

Vulture Conservation Programme at Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve

Vultures are scavengers that feed on dead animals. Out of nine species of vultures found in India, four species—Red-headed Vulture, White-rumped Vulture, Egyptian Vulture and Long-billed Vulture—are found in Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve which is one of the largest tiger reserves in Tamil Nadu. Vulture awareness programmes were conducted in different school students covering Sathyamanglam and Gobichettipalayam areas.

A total of 12 schools were covered during the awareness programmes and 956 students of ages 11–17 years participated. The programmes include drawing competition, screening videos, and PPT presentation. In the presentation students were told about the ecological importance of vultures, its habitat, habitat loss, threat to vulture population and main threat due to diclofenac drug. The drug is fatal to vultures. Veterinary use of this drug to treat livestock has caused collapse of vulture populations throughout its habitat. Vultures that fed on carcasses treated with this drug suffered from kidney failure and died.

Through the presentation, the students understood about vultures and their conservation issues here in STR and other parts of country in detail and they raised many questions on vultures at the end; and all their queries were addressed. They promised that they will carry forward this message to the parents, most of them have livestock at home, and ask them not to use diclofenac for treating their cattle.



Acknowledgements

The author thankful to Tamil Nadu Forest Department, Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve and all the schools and teachers who participated in the programme.

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