BANVET
DICLO
FENAC

EAT
PREY
LOVE VULTURES

VULTURE

FROM THE LATIN VULTUR, -ŭRIS.

1. NOUN. RAPTOR WITH A WINGSPAN OF ABOUT TWO METERS, A BARE NECK SURROUNDED BY A COLLAR OF LONG, NARROW AND FLEXIBLE FEATHERS, A FULVOUS BODY, DARK FEATHERS WITH A WHITE STRIPE ON EACH WING, THAT FEEDS ON CARRION AND LIVES IN FLOCKS

2. A RAPACIOUS OR PREDATORY PERSON

BANVET DICLOFENAC

AN INITIATIVE BY SEO/BIRDLIFE, VCF, SPEA, WWF SPAIN, AND BIRDLIFE EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA TO BAN VETERINARY DICLOFENAC, A DRUG THAT COULD WIPE OUT VULTURES.

BirdLife INTERNATIONAL
EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

WWF

VCF
Vulture Conservation Foundation

spea
Sociedade Portuguesa para o Estudo das Aves

SEO BirdLife

BAD REPUTATION

Vultures do not deserve their bad reputation.

Perched on top of the food chain, vultures are nature's cleanup crew. Thanks to their carrion diet, they prevent the spread of diseases produced by corpses in putrefaction.

Vultures also help cattle ranchers, not only because they clean up the fields, but also because they eliminate the need for the treatment and incineration of thousands of tons of animal remains every year.

Thanks to this free cleaning service, we save millions of euros in waste management and avoid the potential emission of hundreds of thousands of tons of CO2 per year, for the benefit of all.

Vulture populations in Spain, Portugal and Italy are in danger: a veterinary drug, diclofenac, could potentially lead to the death of thousands of vultures. The birds are exposed to the drug – which is not toxic to livestock or humans – when they eat the corpses of animals that were previously treated with the drug.

There are alternatives to diclofenac. So if diclofenac is not necessary, why is it not banned?

REASONS TO BAN DICLOFENAC

01

DICLOFENAC IS A PROVEN KILLER

In the 1990s, within the space of a few short years, the use of diclofenac in cattle led to the extinction of 99% of four species of vultures on the Indian subcontinent. This could happen in Europe.

02

BECAUSE VULTURES ARE IMPORTANT

As scavengers, vultures are adapted to consume foods that other species cannot process, including food that could be a source of infection for a lot of other animals. They are nature's cleanup crew and this free service saves us billions of euros in sanitary measures.

03

BECAUSE WE HAVE THE EU'S BIGGEST VULTURE POPULATION

Spain, Portugal and Italy host 95% of the European Union’s vultures. Following the use of diclofenac in Asia and the massive use of poison in Africa, we have a responsibility to protect our European populations.

04

BECAUSE THE GREAT EAGLES ARE ALSO IN DANGER

Diclofenac’s deadly effect has also been detected in Steppe eagles. There is, therefore, a risk that other species could be affected, including globally threatened species like the Spanish (or Iberian) imperial eagle.

REASONS TO BAN DICLOFENAC

05

THE SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM IS UNKNOWN

There are not enough studies evaluating the impact of diclofenac on other scavenger species. This could negatively impact many other species, yet diclofenac has not been tested on any of them.

06

BECAUSE THERE IS A SAFE ALTERNATIVE

Banning diclofenac will not have negative effects on the health of livestock or on the economy of livestock farmers. There are equally effective anti-inflammatory drugs that are safe for vultures and cost roughly the same. In fact, the drug is already banned in several countries such as India, Pakistan, Nepal and Iran.

07

BECAUSE THERE IS INSUFFICIENT CONTROL

Some veterinary authorities allege that it is enough to simply tell farmers not to use the drug to treat animals that are commonly consumed by scavengers. This is not a safe solution, as the authorities cannot control the good use of the product.

THE TRAIL LEFT BY DICLOFENAC

99 %

On the Indian subcontinent, 99% of four species of vultures became extinct as a result of diclofenac use: the Indian vulture, the White-backed vulture, the White-rumped vulture, the Red-headed vulture and the Slender-billed vulture. Diclofenac is currently banned in India and Nepal, where the decline in vulture populations has stopped.

1%

The presence of diclofenac in just 1% of corpses abandoned in fields was enough to eliminate vulture populations on the Indian subcontinent.

16

Of the 23 species of vultures that exist in the world, 16 are highly threatened.

6000

A recent investigation, in response to a request from the Spanish Agency of Drugs and Sanitary Products (AEMPS), concluded that, each year, around 6,000 specimens of Griffon vultures in the country could die as a result of diclofenac use. This means a decline of more than 7% per year.

8000

The scavenging activities of vultures eliminate the need for the treatment and incineration of some 8,000 tonnes of animal remains every year in Spain. Thus, we save millions of euros in waste management and avoid the potential emission of hundreds of thousands of tons of CO2 per year.

95 %

The EU has an important responsibility for the conservation of these birds: Italy, Portugal and Spain are home to 95% of Europe's Black and Griffon vultures, in addition to being home to other threatened species such as the Egyptian vulture and the Bearded vulture. It is possibly the best preserved population of carrion-feeding birds in the world.

SCIENTIFIC CONSENSUS

There is strong scientific consensus: we need a total ban on veterinary diclofenac.

In its 2016 annual report, the Spanish Ombudsman wrote to the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food and the Environment and to the Spanish Agency for Drugs and Sanitary Products (AEMPS) calling for the withdrawal of veterinary drugs containing diclofenac.

The 11th Conference of Parties of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), in its resolution UNEP/CMS/COP11/CRP31, also recognizes the need for a worldwide ban of veterinary diclofenac.

WE NEED TO ACT NOW

We need to ban the veterinary use of diclofenac in livestock and replace it with products which are not toxic to carrion-feeding species.

We need to develop a regulatory procedure to assess the impact of all veterinary drugs on the carrion-feeding fauna. This should apply not only to drugs in testing phase, but also drugs that have already been approved.

For example, we need to temporarily suspend the sale and use of flunixin until it is assessed and proven harmless to the carrion-feeding fauna.


BANNING VETERINARY DICLOFENAC, A DRUG THAT COULD WIPE OUT VULTURES WHEN THERE ARE ALTERNATIVES, IS A MATTER OF POLITICAL WILL AND COMMON SENSE.

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