

African White-Backed Vulture

Scientific Name: *Gyps africanus*

Class: Aves

Order: Accipitriformes

Family: Accipitridae



This African White-Backed vulture has a bare head and sparse yellowish or whitish down on the back of the neck. Length is about 3 feet, and weight about 12 pounds. The wingspan is over 7 feet. This bird cannot fly far without using thermals to permit long glides. It often flies over 30 miles to find food. It often perches near cattle kraals, where it expects dead livestock to be available. Breeding takes place from August to April. They may make their own nests of sticks and leaves held together by guano, or they take over old nests of storks, eagles or secretary birds. Both male and female share in the incubation of the single egg, and in caring for the chick until it can fly at about six weeks of age. They will not breed if food is scarce

Range

The range of the African White-Backed vulture is Tropical Africa.

Habitat

African White-Backed vultures inhabit savannas, grasslands, sub-desert; sometimes in dense woodlands with abundant rainfall.

Gestation

Incubation: 56 to 58 days

Litter

1 egg

Behavior

African White-Backed vultures cannot fly far without using thermals to permit long glides. It often flies over 30 miles to find food. It often perches near cattle kraals, where it expects dead livestock to be available. The bird is quite gregarious at feeding sites and at its roost in tall trees, making throaty squawks, hisses, and pig-like squeals. They roost in groups until two or three hours after dawn and return to the roost about three hours before dark. They often gorge themselves until they are too full to fly.

Reproduction

African White-Backed vultures breed in loose groups, often in arid areas and nests in tall trees. The nuptial display is not spectacular and consists mostly of slow circling in pairs near the nest. Copulation takes place in the trees or in the nest itself. Both male and female share in the incubation of the single egg and in caring for the chick until it can fly at about six weeks of age.

Wild Diet

Carrion