

The Vanishing Vultures -- A conservation film

On April 7, 2006, the Bombay Natural History Society and Earth Matters Foundation organised launch of 'The Vanishing Vultures', a conservation film by eminent filmmaker, Mike Pandey.

The screening of the film was followed by an open discussion about vulture crisis. Dr. A. R. Rahmani (Director, BNHS), Dr. Nita Shah (Advocacy Officer, Vulture Advocacy Programme, India) and Mr. Chris Bowden (South Asia Vulture Programme, Director, RSPB) answered the queries of the audience.



Following questions were raised during the open discussion

Is it only diclofenac the reason for the vulture decline? Are we sure that there is no other factor that is killing vultures?

Yes. It is only the diclofenac that is responsible for the decline of the vulture population. There could be several reasons for the death of vultures but they cannot cause such a rapid decline. It is the diclofenac that has caused it.

Are we sure of Meloxicam, a substitute of diclofenac, being safe and not having any side effects on food chain?

We are assured that Meloxicam is a safe substitute. We did test this drug on common mynas, egrets, crows, and the results of these tests revealed that the drug Meloxicam is safe. Research done with the safety testings and the efficacy results assure us that Meloxicam is safe.

Did our decision makers watch 'The Vanishing Vultures'?

Yes. We have been circulating this film to our decision makers.

Did we involve pharmaceutical companies to phase out diclofenac?

Yes. The BNHS participated in the meeting hosted by Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India, where the representatives of various pharmaceutical companies were involved. Their response was positive toward the suggestion of substitute to veterinary diclofenac.

Diclofenac is widely used in various medical applications, other than veterinary. In the light of this fact, why are we asking for only veterinary diclofenac to be banned? Why not all of it to be banned?

Diclofenac has been in use for over three decades in human medication. However, it did not have such drastic effect on vultures as veterinary applications of diclofenac has! Also, considering the fact that the veterinary diclofenac is causing havoc, it is must that we ban its use immediately.

Apart from BNHS what are the othe organisations dealing with this issue?

Apart from BNHS, the Wildlife Institute of India(WII), Poultry Diagnostic Research Centre(PDRC), Indian Veterinary Research Institute(IVRI), Worldwide Fund for Nature(WWF), Royal Society for Protection of Birds(RSPB), Birdlife International, Zoological Survey of London(ZSL), Peregrine Funds; USA are the organisations and institutes dealing with this issue.

To get a copy of the film for promotion and education please contact us.