

Red-Headed Vulture Sighted in Uttarakhand

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Species

Why in News?

A Red-headed Vulture was sighted in the Patalthod forests near Munsiyari, Pithoragarh district, Uttarakhand.

- **Documented by** - Birdwatchers associated with the Munsiyari-based NGO Monal.
- The sighting occurred at an altitude of approximately 2,650 metres.

Red-headed Vulture





Parameter	Fact
Scientific name	<i>Sarcogyps calvus</i>
Common names	Red-headed Vulture; King Vulture (Asian species)
Feeding habit	Scavenger
Key identification feature	Bare red head
Sighting location	Munsiyari, Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand
Reported altitude	2,650 metres

IUCN status

- **Critically Endangered (CR)**

Habitat

- Open country, forest edges and other landscapes where carrion is available.

Identification

- Bare red head, strong beak and dark-coloured body feathers.

Ecological Significance

- **Scavenger** - Primarily feeds on animal carcasses.
- **Disease control** - Removes carcasses, which may reduce pathogen spread.
- **Nutrient recycling** - Returns nutrients to the ecosystem through decomposition.
- **Food-chain indicator** - Presence indicates local habitat and food availability, though a single sighting does not confirm overall ecosystem health.

Major Threats

- **Veterinary drugs** - Diclofenac poisoning from livestock carcasses is a leading cause of vulture mortality.
- **Poisoning** - Exposure to contaminated carcasses and intentional poisoning.
- **Habitat loss** - Ongoing loss and degradation of natural habitats.
- **Food scarcity** - Declining availability of uncontaminated food sources.
- **Other veterinary NSAIDs** - Additional drugs may also pose risks to vultures.

Reference

[The Tribune | Red-Headed Vulture](#)

