

SAPICS SPRING SUMMIT

29 AUGUST
2024

Focus Rooms, Modderfontein, Johannesburg

12:00 – 19:00

DHL Vulture Relocation Project

Nadia Opperman

think

supply chain

think SAPICS

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Introduction

Introduction



SAVING AFRICA'S VULTURES DHL move endangered birds

DHL Transport forms part of the DHL Supply Chain family, which offers safe and reliable transport solutions.

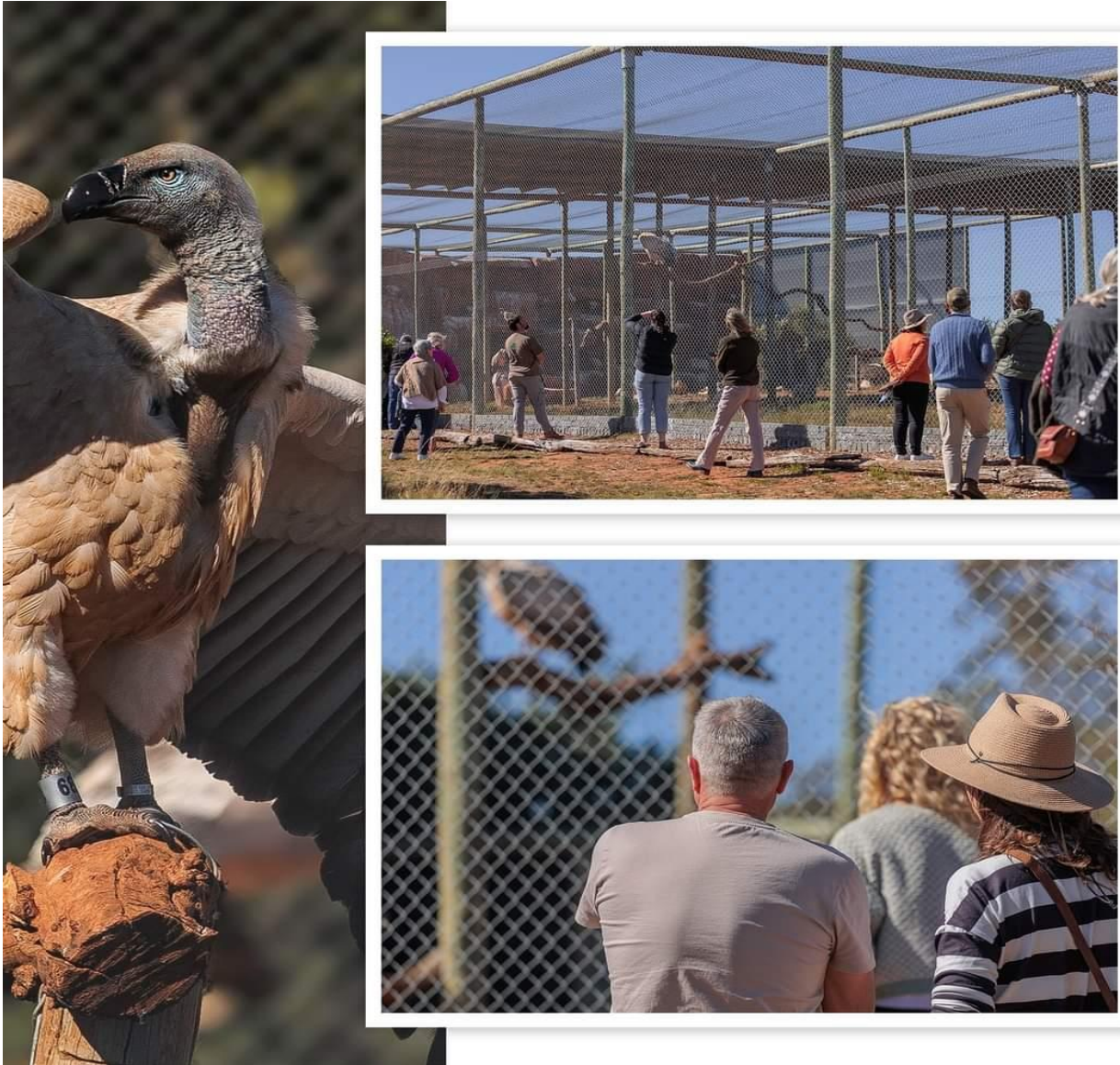
VulPro is a non-profit vulture rehabilitation organization based in South Africa. They are the only vulture conservation organization on the African continent. They approach conservation holistically through in-situ and ex-situ management strategies and aim to prevent the extinction of critically endangered African vultures.

Back in 2012, VulPro approached DHL for assistance to transport an injured black eagle from Bloemfontein to their facility in Hartbeespoort. This initial collaboration evolved into a long-standing relationship, with DHL helping to transport both injured or sick, non-releasable vultures as well as healthy vultures bound for release back into the wild.

Earlier this year, DHL undertook a remarkable journey to once again support Vulpro, this time to transport 160 Cape and African White-backed vultures from Hartbeespoort in the North-West to VulPro's new facility in the Shamwari Private Game Reserve, near Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape. This ambitious move, the largest of its kind in Africa, was made possible with the help of several sponsors, volunteers, and a dedicated support crew. The successful completion of this monumental undertaking has provided the vultures with a new environment in which to thrive and be healthy.

#ConnectingPeople #ImprovingLives #TogetherUnstoppable

Problem Definition/ Opportunity Identified



Protecting Africa's Vultures

VulPro reached its capacity in the Hartbeespoort facility with no space left to expand. Additionally, the staff and the birds faced significant safety risks seeing that the vultures were being targeted for poaching for belief-based purposes. Vulpro therefore required a larger, better-protected facility where the largest captive breeding population of vultures isn't concentrated in one location.

Vulpro partnered with Shamwari Private Game Reserve which offered them more space with much larger enclosures, protection through their anti-poaching unit, and onsite veterinary care. The new location offers a well-balanced ecosystem and provides financial support and sustainability.

The move would also be critical for VulPro's long-term plan to attempt to re-establish a vulture colony in the Eastern Cape.

NO. OF VULTURES ADMITTED TO VULPRO	NO. OF VULTURES RELEASED FROM REHAB	TOTAL VULTURES RELEASED (INCL CAPTIVE BRED)
1647+	606+	63%

Risks & Statistics

POISON CASES

NO. OF POISININGS IN AFRICA:

15,028+

NO. OF POISININGS IN RSA:

2473+

POWERLINE FIGURES

NO. OF INCIDENT REPORTS BY VULPRO:

460+

NO. OF MORTALITIES DUE TO POWERLINES:

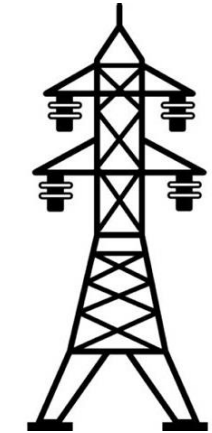
2473+

Protecting African Vultures

*Some species have declined by over 95% in the last 30 years
VulPro is working towards preventing the extinction of African Vultures*

Vultures face an onslaught of threats like:

- Power line collisions and electrocution
- Collisions with other infrastructure i.e. wind turbines
- Direct and indirect poisoning
- Direct persecution
- Illegal harvesting and trade of vultures for belief-based purposes
- Habitat loss, fragmentation, and degradation
- Reduced availability of natural food sources
- Drownings in man-made structures as they are seeking alternative water sources
- Exposure to toxicity through certain veterinary drugs



Planning & Preparation



DHL essential in the plan to move endangered birds

Moving critically endangered animals is a massive task that requires extensive planning and collaboration among various experts, including the VulPro team, other conservation organizations, wildlife veterinarians, transport specialists, and security staff.

The planning process began 16 months before the actual move, with weekly calls held two months before to determine the requirements and the best time for the relocation to happen. Procedures were established and rehearsed to ensure that everyone understood their roles on the day of the move.

Special crates were constructed to transport the vultures individually, providing ample space and ventilation to minimize stress and ensure the safe transport of each bird.

The team monitored the weather for over a month before the move to determine the best time to load the vultures and begin the long journey to the Eastern Cape.

All these preparations were made to minimize the stress on the vultures during the move, with their safety, well-being, and survival always being the top priority.

The Team Involved



#TogetherUnstoppable

The move involved over 50 people who all had one vision. Everyone understood the complexity and challenges this would bring, but all worked as one team to make this project a success and support Vulpro in their conservation efforts.

All the birds were loaded in just three hours, the journey took 18 hours, and the relocation was completed within 24 hours.

Prof. Katja Koeppel from the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Veterinary Sciences managed the welfare of the birds, supported by Dr. Johan Joubert from Shamwari.

A special mention need to go out to the DHL drivers that lead the convoy and safely transported the birds to their new forever home.



The Solution



Making the impossible possible

- ✓ DHL Express sponsored two 8-ton trucks with tail lifts to help move the birds from the enclosures to where the larger vehicles were parked.
- ✓ For the relocation, DHL Transport sponsored 2 superlink trucks with 2 drivers per vehicle. This way, all the birds could be moved at once and the journey could be done overnight to ensure the birds did not have to travel during the heat of the day. Air-suspension trailers were used to reduce the noise and movement during the journey.
- ✓ DHL Transport also provided a support crew to assist with the on-route logistics and security to ensure the journey could be done safely and uninterrupted.
- ✓ The University of Pretoria and Shamwari each made a veterinarian available to ensure that specialist care was always available.
- ✓ Unitrans sponsored a support crew and additional security for the journey.
- ✓ WeWild Africa, an NGO specializing in animal rewilding and translocation, funded the transport crates and assisted with volunteers to catch, crate, and load the birds.

The Journey



Driving for Vultures

Crating & Loading	Transportation	Offloading	Difficulties
Vulpro specialists	4x Drivers	Vulpro specialists	Stress on the birds
2x Wildlife veterinarians	2x Curtain-sided superlink trucks	50+ Shamwari staff members	Soaring heat when birds had to be caught, crated and loaded
50+ volunteers	Air-suspension trailers	5x Trucks to move birds to enclosures	Sufficient ventilation during transit and temperature control
160x crates	72x Pallets	23x Ranger & Support vehicles	Onroute health checks had to be done fast for temp control and safety of birds and crew
2x 8Ton trucks with taillifts	2x Security vehicles	24x Transport crew	Special needs birds (sub-adults, sick and injured)
2x drivers	3x Support vehicles		Road closure onroute during the hottest time of day
Special loading plan and specifications	18x support crew		
2x Photographers	2x Veterinarians		
Food and drinks	6x Health-check stops		

The Arrival



Delivering precious cargo

- ✓ Two DHL team members flew to PE to meet the Vulpro and Shamwari teams before the convoy arrived.
- ✓ The team did a route assessment to pre-empt and plan for any difficulties we might experience in getting the trucks to the designated offloading point in the game reserve.
- ✓ A pre-arrival safety briefing was done between all teams.
- ✓ Game rangers had to be deployed to keep everyone safe while offloading the vultures.
- ✓ The vulture enclosures are in remote areas on the game reserve where the superlink trucks would not have been able to reach. Smaller trucks were made available to move the vultures to the various enclosures
- ✓ Shamwari made a whole team available to assist in offloading and moving the birds to the new enclosures as quickly as possible to limit the stress on the already tired birds.

Results Achieved

"In a season of success and peace, even a small disruption can break the window of progress. Let's protect our wildlife and cherish the harmony they bring."

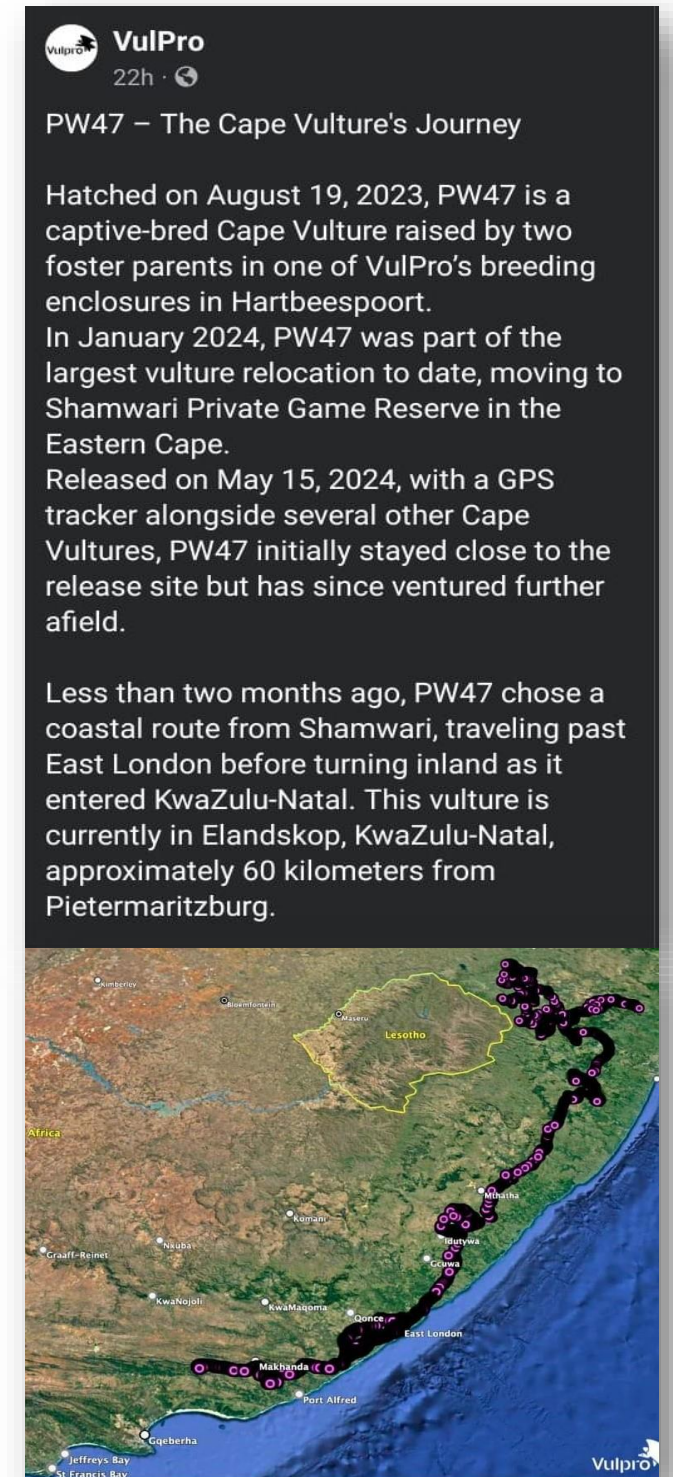
Orbert Phiri



Africa's largest vulture relocation marks a conservation milestone

Despite the complexities of this project, **every single one of the 160 vultures was successfully relocated**. By moving these majestic birds to a new environment where they are safe and allowed to thrive, Vulpro aims to bolster their population and preserve their species for generations.

- The 23rd of April marked a historically significant day as the first two vultures were released from the reserve since the relocation of the vultures in January.
- On April 30th, VulPro@Shamwari proudly released the first-ever captive-bred Cape Vulture into the wild.
- On the 2nd of May, another 5 Cape Vultures from the captive breeding project were released into the wild! Together with Shamwari, VulPro's conservation efforts aim to re-introduce species that went locally extinct marking the 2nd of May as an important milestone for the Eastern Cape.
- PW47, a captive-bred Cape Vulture fitted with a GPS tracker, was released alongside several other cape vultures on the 15th of May. His incredible journey is being monitored and the tracking shows the vast distances wild vultures can travel.



The Way Forward



Creating a Lasting Legacy!

The 2024 breeding season is well underway. According to the update from Vulpro@Shamwari on Thursday, August 8th, 19 eggs have successfully hatched, with 7 more hatchlings expected soon.

Not only were all the vultures successfully relocated, but this also demonstrates that the birds are healthy and thriving in their new environment.

With the breeding project, Vulpro is spearheading population restocking and supplementation to address the severe decline of African vulture species.



Our Commitment

Driving for Conservation

Because of the successful Vulture relocation, The BornFree Foundation approached DHL to assist in moving two lion brothers who were rescued from war-torn Ukraine. We are extremely proud to share another successful relocation story.

DHL will continue to support conservation efforts and organizations, to ensure we all work together towards a sustainable future, where our wildlife is protected so that future generations will be able to see and experience their magnificence.



Q & A

THANK YOU