

SACT EDUCATIONAL COMIC BOOK ON THE PLIGHT OF VULTURES

# Vusa the Vulture GUARDIAN



OUR VULTURES  
ARE BEING KILLED!  
HELP ME SAVE THEM.



*Conservation Through Education*

Revised 2025 Edition 4

# Vultures: Nature's Unsung Heroes!

Imagine a superhero with a special power: cleaning up the Earth!

**That's exactly what vultures do.**

While they might not wear capes, these incredible birds are super important for keeping our planet healthy and clean.

Think about it: when animals die, vultures swoop in like a clean-up crew. They eat what's left behind, stopping the spread of germs and diseases.

Without vultures, our world would be a much smellier and less healthy place!

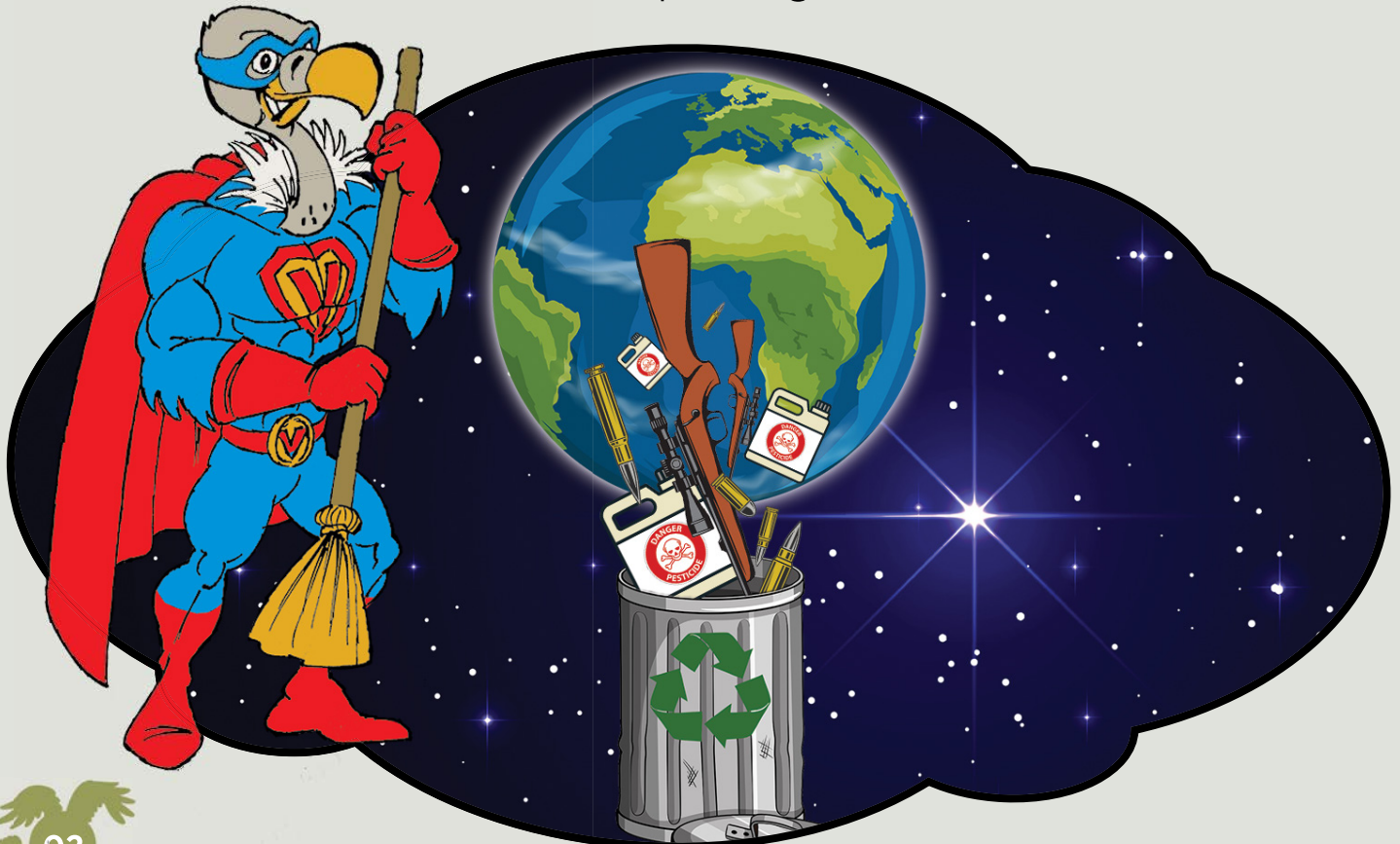
**Here's why vultures are true heroes:**

**Disease Fighters:** By eating decaying animals, they stop harmful bacteria from spreading to other animals and even people.

**Guardians of the Environment:** Their clean-up work helps keep ecosystems balanced and healthy for everyone.

**Super Scavengers:** They're like nature's recycling team, making sure nothing goes to waste.

So next time you see a vulture, remember they're not scary at all. They're amazing, hardworking superheroes doing a dirty job to keep our world sparkling clean!





# The Vulture Guardian Team

Meet Vusa, his family and friends. Vusa's parents work far from home, so Vusa and Thandi live with their grandparents in a rural village that borders a National Park in southern Africa. This park is one of many protected areas in the region. Protected areas are places where wild animals and plants can live and grow safely.

## Vusa



The hero of our story. Vusa is curious and brave. He wants to become a wildlife researcher and safari field guide when he grows up.

## Polepole



Vusa's dog. His name means "slow" but he's always full of energy.

## Thandi



Vusa's cheerful and loving younger sister. She is always ready for adventure. She has a rescued donkey called Daisy.

## Babamkulu



Vusa and Thandi's wise grandfather and village elder. Many people look up to him.

## Gogo



Vusa and Thandi's homely grandmother. She loves telling folktale stories.

## Siya



Vusa's best friend. He is funny and always up for exploring. He lives nearby and goes to the same school as Vusa and Thandi.

## Enoch



Vusa's uncle. He is a safari field guide at Lenong Lodge in a game reserve near Vusa's village.

## Amos



A local wildlife conservation officer and researcher at Lenong Lodge.

## YOU

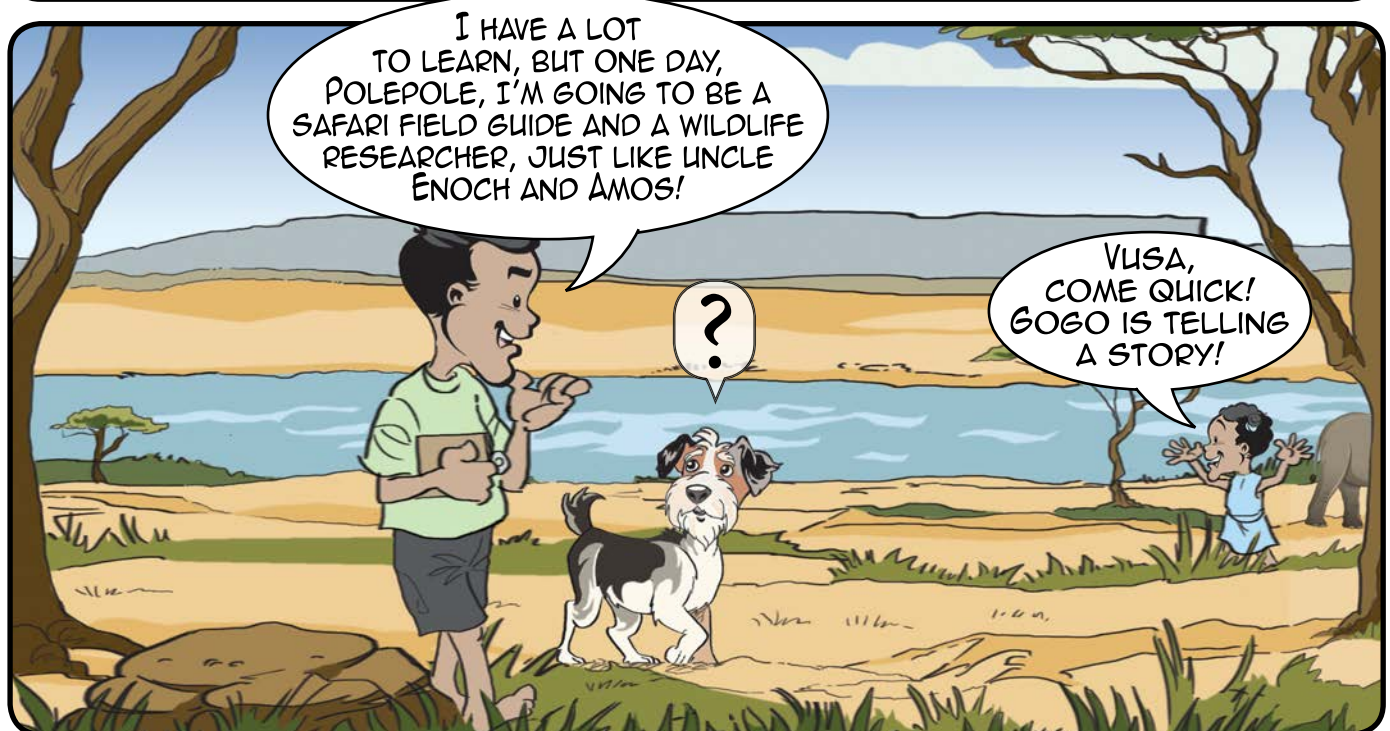
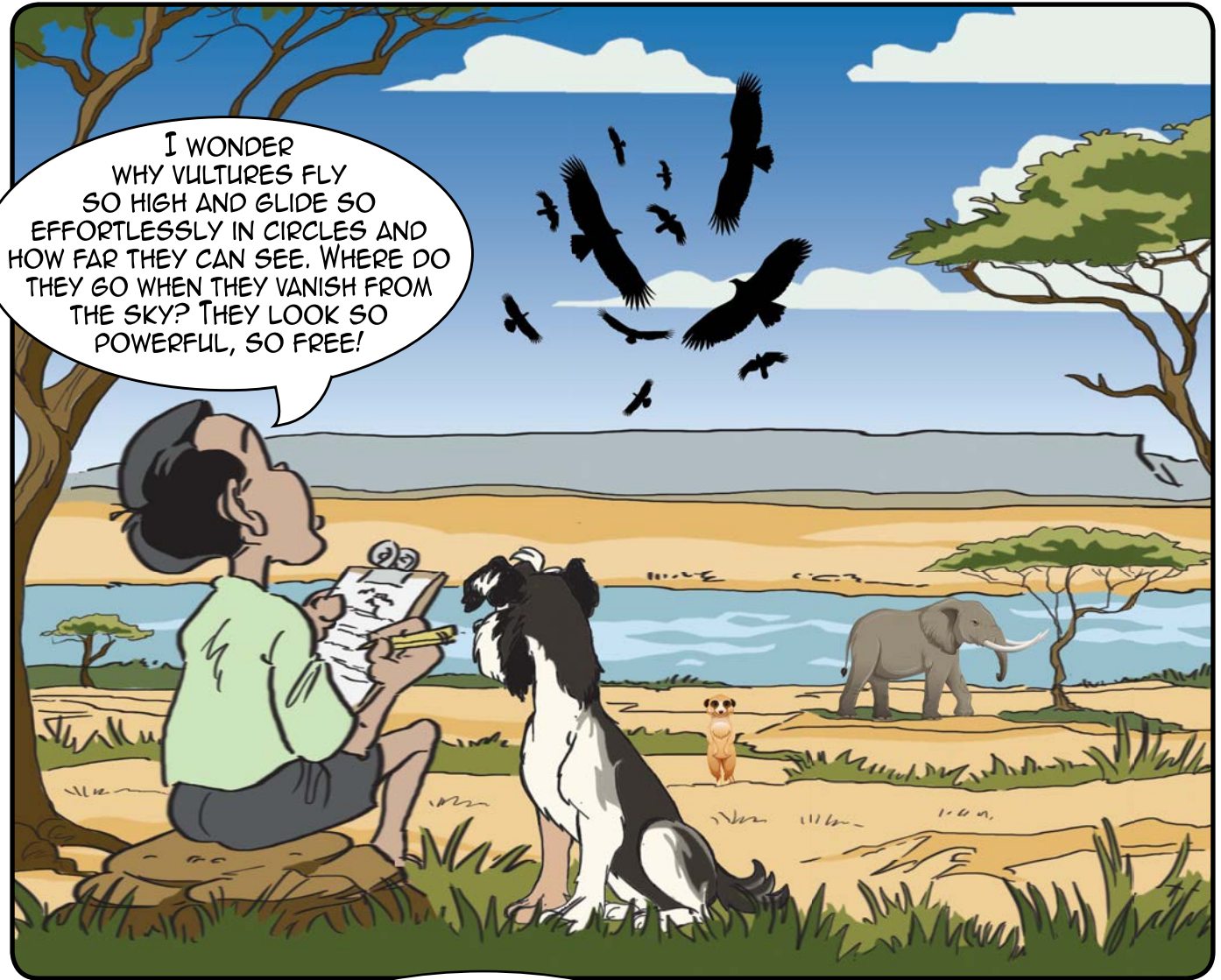
Draw or paste a picture yourself here.

You are part of the vulture guardian team because Vusa needs your help.

**Write your name below:**





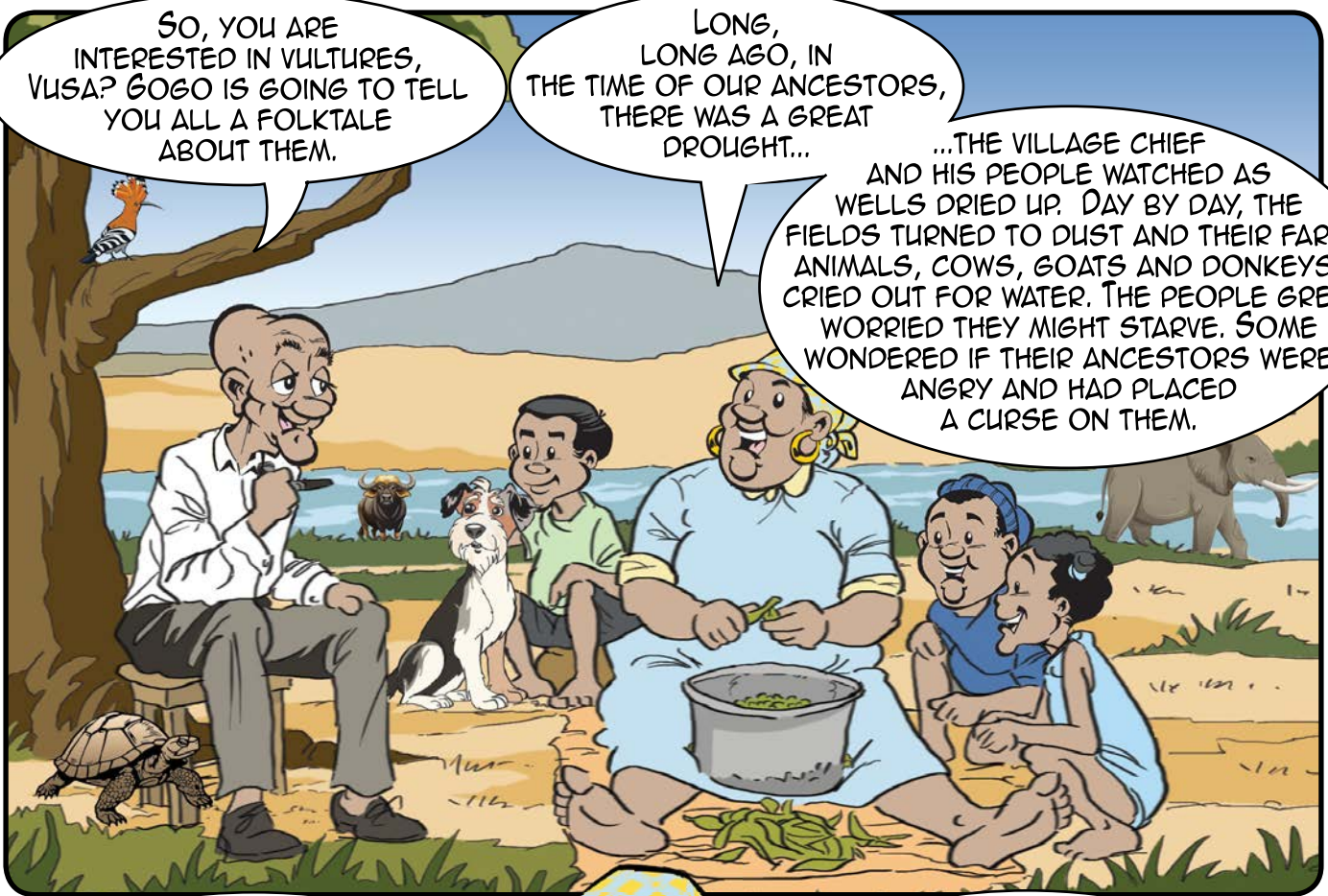




SO, YOU ARE INTERESTED IN VULTURES, VUSA? GOGO IS GOING TO TELL YOU ALL A FOLKTALE ABOUT THEM.

LONG, LONG AGO, IN THE TIME OF OUR ANCESTORS, THERE WAS A GREAT DROUGHT...

...THE VILLAGE CHIEF AND HIS PEOPLE WATCHED AS WELLS DRIED UP. DAY BY DAY, THE FIELDS TURNED TO DUST AND THEIR FARM ANIMALS, COWS, GOATS AND DONKEYS, CRIED OUT FOR WATER. THE PEOPLE GREW WORRIED THEY MIGHT STARVE. SOME WONDERED IF THEIR ANCESTORS WERE ANGRY AND HAD PLACED A CURSE ON THEM.

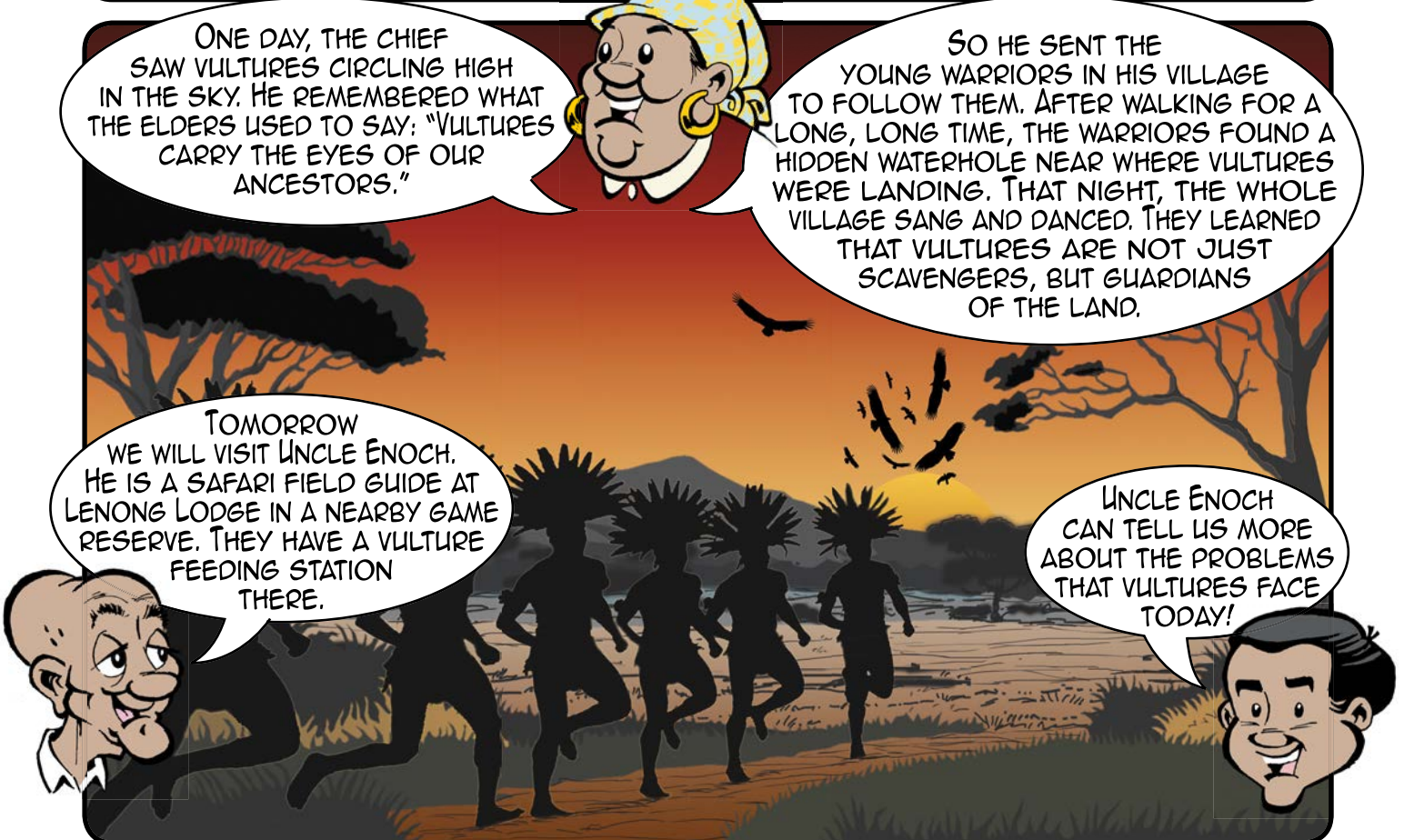


ONE DAY, THE CHIEF SAW VULTURES CIRCLING HIGH IN THE SKY. HE REMEMBERED WHAT THE ELDERS USED TO SAY: "VULTURES CARRY THE EYES OF OUR ANCESTORS."

SO HE SENT THE YOUNG WARRIORS IN HIS VILLAGE TO FOLLOW THEM. AFTER WALKING FOR A LONG, LONG TIME, THE WARRIORS FOUND A HIDDEN WATERHOLE NEAR WHERE VULTURES WERE LANDING. THAT NIGHT, THE WHOLE VILLAGE SANG AND DANCED. THEY LEARNED THAT VULTURES ARE NOT JUST SCAVENGERS, BUT GUARDIANS OF THE LAND.

TOMORROW WE WILL VISIT UNCLE ENOCH. HE IS A SAFARI FIELD GUIDE AT LENONG LODGE IN A NEARBY GAME RESERVE. THEY HAVE A VULTURE FEEDING STATION THERE.

UNCLE ENOCH CAN TELL US MORE ABOUT THE PROBLEMS THAT VULTURES FACE TODAY!



#### DID YOU KNOW?

VULTURES CAN FLY VERY HIGH ABOVE THE EARTH. A RÜPPELL'S VULTURE ONCE SMACKED INTO A PASSING AEROPLANE AT 11,300 METERS!

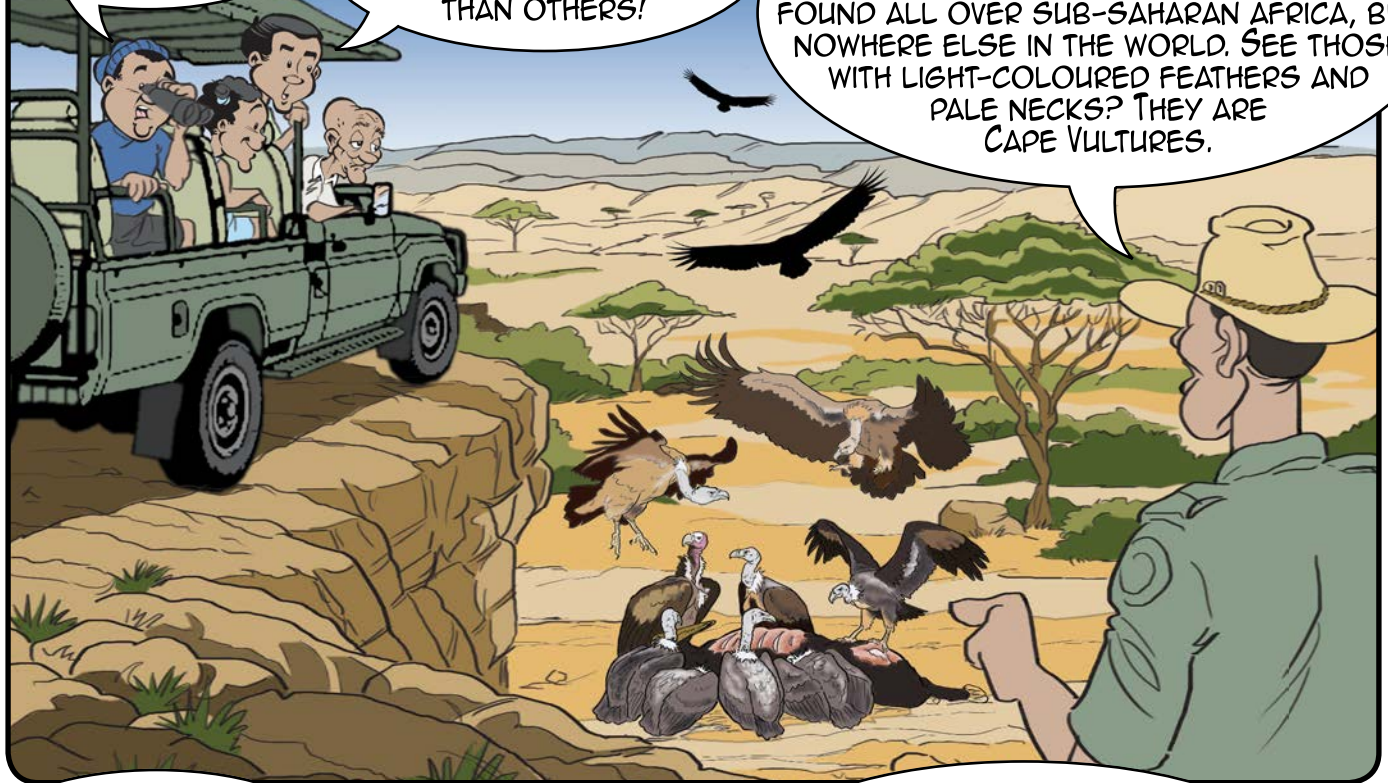




WOW! SO THAT'S THE VULTURE FEEDING STATION.

I DIDN'T KNOW THERE ARE SO MANY DIFFERENT VULTURE SPECIES. SOME ARE MUCH BIGGER THAN OTHERS!

THAT'S RIGHT, VUSA. THE ONES WITH WHITE BACKS ARE CALLED WHITE-BACKED VULTURES. THEY BUILD THEIR NESTS IN TREES AND ARE FOUND ALL OVER SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA, BUT NOWHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD. SEE THOSE WITH LIGHT-COLOURED FEATHERS AND PALE NECKS? THEY ARE CAPE VULTURES.



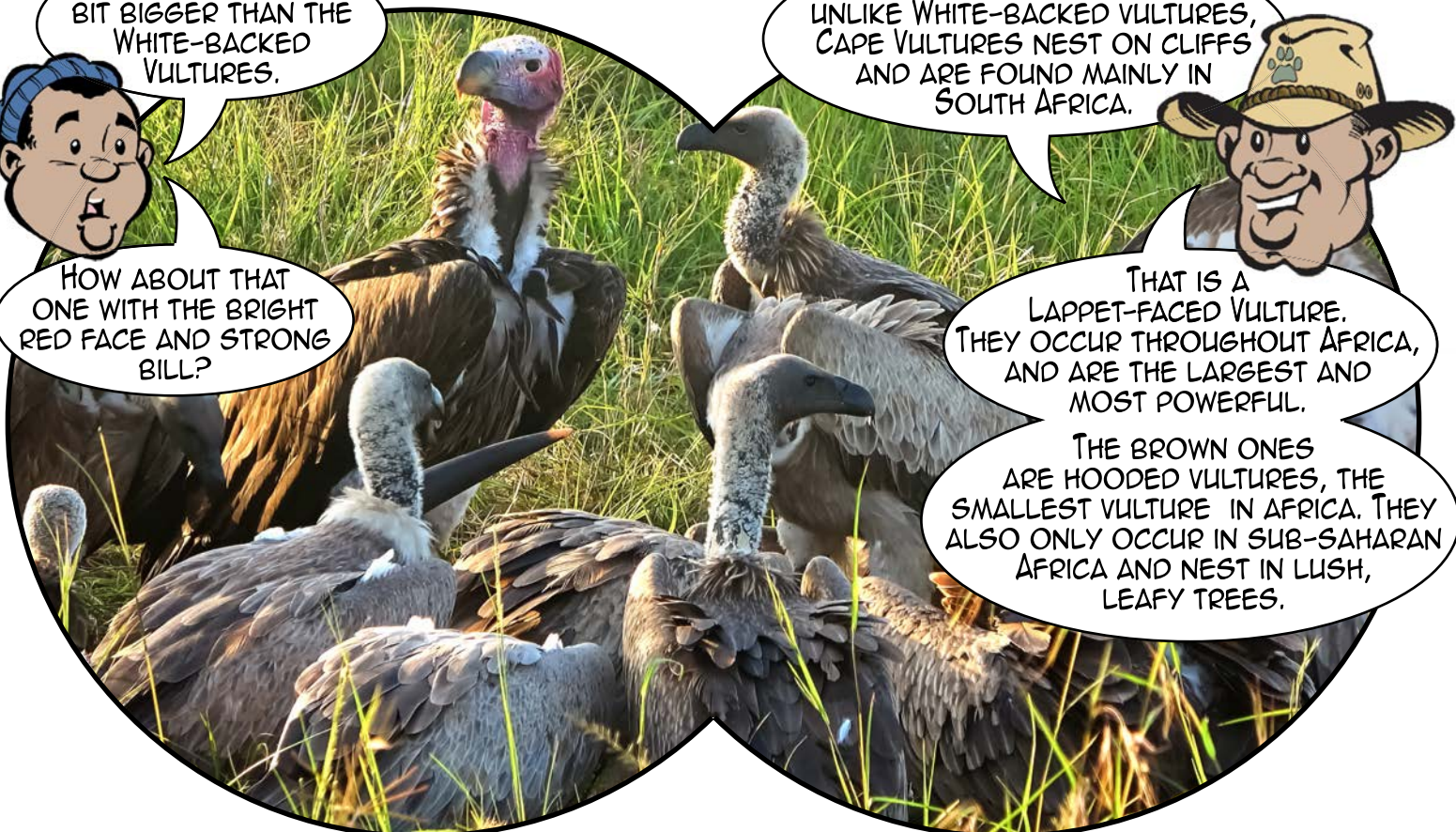
THEY LOOK A BIT BIGGER THAN THE WHITE-BACKED VULTURES.

THAT'S CORRECT, SIYA. UNLIKE WHITE-BACKED VULTURES, CAPE VULTURES NEST ON CLIFFS AND ARE FOUND MAINLY IN SOUTH AFRICA.

HOW ABOUT THAT ONE WITH THE BRIGHT RED FACE AND STRONG BILL?

THAT IS A LAPPET-FACED VULTURE. THEY OCCUR THROUGHOUT AFRICA, AND ARE THE LARGEST AND MOST POWERFUL.

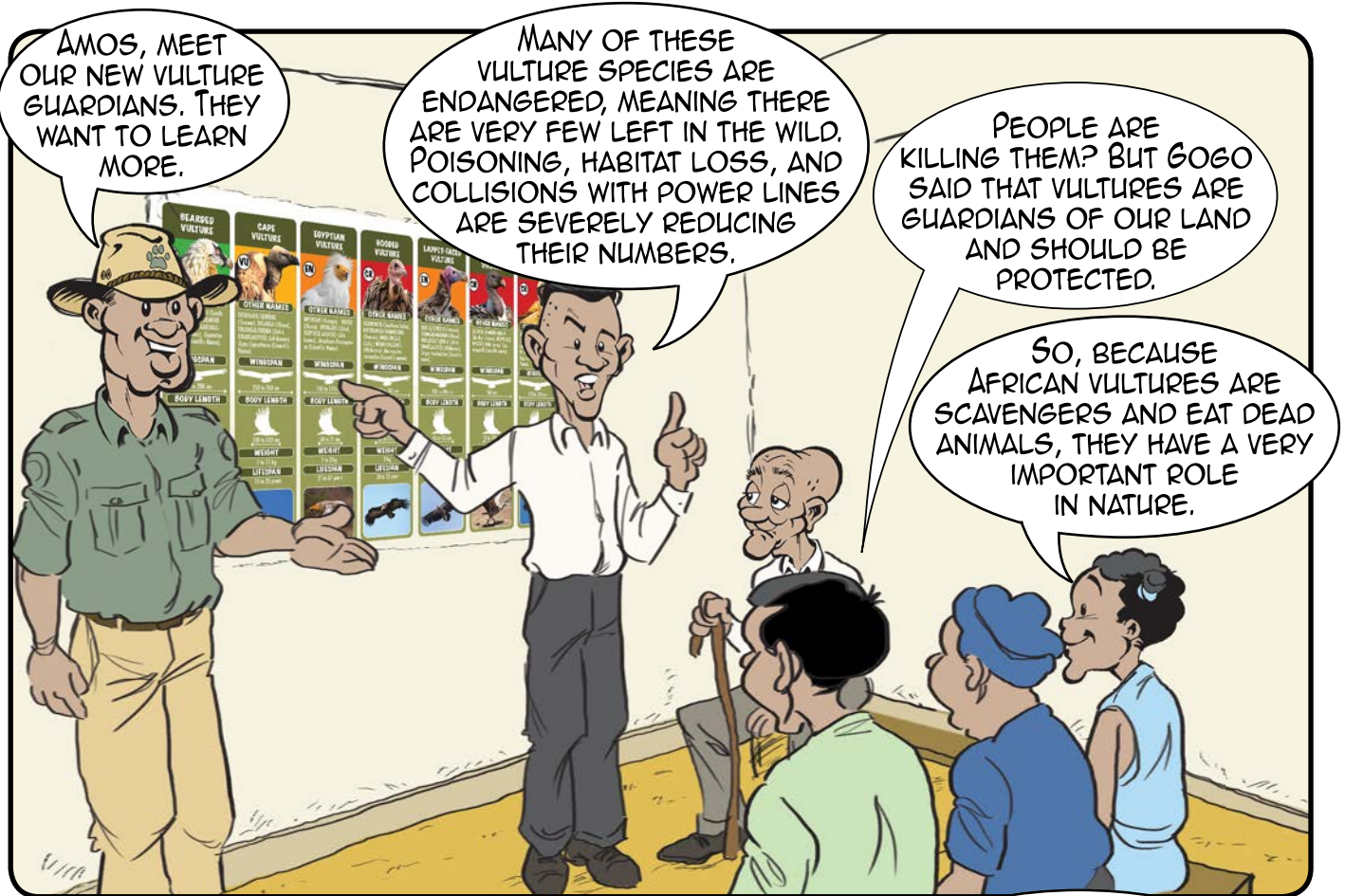
THE BROWN ONES ARE HOODED VULTURES, THE SMALLEST VULTURE IN AFRICA. THEY ALSO ONLY OCCUR IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA AND NEST IN LUSH, LEAFY TREES.



**DID YOU KNOW?**

VULTURES FEATHERLESS HEADS AND NECKS ARE AN ADAPTATION FOR FEEDING DEEP INSIDE ANIMAL CARCASSES.



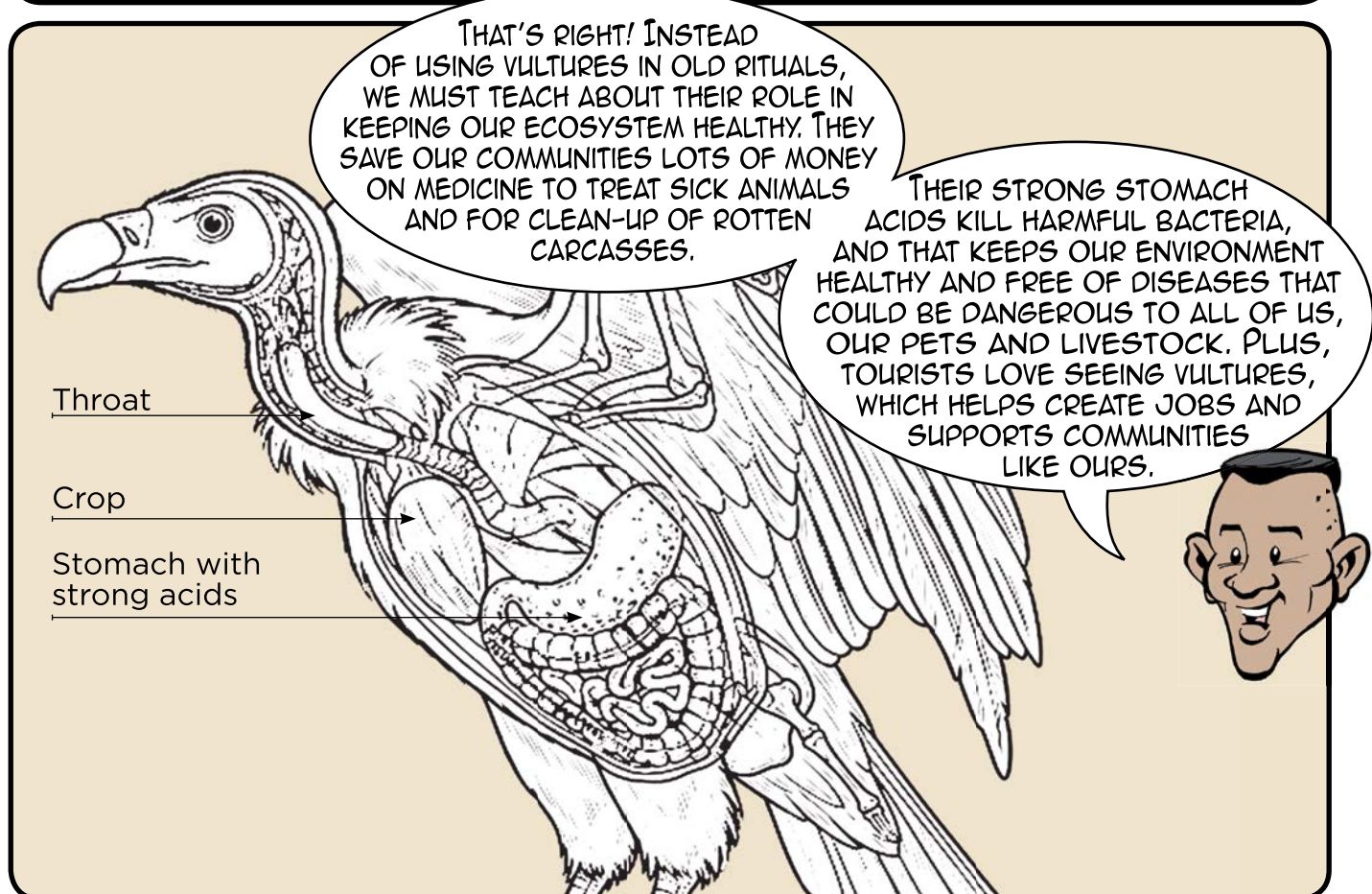
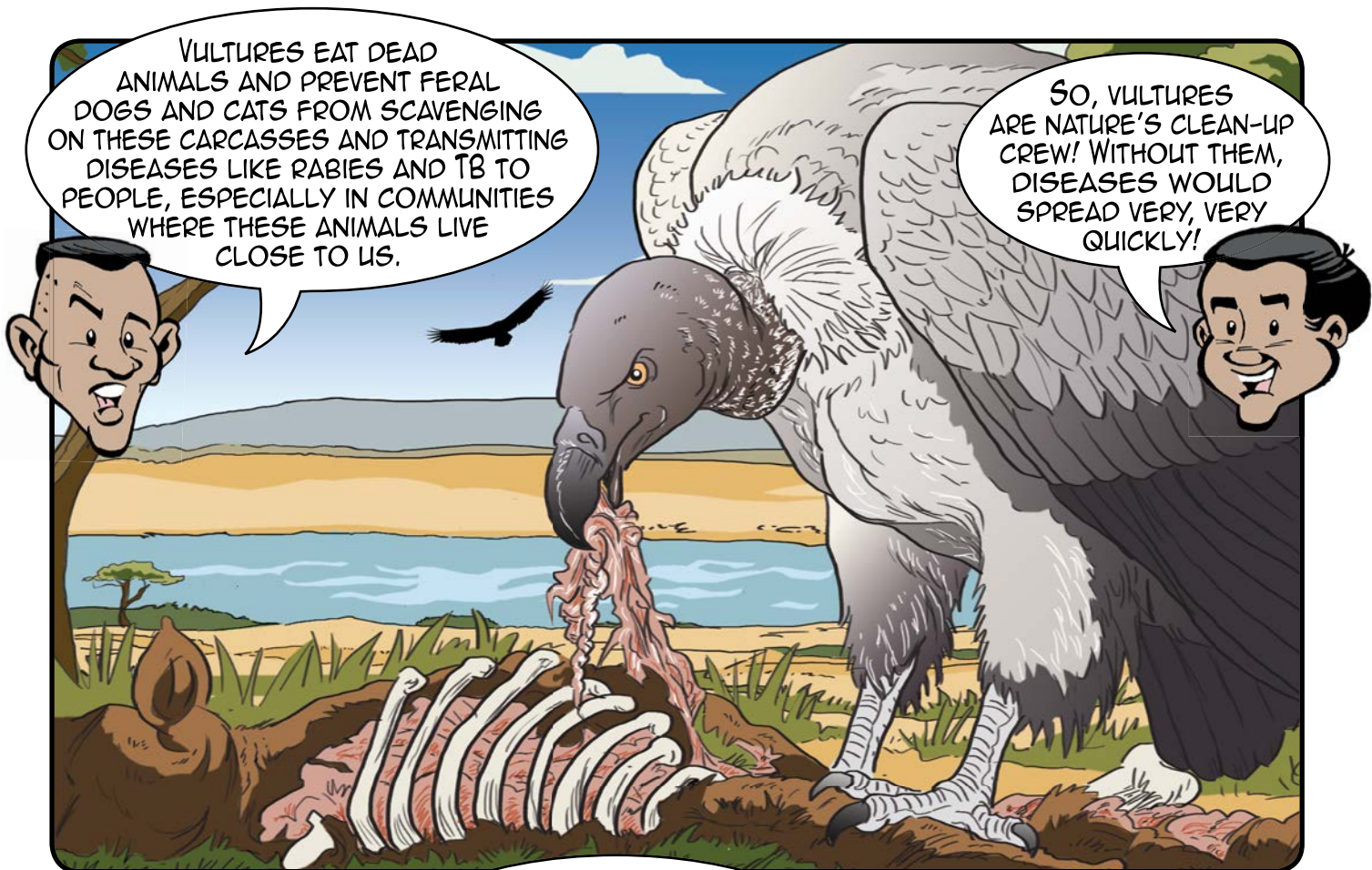


#### DID YOU KNOW?

WHITE-BACKED AND CAPE VULTURES HAVE UNIQUE GROOVED TONGUES WHICH ALLOW THEM TO ACCESS PARTS THAT THEIR BEAKS CAN'T REACH.



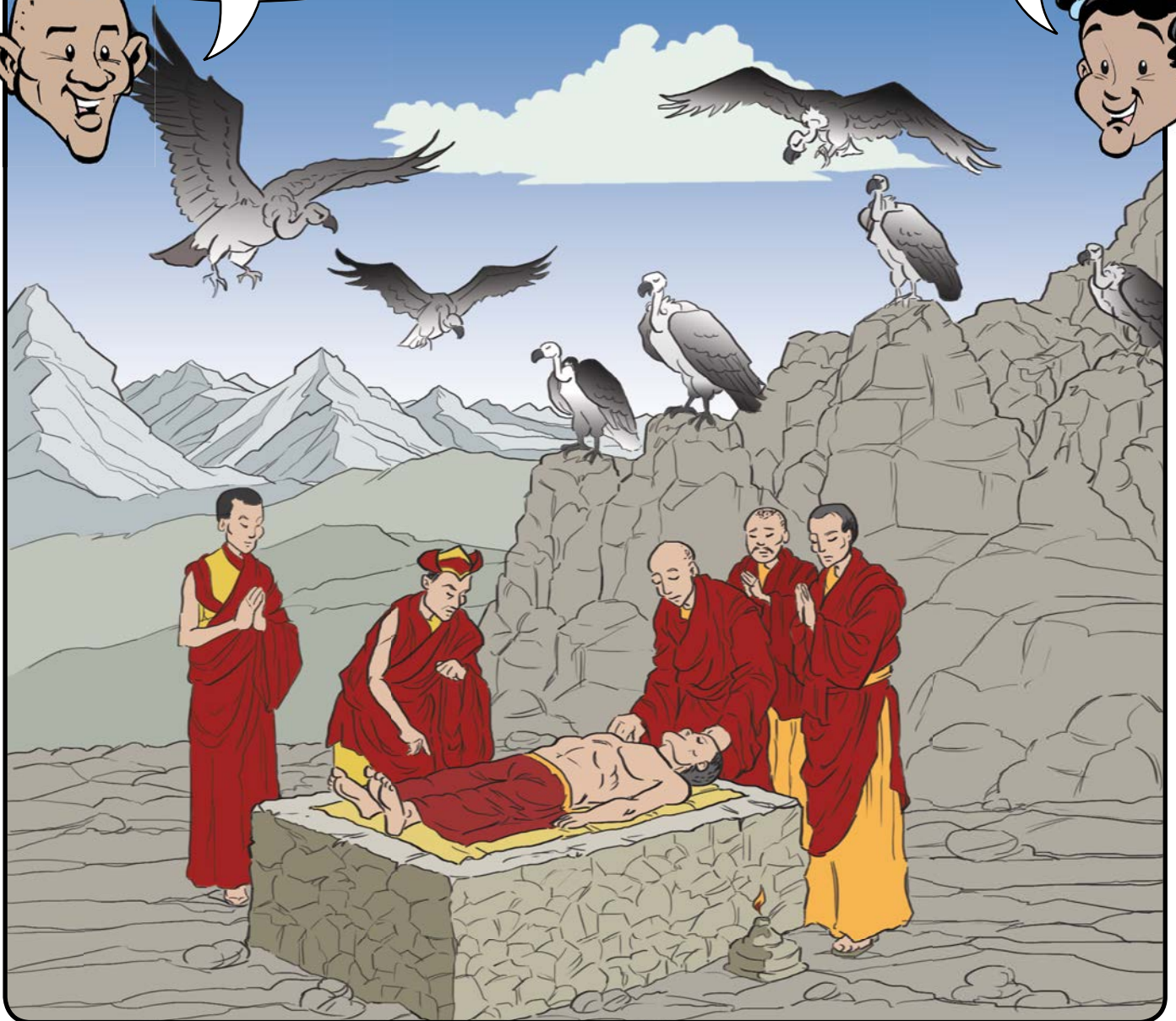






IN THE TIBETAN CULTURE, WHEN PEOPLE DIE, THEIR BODIES ARE LEFT OUT FOR VULTURES TO EAT. THIS IS A SPECIAL WAY OF SAYING GOODBYE. THEY BELIEVE IT HELPS THE PERSON'S SPIRIT REST.

WOW! THAT'S INTERESTING. SO VULTURES ARE SACRED BIRDS TO THESE PEOPLE.



**Vusa**  
Says:

“African vultures are facing a big crisis, with very serious lowering in population numbers.”

“Seven of Africa’s vulture species are slipping toward extinction.”

“Together, poisoning and the trade in traditional medicines make up 90 per cent of reported vulture deaths in Africa.”



**DID YOU KNOW?**

VULTURES PROVIDE AN EFFICIENT AND ENVIRONMENTALLY BENEFICIAL CARCASS DISPOSAL SERVICE THAT IS VALUED BY LIVESTOCK FARMERS.





VULTURES FACE MANY DANGERS IN THEIR LIFETIMES. BUSY HIGHWAYS, ELECTRICITY PYLONS, WIND TURBINES, POACHING, BAD FARMING PRACTICES AND POISONED CARCASSES KILL FAR TOO MANY VULTURES.

IN ADDITION, THEY ARE ALSO LOSING THEIR BREEDING HABITATS MAINLY DUE TO THE CUTTING DOWN OF BIG TREES AND DISTURBANCE FROM HUMAN ACTIVITIES.



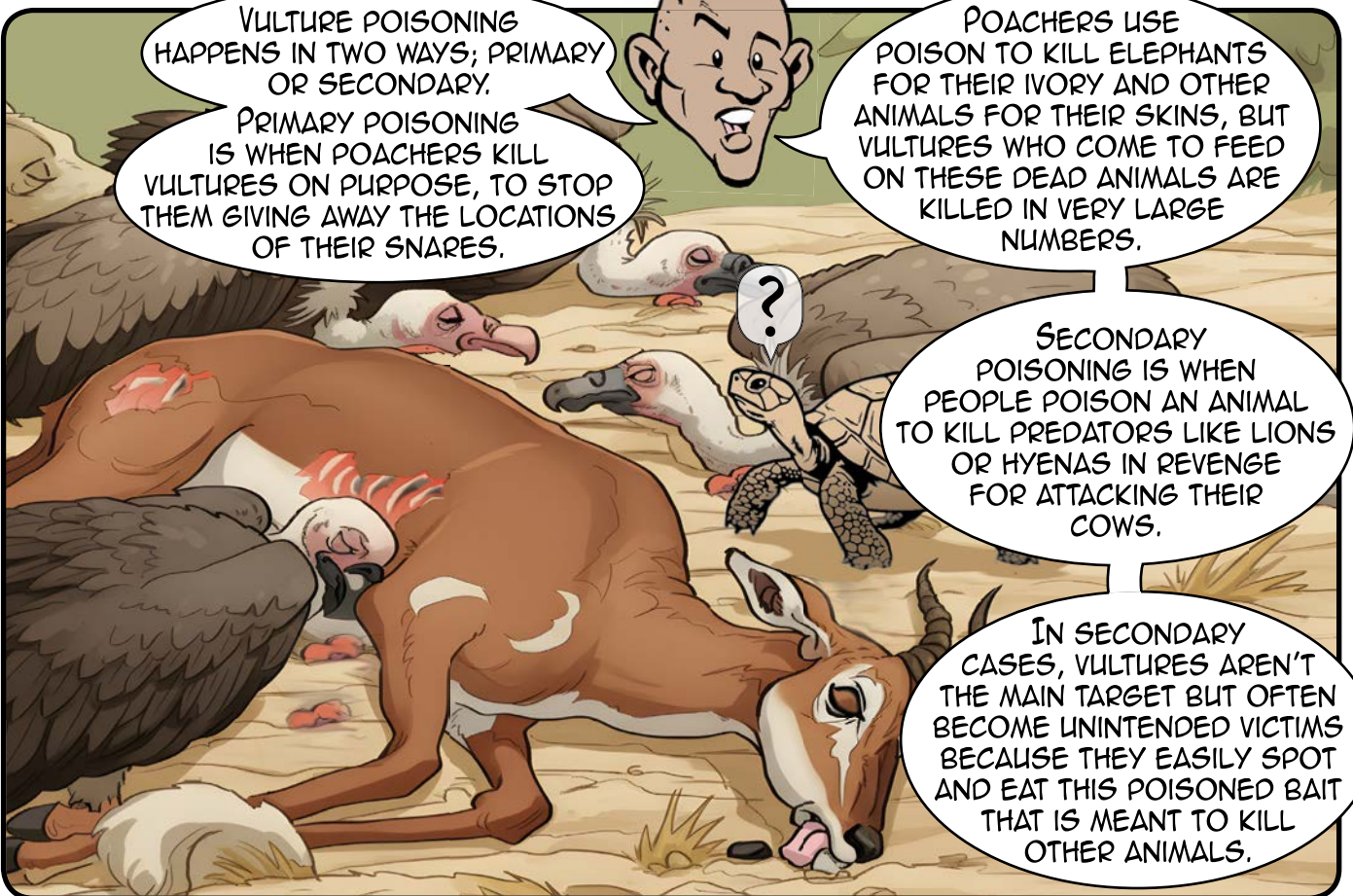
VULTURE POISONING HAPPENS IN TWO WAYS; PRIMARY OR SECONDARY.

PRIMARY POISONING IS WHEN POACHERS KILL VULTURES ON PURPOSE, TO STOP THEM GIVING AWAY THE LOCATIONS OF THEIR SNARES.

POACHERS USE POISON TO KILL ELEPHANTS FOR THEIR IVORY AND OTHER ANIMALS FOR THEIR SKINS, BUT VULTURES WHO COME TO FEED ON THESE DEAD ANIMALS ARE KILLED IN VERY LARGE NUMBERS.

SECONDARY POISONING IS WHEN PEOPLE POISON AN ANIMAL TO KILL PREDATORS LIKE LIONS OR HYENAS IN REVENGE FOR ATTACKING THEIR COWS.

IN SECONDARY CASES, VULTURES AREN'T THE MAIN TARGET BUT OFTEN BECOME UNINTENDED VICTIMS BECAUSE THEY EASILY SPOT AND EAT THIS POISONED BAIT THAT IS MEANT TO KILL OTHER ANIMALS.





FARMERS USE INSECTICIDES, (POISON), TO KILL INSECTS THAT ARE EATEN BY OTHER ANIMALS THAT THEN DIE AND ARE EATEN BY VULTURES WHO THEN FALL SICK FROM THE POISON AND ALSO DIE WHEN LEFT UNTREATED.

LEAD POISONING IS ANOTHER KILLER OF VULTURES. THIS HAPPENS WHEN VULTURES EAT FLESH CONTAINING TINY BITS OF LEAD LEFT BEHIND WHEN LEAD BULLETS SHATTER AS THEY HIT THE ANIMAL BEING SHOT.

LEAD POISONING CAN ALSO AFFECT THE STRENGTH OF THEIR EGG SHELLS AS WELL AS CAUSE INFERTILE EGGS TO BE LAID - RESULTING IN LESS VULTURES BEING BORN AND RAISED.

VULTURE HABITATS ARE ALSO DISAPPEARING DUE TO DEFORESTATION AND HUMAN EXPANSION. WITHOUT BIG TREES THEY CANNOT BUILD NESTS TO BREED AND RAISE YOUNG VULTURES TO CARRY ON THE GOOD WORK FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND FOR ALL OF US.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

ONLY THE BEARDED VULTURE CAN EAT CARCASS BONES. IT CAN SWALLOW AND DIGEST BONES THE SIZE OF A SHEEP'S LEG!



THIS IS AMANI.  
SHE IS A VETERINARY STUDENT  
WHO WORKS WITH CONSERVATION  
ORGANISATIONS, INCLUDING  
LENONG LODGE, TO SAVE  
VULTURES.

HELLO EVERYONE.  
I'VE BROUGHT SOME MAPS.  
WHAT THREATS HAVE YOU LEARNT  
SO FAR THAT AFFECT VULTURE  
SURVIVAL IN AFRICA?

THE USE OF  
VULTURE BODY PARTS IN TRADITIONAL  
MEDICINE!

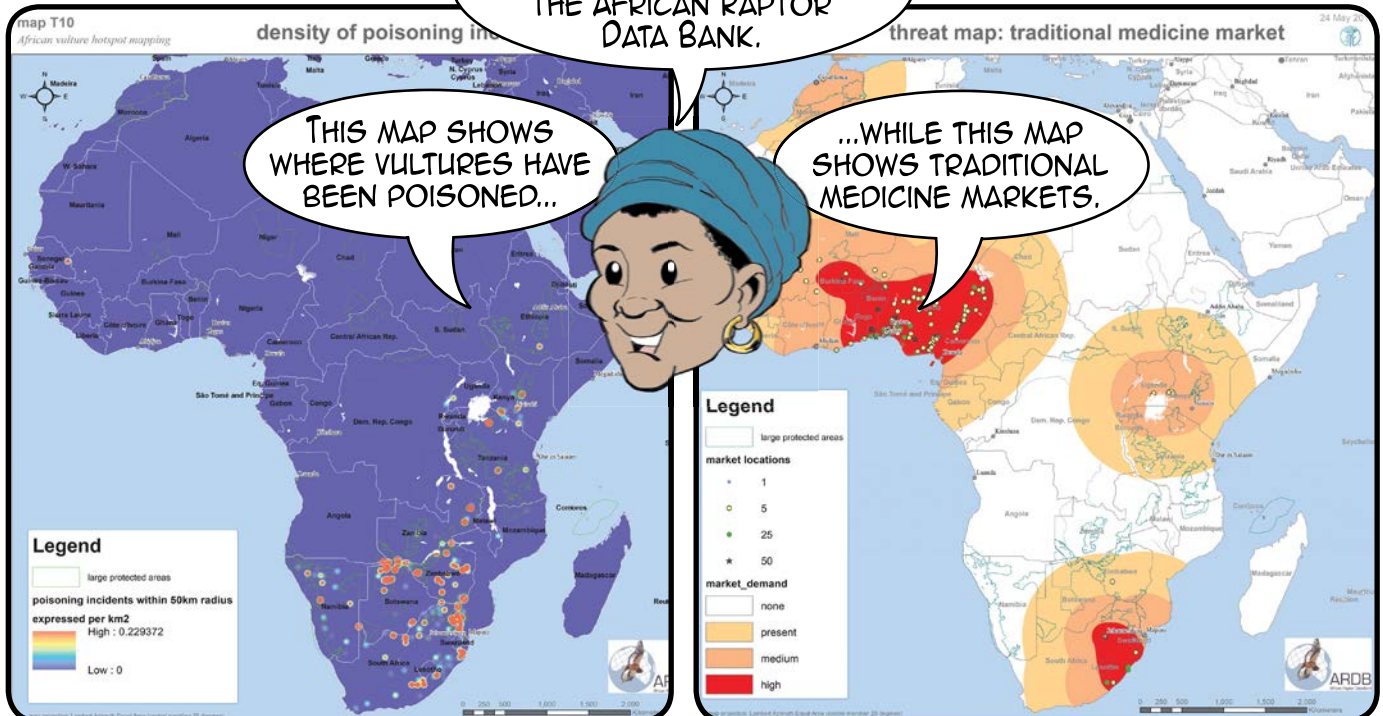
POISONING AND  
POACHING!

ELECTRICITY  
POLES AND WIND  
TURBINES!

HERE ARE TWO  
THREAT ANALYSIS MAPS FROM  
THE AFRICAN RAPTOR  
DATA BANK.

THIS MAP SHOWS  
WHERE VULTURES HAVE  
BEEN POISONED...

...WHILE THIS MAP  
SHOWS TRADITIONAL  
MEDICINE MARKETS.





## VULTURE RESCUE NPOs (Not for Profit Organisations) CONTACTS

THERE ARE MANY CONSERVATION GROUPS ACROSS AFRICA THAT WORK ON VULTURE PROTECTION. YOU CAN CALL THEM FOR HELP.

BUT BEFORE YOU CALL, YOU SHOULD KNOW WHAT TO DO IF YOU FIND AN INJURED BIRD.

**Injured Vulture Reporting**  
If you see a vulture, eagle, or other large bird that looks hurt or needs help, call the closest Vulture Rescue Team (you can find them on page 32)!  
**Some signs that a bird needs help:**  
The ground and can't fly up into the sky.  
The ground and not moving at all.  
In the water and can't stand up.  
Bling and falling down.

SEE PAGES  
31-33

### WHEN YOU SEE AN INJURED VULTURE

- | DO:   | DO NOT:   |
|---|---|
| <b>KEEP YOUR DISTANCE!</b><br>Make any visible injuries, behaviours, or potential hazards.          | <b>APPROACH CLOSELY!</b><br>Handling the vulture can lead to injury to yourself and the bird. |
| <b>APPROACH SAFELY!</b><br>Vultures have powerful beaks and sharp talons that can hurt you.         | <b>GIVE FOOD OR WATER!</b><br>This might alter the wrong food, or the bird might choke.       |
| <b>SECURE THE AREA!</b><br>Keep any and people away so they don't disturb the injured bird.         | <b>SCARE THE BIRD!</b><br>Loud noises can stress the bird, causing it to act aggressively.    |
| <b>TAKE PICTURES!</b><br>Take photos or video from a distance to help experts assess the situation. | <b>LEAVE THE BIRD!</b><br>If you're in a car, stay near the bird until help arrives.          |
| <b>NOTE LOCATION!</b><br>Look for landmarks that can guide rescuers to find the bird.               | <b>SHARE LOCATION!</b><br>Posting images on social media could attract unwanted attention.    |

SO, WHAT DO THESE CONSERVATION GROUPS ACTUALLY DO?

THEY RESCUE AND REHABILITATE SICK AND INJURED BIRDS, AS WELL AS EDUCATE PEOPLE ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF VULTURES.

WHEN THEY HAVE RECOVERED FROM THEIR INJURIES OR FROM POISONING, WE RELEASE THE VULTURES BACK INTO THE WILD.

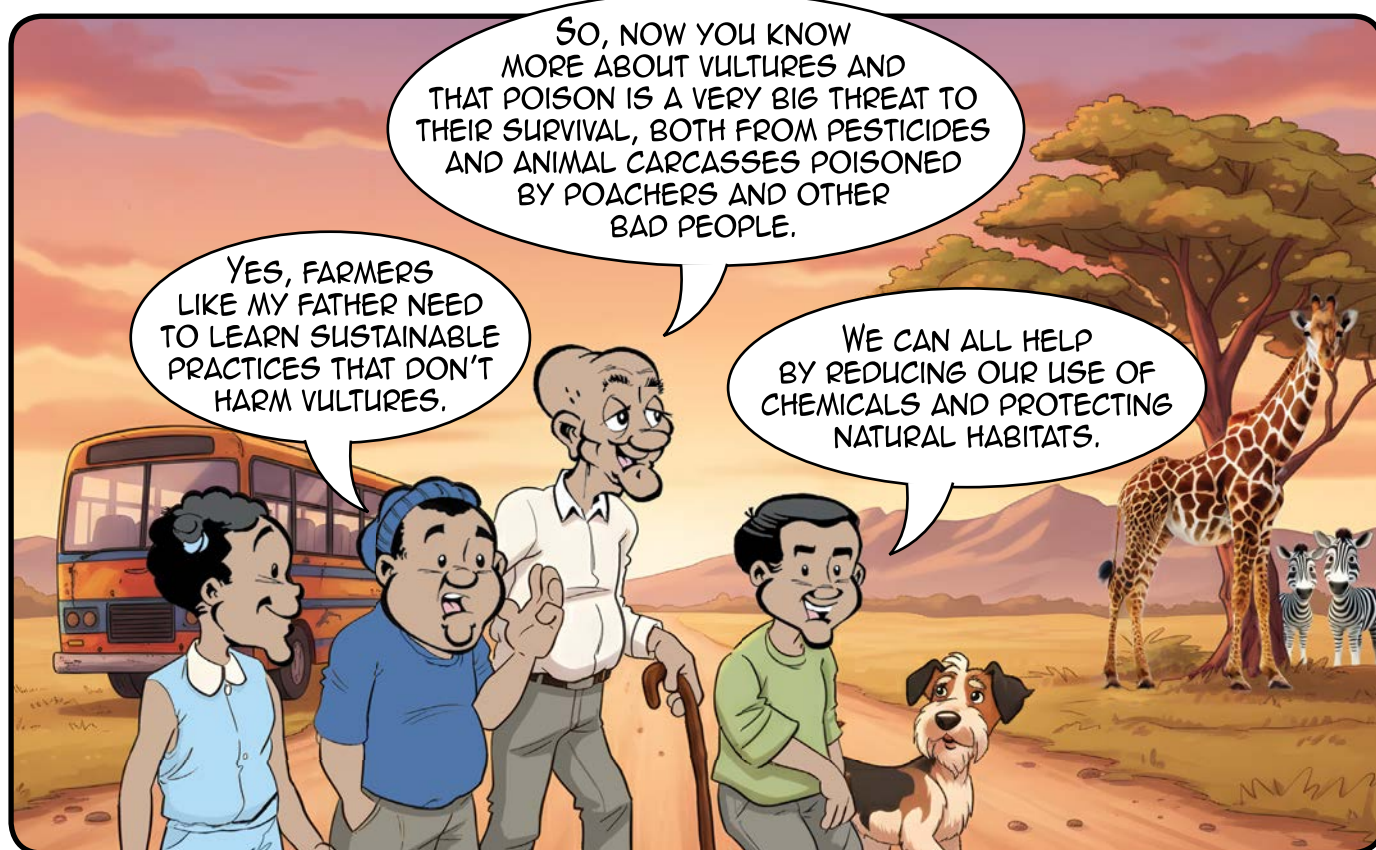
THANK YOU, AMANI. WE WILL SHARE THIS IMPORTANT INFORMATION WITH EVERYONE WHEN WE RETURN TO OUR VILLAGE.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

VULTURES NEST JUST ONCE A YEAR AND SOMETIMES NOT AT ALL.



Much later, a bus drops them off at their village. They are excited about all they have learnt from Enoch and Amani but still have questions.







**DID YOU KNOW?**

POACHERS WERE JAILED FOR 4 YEARS FOR POISONING 50 VULTURES IN GUINEA-BISSAU: THE COUNTRY'S 1ST ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME CONVICTION.





WE CAN ALL BE  
VULTURE GUARDIANS! WE CAN  
LEARN ABOUT VULTURES AND  
SHARE OUR KNOWLEDGE  
WITH OTHERS.

AND TELL YOUR  
PARENTS TO HELP STOP  
THE SALE OF POISONOUS  
CHEMICALS, AND TO REPORT  
POACHERS WHO POISON  
ANIMAL CARCASSES  
TO THE POLICE!

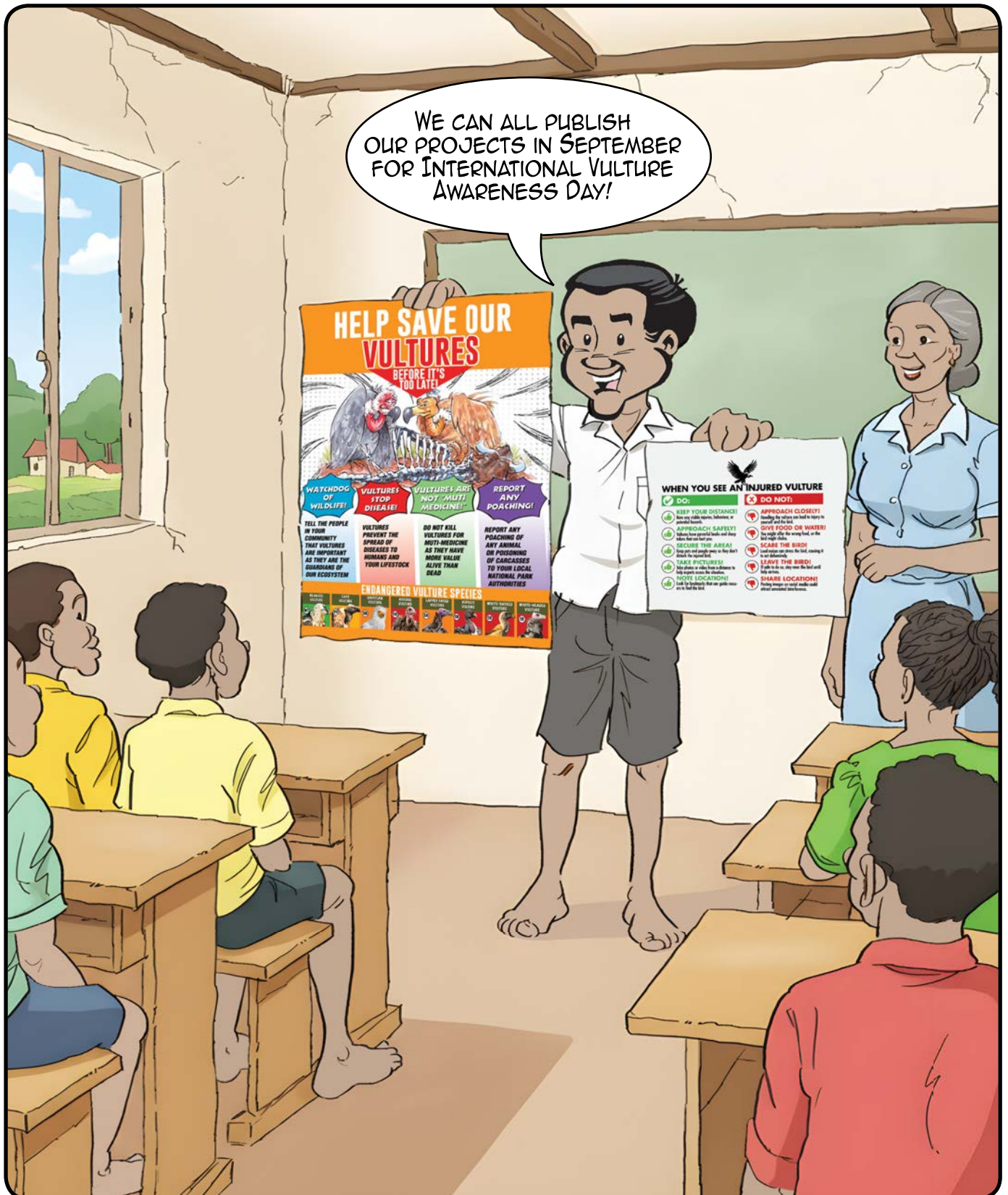


WE CAN ALSO  
HELP BY CLEANING UP LITTER,  
LOOKING AFTER OUR RIVERS,  
PLANTING INDIGENOUS TREES  
AND TELLING OUR FAMILIES  
ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE  
OF VULTURES.





Vusa worked on a school project about vultures. He wanted to teach everyone about the dangers they face and how we can help.



**DID YOU KNOW?**

THAT INTERNATIONAL VULTURE AWARENESS DAY HAPPENS ON THE FIRST SATURDAY IN SEPTEMBER EACH YEAR? [WWW.VULTUREDAY.ORG](http://WWW.VULTUREDAY.ORG)







# Know your Vultures!

THERE ARE 23 VULTURE SPECIES WORLDWIDE,  
11 IN AFRICA AND 8 IN SOUTHERN AFRICA.  
ONLY 3 OF THESE LIVE ONLY IN AFRICA.  
\*DO YOU KNOW WHICH 3?

SEE ANSWER AT BOTTOM OF PAGE.



## BEARDED VULTURE



**NT**

### OTHER NAMES

NTSU (Sotho), SEODI (Southern Sotho), UKHOZILWENT-SHEBE (Zulu), BAARDAAS-VOËL (Afrikaans), *Gypaetus barbatus* (Scientific Name).

### WINGSPAN



260 to 280 cm

### BODY LENGTH



110 cm

### WEIGHT

4 to 8 kg

### LIFESPAN

21 years



## CAPE VULTURE



**VU**

### OTHER NAMES

DISWAANE/LENÔNG (Tswana), IHLANGA (Xhosa), IDLANGALENTABA (Zulu), KRANSAASVOËL (Afrikaans), *Gyps Coprotheres* (Scientific Name).

### WINGSPAN



250 to 260 cm

### BODY LENGTH



100 to 120 cm

### WEIGHT

7 to 11 kg

### LIFESPAN

15 to 25 years



## EGYPTIAN VULTURE



**EN**

### OTHER NAMES

MPENYANI (Tsonga), INKQO (Xhosa), UPHALANE (Zulu), EGIPTIESE AASVOËL (Afrikaans), *Neophron percnopterus* (Scientific Name).

### WINGSPAN



160 to 170 cm

### BODY LENGTH



58 to 71 cm

### WEIGHT

1 to 2 kg

### LIFESPAN

21 to 37 years



## HOODED VULTURE



**CR**

### OTHER NAMES

KGONYAITO (Southern Sotho), MOTHLANKA-WAMANONG (Tswana), INQELINCANE (Zulu), MONNIKAASVOËL (Afrikaans), *Necrosyrtes monachus* (Scientific name).

### WINGSPAN



170 to 180 cm

### BODY LENGTH



65 to 75 cm

### WEIGHT

2 kg

### LIFESPAN

20 to 25 years

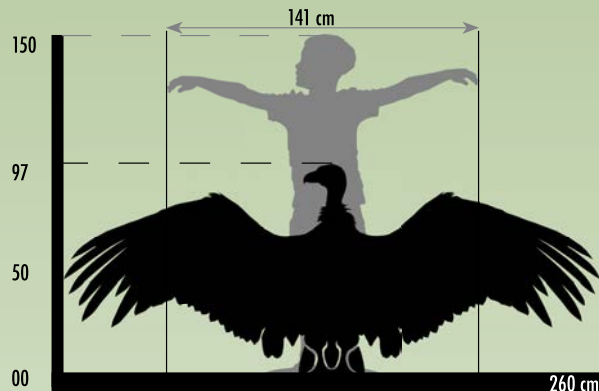




# Class Activity:

USE A TAPE MEASURE TO DRAW THE WINGSPAN OF EACH VULTURE SPECIES ON A WALL.

NOW STAND WITH ARMS OUTSTRETCHED TO SEE HOW YOU COMPARE TO THE VULTURE SIZE.



## LAPPET-FACED VULTURE

EN



### OTHER NAMES

BIBING/LENÔNG (Tswana), ISILWANGANGUBO (Xhosa), INDLANGAMANDLA (Zulu), SWARTAASVOËL (Afrikaans), *Torgos tracheliotos* (Scientific name).

### WINGSPAN



### BODY LENGTH



### WEIGHT

4 to 8 kg

### LIFESPAN

24 to 50 years



## RÜPPEL'S VULTURE

CR



### OTHER NAMES

LENONG LA MEBALABALA (Northern Sotho), RÜPPELSE AASVOËL (Afrikaans), *Gyps rueppelli* (Scientific name).

### WINGSPAN



### BODY LENGTH



### WEIGHT

7 to 9 kg

### LIFESPAN

40 to 50 years



## WHITE-BACKED VULTURE

CR



### OTHER NAMES

KOPAJAMMUTLA /LENONG (Tswana), LEAKA (Southern Sotho), INQELEHLANZE (Zulu), WITRUGAASVOËL (Afrikaans), *Gyps africanus* (Scientific Name).

### WINGSPAN



### BODY LENGTH



### WEIGHT

4 to 7 kg

### LIFESPAN

40 to 50 years



## WHITE-HEADED VULTURE

CR



### OTHER NAMES

LENONG LA HLOGOŠWEU (Sotho), NKOTIMPENYANA (Tsonga), UKHANDELIMHLO-PHE (Zulu), WITKOPAASVOËL (Afrikaans), *Trigonoceps occipitalis* (Scientific name).

### WINGSPAN



### BODY LENGTH



### WEIGHT

3 to 5 kg

### LIFESPAN

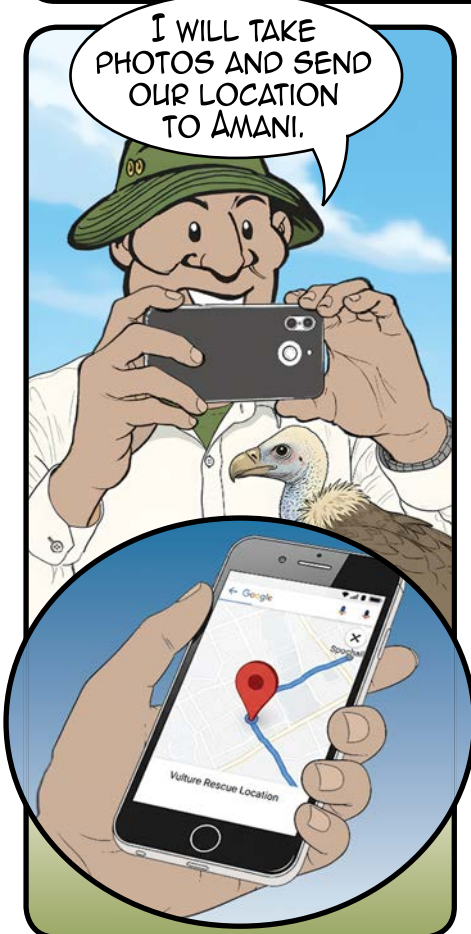
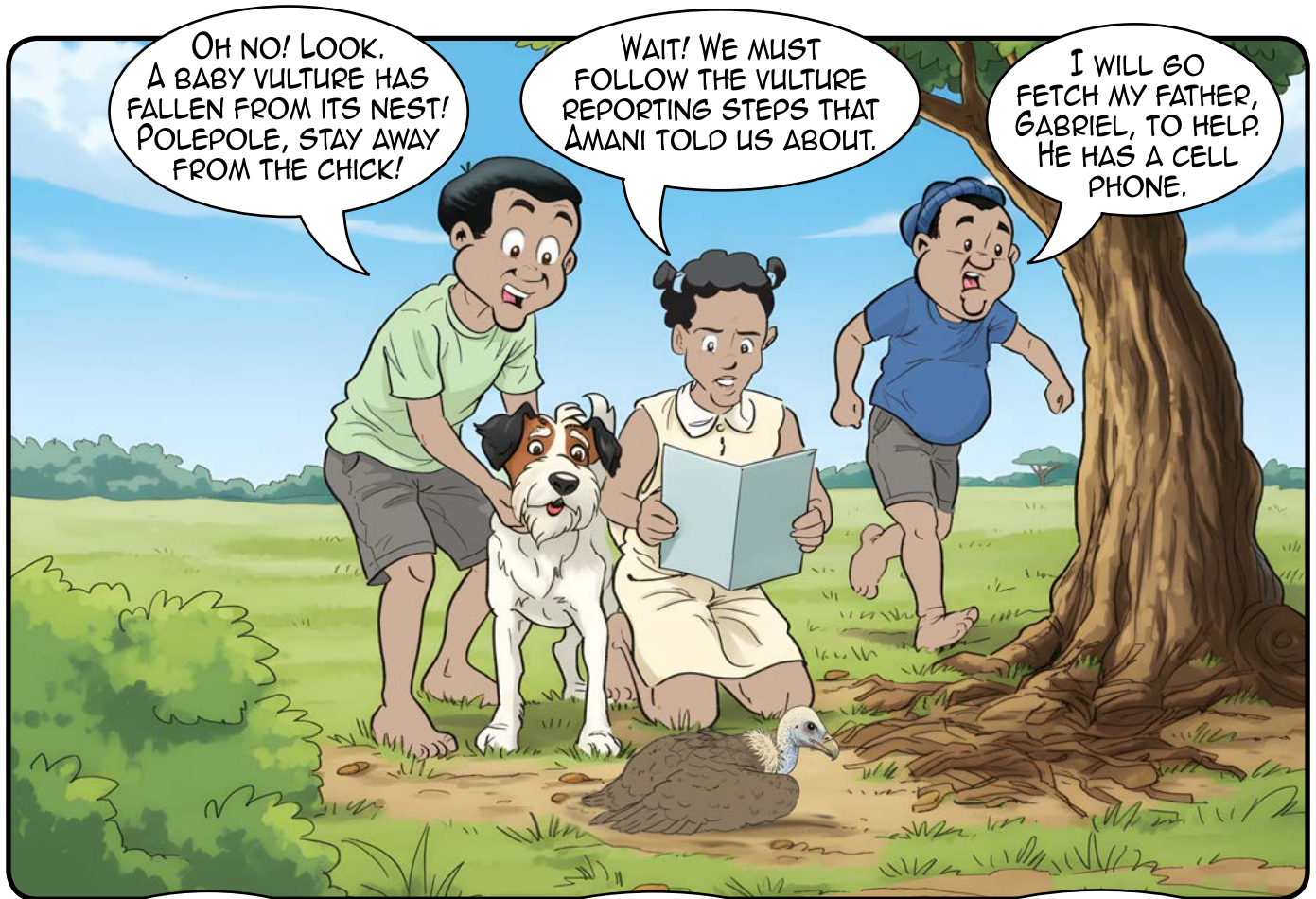
20 years



WHICH MEANS THEY ARE FOUND ONLY IN AFRICA. OF THE 11 VULTURE SPECIES IN AFRICA, NEVER SEEN ALIVE IN THE WILD AGAIN!. VULTURE GUARDIANS CAN HELP TO SAVE THEM! (VERY FEW LEFT). **VU** VULNERABLE (A FEW LEFT). **NT** NEAR THREATENED (SOME LEFT).









A short while later, Amani and the children arrive at the Umusa Rehabilitation Centre where the chick is inspected.



**DID YOU KNOW?**

VULTURE CHICKS ARE FED BY BOTH PARENTS UNTIL THEY ARE 5-6 MONTHS OLD. 'HABITUATED' IS WHEN ANIMALS BECOME TOO USED TO HUMANS.





Vusa and his friends watched one of the older and previously rescued vultures being released. They were so happy to see that the efforts made by Amani, and other good people like her, were making a difference in saving our vultures.





VULTURES USE THERMALS, WHICH ARE RISING CURRENTS OF WARM AIR, TO HELP THEM GAIN HEIGHT AND SOAR VERY HIGH, FROM WHERE THEY CAN USE THEIR EYESIGHT TO FIND DEAD ANIMALS ON WHICH TO FEED.



**DID YOU KNOW?**

VULTURES CAN EASILY FLY MORE THAN 200 KILOMETRES A DAY AND COVER NEARLY 1000 KILOMETRES IN A WEEK.





# Vinny Vulture's Life

## Egg

About 2 Months

VINNY'S LIFE STARTS WITH A BIG, WHITE EGG, IN A NEST HIGH UP ON A TREE.

THERE'S ALWAYS ONLY ONE EGG AND IT CAN FALL OUT OF THE NEST AND BREAK.



**DANGER!**

ANIMALS AND PEOPLE MIGHT STEAL THE EGG AND IF TREES ARE CHOPPED DOWN VINNY'S PARENTS WOULD HAVE NOWHERE TO BUILD THEIR NEST.

## Fledgling

About 5 to 6 Months

WHEN VINNY THE BABY VULTURE HATCHES, HE'S CALLED A NESTLING OR CHICK AND LATER A FLEDGLING.

HE STAYS IN THE NEST BEING FED BY BOTH PARENTS.



**DANGER!**

A STRONG WIND CAN BLOW VINNY OUT OF THE NEST OR HIS PARENTS COULD BE POISONED LEAVING POOR VINNY TO STARVE.

AND SO, VINNY GOES FROM A TINY EGG TO A BIG, STRONG VULTURE, BUT HE FACES DAN



# vetime Adventure

## Juvenile Up to 4 Years

VINNY VULTURE GROWS BIGGER AND  
LEARNS HOW TO FLY!

HE THEN LEARNS HOW TO FIND  
FOOD ON HIS OWN.

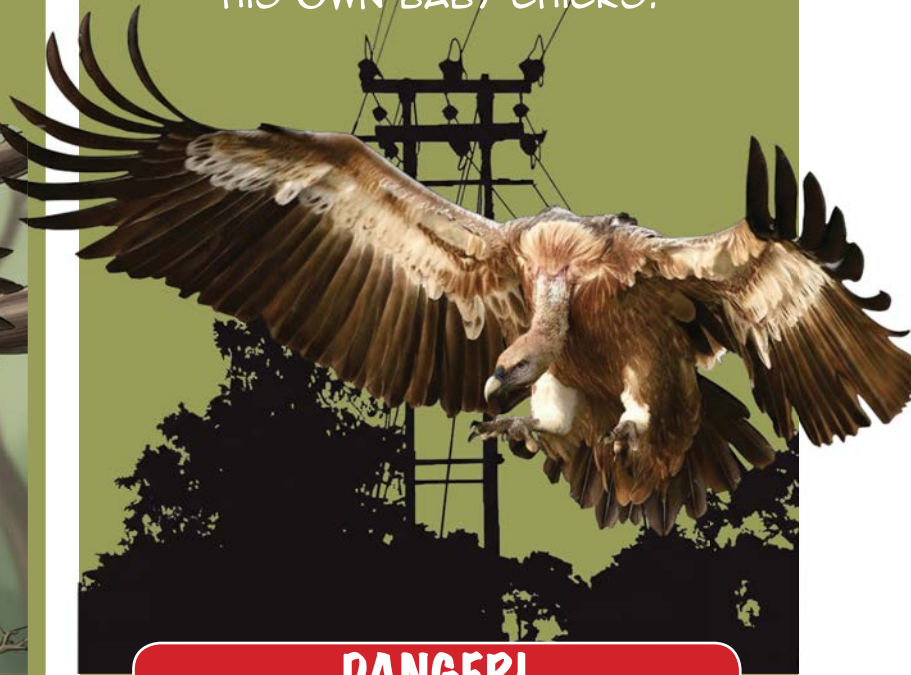


**DANGER!**

FLYING NEAR BUSY ROADS CAN BE  
DANGEROUS! HE MIGHT FLY INTO  
POWER LINES OR WIND TURBINES  
AND BE KILLED.

## Adult 5 to 25+ Years

NOW VINNY THE VULTURE IS ALL  
GROWN UP! HE CAN FIND FOOD  
EASILY AND MIGHT EVEN HAVE  
HIS OWN BABY CHICKS.



**DANGER!**

BUT EVEN GROWN-UP VULTURES  
CAN FACE DANGERS.  
BESIDES GETTING HURT FLYING INTO  
POWER LINES OR WIND TURBINES,  
BAD PEOPLE COULD LEAVE OUT  
POISONED MEAT THAT THE  
VULTURES MIGHT EAT!



GER ALL ALONG THE WAY! GETTING OLD IS NOT THAT EASY ANYMORE FOR A VULTURE!



## QUIZ ACTIVITY

# Circle the correct answers!

ONLY ONE OF THE 3 (A,B,C) ANSWERS IN THE PANELS BELOW IS THE CORRECT ONE. CIRCLE THE ONE THAT YOU THINK IS CORRECT. THEN CHECK YOUR ANSWERS BY TURNING THIS PAGE UPSIDE DOWN.

1 How many vulture species are there?

- A. 9
- B. 18
- C. 23

2 How many species come to Africa?

- A. 3
- B. 9
- C. 23

3 Which one is found only in Africa?

- A. Cape Vulture
- B. Vinny Vulture
- C. Woolly Vulture

4 Which has the longest wingspan?

- A. Rüppell's
- B. White-backed
- C. Lappet-faced

5 What threats affect vulture survival?

- A. Choking
- B. Poisoning
- C. Bullying

6 Which metal poisons vultures?

- A. Lead
- B. Iron
- C. Tin

7 What do vultures like eating?

- A. Hamburgers
- B. Fish
- C. Carrion

8 Where do Cape vultures nest?

- A. Chimneys
- B. Cliffs
- C. Poles

9 Vultures are known as:

- A. Herbivores
- B. Frugivores
- C. Scavengers

10 A guardian is a:

- A. Protector
- B. Lizard
- C. Teddy Bear

11 A baby vulture is called:

- A. An ankle biter
- B. A fledgling
- C. An adult

12 Vulture stomach acids can kill:

- A. Bacteria
- B. People
- C. Spirits

13 Which species can eat carcass bones?

- A. Hooded Vulture
- B. White-headed Vulture
- C. Bearded Vulture

14 What do Vultures Symbolise?

- A. Bad Luck
- B. Good Luck
- C. Tough Luck

15 Vultures are classified as:

- A. Rodents
- B. Mammals
- C. Avians

16 Vulture Awareness Day is on a:

- A. Saturday
- B. Wednesday
- C. Friday

17 Vultures see better than people by:

- A. 2 times
- B. 8 times
- C. 100 times

18 Vultures can see dead animals from:

- A. 5m away
- B. 100m away
- C. 1km away

Answers: 1 C 2 B 3 A 4 C 5 B 6 A 7 C 8 B 9 C 10 A 11 B 12 A 13 C 14 B 15 C 16 A 17 B 18 C

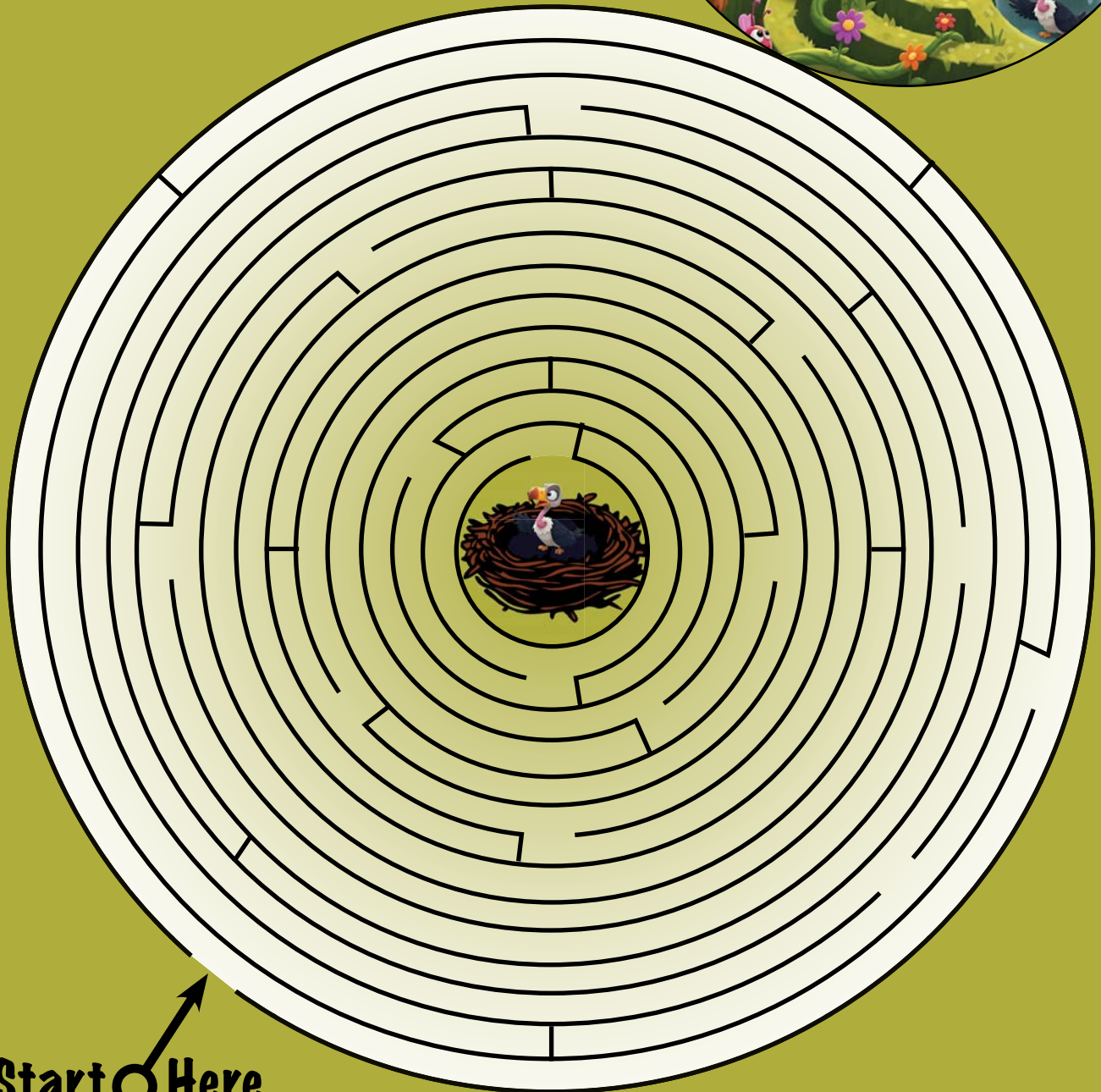




## MAZE ACTIVITY

# Help the vulture Mom to find her Fledgling

MOM VULTURE HAS BEEN FLYING IN CIRCLES TRYING TO FIND HER NEST. USE A CRAYON OR PENCIL TO HELP HER FIND A WAY THROUGH THE MAZE TO HER FLEDGLING IN THE NEST.



Start Here



### DID YOU KNOW?

VULTURES ARE VERY SMART. THEY FOLLOW OTHER ANIMALS TO LEAD THEM TO A DELICIOUS DINNER.





# CROSSWORD ACTIVITY

## Down

- 1 Some bad stuff that vultures eat can be like a \_\_\_\_\_ and make them sick (6 letters)
- 2 A word used to classify all birds that lay eggs (5 letters)
- 3 Vultures are a type of \_\_\_\_\_ (4 letters)
- 6 Vultures have a very good sense of \_\_\_\_\_ to find food (5 letters)
- 7 The measurement a vulture's wings (8 letters)
- 8 What vultures do in the sky (4 letters)

## Across

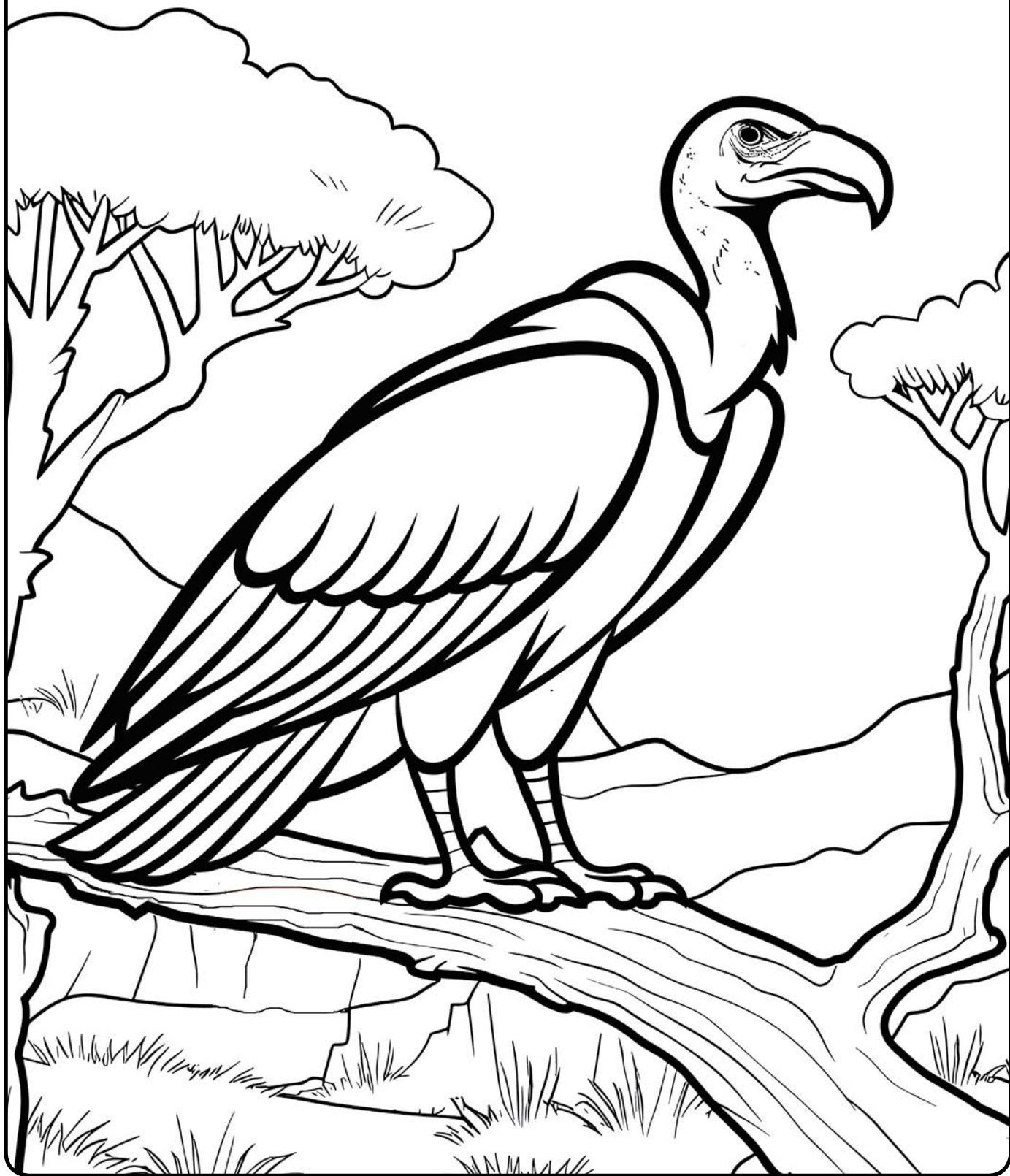
- 2 Vultures like to eat this (5 letters)
- 4 The name of the veterinary student who works to save vultures (5 letters)
- 5 Sometimes vultures get hurt by these tall \_\_\_\_\_ with electric wires (5 letters)
- 7 Vultures have big \_\_\_\_\_ to help them fly (5 letters)
- 9 When hunters shoot animals, small pieces of this metal can make vultures sick when they eat it (4 letters)
- 10 Thandi says that some agricultural poisons should be \_\_\_\_\_ (6 letters)



Answers on page 34







**DID YOU KNOW?**

VULTURES ARE LARGELY SILENT. THEIR NOISES ARE MOSTLY LIMITED TO HISSES AND SNARLS, PARTICULARLY AROUND A CARCASS.



## JOIN THE DOTS ACTIVITY

CONNECT THE DOTS TO REVEAL A HIDDEN VULTURE ILLUSTRATION. THEN COLOUR THE INSIDE BLACK TO MAKE A VULTURE SILHOUETTE (A SILHOUETTE IS A DRAWING THAT SHOWS ONLY THE SHAPE AGAINST A BRIGHT BACKGROUND).





## Injured Vulture Reporting

If you see a vulture, eagle, or other large bird that looks hurt or needs help, call the closest Vulture Rescue Team (you can find them on pages 32 and 33)!

### Some signs that a bird needs help:

- It is limping on the ground and can't fly up into the sky.
- It is lying on the ground and not moving at all.
  - It is stuck in water and can't stand up.
  - It is stumbling and falling down.

Every single bird you can save is important to the survival of our essential and endangered vultures!



## WHEN YOU SEE AN INJURED VULTURE



### DO:



#### KEEP YOUR DISTANCE!

Note any visible injuries, behaviour, or potential hazards.



#### APPROACH SAFELY!

Vultures have powerful beaks and sharp talons that can hurt you.



#### SECURE THE AREA!

Keep pets and people away so they don't disturb the injured bird.



#### TAKE PICTURES!

Take photos or video from a distance to help experts assess the situation.



#### NOTE LOCATION!

Look for landmarks that can guide rescuers to find the bird.



### DO NOT:



#### APPROACH CLOSELY!

Handling the vulture can lead to injury to yourself and the bird.



#### GIVE FOOD OR WATER!

You might offer the wrong food, or the bird might choke.



#### SCARE THE BIRD!

Loud noises can stress the bird, causing it to act defensively.



#### LEAVE THE BIRD!

If safe to do so, stay near the bird until help arrives.



#### SHARE LOCATION!

Posting images on social media could attract unwanted interference.



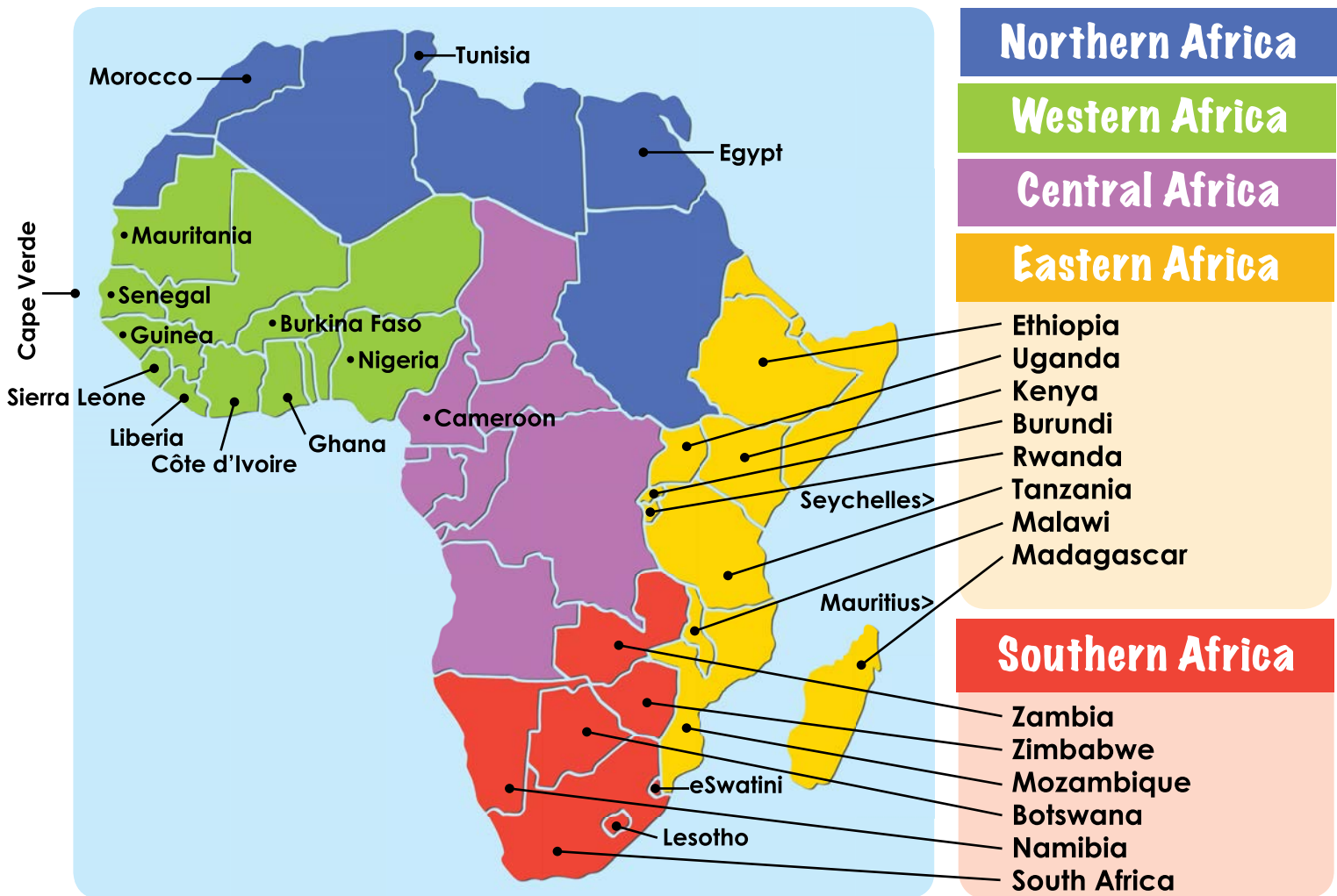
### DID YOU KNOW?

IN FLIGHT, A GROUP OF VULTURES IS A KETTLE AND WHEN FEEDING AT A CARCASS, THE GROUP IS REFERRED TO AS A WAKE.





# VULTURE RESCUE NPOs (Not for



## South Africa

**BirdLife SA**  
+27 11 789 1122

**EWT**  
Johannesburg: +27 11 372 3600  
Cape Town: +27 21 799 8800  
Howick: +27 33 330 6982

**HAART / Umoya Khulula**  
(Limpopo)  
+27 60 621 2038  
+27 93 272 3220

**Moholoholo** (Hoedspruit)  
+27 15 795 5236  
+27 82 907 5984

**Project Vulture (ACT)**  
(KwaZulu-Natal)  
+27 72 086 4445

**Provet Wildlife Services**  
(Hoedspruit)  
+27 15 793 0797

**VulPro**  
+27 82 254 3020  
+27 82 808 5113  
+27 82 254 4162

**Wildlife ACT**  
(KwaZulu-Natal)  
+27 87 806 3293



## Botswana

**BirdLife BW**  
+267 (0) 319 0540

**Raptors BW (KRC)**  
+267 73 839 370

**CARACAL**  
+267 625 2392

**Connect Trust**  
+267 74 808 516



**Abbreviations:** EWT (Endangered Wildlife Trust), NARREC (Namibia Animal Rehabilitation Research & Education Centre), NNF (Namibia Nature Foundation), REST (Rare & Endangered Species Trust),



# Profit Organisations) CONTACTS

## Morocco

**GREPOM/BirdLife**  
+212 053 784 7663

## Tunisia

**TAW**  
+216 5 353 2798

## Egypt

**NCE**  
+20 23 346 5668

## Mauritania

**Nature MY**  
+222 4 642 1084

## Senegal

**NCD**  
+221 33 833 0578

## Cape Verde

**Biosfera**  
+238 231 7929

## Burkina Faso

**Naturama**  
+226 5 126 6429

## Guinea

**Ecologie**  
+224 62 742 8727

## Sierra Leone

**CSSL**  
+232 7 507 8832

## Liberia

**NCSL**  
+231 88 657 3612

## Côte d'Ivoire

**SOS-Forets**  
+225 074 863 2857

## Ghana

**GWS**  
+233 30 266 5197

## Nigeria

**NCF**  
+234 903 489 5750

## Ethiopia

**EWNHS**  
+251 11 663 6792

## Uganda

**Nature UG**  
+256 41 454 0719

## Kenya

**NatureKenya**  
+254 77 134 3138

## Burundi

**ABN**  
+257 2 224 9471

## Rwanda

**Nature RW**  
+250 78 877 3177

## Tanzania

**Nature TZ**  
+255 68 911 1313

## Malawi

**WESM**  
+265 21 284 3502

## Madagascar

**Asity**  
+261 33 155 3607

## Mauritius

**MWF**  
+230 697 6097

## Seychelles

**Nature SY**  
+248 251 9090

## Cameroon

**CWCI**  
+237 67 524 7151



## Mozambique

**WCS Mozambique**  
+ 258 21 496 965



## Namibia

**REST**  
+264 81 373 8959

## NARREC

+264 126 4409

## NNF

+264 61 248 345



## Zambia

**BirdWatch ZW**  
+260 97 911 4065



## Zimbabwe

**BirdLife ZM**  
+263 24 248 1496

**Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust**  
+263 782 799 006

**Free to be Wild Sanctuary**  
+263 775 545 546

**Abbreviations:** **ABN** (Association Burundaise pour la protection de la Nature), **CSSL** (The Conservation Society of Sierra Leone), **CWCI** (Cameroon Wildlife Conservation Initiative), **EWNHS** (Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society), **GWS** (Ghana Wildlife Society), **MWF** (Mauritian Wildlife Foundation), **NCD** (Nature Communauté et Développement-Senegal), **NCF** (Nigeria Conservation Foundation), **TAW** (Tunisian Association for Wildlife), **WESM** (Wildlife & Environmental Society of Malawi), **WCS** (Wildlife Conservation Society),





## Glossary (Word Meanings)

<b>Airborne</b>	Being in the air or off the ground.
<b>Agrochemical</b>	A chemical product used in farming.
<b>Agriculture</b>	The science or practice of farming, including cultivation of the soil for the growing of crops and the rearing of animals.
<b>Ancestors</b>	People from the past, like great-grandparents, from whom you are descended.
<b>Awareness</b>	Knowledge of a situation or fact.
<b>Bacteria</b>	A large group of single-celled living organisms, many of which cause disease.
<b>Beneficial</b>	Producing good or helpful results or effects.
<b>Carcass</b>	The dead body of an animal.
<b>Chemical</b>	Any substance that is made up of the same "stuff." Some chemicals occur in nature, such as water, while others are manufactured, such as fertiliser.
<b>Collision</b>	Coming violently into contact; crash.
<b>Conservation</b>	Preventing plant and animal species from being lost, wasted, damaged, or destroyed.
<b>Critical</b>	Very important.
<b>Deforestation</b>	The action of clearing, or chopping down, a wide area of trees.
<b>Digestion</b>	The process of chemically changing food in the stomach into a form of energy.
<b>Disposal</b>	Getting rid of something, or throwing it away.
<b>Ecosystem</b>	A large community of living things, like plants, animals and microbes, in a particular area.
<b>Economic</b>	The production, distribution, and use of money or goods in a sustainable way.
<b>Endangered</b>	A plant or animal species that may become extinct.
<b>Endemic</b>	Belonging to a local area or region and found nowhere else on earth.
<b>Expansion</b>	The act of increasing (something) in size.
<b>Extinct</b>	The disappearance of a species from earth.
<b>Fulfil</b>	If you fulfil something such as a promise, dream, or hope, you do what you said or hoped you would do.
<b>Guardian</b>	A person who defends and protects something.
<b>Habitat</b>	The natural home of an animal, plant, or other organism.
<b>Incubate</b>	To keep eggs warm, often by sitting on them, to allow the embryo inside to develop until it hatches.
<b>IUCN</b>	The International Union for Conservation of Nature is an international organisation working towards the sustainable use of natural resources.
<b>Location</b>	The exact position of a place.
<b>Organism</b>	Any living thing (person, plant, or animal) that carries on the activities of life by means of organs which have separate functions but are dependent on each other.
<b>Occur</b>	This word has three meanings. It means "to be found or met with; appear," or "to come into existence; happen," or "to come to mind".
<b>Olfactory</b>	Having to do with the sense of smell.
<b>Organophosphate</b>	A chemical compound used in herbicides, pesticides, and insecticides.
<b>Primary</b>	Something that stands first in rank, importance, or value.

<b>Pesticide</b>	A chemical used to control or kill pests. Pests can be weeds, insects, rodents, or bacteria.
<b>Predator</b>	An animal that hunts and eats another animal for food and, ultimately, energy.
<b>Pylon</b>	A large vertical steel tower supporting high-tension power lines.
<b>Raptor</b>	A type of bird that hunts live prey. Eagles, hawks, kites, falcons, and owls are all raptors. Vultures are similar except that they eat dead animals.
<b>Reservoir</b>	A large man-made body of water.
<b>Revenge</b>	Punishing something that has hurt or harmed you.
<b>Ritual</b>	A type of behavior or action that is different from everyday life. Each person has a ritual, and they do it for their beliefs or traditions.
<b>Scavenging</b>	The action of animals that search for carcasses that have died from natural causes or have been killed by other predators.
<b>Secondary</b>	The opposite of primary, which is done first, secondary is the second most important thing.
<b>Species</b>	A group of similar living things. This is part of how scientists compare living things.
<b>Stronghold</b>	A place or belief that is strongly defended.
<b>Sustainable</b>	A social goal for people to co-exist on Earth over a long period of time.
<b>Thermal</b>	Rising column of warm air, created when the sun heats the Earth's surface unevenly. These updrafts are used by vultures to gain height without flapping their wings.
<b>Threat</b>	The possibility of harm, danger, or pain.
<b>Tibetan</b>	Someone who lives in Tibet, an area of Asia.
<b>Transmitting</b>	To send or carry from one place to another.
<b>Unintended</b>	Doing something without planning to do it.
<b>Unique</b>	If something is unique, it's the only one around.
<b>Value</b>	How much something is worth.
<b>Victim</b>	Someone or something that has been hurt.
<b>Wind turbine</b>	Tall towers topped with blades, like aeroplane propellers, used for making electricity.
<b>Wingspan</b>	The distance between the tips of a pair of wings (of a bird or an airplane).

### Crossword Solution



### DID YOU KNOW?

BIRDS ARE CLASSIFIED AS AVIANS, NOT MAMMALS, BECAUSE THEY HAVE FEATHERS, BEAKS, LIGHTWEIGHT SKELETONS AND LAY HARD EGGS.



## Note from the Chairman

The purpose of this educational comic book, Vusa the Vulture Guardian, is to bring the importance of this endangered species to the attention of children living in communities where vultures occur. Living alongside vultures requires an appreciation of their vital role in our ecosystem as nature's clean-up crews, preventing the spread of disease and thereby benefitting communities throughout the African continent. This new revised edition aims to raise awareness of the many threats faced by vultures today, to explore solutions designed to tackle these threats and to foster appreciation of these often misunderstood birds. It has been a great privilege to work in collaboration with Dr Gareth Tate, Programme Manager at The Endangered Wildlife Trust and specialist in vulture conservation in southern Africa and his expert team of vulture researchers. Their assistance in interpreting the scientific data surrounding these special creatures and their invaluable guidance to our creative team enabled us to produce this amazing and detailed educational publication. I would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to our incredible sponsors, Briandez Legacy Trust (Australia) for their sponsorship of this publication and also for the many hours of personal input on its contents. I am sure conservationists everywhere will thank you for your generosity and foresight in making the illustration, printing and distribution of this comic possible. And finally, to our SACT creative team, a huge thank you for your dedicated input. A job well done!

### Brian Courtenay

Chairperson, Southern African Conservation Trust

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## Note from Briandez Legacy Trust

We are privileged to be involved with this wonderful SACT educational publication, which endeavours to highlight the extreme threat to the survival of Africa's Vultures. The young people of Africa need to take ownership of the problem and work together to reverse the ever increasing death rates of these incredible birds.

Website: [www.briandez.org](http://www.briandez.org)

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A PUBLICATION OF



WILDLIFE & COMMUNITIES

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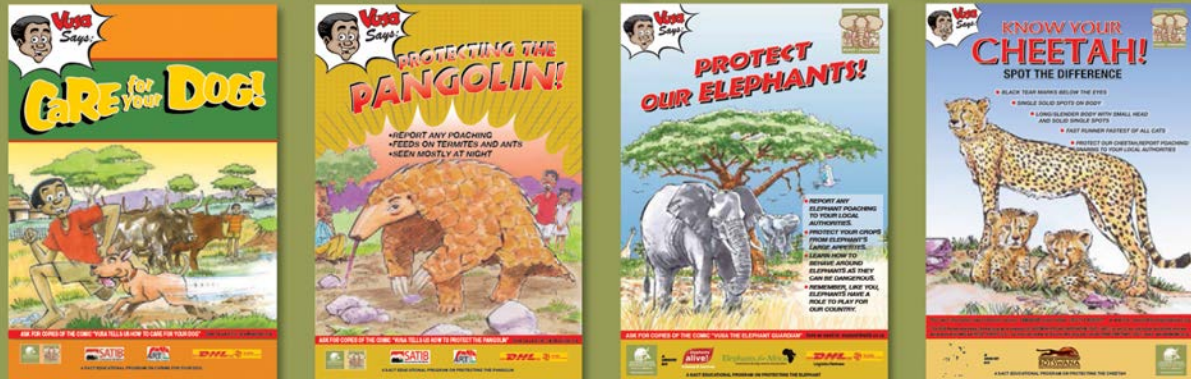


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For more information on SACT's range of educational publications,  
please contact Brian Courtenay: [elephant@satib.co.za](mailto:elephant@satib.co.za). Thank you.