



## THE ADOPT A VULTURE PROJECT – ESKOM PUTTING THEIR WEIGHT BEHIND VULTURE CONSERVATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

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The Endangered Wildlife Trust's Wildlife and Energy Programme (EWT-WEP), in partnership with Eskom Limpopo Operating Unit, the EWT's Birds of Prey Programme (EWT-BoPP) and the Vulture Conservation Programme (VulPro), has launched the Adopt a Vulture Project that forms part of the Greater Limpopo Vulture Project.

The main aim of the Limpopo Vulture Project is to use Global System for Mobile (GSM) tracking devices to obtain further information about the movement patterns of the different vulture species in Limpopo. These data will enable Eskom to make informed and vulture-friendly decisions when new powerlines are planned and erected. The project will also look at the relationship between line faults on Eskom distribution lines and vulture movements, in an attempt to determine whether tracking data can be used to predict where line faults are likely to occur. This will enable Eskom to mitigate potential interactions pro-actively rather than reactively.

"It was during the initiation and implementation of the Vulture Project that the idea for the Adopt a Vulture initiative was born," commented Constant Hoogstad, Senior Field Officer of the EWT-WEP. "Eskom has allocated a vulture to each of their General Managers in all nine of South Africa's provinces and these managers have become responsible for monitoring the bird's movements and observing its behaviour. By allowing these managers to take some kind of custodianship over these birds we have made the project real and tangible to Eskom's managers."

The foster parents to the birds received the opportunity to personally tag and release their vulture and this was an extraordinary experience for many as they had never had the opportunity to engage so closely with these majestic birds. Furthermore, the managers are also responsible for educating their Operating Unit about the importance of conserving vultures and for ensuring that the adopted birds are used as mascots to promote the reporting of wildlife and energy infrastructure incidents.

"I am extremely delighted with the initiation of this project as the promotion of environmental awareness and protection is aligned to Eskom's key values of Zero Harm. Historically, the lack of knowledge and research has resulted in line designs that have inflicted damage to some of our precious vulture species. We have the opportunity to turn the tide, and are committed to bird-friendly designs and promoting research to gain more knowledge on saving the environment," said the General Manager of Eskom Distribution, Peter Sebola.

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The Endangered Wildlife Trust is a non-profit, public benefit organisation dedicated to conserving species and ecosystems in southern Africa to the benefit of all people.

**NPO Number:** 015-502, **PBO number:** 930 001 777, **Member of IUCN** - The International Union for Conservation of Nature  
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“Releasing the vulture was an exhilarating experience and will forever motivate me to promote bird-friendly structures where bird electrocutions or collision are possible. The Gauteng Operating Unit’s vulture was a Cape Vulture who we have named GOU-SHA. This name symbolises the bird rising above adversity to play a critical role in the reproduction of this threatened species,” concluded Sebola.

For further information about the Limpopo Vulture Project contact Constant Hoogstad on [constanth@ewt.org.za](mailto:constanth@ewt.org.za). The Project is sponsored by Eskom Limpopo Operating Unit.

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