



February 2010, Volume 100, No. 2

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ISSN 0256-9574

Website: www.hmpg.co.za
Journal: www.samj.org.za



PRINTED BY TANDYM PRINT

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The Cape Vulture *Gyps coprotheres* is endemic to southern Africa, but its numbers have declined dramatically to the extent that its status is listed as vulnerable in the Red Data Book on birds published in 2000. Its current population numbers have disappeared within living memory. There are several reasons for its decline: the disappearance of the once vast ungulate herds that occurred in its former range, direct persecution by the poisoning of carcasses, electrocution on power lines, disturbance at breeding colonies, and traditional medical or ceremonial uses. Conservation measures are in place, notably the establishment of vulture restaurants to ensure a regular and safe food supply.

Photo and text: Peter Steyn
Email: peregrine@mweb.co.za



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Subscription rates

Local subscriptionsR852.00 p.a.
Foreign subscriptionsR1 920.00 p.a.
Single copies R75.00
Members of the Association receive the SAMJ only on request, as part of their membership benefit.
Subscriptions
Tel. (012) 481-2071
E-mail: members@samedical.org

The SAMJ is published on the first of the month by the Health and Medical Publishing Group (Pty) Ltd, Co registration 2004/0220 32/07, a subsidiary of SAMA.
28 Main Road (Cnr Devonshire Hill Road), Rondebosch, 7700

Please submit all letters and articles for publication online at www.samj.org.za
Tel. (021) 681-7200. Fax (021) 685-1395.
E-mail: publishing@hmpg.co.za
Website: www.samedical.org



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