

Vulture killing drug now available on EU market

Title

Diclofenac is a powerful anti-inflammatory drug that has wiped out vulture populations in India, Pakistan and Nepal. Now, a repeat of this ecological disaster is threatening Europe. Despite the fact that safe alternative drugs are readily available, Diclofenac has been authorised for use on domestic animals in Italy, and in Spain where 80% of European vultures live, and is now becoming widely available on the EU market. According to experts in SEO/BirdLife (BirdLife in Spain), RSPB (BirdLife UK) and the [Vulture Conservation Foundation](#), this may cause a European mass die off of endangered and ecologically valuable wildlife.

Vultures have long suffered from unfavourable public opinion in Europe, but as species that are built to do the dirty work of ecological recycling, they are essential to the health and well-being of ecosystems. In Europe, four rare vulture species exist and are continuing to face threats to their survival. [Egyptian Vulture](#) is listed as Endangered by BirdLife on behalf of the IUCN Red List of Species while [Cinereous Vulture](#) is listed as Near Threatened. Fortunately, thanks to decades of conservation efforts and millions of euros invested, vulture populations are recovering. The introduction of Diclofenac now puts these efforts and investments in jeopardy.

In India, Pakistan and Nepal, Diclofenac was regularly used in the 1990s to treat cattle. When the animals died, Diclofenac remained in the body and was eaten by vultures, causing their almost immediate death. In about 10 years, the vulture populations in these countries has declined by 99%, bringing some of the most common and iconic large birds of the Indian subcontinent to the verge of extinction. This also led to serious human health consequences as the availability of unconsumed carrions led to an increase in stray dogs and spread of diseases such as rabies. Thanks to joint campaign efforts from the RSPB and its partner [SAVE](#), Diclofenac has been banned in India and we are beginning to see signs of recovery for the Indian vulture population.

The EU and its Member States have a legal obligation to conserve vultures under the EU Birds Directive and EU Veterinary Drugs legislation that require avoiding ecological damage. An immediate ban on veterinary Diclofenac is needed to protect our vultures from the fate of their Asian cousins, and would also send a crucial signal encouraging African countries to stop the spread of Diclofenac, which is already affecting the highly endangered populations of African vultures.

Read more about [our campaign](#) and [what you can do to help](#).
