

Husbandry Guidelines for ‘in range’ breeding programmes of *Gyps bengalensis*, *Gyps indicus* and *Gyps tenuirostris*

Compiled by BNHS and the working group of India at the workshop December 2006

Chief Wildlife Wardens of various States within India

RSPB

ZSL

NBPT

The peregrine fund

Chester Zoo

IOZ

INTRODUCTION

There are 23 species of Old World vultures, most of which have been kept in captivity at some point over the last hundred years. There are eight species of the *Gyps* vulture genera, many of which have been popular in zoos mainly because of their size. They have been bred in captivity within zoos, and species such as the Eurasian griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*) has benefited from zoo breeding programmes with concerted efforts and successful release programmes in France and Spain.

These management guidelines have been developed for vultures from the genus *Gyps*, and in particular the three critically endangered species of *Gyps* vultures found in South East Asia. Although many aspects will be relevant to other species of vulture, the bulk of this document refers specifically to this genus, and in many cases to the experience gained with the breeding programmes of *Gyps bengalensis*, *Gyps indicus* and *Gyps tenuirostris*, run in India by BNHS

BIOLOGY AND FIELD DATA

The Order of diurnal birds of prey has generated considerable admiration, excitement, argument and interest. One only need look at the available literature, both popular and academic, to see how mankind's imagination has been stirred by the raptors. In all probability man has a longer historical involvement with this Order than any other with the possible exception of the chicken.

Scientific investigation has shown that there are no obvious links with any of the other Orders of birds apart from the owls and the storks. Historically the diurnal birds of prey and owls were thought of as being related, however the obvious resemblance came to be thought of as superficial.

In the Order FALCONIFORMES, there are four Suborders and five Families; two of these Families contain one species only. The tree below shows the accepted groupings.

