

## A Record of Cinereous Vulture (*Aegypius monachus*) for Cambodia

On 23 December 1993, a Cinereous Vulture (*Aegypius monachus*) was found at Tapon, Sangke District, Battambang Province, North-west Cambodia (13° 15'N; 103° 15'E). The bird was caught by a farmer and was severely wounded during capture. The farmer intended to eat the bird but was instead persuaded by his neighbours to display it to the public. Four days later, the assistance of the provincial veterinary office in Battambang municipality was sought to treat the bird, when it came to my attention. It had suffered a depression fracture of the skull during capture, presumably by a blow to the head. It was comatose and severely dehydrated, and more or less beyond assistance, and died on 29 December 1993. I photographed, sketched and examined the bird after death, before it was taken away by its captor (Figs. 1-3).

*Description:* Huge size. Blackish, brown-tinged plumage. Feathers of the wing-lining and vent greyish. Bill whitish with a black tip. Feet whitish. Eyelids pale. The measurements were: body length approx. 1090 mm; wing 760 mm; tail 415 mm; bill and skull combined (measured from occiput to bill-tip) 150 mm; culmen 105 mm; gape 95 mm; tarsus 120 mm. The bird weighed 5.2 kg at death, when it was thought to have lost as much as 10% of its body weight due to dehydration.

The Cinereous Vulture ranges across the south-central Palearctic in grassland, steppe country and subdesert from the Iberian peninsula eastwards to eastern China (CRAMP & SIMMONS 1980). Though mainly resident it seems to wander widely outside its breeding range, to south and south-east China (CHENG 1987). It is scarce and declining throughout its range and considered to be threatened or endangered (COLLAR & ANDREW 1988). This appears to be the first record of Cinereous Vulture for Cambodia since the species is not listed for this country by KING ET AL. (1975). There are however, at least three records for Thailand where the species is described as a rare winter visitor (LEKAGUL & ROUND 1991). These are: Roi Et Province in 1965 and Maha Sarakham and Buriram Provinces in 1972 (CHAIYAPHUN 1973) and Phatthalung Province, S. Thailand on 1983 (record on file at the Conservation Data Centre, Center for Conservation Biology, Mahidol University, Bangkok; P.D. Round *in litt.*). This last was apparently shot, wounded and captured alive. It has also been recorded in north-east and eastern Burma (KING ET AL. 1975).

The capture of the Cinereous Vulture was widely reported by Cambodian national newspapers, registering local fascination with unusual species. Sadly, the capture of wild-life in Cambodia appears to be encouraged and, together with ongoing military conflict, greatly threatens the continued survival of many species.

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Figures 1-3. Cinereous Vulture (*Aegypius monachus*), Battambang, Cambodia, 29 December 1993.

