



Clean-up initiative | Photo source Pixabay

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IN PERU, TRACKABLE VULTURES ARE HELPING AUTHORITIES FIND ILLEGAL GARBAGE DUMPS



Black vultures, who are naturally drawn to garbage, have been fitted with GoPros as part of a campaign to clean up the city of Lima.

Peru's black vultures are well known locally for their natural aptitude for garbage location. They don't have to search too hard, since much of the garbage produced by the city of Lima is dumped illegally and ends up in the Pacific ocean. Now, the Ministry of the Environment has launched the **Gallinazo Avis** campaign — meaning Vultures Warn — to clean up the city. It is using the vultures to its advantage, by fitting a flock of them with GoPros, which collect real-time GPS data, and enable the people to find the illegal dumps across the city.

The scheme is being run with the help of the Museum of Natural History and a local university, who had already tagged vultures to understand their seasonal movements. Each of the birds has been given a name and character, and their movements can be followed in real-time through an interactive map. Promotional videos have been created, which place the vultures in a filmic narrative as misunderstood heroes. Not only does the GPS data enable the location of garbage, the footage collected is also having a two-fold effect. First, it is educating the citizens about the repercussions of illegal dumping, and second, it is improving the reputation of the vultures by transforming them into allies of the people.

vulturewarn-1-garbage-animal-bird-data-location

Could the natural instincts of other animals help us to locate and solve problems?

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