

**You will need:**

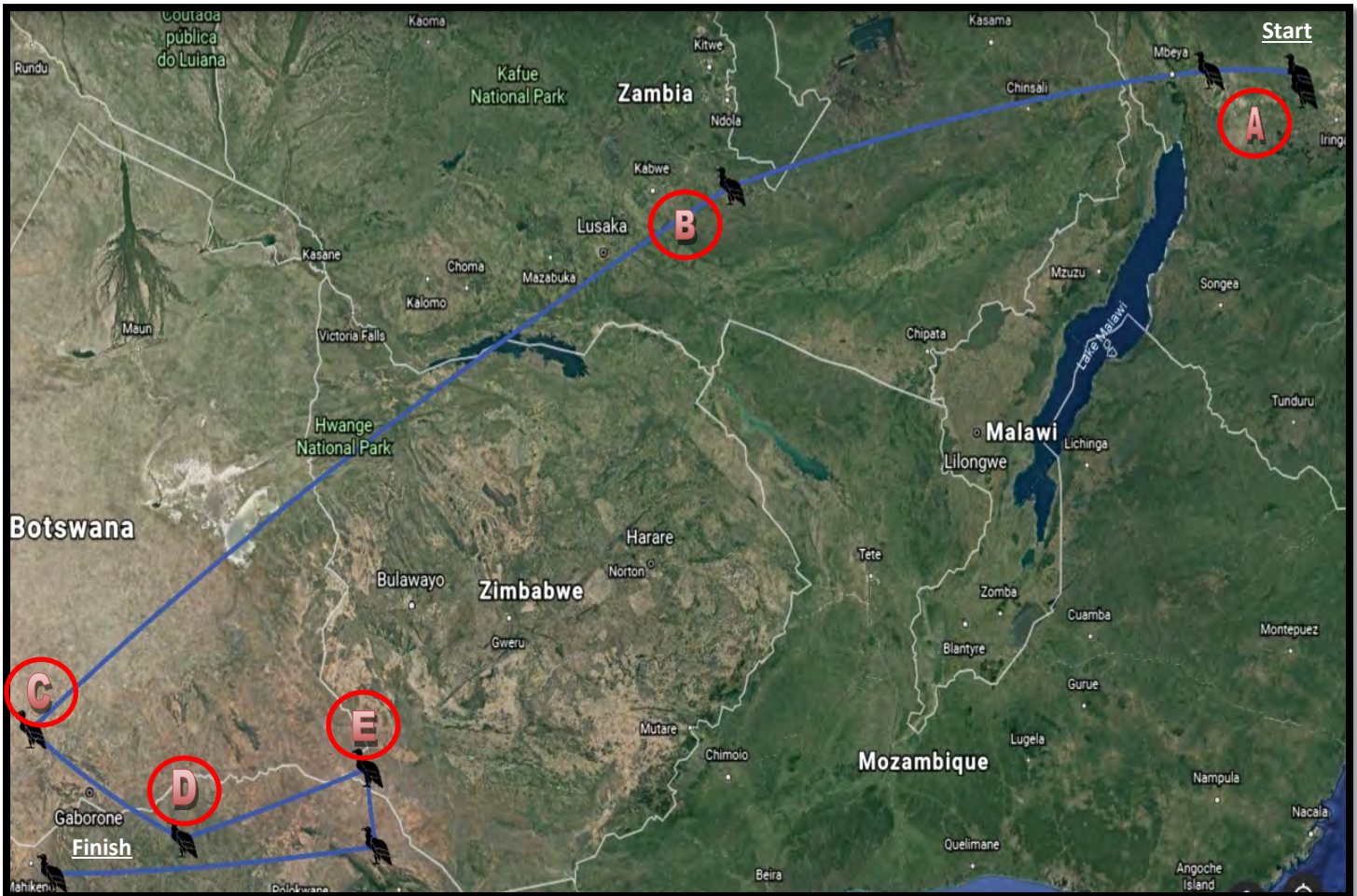
- Worksheet and pictures below

**Objective:** Students will use critical thinking skills as they explore the journey of a white-backed vulture.

**Directions:**

Vultures in the wild travel to many places and face a lot of dangers. To better understand where they go and how they survive, scientists fit them with a stylish backpack (circled in the picture) that allows us to track them. Are you ready to track a vulture and help save an endangered species?

Over the last few years, we have been tracking a white-backed vulture named Swoops! Take a look at the map below and discover some of the places Swoops has gone. The information on the second page corresponds with a red circled area on the map. Use this information to learn more about where Swoops has gone. The questions on the last page will help you track swoops and understand his movements!





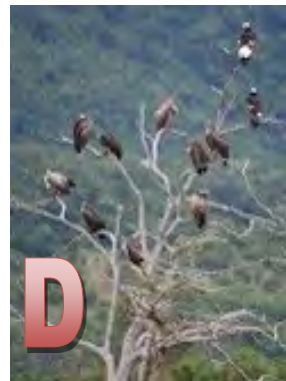
**A** Hi I'm Swoops, a white-backed vulture and this is where my journey begins! On October 5, 2016 you caught me, tagged me, and named me to help identify me! You took a look at my wing, which helped you understand how old I am. After doing this, you determined that I am an immature vulture at only three years old. I was fitted with a stylish backpack, but I hardly notice it's there. This backpack will tell you where I have been and if I am healthy! From where I was caught in southern Tanzania, I traveled over 1,000 miles into Southern Africa, which is likely the longest dispersal for any recorded land animal!



**B** In November 2016, I spent my time on a private game farm in Zambia. The habitat here was a combination of natural habitat with areas of agriculture and livestock farming. I spent so much time in this area because the locals had created a vulture restaurant for me and my fellow vultures to eat at. We vultures are scavengers, and the habitats we search for food in are disappearing. The locals here are aware that finding food can be hard for us, so they have created restaurants for us. At these restaurants they will leave out carcasses (usually pig) for us to scavenge on.



**C** In January 2017, I was quickly making my way towards South Africa, but before I left Botswana, I made a visit to the richest diamond mine in the world, the Jwaneng Diamond Mine. This mine is located in the Kalahari Desert west of Botswana's capitol Gaborone. How cool is this? Unfortunately, I didn't pick up any diamonds for you on my visit.

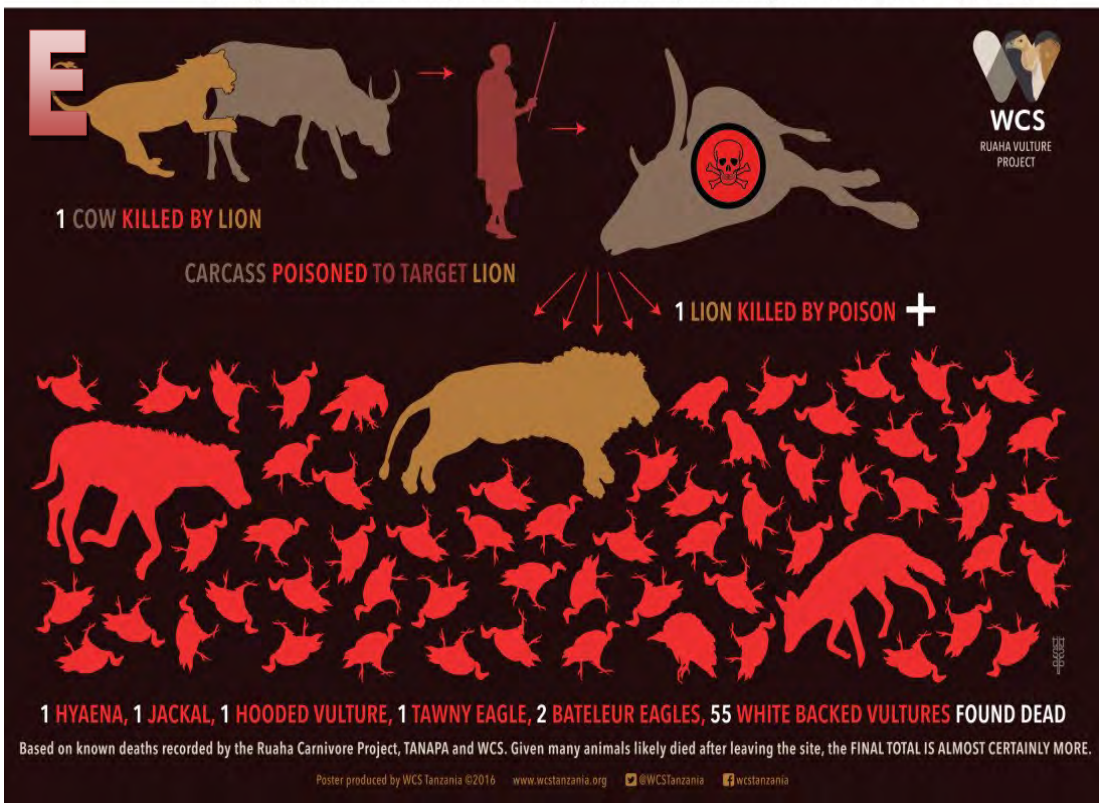


**D** At night after I am full from eating a nice big dinner I will roost, meaning settle in for the night, in a tall tree. We take refuge at our roosting site about 3 hours before it gets dark and will stay put for the night until about 3 hours after dawn.



### IMPACT OF A POISONING INCIDENT NEAR RUAHA NATIONAL PARK

Retaliatory poisoning is one of the main reasons why both carnivore and vulture populations are in rapid decline in many parts of Africa. WCS has been monitoring vultures since 2013.



In May of 2017 I traveled to Zimbabwe for the first time. During this time a serious poisoning event occurred near me in southeastern Zimbabwe where 94 critically endangered vultures were poisoned. Poachers had killed an elephant and had added poison to the carcass so my fellow vultures wouldn't attract the attention of the rangers. Luckily, I stayed away from that carcass and did not get sick. Not just poachers do this, farmers who have had one of their livestock killed by a lion will illegally leave poison on the meat in retaliation of the lion killing his animal; however, what the farmer doesn't know is that a lot of animals will eat that carcass besides the lion.

**Answer these questions to understand more about Swoops!**

1. What countries in Africa did Swoops travel through? Where did he start? Where did he end? Find a map of Africa to help you compare with the map on the first page!
  
2. How did you identify how old Swoops was?
  
3. How many miles did Swoops fly throughout his journey? How long did it take him?
  
4. How can vulture restaurants help save wild vultures?
  
5. Which desert has the world's richest diamond mine?
  
6. Unlike nocturnal animals, vultures are \_\_\_\_\_, which means they roost from roughly dusk until dawn and are more active during the day
  
7. Other than poisoning, what else has made it difficult for vultures like Swoops to find food?
  
8. What was one of the biggest threats to Swoops on his journey?
  
9. What are some of the reasons vultures get poisoned?
  
10. Why do you think it is important to be able to track where Swoops goes?
  
11. What are some things you think can be done to help protect vultures like Swoops?
  
12. What was the most interesting part of Swoops' journey to you?