

Project Update: December 2016

After the completion of field activities, data processing and analysis, we went back to conduct awareness activities directed to relevant stakeholders, using communication materials, such as flyers, posters and power-point presentations to reveal the results of our work. We conducted visits to local authorities, abattoirs, and to veterinary and livestock national offices to raise awareness concerning the importance of vultures as ecosystem services providers. We gave talks at the National Institute of Biodiversity and Protected Areas concerning the importance of vulture conservation and presented several census methodologies developed during this project, which can potentially be used to set up a monitoring program in the country. Finally, we gave talks in two Universities to undergraduate students of Medicine, Nursing and Biological Sciences on the impact of vulture declines to human health and to the balance of ecosystems. The project activities are now completed and the final report now available.



Left: Delivery of posters and flyers to the director of the livestock government office, after a long conversation regarding the results of our work and the importance of his office to the conservation of vultures. This was the second visit to this government leader, after a first interview, in the beginning of this project. Right: Delivery of flyers and posters to the veterinary services of Bissau's major slaughterhouse. This was also the second visit to this office and we were warmly welcomed by these veterinary technicians, who reacted positively to our calls to protect vultures.



Left: Delivery of posters and flyers in local language to the leaders of the association of livestock herders, in Bissau's slaughterhouse. These men recognized the importance of vultures for them, as harmless clean-up agents. Right: Talk delivered by Mohamed Henriques to the students of the

University of Medicine and Nursing. For 3 hours, we presented the importance of vulture populations for human health in Guinea-Bissau and discussed with the students how vultures helped avoiding contaminations and disease outbreaks. The students were very receptive and interacted very positively during all the presentation.



Presentation of the results of this project by Mohamed Henriques in an international scientific conference, the Pan-African Ornithology Congress, held in October 2016, in Dakar – Senegal. The exceptional importance of Guinea-Bissau for two species of vultures was recognized by all international specialists and researchers present.



Left: A nest of White-backed Vulture, the second most abundant species of vulture in the country, found during field work of this project. This nest had a nestling almost of the size of its parent and was being fed by the adult. This Critically Endangered have a very low reproductive rate, laying one egg at each breeding season and attaining sexual maturity only after 3 to 5 years. This is why these vultures are so sensitive to mortality. Right: Hooded Vultures, the most abundant vulture in the country, in the abattoir of the city of Gabú. There, these vultures eliminate the reminiscent of the meat that is not used for human consumption and provide very important clean-up services. Our results show that Guinea-Bissau may hold one of the most important populations of these species in the African continent.