

number of .cn domains has increased significantly. On 7 March 2007, CNNIC claimed that the registration cost of a .cn domain is priced at only one yuan, which resulted in cybersquatting afterwards. The number of .cn domains doubled within a month after the claim, and it quintupled in a year (<http://www.cnnic.net>). However, the cybersquatting brought hidden troubles, such as illegal application of .cn domains for poronographic sites, phishing sites, etc. In December 2009, the CNNIC enforced clearance of illegal .cn websites, in line with the action of the Ministry of Public Security. Meanwhile, CNNIC announced that since 14 December 2009, individuals can no longer register .cn domains and a paper application has to be submitted for registering, along with photocopies of the company business license and registrant ID. Therefore, the number of .cn domains reduced to one-third in a year from 13.459 million to 4.350

million; on an average about 24,956 .cn domains were removed out from the Chinese Internet every day.

The shrinkage of Chinese Internet resources is mainly due to the regulation of CNNIC, rather than the action by the Ministry of Public Security, the General Administration of Press and Publication, etc., which are responsible for the censorship of Internet content. As a non-profit organization affiliated to the Chinese Academy of Sciences, CNNIC is in charge of domain name registry services. It is concluded that the shrinkage of Chinese Internet resources since 2009 is not due to censorship of content or political control^{4,5}, but because of the regulation of domain name registry services.

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Vulture decline – an ecosystem crisis

The letter by Bohra¹ is interesting and highly informative. Decline of vultures is a serious ecosystem problem with negative consequences. Rotting carcasses constitute the favourite and typical diet of vultures. Thus, through their scavenging habits, vultures provide an important link in checking and containing the spread of infectious diseases among animals and even human beings. The concern raised by Bohra¹ is timely and calls for immediate action. He has reported the death of 80 vultures from the Jorbeer dead animal dumping site due to poisoning effects. Evidently, the situation is alarming. During the past few years, vultures are vanishing not only from India but from other parts of the world sky and going towards extinction. The *IUCN Red Data Book* has listed this bird as ‘critically endangered’.

Out of the 1200 bird species found in India, 8 belong to those of the vultures. The most common among them is the ‘Indian scavenger’, which was practically found throughout the country. However, over the years a number of species like the Indian king, long-billed griffon and Himalayan griffon have become a rare sight these days. Many have simply vanished and may be found in the high mountain ranges. Over the last dec-

ade, long-billed vulture has declined by more than 95% and moved onto the *IUCN Red Data Book* list as ‘critically endangered’. Similar declines have been reported from Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, where the population is rapidly disappearing. The present author has seen a number of unbeaten carcasses while on road journey between Jammu and the surrounding areas. The reasons for declining vulture populations include increasing urbanization, rampant use of pesticides in agricultural production, mounting pollution and widescale killing for their meat, increasing air traffic and lack of perching and nesting sites. In the light of the above, it is necessary that further decline be arrested. Although no definite control measures have been known so far, the tribal people can be educated regarding the importance of vultures to stop their killings². Airport authorities can also be approached not to kill vultures relentlessly. Captive breeding as is being followed in Himachal Pradesh needs to be started in other states also. Use of pesticides in agriculture needs to be minimized³. Proper consultation with a veterinarian before throwing out carcasses that have been treated with any non-steroidal anti-

inflammatory drugs such as diclofenac, should be done as a precautionary measure³. Chaudhry *et al.*⁴ reported that populations of the critically endangered long-billed vulture (*Gyps indicus*) in Pakistan have increased following the ban of the toxic veterinary drug diclofenac in South Asia. Similar efforts are required to fully implement the ban to eliminate diclofenac from the food supply of vultures⁵.

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