

SACT EDUCATIONAL COMIC BOOK ON THE PLIGHT OF VULTURES

Musa 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.

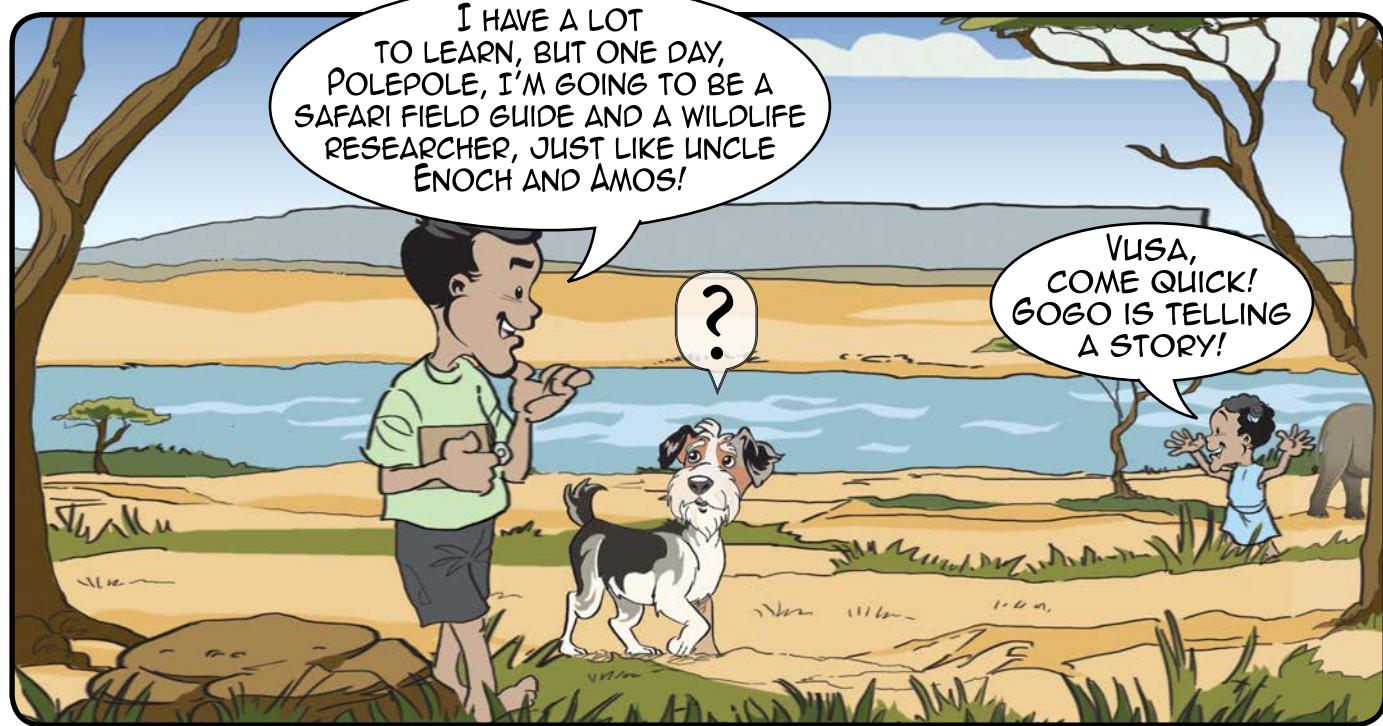
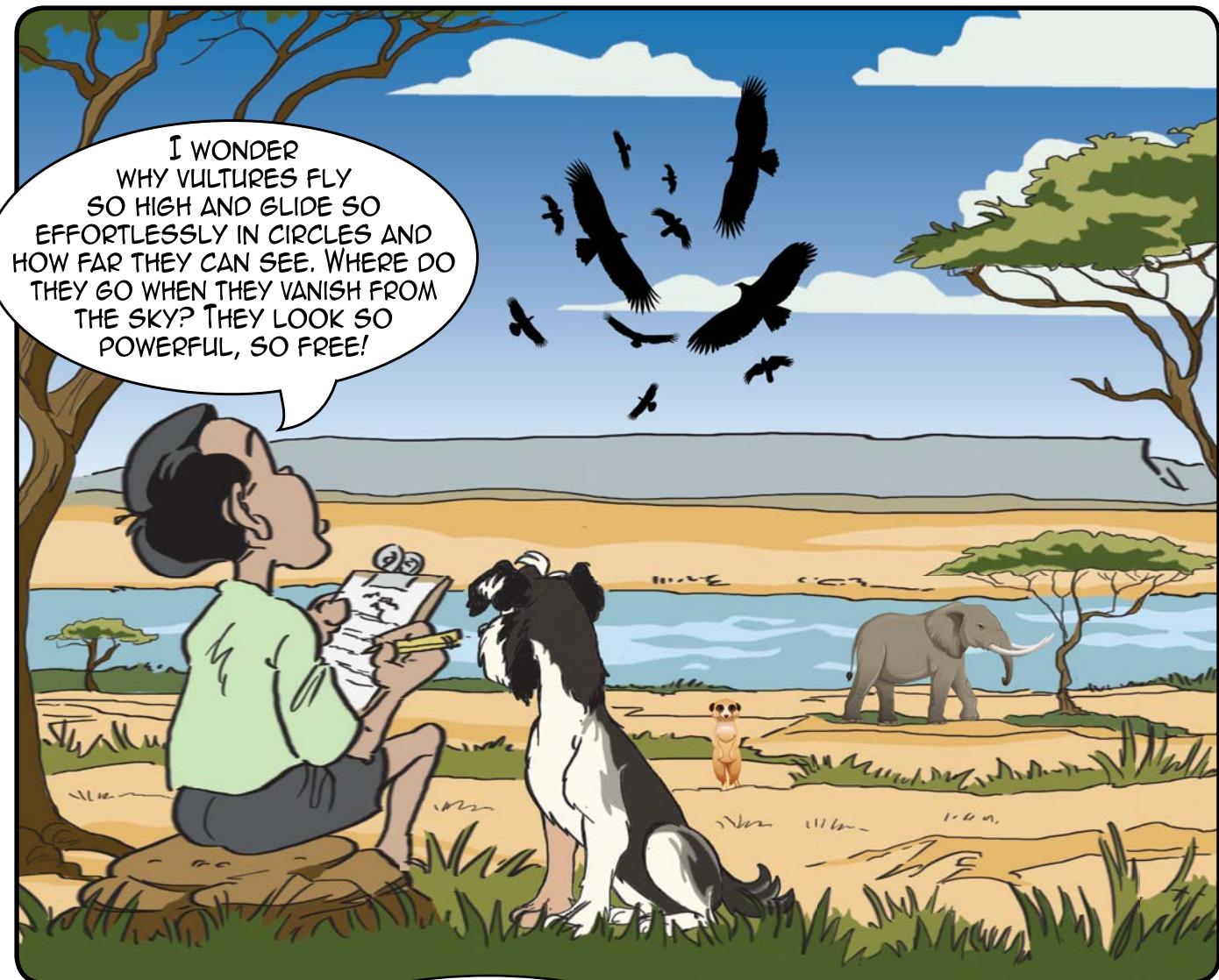
YOU

Draw or paste a picture yourself here.

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

Write your name below:





04



DID YOU KNOW?

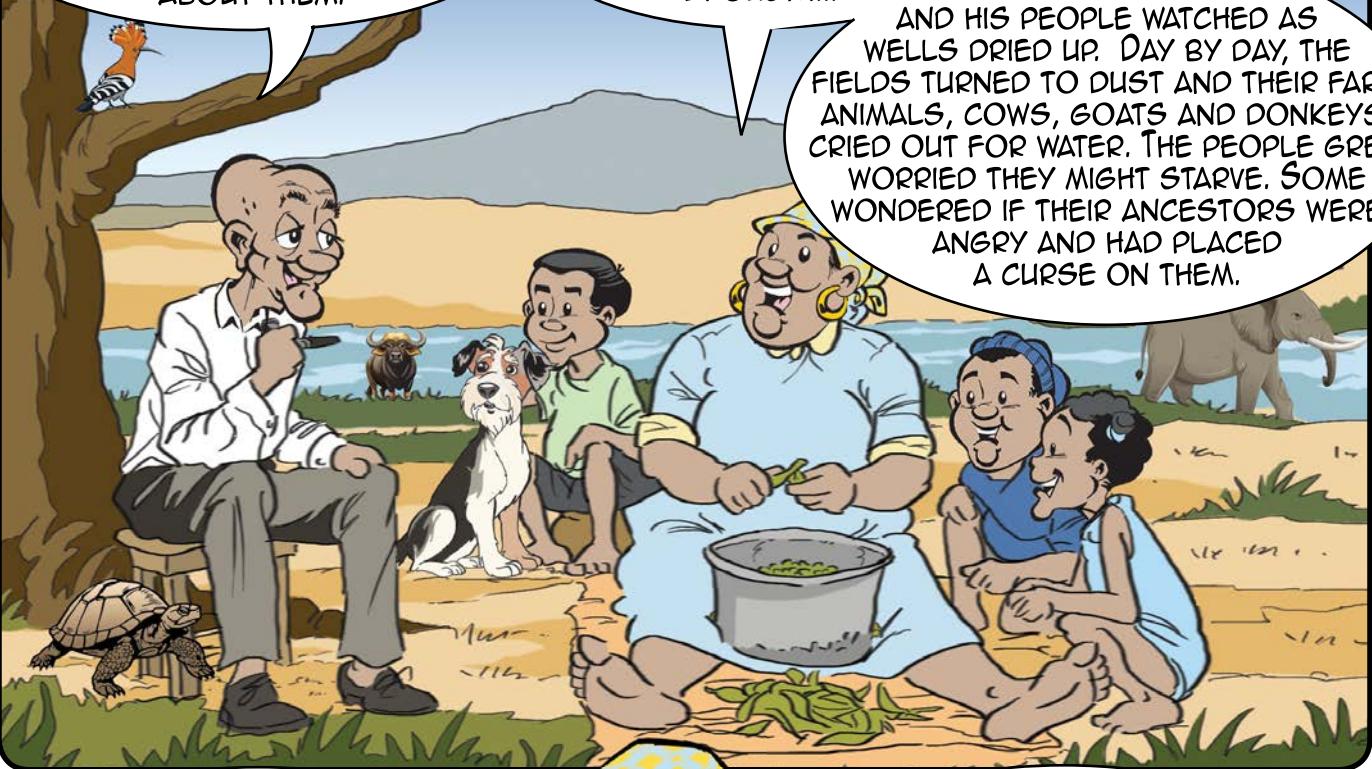
VULTURES CAN SEE 8 TIMES BETTER THAN PEOPLE. THEY CAN CLEARLY SEE A DEAD ANIMAL FROM A HEIGHT OF ONE KM!

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,
CRYED 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 ELTERS 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.

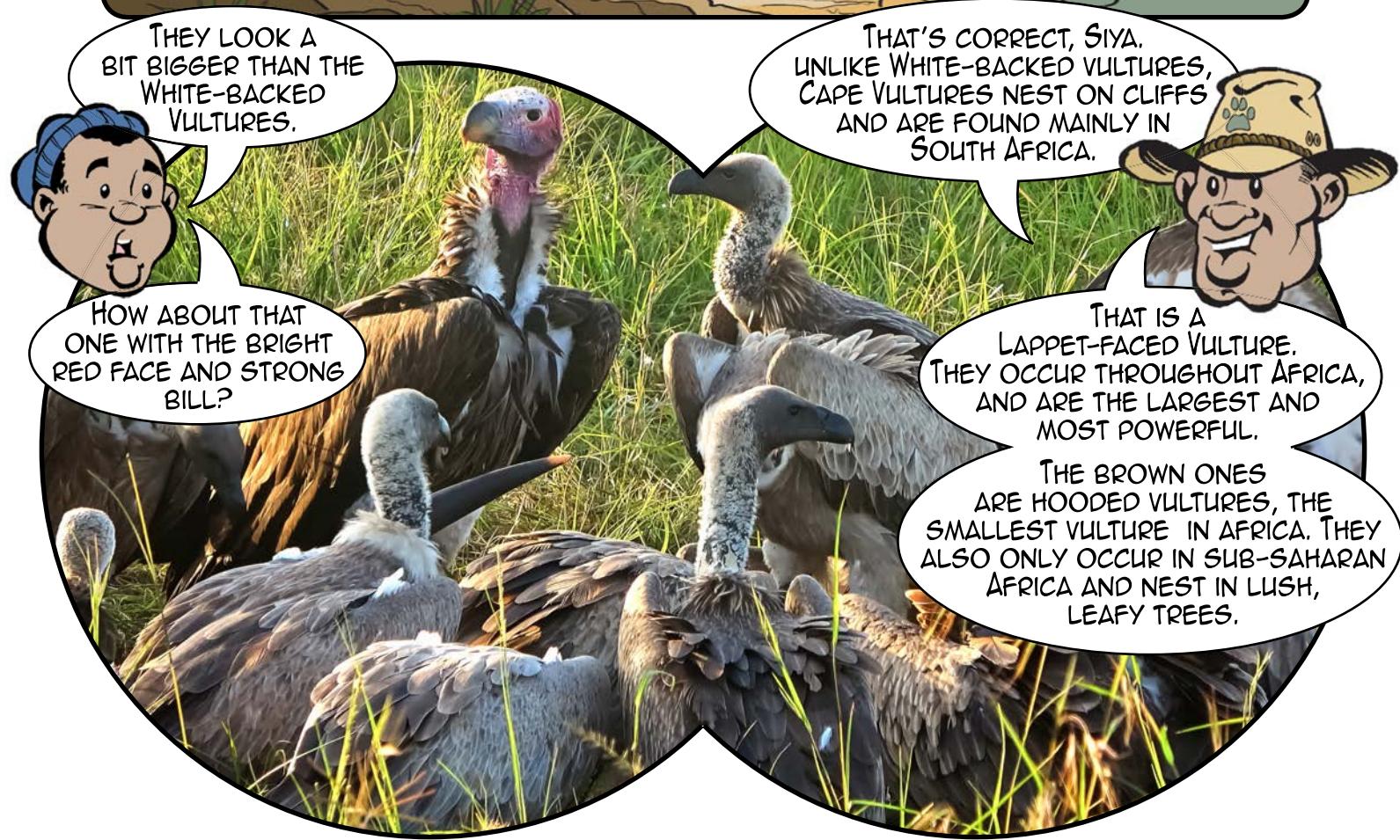
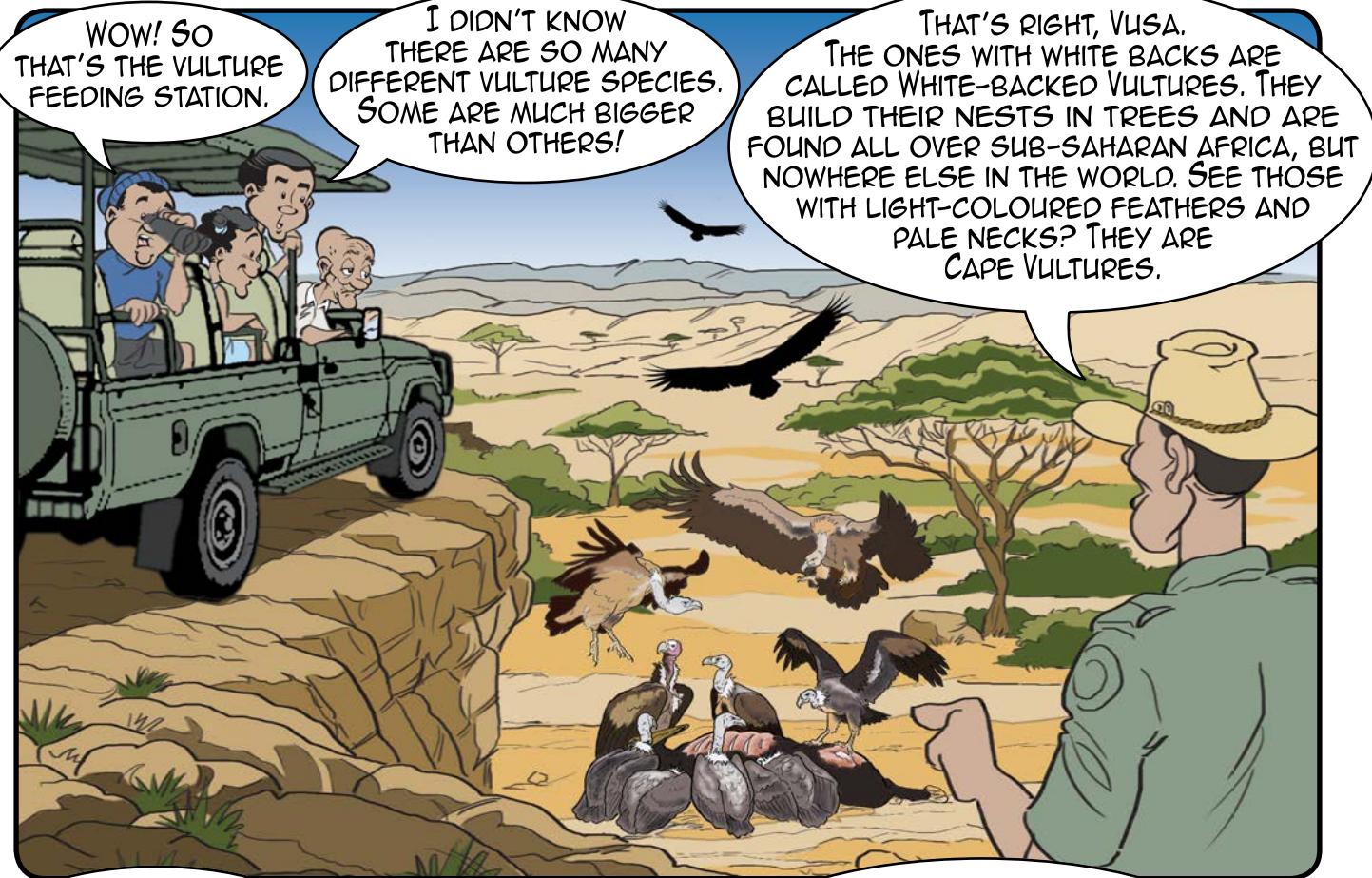
UNCLE ENOCH
CAN TELL US MORE
ABOUT THE PROBLEMS
THAT VULTURES FACE
TODAY!



DID YOU KNOW?

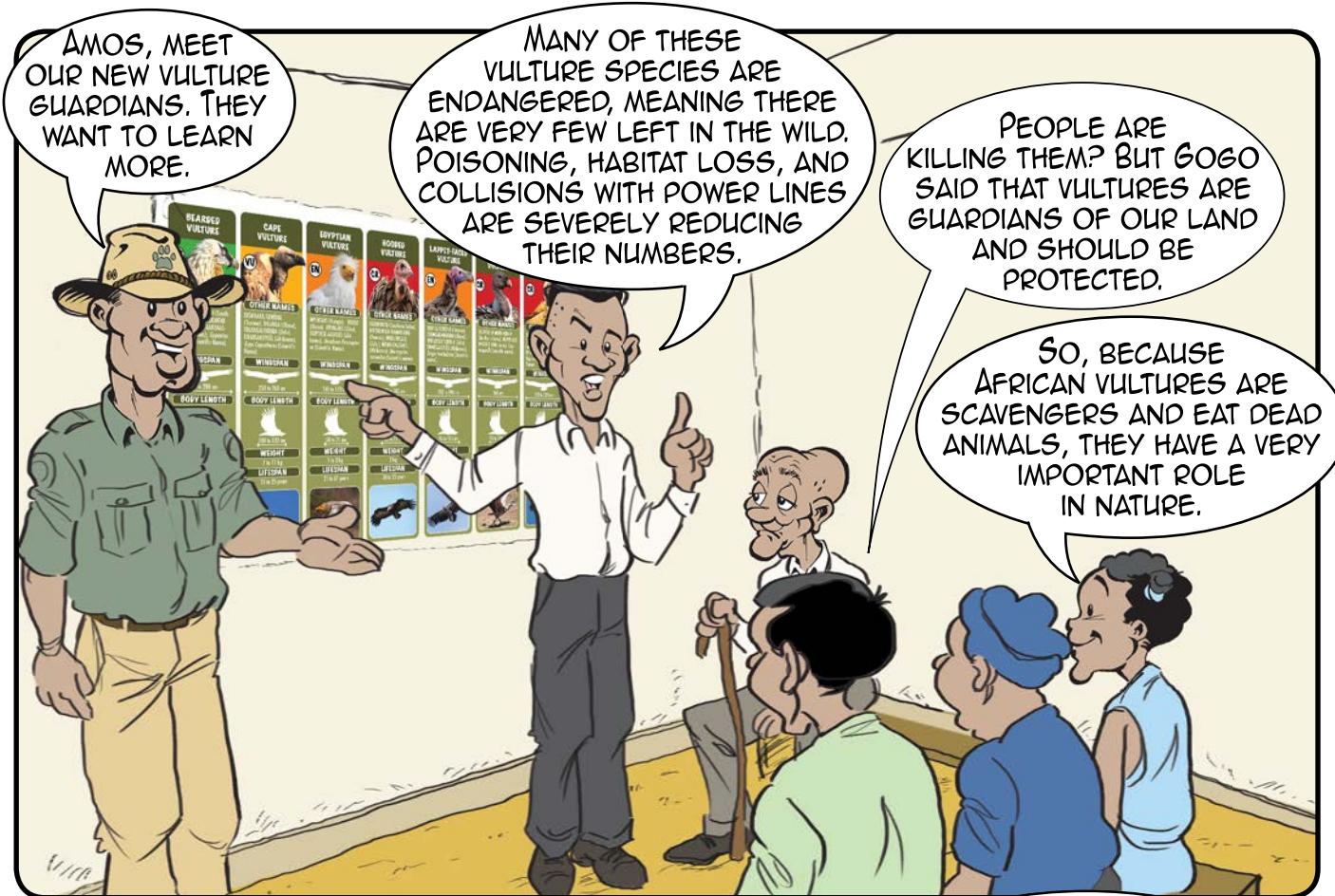
VULTURES CAN FLY VERY HIGH ABOVE THE EARTH. A RÜPPELL'S VULTURE
ONCE SMACKED INTO A PASSING AEROPLANE AT 11,300 METERS!





DID YOU KNOW?

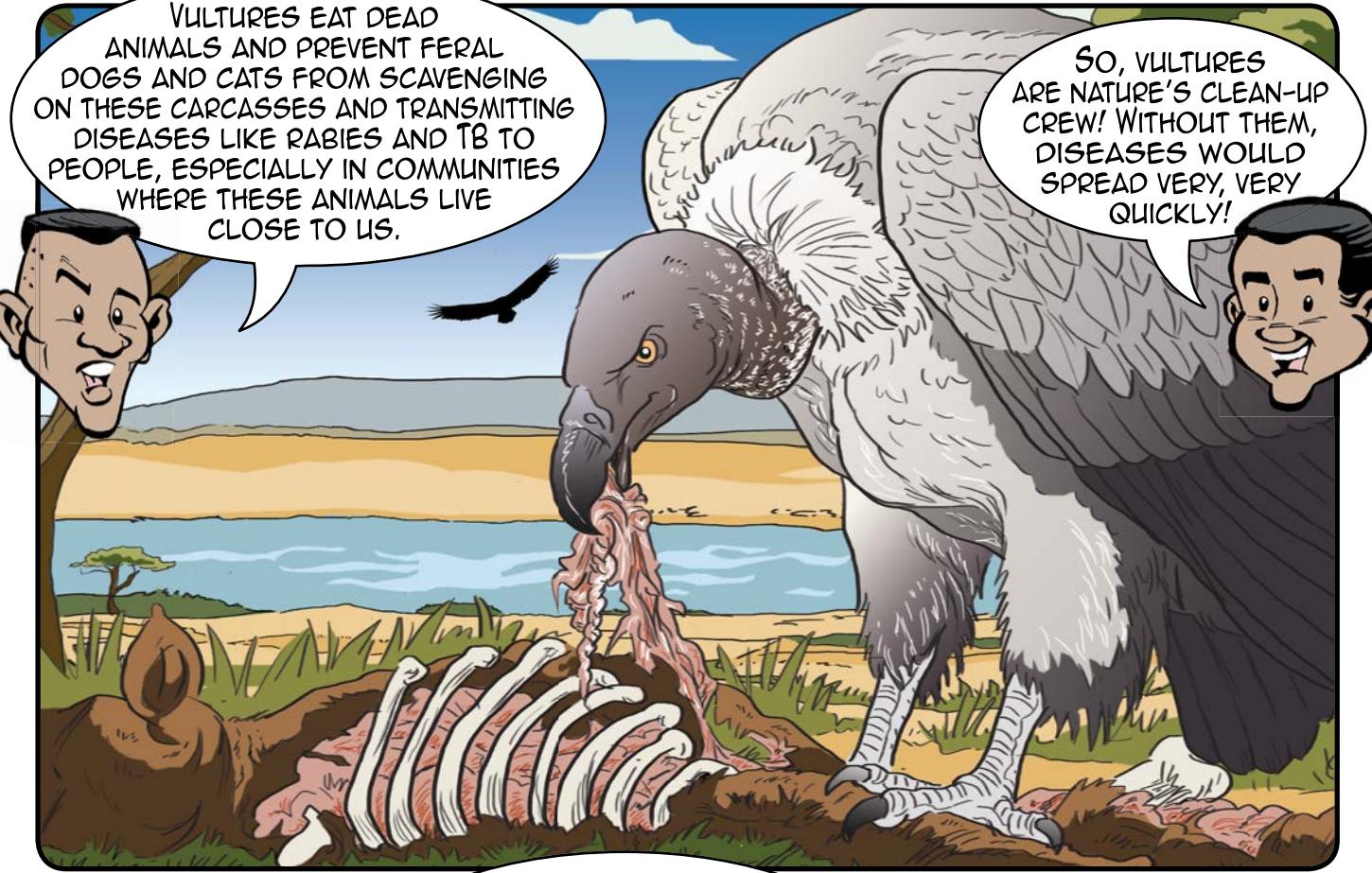
VULTURES FEATHERLESS HEADS AND NECKS ARE AN ADAPTATION FOR FEEDING DEEP INSIDE ANIMAL CARCASSES.



DID YOU KNOW?

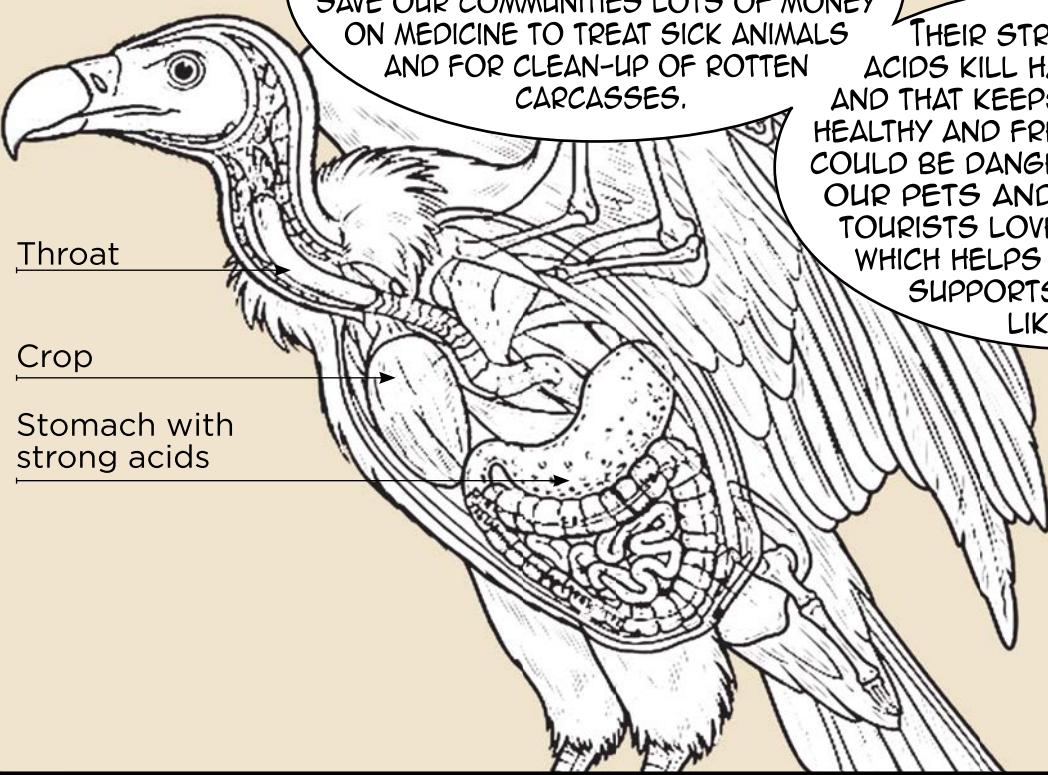
WHITE-BACKED AND CAPE VULTURES HAVE UNIQUE GROOVED TONGUES WHICH ALLOW THEM TO ACCESS PARTS THAT THEIR BEAKS CAN'T REACH.





VULTURES EAT DEAD ANIMALS AND PREVENT FERAL DOGS AND CATS FROM SCAVENGING ON THESE CARCASSES AND TRANSMITTING DISEASES LIKE RABIES AND TB TO PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY IN COMMUNITIES WHERE THESE ANIMALS LIVE CLOSE TO US.

SO, VULTURES ARE NATURE'S CLEAN-UP CREW! WITHOUT THEM, DISEASES WOULD SPREAD VERY, VERY QUICKLY!



THAT'S RIGHT! INSTEAD OF USING VULTURES IN OLD RITUALS, WE MUST TEACH ABOUT THEIR ROLE IN KEEPING OUR ECOSYSTEM HEALTHY. THEY SAVE OUR COMMUNITIES LOTS OF MONEY ON MEDICINE TO TREAT SICK ANIMALS AND FOR CLEAN-UP OF ROTTEN CARCASSES.

THEIR STRONG STOMACH ACIDS KILL HARMFUL BACTERIA, AND THAT KEEPS OUR ENVIRONMENT HEALTHY AND FREE OF DISEASES THAT COULD BE DANGEROUS TO ALL OF US, OUR PETS AND LIVESTOCK. PLUS, TOURISTS LOVE SEEING VULTURES, WHICH HELPS CREATE JOBS AND SUPPORTS COMMUNITIES LIKE OURS.

Throat

Crop

Stomach with strong acids

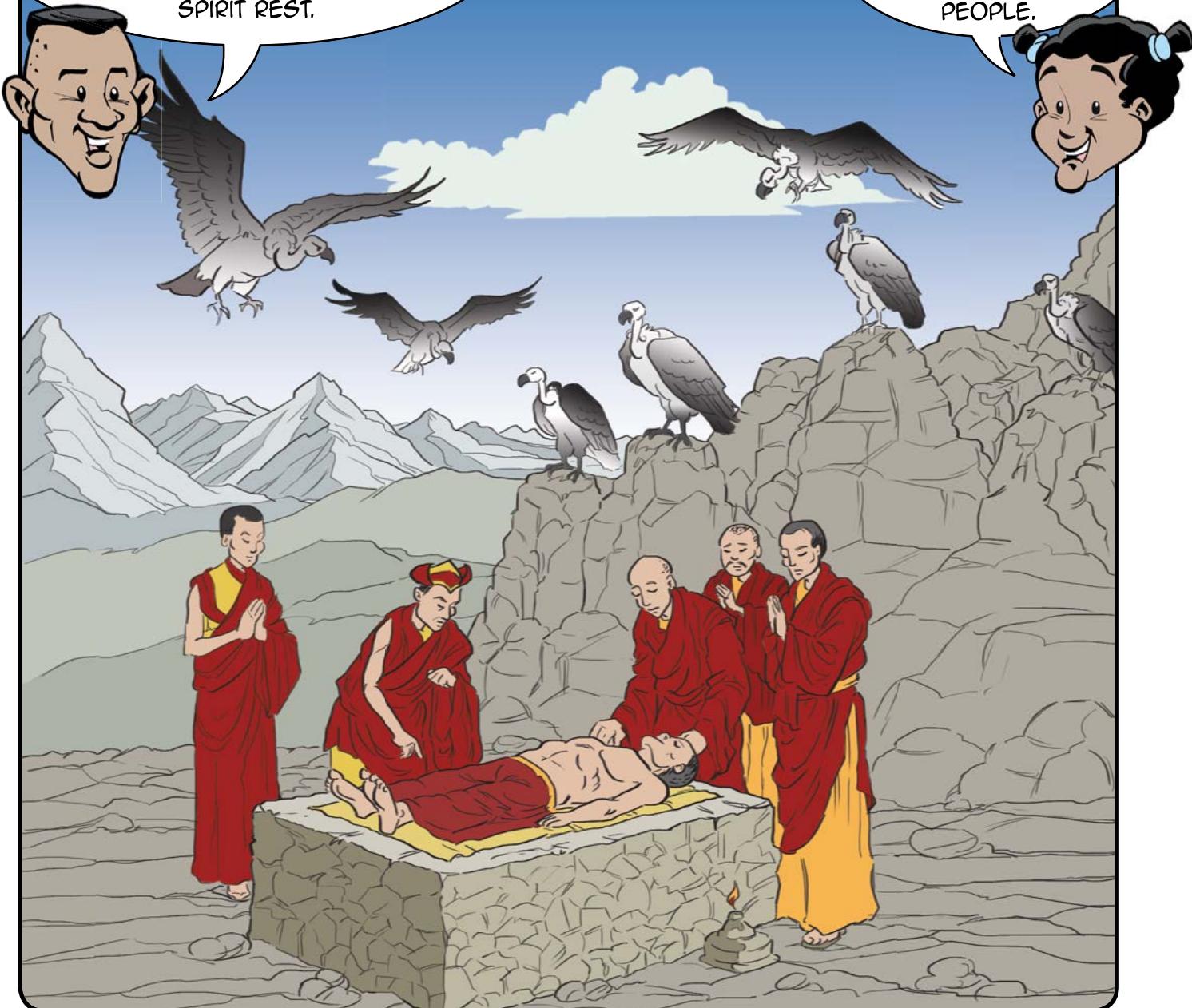


DID YOU KNOW?

VULTURES CAN FILL THEIR CROPS IN 5 MINUTES ALLOWING THEM TO QUICKLY LEAVE AND DIGEST THE FOOD THEY HAVE JUST TAKEN IN.

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.

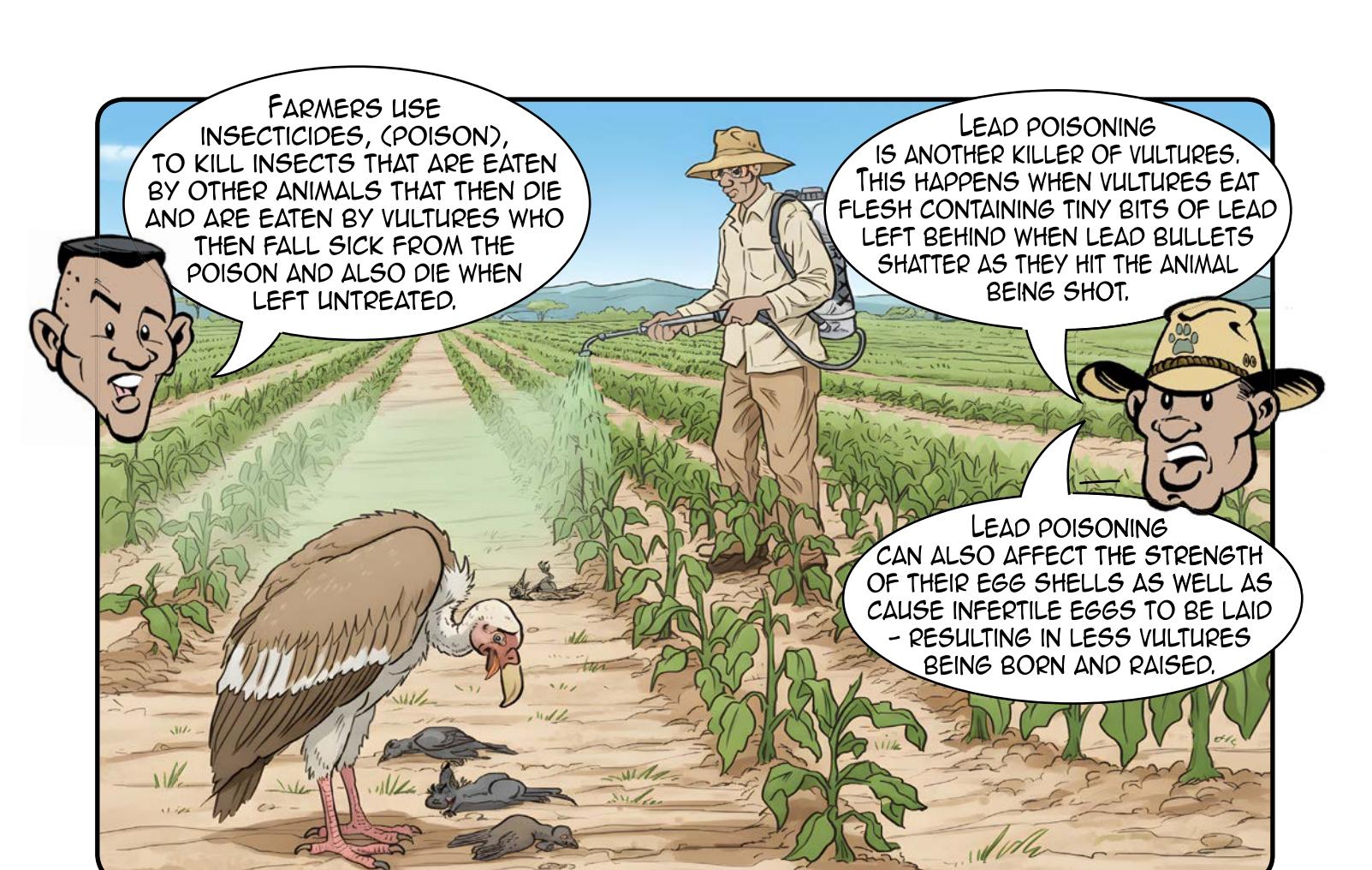
SECONDARY POISONING IS WHEN PEOPLE POISON AN ANIMAL TO KILL PREDATORS LIKE LIONS OR HYENAS IN REVENGE FOR ATTACKING THEIR COWS.

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.



DID YOU KNOW?

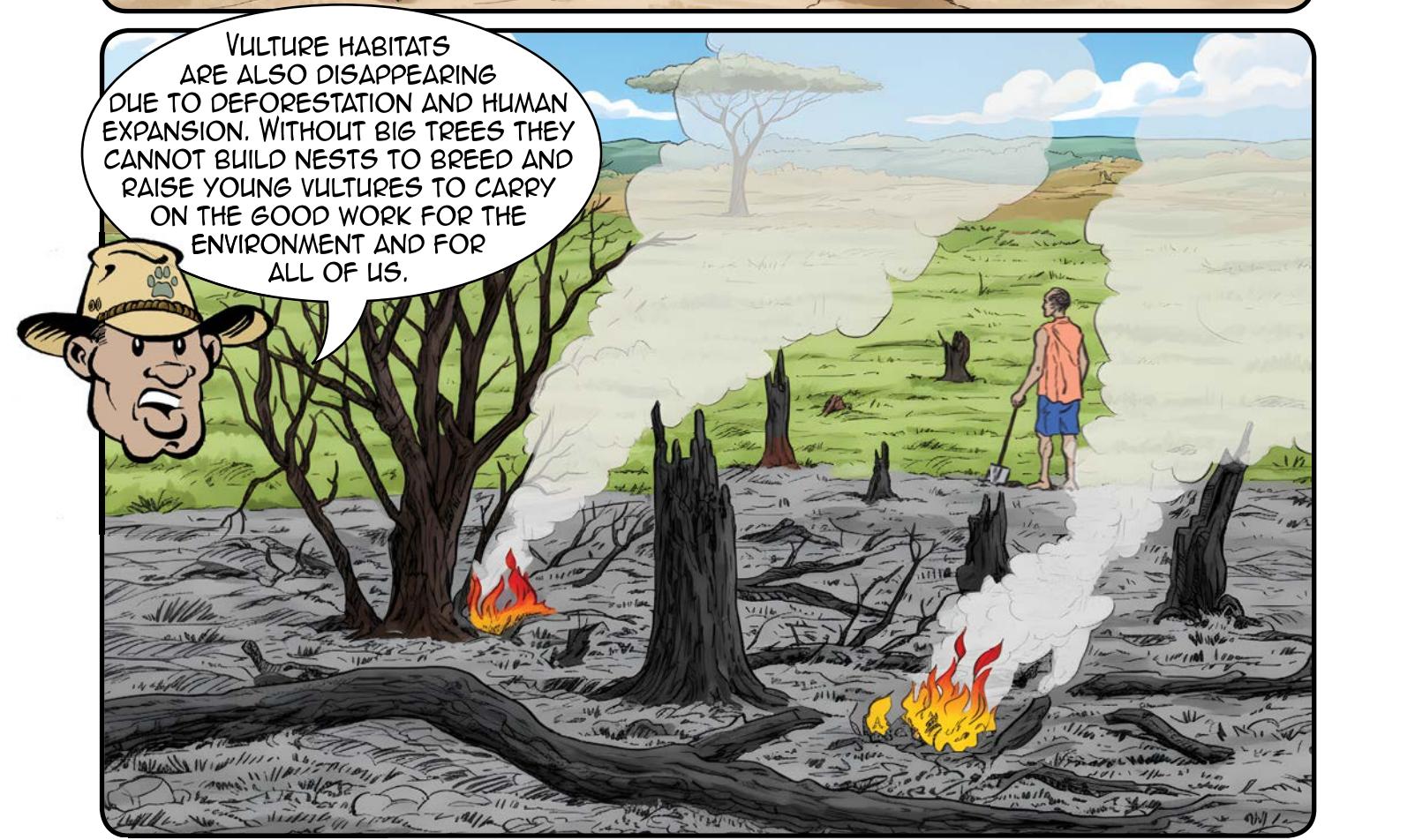
VULTURES ALL HAVE LONG, HOOKED BEAKS FOR TEARING PIECES OF FLESH FROM CARCASSES BUT ONLY ONE SPECIES CAN EAT BONES.



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.

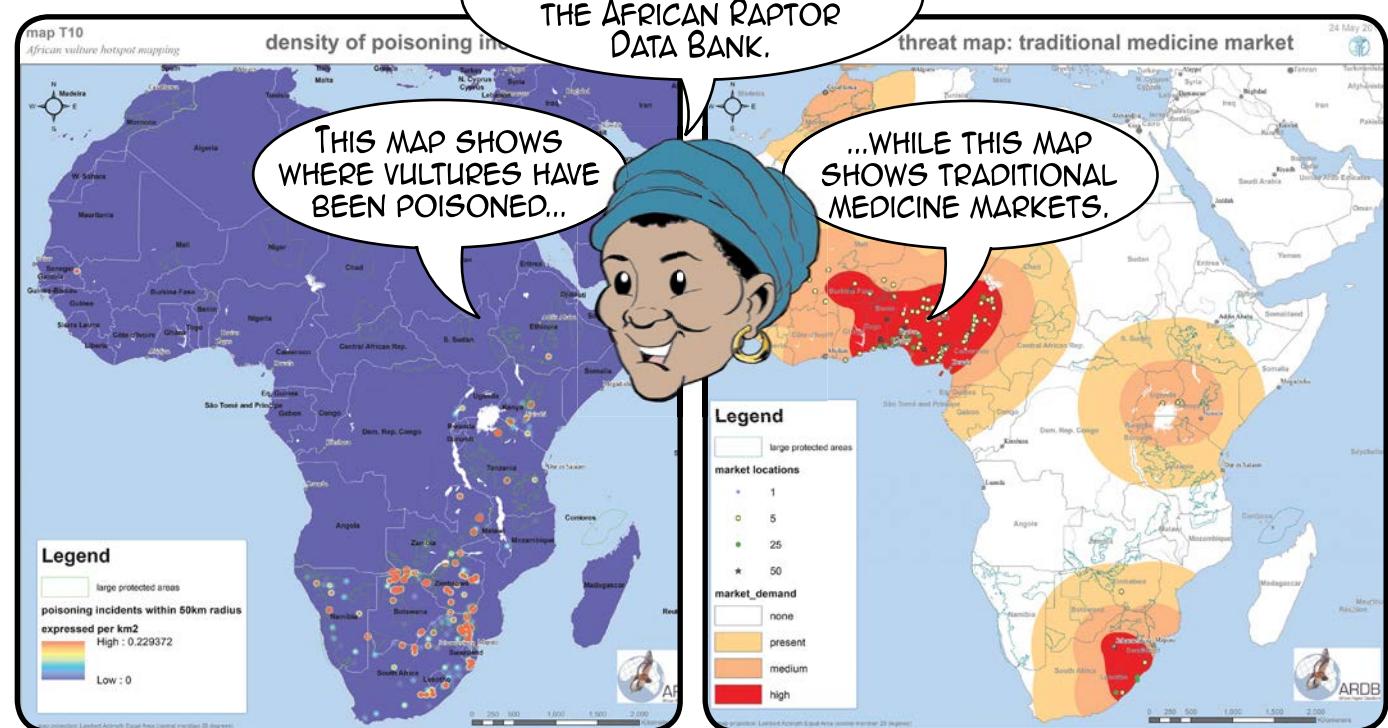
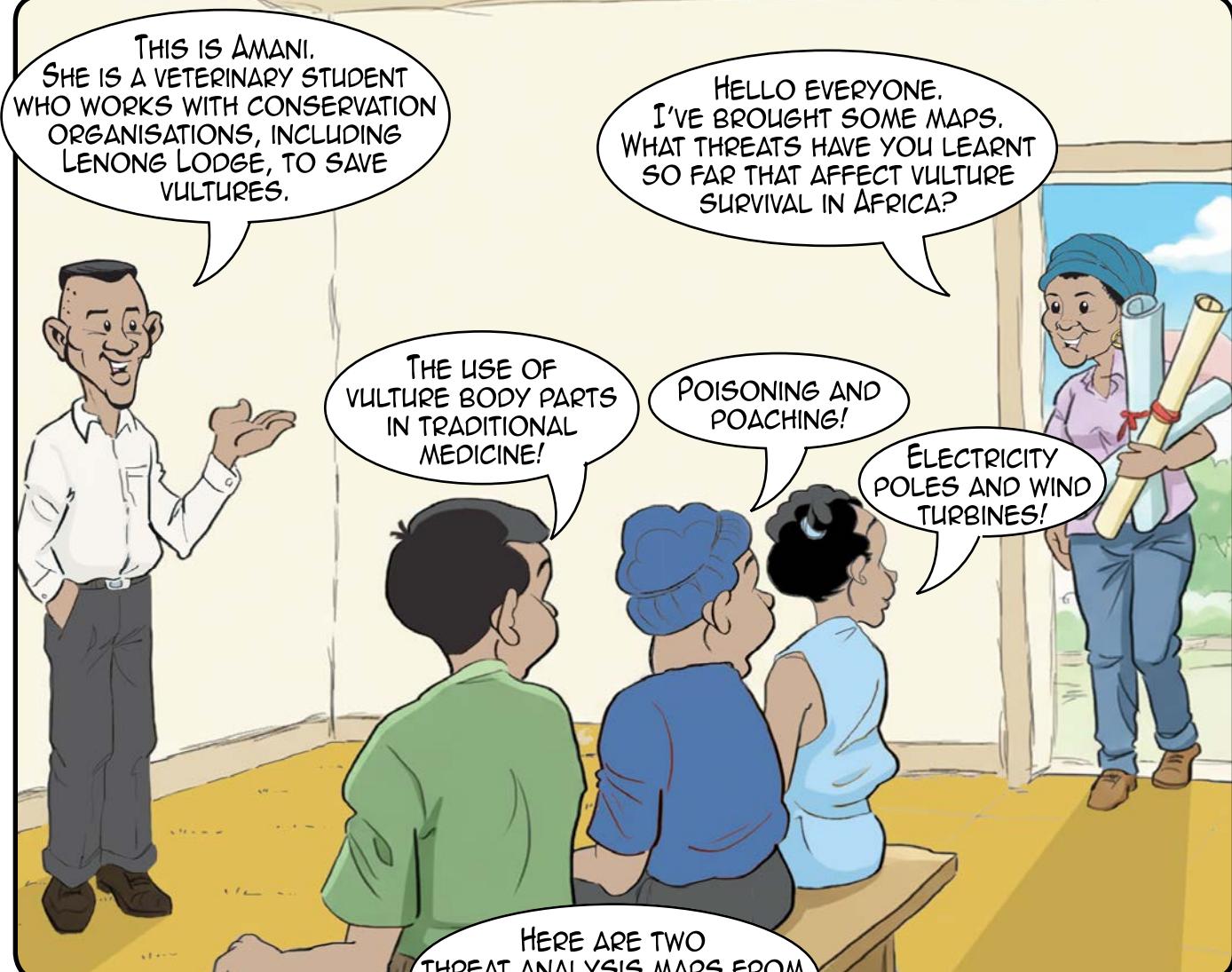


VULTURE HABITATS ARE ALSO DISAPPEARING DUE TO DEFORESTATION AND HUMAN EXPANSION. WITHOUT BIG TREES THEY CANNOT BUILD NESTS TO BREED AND RAISE YOUNG VULTURES TO CARRY ON THE GOOD WORK FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND FOR ALL OF US.

DID YOU KNOW?

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





DID YOU KNOW?

THE AFRICAN RAPTOR DATA BANK HAS MORE MAPS THAT CAN BE USED FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES AT WWW.HABITATINFO.COM/VULTURE/

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.

SEE PAGES 31-33

Country	Organization	Phone Number
Tunisia	TAW	+216 5 353 2798
Egypt	NCE	+20 23 346 5668
Mauritania	Pro	+223 30 266 5197
Niger	GWS	+234 903 489 5750
Senegal	ABN	+257 2 224 9471
Guinea	NatureKenya	+254 77 134 3138
Burundi	Nature RW	+250 78 877 3177
Rwanda	Nature TZ	+255 68 911 1313
Tanzania	WESM	+265 21 212 212
Malawi		
Madagascar	Asity	+261 33 155 3607
Mauritius	MWf	+230 697 6097
Seychelles	Nature SY	+248 251 9090
Cameroon	CWCI	+237 67 524 7151
Botswana	BirdLife BW	+267 (0) 319 0540
Mozambique	WCS Mozambique	+258 21 496 965
Namibia	REST	+264 81 373 8959
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
	Project Vulture (ACT) (KwaZulu-Natal)	+27 72 886 4445
	Provet Wildlife Services (KwaZulu-Natal)	+27 15 793 0797
	VulPro	+27 82 808 3020
	CARACAL	+267 625 2392
	Connect Trust	+267 74 808 516
	Wildlife ACT (KwaZulu-Natal)	+27 87 806 3293

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.
Lie on the ground and not moving at all.
Lie in water and can't stand up.
Lie on the ground and falling down.



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

WHEN YOU SEE AN INJURED VULTURE



DO:

KEEP YOUR DISTANCE!

Never get within 10 feet of an injured vulture as they can land to injure or kill you.

APPROACH SAFELY!

Approach slowly and carefully from the side or behind the bird.

SECURE THE AREA!

Secure the area around the bird so it can't fly away or get hurt.

TAKE PICTURES!

Take pictures of the bird and its surroundings to help experts assess the situation.

NOTE LOCATION!

Mark the location where the bird was found so experts can find it.

SHARE LOCATION!

Share the location with local media so they can help.

DO NOT:

APPROACH CLOSELY!

Approaching the vulture can lead to injury or death.

GIVE FOOD OR WATER!

The bird might eat the wrong food, or drink water that can hurt you.

SCARE THE BIRD!

Land on the bird can stress the bird, causing it to act aggressively.

LEAVE THE BIRD!

Leave the bird alone if you can't help it.

SHARE LOCATION!

Don't share the location if you can't get help.

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.

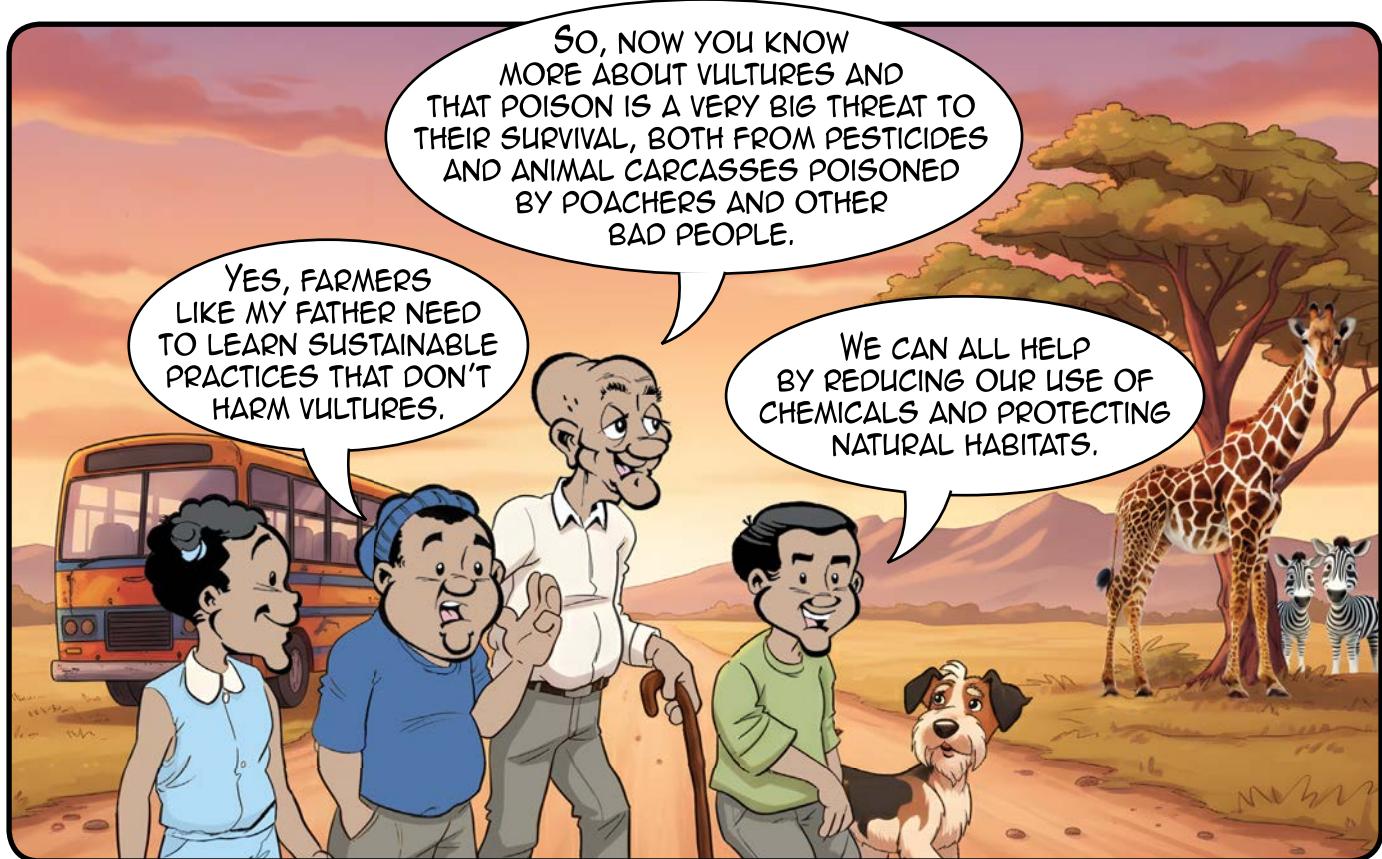
THANK YOU, AMANI. WE WILL SHARE THIS IMPORTANT INFORMATION WITH EVERYONE WHEN WE RETURN TO OUR VILLAGE.

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?

VULTURES HAVE STRONG DIGESTIVE SYSTEMS BUT THEY CANNOT HANDLE POISONS LIKE LEAD OR AGROCHEMICALS LIKE ORGANOPHOSPHATES.

GOVERNMENTS
NEED TO MAKE LAWS TO REGULATE
AND TRACE AGRICULTURAL POISONS
COMMONLY USED IN WILDLIFE
CRIMES.



WE CAN TELL
OUR FRIENDS AT SCHOOL,
AND THEY CAN TELL THEIR PARENTS TO
LOBBY THE GOVERNMENT TO STOP
THE KILLING OF OUR PRECIOUS AND
UNIQUE WILDLIFE.



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!



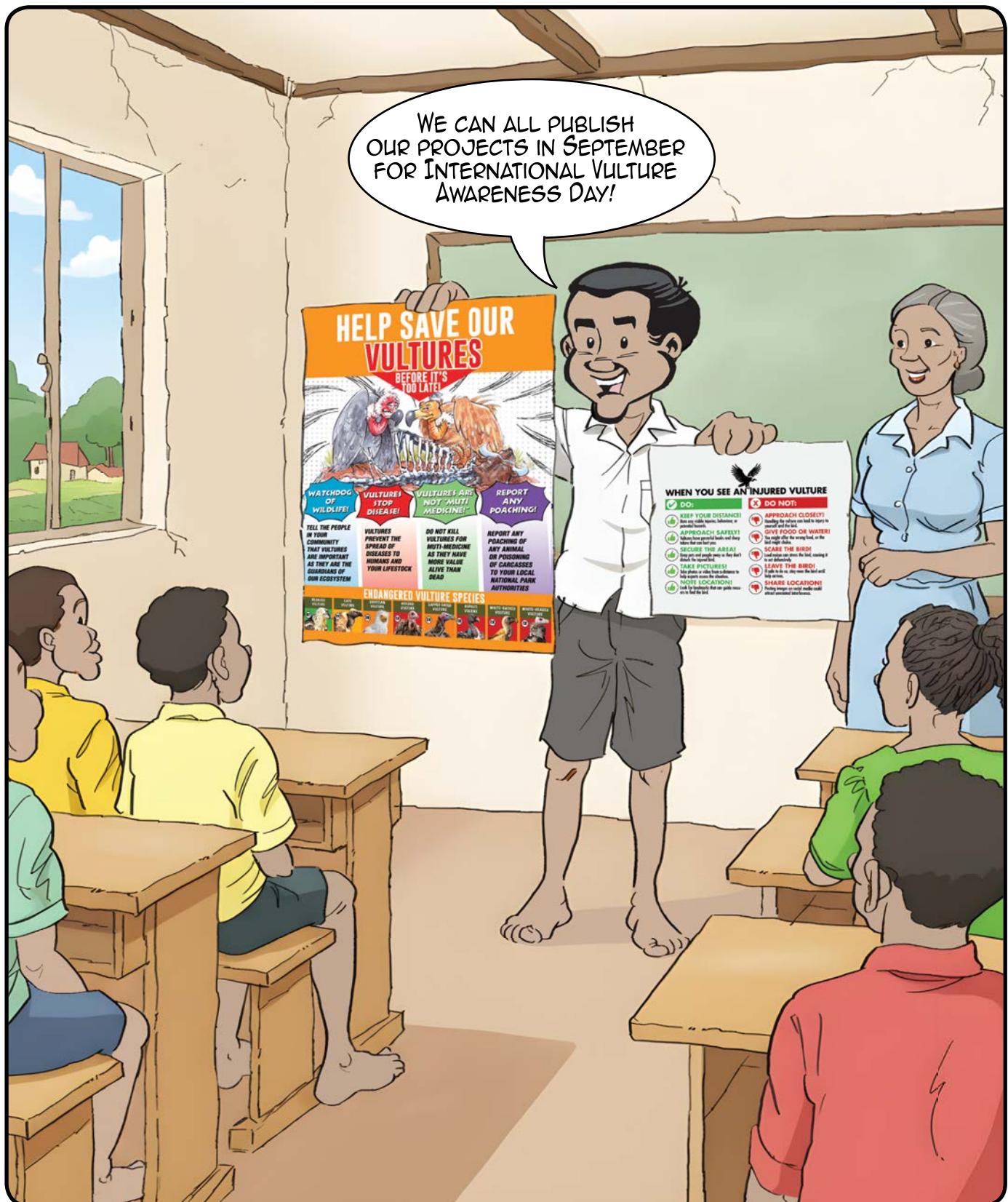
WE CAN ALSO HELP BY CLEANING UP LITTER, LOOKING AFTER OUR RIVERS, PLANTING INDIGENOUS TREES AND TELLING OUR FAMILIES ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF VULTURES.



DID YOU KNOW?

MOST VULTURES LAY JUST ONE EGG AT A TIME AND BOTH PARENTS LOOK AFTER THE EGG.

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





Vusa
Says:

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), IDLNGALENTABA (Zulu), KRANSAAASVOËL (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), EGIETIESE 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



*ANSWER: THE CAPE VULTURE, HOODED VULTURE AND WHITE-HEADED VULTURE ARE ENDEMIC, V

7 SPECIES ARE ENDANGERED, MEANING THAT THEY COULD BECOME EXTINCT AND NEVER

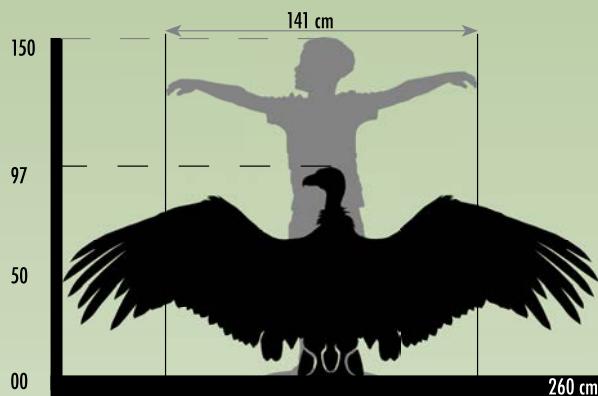
IUCN SYMBOLS: **CR** CRITICALLY ENDANGERED (NEARLY EXTINCT). **EN** ENDANGERED (



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



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



OTHER NAMES

LENONG LA MEBALABA (Northern Sotho), RÜPPELLSE AASVOËL (Afrikaans), *Gyps rueppelli* (Scientific name).

WINGSPAN



BODY LENGTH



WEIGHT

7 to 9 kg

LIFESPAN

40 to 50 years



WHITE-BACKED VULTURE



OTHER NAMES

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

WINGSPAN



BODY LENGTH



WEIGHT

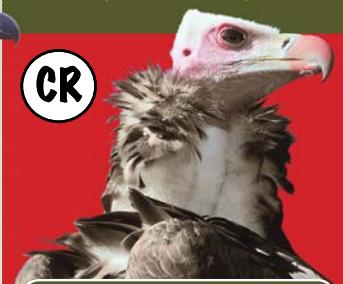
4 to 7 kg

LIFESPAN

40 to 50 years



WHITE-HEADED VULTURE



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

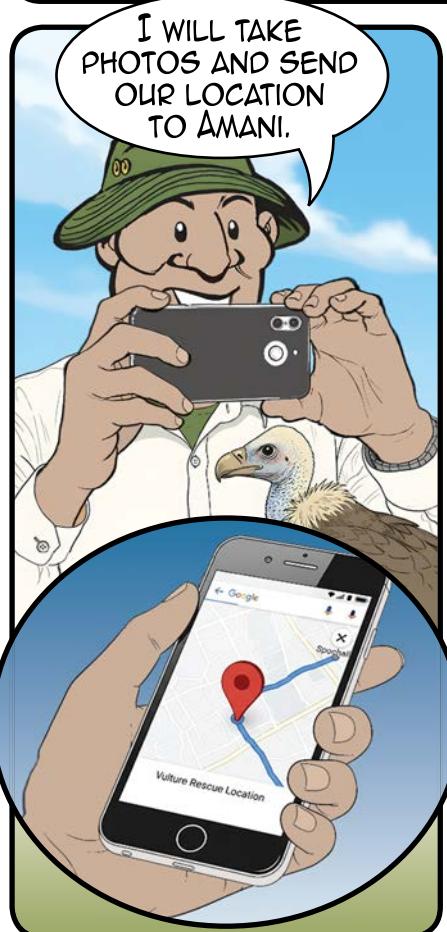
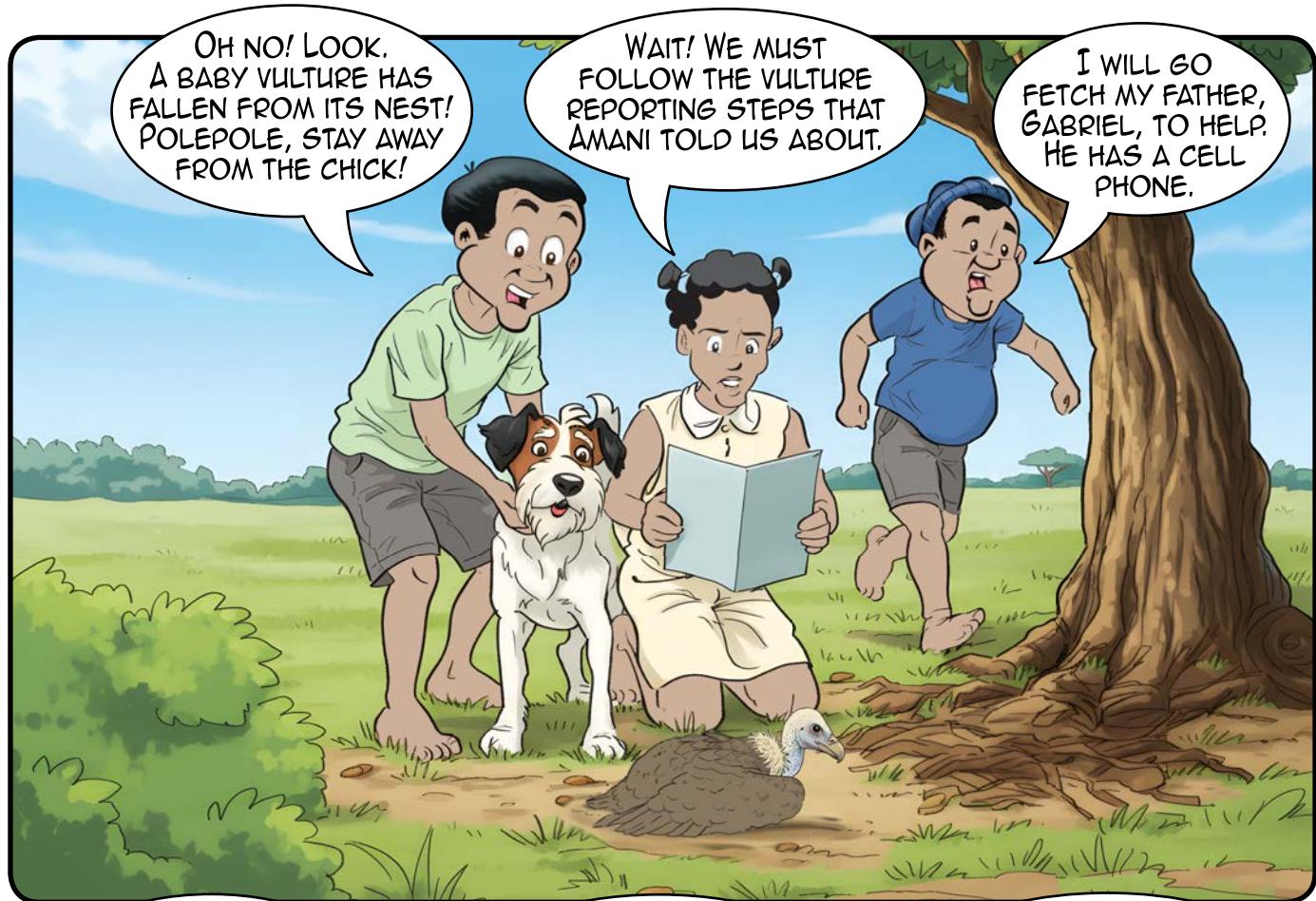
LIFESPAN

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! (A FEW LEFT). **VU** VULNERABLE (A FEW LEFT). **NT** NEAR THREATENED (SOME LEFT).





DID YOU KNOW?

VULTURES DON'T HAVE THE POWERFUL FEET OF TRUE RAPTORS. THEY HAVE LONG TOES WITH BLUNTED TALONS FOR WALKING ON THE GROUND.

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 FEED 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.



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DID YOU KNOW?

IN THE EARLY MORNINGS, VULTURES OFTEN SIT WITH THEIR WINGS SPREAD WIDE, TO BE WARMED BY THE SUN AND TO CONTROL PARASITES.



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.

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

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.

Lifetime 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.

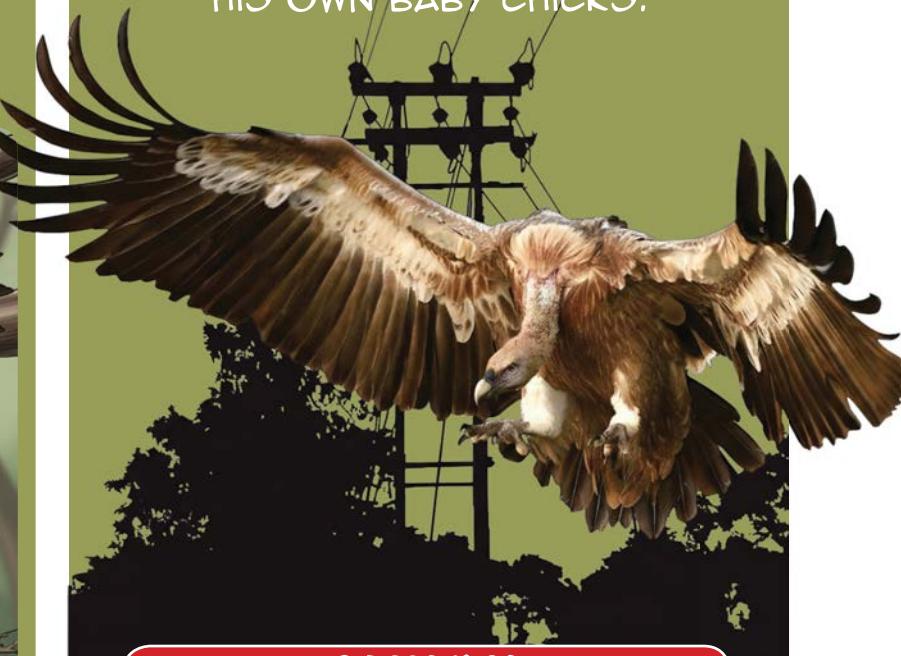


DANGER!

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



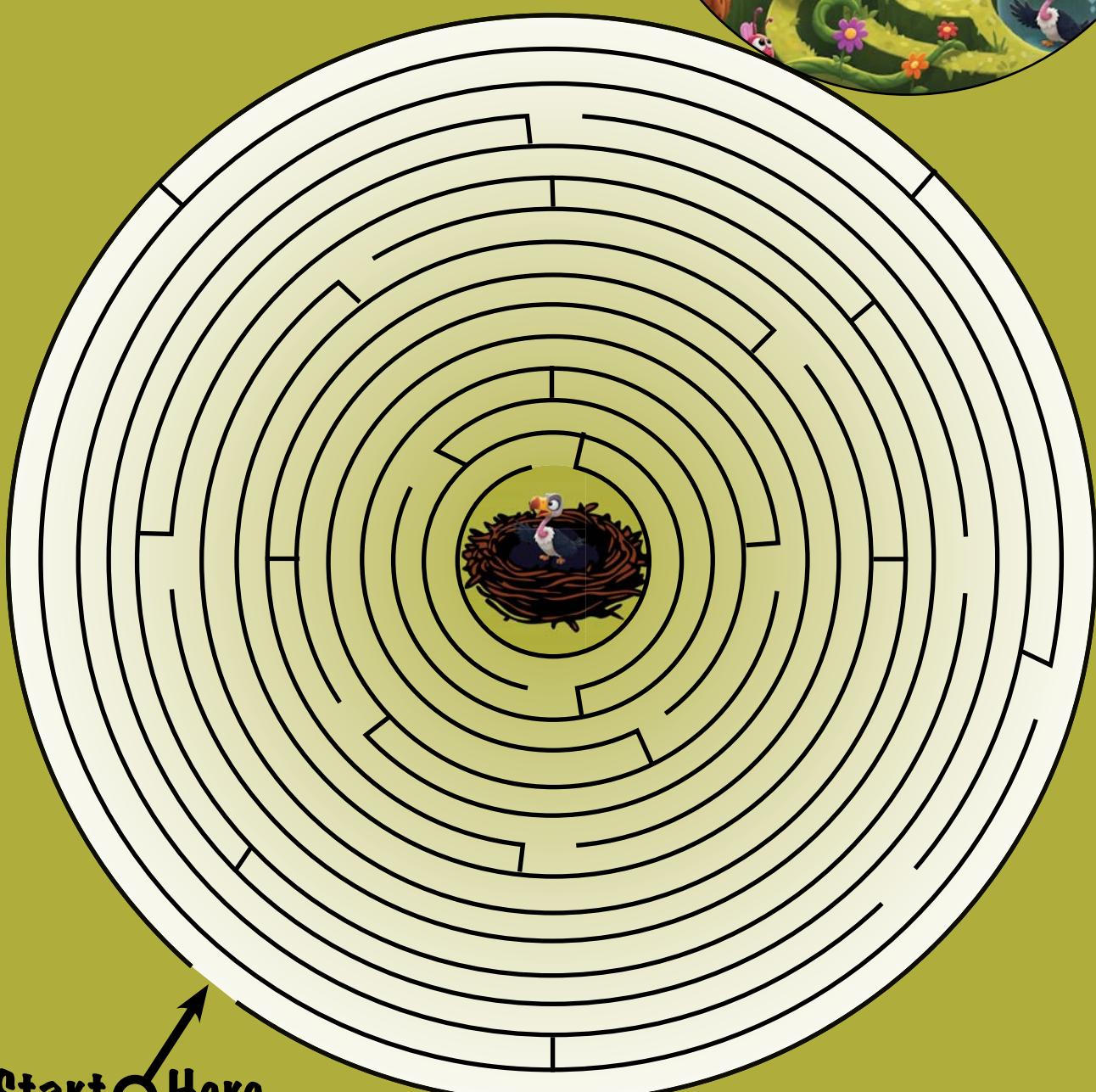
DID YOU KNOW?

VULTURES SYMBOLIZE GOOD LUCK AND REBIRTH - THEY ARE NOT A BAD OMEN.

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.



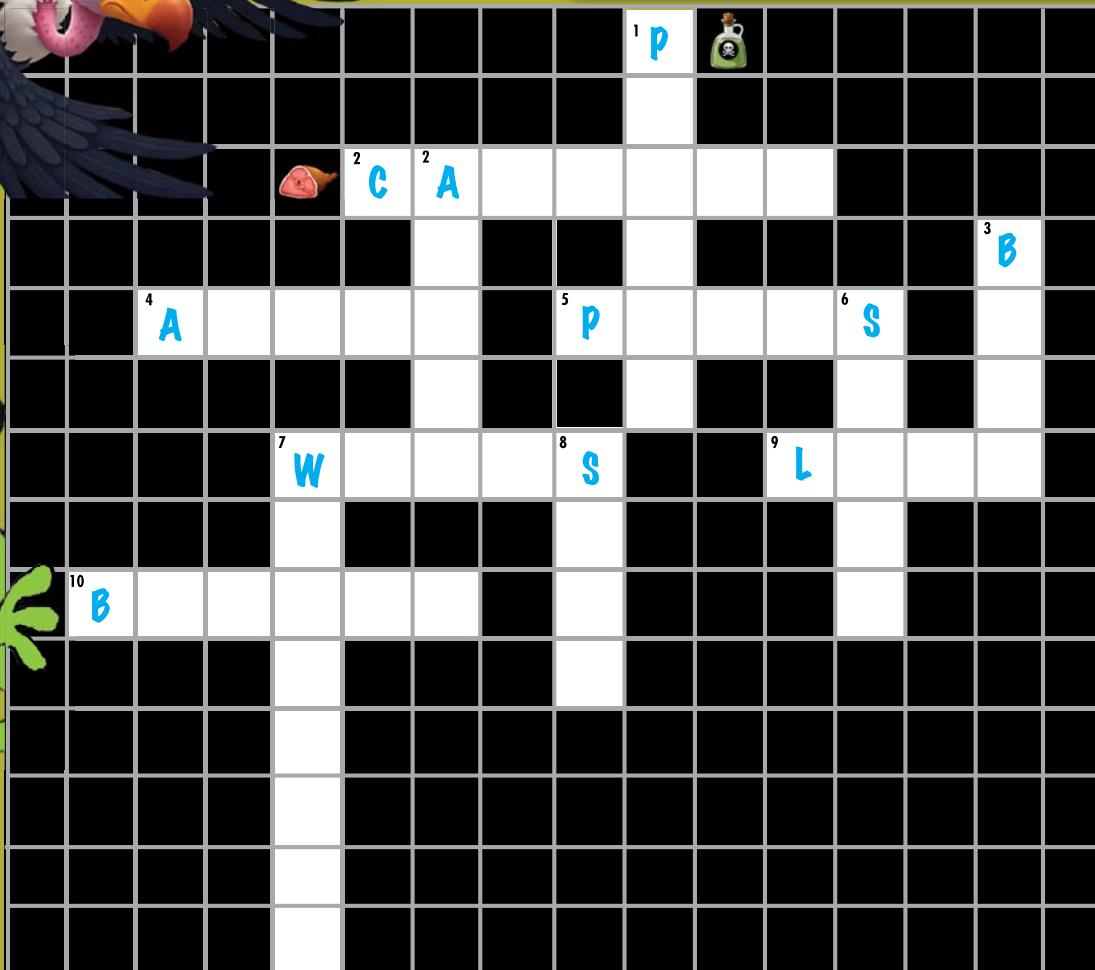
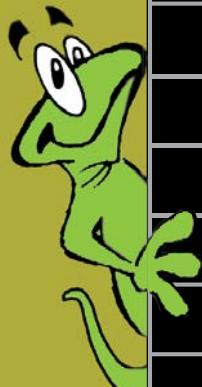
CROSSWORD ACTIVITY

Down

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

Across

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



Answers on page 34



DID YOU KNOW?

MANY AFRICAN VULTURE POPULATIONS HAVE DRAMATICALLY DECLINED, WITH SOME SPECIES FACING UP TO 95% REDUCTIONS.

COLOUR IN ACTIVITY



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).



DID YOU KNOW?

VULTURES KEEP THE GROUND AND WATER CLEAN FOR US BY EATING DEAD ANIMALS.

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.

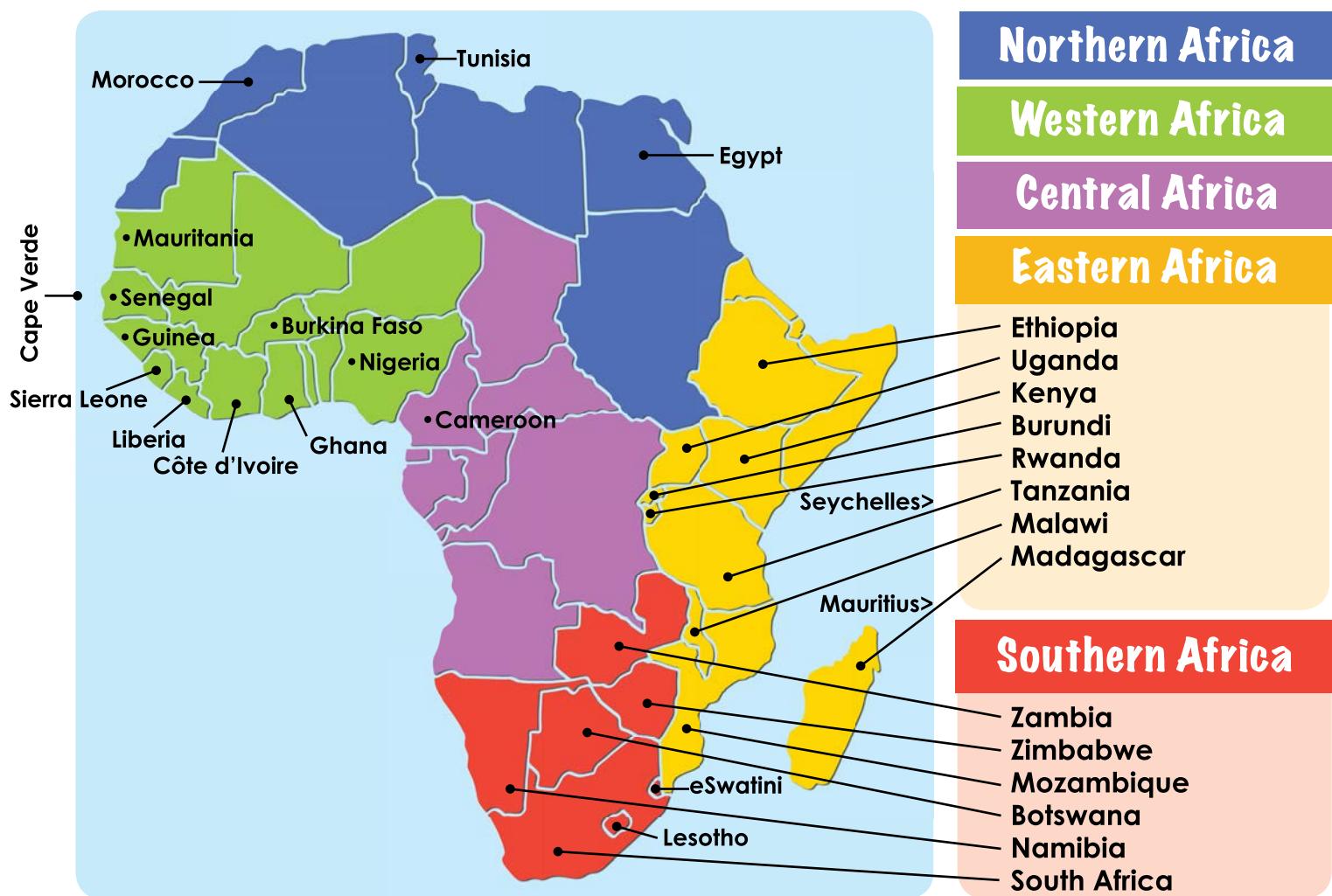


DID YOU KNOW?

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

Profit Organisations) CONTACTS

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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-Forêts +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	

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 Zimbabwe BirdLife ZM +263 24 248 1496	NARREC +264 126 4409	Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust +263 782 799 006
NNF +264 61 248 345	Free to be Wild Sanctuary +263 775 545 546	

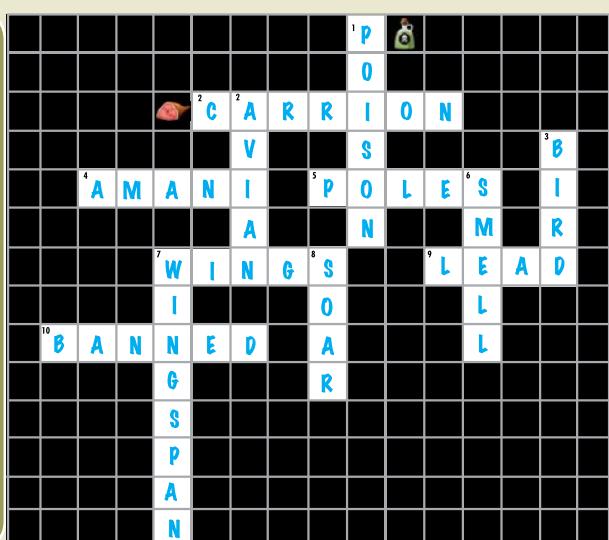
Abbreviations: **ABN** (Association Burundaise pour la protection de la Nature), **CSSL** (The Conservation Society of Sierra Leone), **CWCI** (Cameroon Wildlife Conservation Initiative), **EWNHS** (Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society), **GWS** (Ghana Wildlife Society), **MWF** (Mauritian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



Glossary (Word Meanings)

Airborne	Being in the air or off the ground.	Pesticide	A chemical used to control or kill pests. Pests can be weeds, insects, rodents, or bacteria.
Agrochemical	A chemical product used in farming.	Predator	An animal that hunts and eats another animal for food and, ultimately, energy.
Agriculture	The science or practice of farming, including cultivation of the soil for the growing of crops and the rearing of animals.	Pylon	A large vertical steel tower supporting high-tension power lines.
Ancestors	People from the past, like great-grandparents, from whom you are descended.	Raptor	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.
Awareness	Knowledge of a situation or fact.	Reservoir	A large man-made body of water.
Bacteria	A large group of single-celled living organisms, many of which cause disease.	Revenge	Punishing something that has hurt or harmed you.
Beneficial	Producing good or helpful results or effects.	Ritual	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.
Carcass	The dead body of an animal.	Scavenging	The action of animals that search for carcasses that have died from natural causes or have been killed by other predators.
Chemical	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.	Secondary	The opposite of primary, which is done first, secondary is the second most important thing.
Collision	Coming violently into contact; crash.	Species	A group of similar living things. This is part of how scientists compare living things.
Conservation	Preventing plant and animal species from being lost, wasted, damaged, or destroyed.	Stronghold	A place or belief that is strongly defended.
Critical	Very important.	Sustainable	A social goal for people to co-exist on Earth over a long period of time.
Deforestation	The action of clearing, or chopping down, a wide area of trees.	Thermal	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.
Digestion	The process of chemically changing food in the stomach into a form of energy.	Threat	The possibility of harm, danger, or pain.
Disposal	Getting rid of something, or throwing it away.	Tibetan	Someone who lives in Tibet, an area of Asia.
Ecosystem	A large community of living things, like plants, animals and microbes, in a particular area.	Transmitting	To send or carry from one place to another.
Economic	The production, distribution, and use of money or goods in a sustainable way.	Unintended	Doing something without planning to do it.
Endangered	A plant or animal species that may become extinct.	Unique	If something is unique, it's the only one around.
Endemic	Belonging to a local area or region and found nowhere else on earth.	Value	How much something is worth.
Expansion	The act of increasing (something) in size.	Victim	Someone or something that has been hurt.
Extinct	The disappearance of a species from earth.	Wind turbine	Tall towers topped with blades, like aeroplane propellers, used for making electricity.
Fulfil	If you fulfil something such as a promise, dream, or hope, you do what you said or hoped you would do.	Wingspan	The distance between the tips of a pair of wings (of a bird or an airplane).
Guardian	A person who defends and protects something.		
Habitat	The natural home of an animal, plant, or other organism.		
Incubate	To keep eggs warm, often by sitting on them, to allow the embryo inside to develop until it hatches.		
IUCN	The International Union for Conservation of Nature is an international organisation working towards the sustainable use of natural resources.		
Location	The exact position of a place.		
Organism	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.		
Occur	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".		
Olfactory	Having to do with the sense of smell.		
Organophosphate	A chemical compound used in herbicides, pesticides, and insecticides.		
Primary	Something that stands first in rank, importance, or value.		

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

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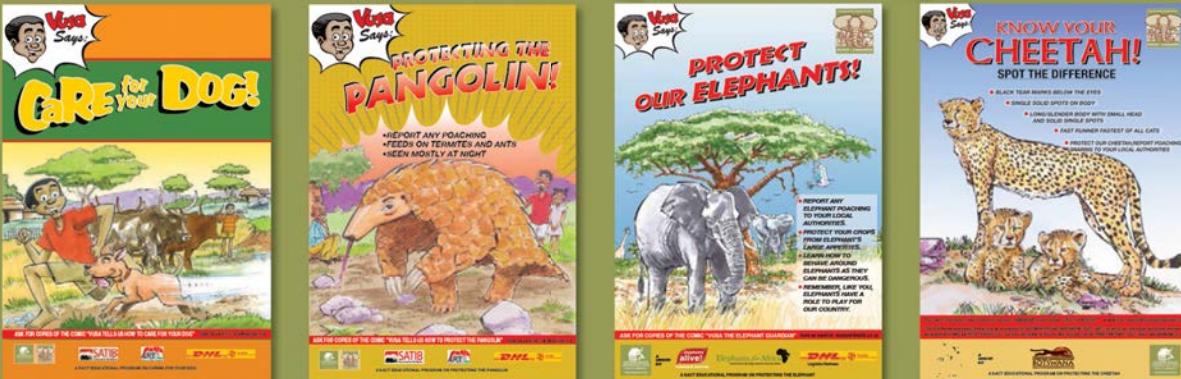
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For more information on SACT's range of educational publications,
please contact Brian Courtenay: elephant@satib.co.za. Thank you.