

SANCTUARY NATURE FOUNDATION

Impact Report 2021





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FOUNDATION**

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"Every project outlined on these pages has been founded on the hope that *Homo sapiens*, the wise man, will live up to his name."



Bittu Sahgal

**Founder,
Sanctuary Nature Foundation**

Editor of *Sanctuary Asia*, India's first and largest circulating wildlife and ecology magazine (1981) and Founder-Editor of *Sanctuary Cub* (1984).

SEEDS OF HOPE

We at *Sanctuary* are working at the difficult task of conflict resolution between *Homo sapiens* and the rest of the biosphere. From our core we believe that consuming our biosphere today, to the point where it begins to tatter, is not the best way to secure better lives for ourselves, nor guarantee our children, in whose name we do almost all we do, better, more secure lives.

That said, we are sworn to sow seeds of hope for our young... even as we are sworn to tell them the truth about the state of their world. Walking that tightrope is the most difficult part of our mission. Every project outlined on these pages has been founded on the hope that *Homo sapiens*, the wise man, will live up to his name. That we will use our complex brains* to avoid pushing our biosphere over its tipping point.

For four decades, *Sanctuary's* primary constituency has remained young. And our unshakeable belief that 'nature knows best' has remained our North Star. But, generation after generation of powerful forces – governments, corporates, political parties, even some well-intentioned social leaders – effectively convinced us naked apes that the endless accumulation and control of the fruit of the biosphere was the ticket to survival for our families, clans, nations... indeed the planet itself.

Sanctuary's take is different. We *absolutely* believe that in this eat-or-be-eaten world, every species on Earth including *Homo sapiens* must look out for its own interests. Where we diverge from those who have declared war on our biosphere is that wounding the biosphere is not in our own interests. Like every other species, humans are *wholly* subservient to the biosphere. Put in the language of economists, dismantling nature's infrastructures (seas, lands, atmosphere), in ham handed attempts to 'improve' is poor planet management. Evidence of such Anthropocene failure is the climate crisis we have brought down upon ourselves. Also its handmaiden, the COVID-19 pandemic, a consequence of species and ecosystem abuse

Which brings us to the question of hope! When *Sanctuary* speaks with our one-million-strong constituency whose average age is 15 years, we ask, "How would you like to live in a magic house powered by the sun, whose windows were crafted from transparent lollipops, doors of chocolate, and from whose taps flow sweet lemonade. Then, the next morning, everything is magically restored?" The immediate, wide-eyed, delighted answer is "YES!"

And then we ask, "How would you feel if a bully boy came and broke down your magical home?" Silence! And furrowed brows. Micro-moments later we say: "Relax... don't worry, remember we said it's a magic home. It can fix itself... if we leave it alone long enough to do its job. Think... every monkey, bird, butterfly, bee lives in and eats just such a magical home, for that is what Planet Earth is!"

To children, parents and teachers we explain that like a cut on the hand, the biosphere is designed to self-repair and that the magic of reality conspires to return everything to balance (homeostasis).

The best way to gift our children a safe and happy future, we explain to the adults they depend on and trust, is to use science, curiosity, appreciation and wonder to revel in and revere the productivity of our planet's complex systems... without refashioning the biosphere after our own inexperienced image.

Leaders at COP26 in Glasgow said they agreed. That we should wean humanity off fossil fuels, unite to protect our biosphere, and treat social justice and equitable resource distribution as strategic solutions to the anthropogenic climate, health and economic crises we have wreaked upon ourselves. But every country head asked 'someone else' to do what had to be done.

This status quo is what *Sanctuary Nature Foundation's* mycelium-like network is working to change through every project we design and implement. This is how we hope to nourish hope for a better, more secure future for us all.

* Theoretical physicist Michio Kaku: "The human brain has 100 billion neurons, each neuron connected to 10,000 other neurons. Sitting on your shoulders is the most complicated object in the known universe."

“Sanctuary is sworn to sow seeds of hope for our young... even as we are sworn to tell them the truth about the state of their world.”



Paul Abraham

President, Hinduja Foundation

Paul Abraham was Chief Operating Officer (COO) of IndusInd Bank and has over 35 years of banking experience. President of the Hinduja Foundation and Chair, Advisory Board of the Sanctuary Nature Foundation, he also founded the museum initiative Sarmaya Arts Foundation.

THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW!

Today, more than at any time, we are faced with the spectre of having to make urgent choices. The luxury of debates and discussions is over. It's incredible how the world, both at corporate and individual levels, is going through the churn and is faced with existential choices. Not moving fast and choosing right will end up in our models becoming unsustainable. So many industries are already staring at extinction and irrelevance. The energy industry, the automobile industry, the real estate industry, the hospitality industry are all faced with sharp decline if they pursue their current unsustainable practices. And the list grows.

Policy makers who fail the future will also find themselves being put to pasture as younger more committed leadership will be entrusted with the public vote. We see so many countries electing leaders who are in their 30s and who are raising their voices for a sustainable world. Investors are already speaking with their capital as it is increasingly directed to industries and businesses, which are seen to be sensitive to environmentally sustainable practices and business models that are not based on avarice and extraction.

It's the only way into the future. Make your vote, your capital and your wallet count and direct it to where you find empathy, decisive action and a sensitivity to the generations to come and their right to inherit a world worth living in.

“ We humans distinguish ourselves from the rest of the living world because we can imagine alternate scenarios. Let's imagine a world which guarantees future generations pure water, clean air, stable climatic conditions and enough habitat for all animal and plant life to feel secure on this planet. Once we imagine that, let's all resolve to make it happen. ”

Advisory Board Members

The Board Members of the Sanctuary Nature Foundation form the solid edifice upon which all our communication, outreach, research advocacy, and project work thrive. They help connect the organisation's purpose to strategy.



Lord Nicholas Stern

Economist, Academic, Author and Climate Expert

I.G. Patel Professor of Economics and Government, London School of Economics; former President, British Academy; Chair, Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change; and former Chief Economist, World Bank.

“ Over the last 40 years Sanctuary has not only inspired us to appreciate the world's natural wonders, it has also demonstrated that nature and natural capital are central to our well-being and our survival. Sanctuary has been a beacon of hope and of determination in the creation of a much better, more sustainable, and more resilient path of development. That future is still in our hands, but the urgency for action is now intense. ”



Dia Mirza

Actor, Producer, UN Environment Goodwill Ambassador and UN Secretary-General Advocate for SDGs

A champion of nature, she spearheads the movement to reignite and strengthen the connection between man and nature and contribute to positive social change.

“ To empower and be empowered by those who live in the service of nature. The Sanctuary Nature Foundation continues to give me direction, define my purpose and add joy to my life. ”



Nikkhil Advani

Cofounder, Emmay Entertainment

An award-winning film producer, director, and screenwriter, he worked on India's first stereoscopic animation film 'Delhi Safari' (2006), about habitat loss in the Sanjay Gandhi National Park. It won a National Award.

“ My association with Bittu Sahgal and his relentless pursuit of a better, safer, more sustainable future for all has led to me being part of Sanctuary. Our work really has just begun. ”



Tara Lal

Founder, Wild Blue Foundation

Tara Lal came to conservation science later in her career after years in art, architecture and design. She received her Masters of Science in conservation from Imperial College, London, where she is currently working on her Ph.D.

“ Sanctuary has paved the way for connecting people to conservation in India. Projects like COCOON empower local communities to protect critical landscapes, which is the future of conservation practices. ”

Advisory Board Members



Kartik N. Shukul

Advocate, Bombay High Court and Supreme Court of India

A commercial and constitutional lawyer by profession, he also dedicates his time to conservation litigation. He is part of a State Level Committee that deals with human-animal conflict and acts as a Special Public Prosecutor.

“Our world has changed forever, there is no denying this indisputable fact; in these troubled times, the Sanctuary Nature Foundation has not only championed the cause of existing conservation issues, but it has also highlighted future possible calamities.”



Miel Sahgal

Writer, Editor

Miel has held various positions at Sanctuary over the past two decades, including Managing Editor of *Sanctuary Asia*. She was part of the founding team of Kids for Tigers, and spearheaded Sanctuary events, nature walks and workshops.

“Sanctuary has been an integral part of India’s conservation movement for over four decades. It’s exciting to see the organisation evolve as it galvanises yet another generation to work towards enhancing our collective future.”

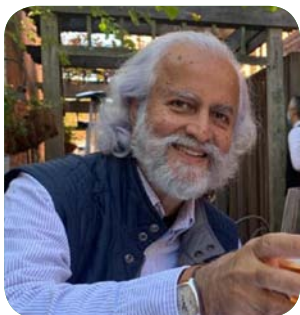


Norma Alvares

Advocate, Bombay High Court

An activist and campaigner on social and environmental issues of public concern, especially in her home state of Goa. In 2002, she was awarded the Padma Shri for her work towards the protection of animals and the environment.

“I am always impressed with the extent of preparatory work that goes into each project by Sanctuary and the professionalism with which it is assessed and evaluated from time to time.”

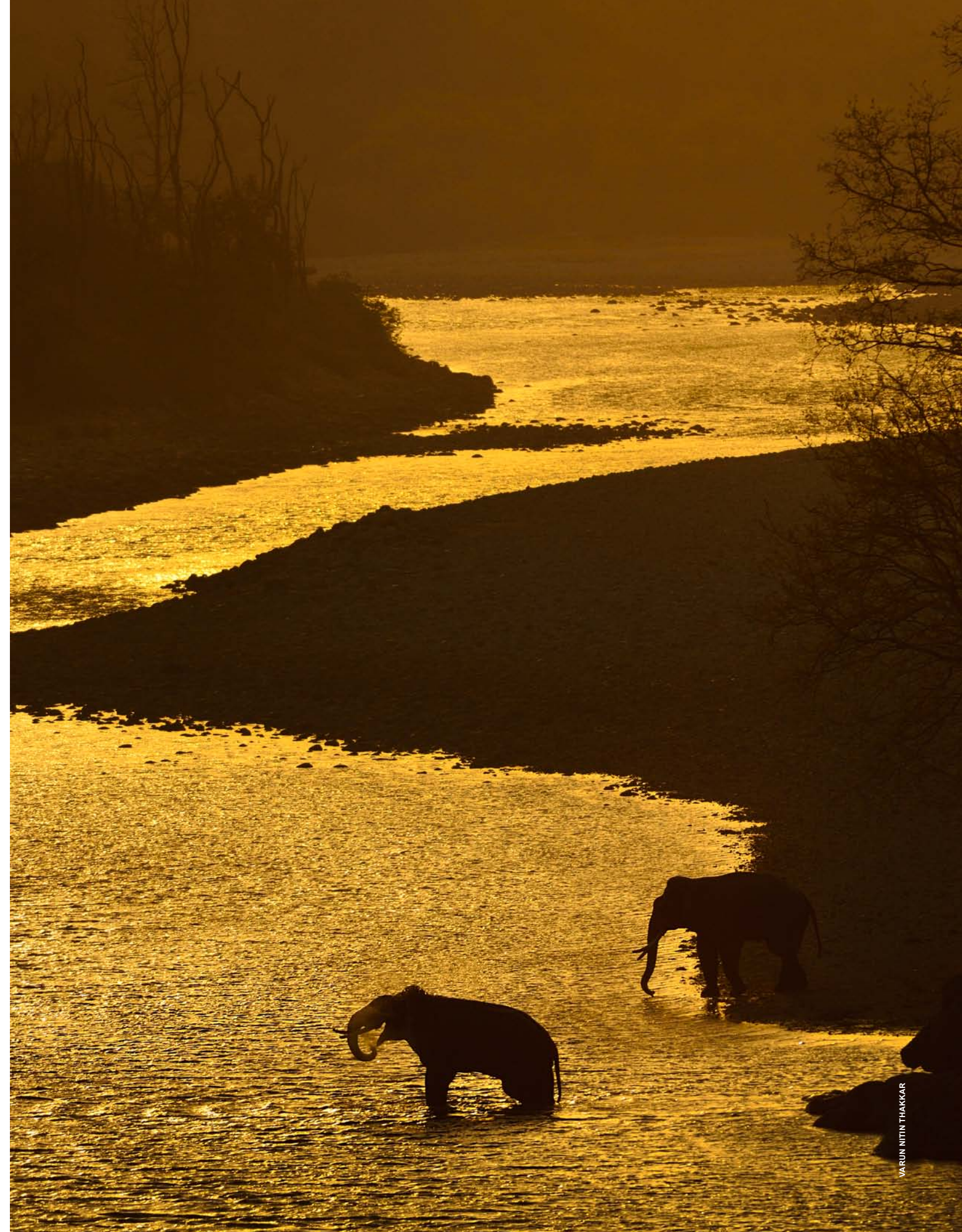


Indru Advani

Executive Member, Advisory Board, Sanctuary Nature Foundation

A Mechanical Engineer and Management Graduate, he has 46 years of Project, Marketing and Corporate experience. He retired as President and CEO of BAPL, an automotive components company.

“Kudos to the Sanctuary team for projecting a symbol of hope through the pandemic year, epitomising this excerpt from *Man of La Mancha*... ‘To fight for the right, without question or pause. To be willing to march into hell for a heavenly cause’.”



SANCTUARY 40 YEARS OF IMPACT 1981-2021

Bittu Sahgal, inspired by the late Fateh Singh Rathore, published the first issue of *Sanctuary Asia* in October. India's first wildlife conservation magazine began as a quarterly and later became a bi-monthly in January/February 1990 ([more on page 16](#)).

1981

Sanctuary Cub published in January/February 1984. It aimed to inculcate an appreciation for nature among children and encourage them to protect our wild heritage ([more on page 16](#)).

1984

Sanctuary Films produced two wildlife conservation serials for Doordarshan, India's national television network.

Late 1980s

Sanctuary Features Syndication began to reach a wider audience through the syndication of articles on nature, wildlife, travel, health and conservation from renowned writers such as Ruskin Bond, Vijaya Venkat, Dilip D'Souza, Pritish Nandy, Ranjit Lal, and more.

1989

Sanctuary Photo Library was set up as a repository of natural history images. It now has a fully computerised and expansive database of wildlife photographs.

1990

Sanctuary published *The Ecologist Asia*, an Indian edition of the U.K. journal *The Ecologist*, founded by Edward Goldsmith. *The Ecologist Asia*, whose co-editors were Bittu Sahgal, Vandana Shiva, Claude Alvares and Smitu Kothari, was dedicated to disseminating environmental and developmental news relevant to the region. It ran until 2003.

1993

Kids for Tigers, an educational outreach programme for schools was launched, and the world's largest 'Save the Tiger' scroll, as certified by the Limca Book of Records, was created ([more on page 24](#)).

1999

The first Sanctuary Wildlife Service and Photography awards was held at NCPA, Mumbai ([more on page 46](#)).

2000



First coffee-table book *The Kaziranga Inheritance* launched. Since then Sanctuary has published over 11 coffee-table books and nine guidebooks on varying landscapes ([more on page 16](#)).

2005

The Sanctuary Nature Foundation was established as a section 8 Foundation.

2015

Community Owned Community Operated Nature (COCOON) Conservancies, a critical rewilding initiative, launched with the first project in Gothangaon village, Maharashtra ([more on page 35](#)).

2015

The first Sanctuary Debate was held in Royal Opera House, Mumbai. Hosted annually, these debates have brought stalwarts of the conservation world and students together in healthy discussion on wildlife policy.

2017

The Mud on Boots Project, a booster programme that supports 'mud-on-the-boots' conservationists in India over a two-year period, launched ([more on page 28](#)).

2017

A new website, with a user-friendly layout, digital magazine and more features to connect with our followers launched in October.

2019

Sanctuary partnered with WILD Foundation and the Government of Rajasthan to organise WILD11 in Jaipur, but this was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2020

Sanctuary celebrated its 40th year anniversary with a special issue. The cover story was dedicated to looking at four decades in conservation, with a glimpse of the past and looking towards the future ([more on page 17](#)).

2021

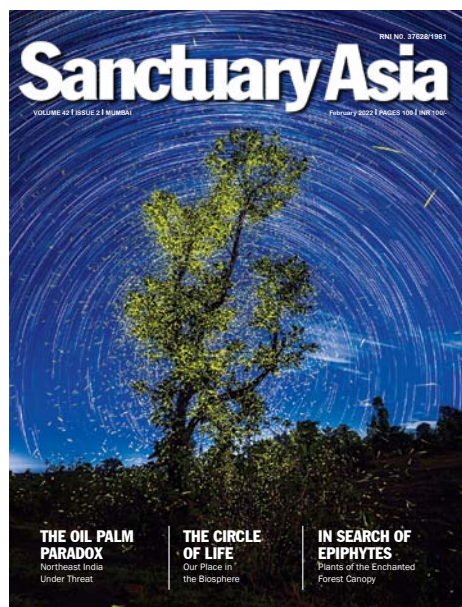
OUTREACH & COMMUNICATION



PUBLICATIONS

“Sanctuary Cub magazine is timeless and fascinating for children. At our home, copies are treasured and shared.”

Patricia Bailey Conway,
@pbaileyconway



The Sanctuary Nature Foundation (SNF)'s flagship magazine has been in continuous publication since 1981 and remains India's leading and best-loved magazine in its genre.

Though the COVID-19 pandemic halted the release of the print edition in April 2020, the magazine is still released as a digital edition.

Sanctuary Asia's six issues in 2021 offered readers insight into some of the most pressing conservation issues, including the devastating wildlife roadkills across India, the role of sociology and psychology in conservation, a groundbreaking story on women in herpetology, the systemic woes that plague Pakke's Special Tiger Protection Force on the frontlines, and more (see more on page 38).

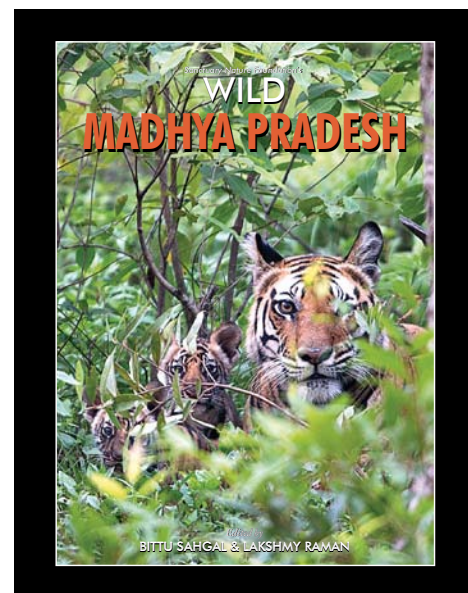
Sanctuary Cub is an edition for younger readers, which has been inspiring generations of young naturalists ever since it was launched in 1984. This edition actively encourages its readership to contribute to the publication, creating a community of children who are passionate about learning and sharing their explorations of Earth. Children send in articles, book reviews, art, updates on their activities, and letters that are published with due credit. In 2021, we added a few new pages to Sanctuary Cub and have been receiving positive feedback on our constant effort to make the magazine interesting and relevant for kids.

Check out all the news and articles we covered in 2021 on

www.sanctuarynaturefoundation.org

COFFEE TABLE BOOKS

Sanctuary's key goal has always been to galvanise public attention to the amazing natural fecundity our country has been blessed with and to highlight our need to secure this wild heritage. Toward this, we began producing large-format coffee table books and guidebooks on various Protected Areas around the country. Sanctuary's core competence has always been its nature and wildlife writing, editing and photography. Our stringent production quality is an industry standard and our campaigns to protect wildlife bring on board both government and non-government supporters of wildlife conservation. In 2005, we produced our first coffee-table book *The Kaziranga Inheritance* to stimulate pride about the heritage of this rhino, elephant and tiger habitat in Assam, and to make a strong visual statement and spotlight its defenders. Following the tremendous success of the book, Sanctuary followed this with the Inheritance series, Wild series and guidebooks.



SANCTUARY PUBLICATIONS

Inheritance Series

Kaziranga	2005
Revised edition	2007
Bharatpur	2006
Corbett	2007
Sundarbans	2007
Bandhavgarh	2008
Periyar	2008
Tadoba	2015

Guide Books

Corbett	2009
Pench	2013
Kaziranga	2014
Achanakmar	2017
Barnawapara	2017
Bhoramdeo	2017
Kanger	2017
Tamor-Pingla-Samarkot-Guru Ghasidas	2017
Nameri	2018

WILD Series

Maharashtra	2012
Revised edition	2015
Chhattisgarh	2017
Madhya Pradesh	2018

Other Coffee Table Books and Publications

Forever Stripes	2007
India Naturally	2008
Sankhala's India	2008
Lest We Forget	
PLAN B	2008
Mobilising to Save Civilisation (English & Hindi)	

40 YEARS OF SANCTUARY

Exactly 40 years ago, the first issue of Sanctuary Asia was published; the result of a promise made by our Founder-Editor Bittu Sahgal to his mentor Fateh Singh Rathore one night under the Jogi Mahal banyan tree in Ranthambhore. Today, as many as 450 issues later, Sanctuary has become a binding force and springboard for countless conservationists who are now leading impactful campaigns and initiatives across the world.

Fittingly, a flourishing terrarium graced our 40th anniversary cover. Sanctuary's decades of work, weaving the threads of community, biodiversity, and wilderness, was evocatively captured in this illustration by Svabhu Kohli. In this self-sustained ecosystem, diverse habitats, species, and beings are nurtured and revered by communities that thrive in her fecund blessings.

Here's a glimpse of what we covered in this special issue:



40 YEARS AND COUNTING

Our Founder-Editor Bittu Sahgal reminisces of days that led to the birth of Sanctuary Asia. "It seems like yesterday. I can still smell the wood smoke. Remember the conversations. Feel the warmth of the campfire under the banyan tree that gave birth to Sanctuary, the magazine, which the late Fateh Singh Rathore, virtually coerced penniless-me into launching," he writes.

FOUR DECADES OF CONSERVATION

For the 40th anniversary issue, we invited a few of India's expert scientists, field biologists, thinkers, wildlife photographers, filmmakers and technology wizards to reflect on the highs, lows, and game-changing moments in their respective fields over the

past four decades. Essays that inform, inspire and offer perspective to a world in flux were penned by Aparajita Datta, Ghazala Shahabuddin, Aditya Panda, Neelima Vallangi, Neema Pathak Broome, Pranay Lal, Joanna Van Gruisen, Akanksha Sood Singh and Shashank Srinivasan.

THE SANCTUARY MAGIC AT 40

Bijal Vachharajani has over a decade of experience working with publications on animals, the environment and climate change, a journey that began with Sanctuary. Here, she reflects on the myriad ways in which Sanctuary changed her life and continues to inspire her as well as hundreds of young people to this day.

MOUNTAIN TRANSITIONS

Ian Lockwood pens a short history of conservation in the Western Ghats, a biodiversity hotspot that, in reality, also encompasses forests in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka and the Western Ghats are lumped together because of shared species and broad biogeographic similarities.

DAYS OF JOURNALISM PAST

Photojournalist Shailendra Yashwant recalls his early days of reporting for Sanctuary in the 1990s and shares a story which eventually led him to become an activist of the finest kind.

INDIAN ORNITHOLOGY: A 40-YEAR LEGACY

Former Director of the BNHS Asad Rahmani examines India's rapidly-growing fascination for birds and their classification over the years, with a special focus on the recent four decades, to commemorate the 'birth' of Sanctuary Asia magazine in 1981.

“Just like tree rings, Sanctuary is a keeper of India's natural history stories, advocate for change, and always, a quiet champion of wildlife and its people.”

– Bijal Vachharajani,
Author and Editor



BELOW Sanctuary was born of an impulse decision made on a dark night at a campfire under Jogi Mahal's famous banyan tree in Ranthambhore, on the suggestion of the late Fateh Singh Rathore.



40 YEARS OF SANCTUARY

“Sanctuary has created a lot of awareness, showcased a lot of authors, a collection of never-seen-before photographs, and some *hulchul* for governments resulting in better lifespan for species and Protected Areas.”

– Dr. Lala Aswini Kumar Singh, Former OIC – Govt. of India Crocodile Institute, Retired Senior Research Officer – Odisha, Member – IUCN/SSC Conservation Planning Specialists Group, Vice-President – Orissa Environmental Society



BELOW This incredible confrontation between a sloth bear and a tiger took place in the Ranthambore Tiger Reserve in 2011. The mother bear with two cubs on her back, literally stumbled upon a pair of courting tigers. Usually both animals would give each other a wide berth, but for some reason the bear chose to stand her ground. The young tiger in the frame had probably never experienced anything like this and after a period of angry vocalisations by both animals, lasting around two minutes, the tigress and her mate retreated. The mother bear, cubs holding on for dear life, won the day.



Forty years since the first issue of *Sanctuary* was published in 1981, much has changed in the world – the climate crisis is now an accepted reality, conservation has more support than ever before, and fragile bridges are being built between human rights and wildlife activists. For the 40th anniversary issue, we invited a few of India’s expert scientists, field biologists, thinkers, wildlife photographers, filmmakers and technology wizards to reflect on the highs, lows, and game-changing moments in their respective fields over the past four decades.

IN GRATITUDE TO THE EASTERN HIMALAYA

Aparajita Datta leads NCF’s Eastern Himalaya research and conservation programme. In this essay, she talks about how her time in the Eastern Himalaya sparked her journey as both a conservationist and researcher.

LIFE IN THE LIVED LANDSCAPE

Ten years ago, **Ghazala Shahabuddin**, a doctor in ecology who has been researching a range of ecological problems in India, visited the hardwood oak forests of Mukteshwar in Kumaon. She has since spent much of her time working on biodiversity research and outreach activities in this area.

TIGERS OF EASTERN CENTRAL INDIA

Aditya Panda, an Odisha-based naturalist and wildlife conservationist who serves as the Honorary Wildlife Warden in Angul District, Odisha, sketches a brief history of tiger conservation efforts in India, with a special focus on the tigers of Eastern Central India.

ONE EARTH

In this essay, **Pranay Lal**, a biochemist who works in public health and the environment, explains why “techno fixes” to looming issues like climate change and ecological breakdown, do not take into account the enormous, planetary scale ‘engine’ made up of small things like soil, mud, detritus, mulch, sand, gravel, grit and rock.

LOVE IN THE ANTHROPOCENE

Neelima Vallangi writes about how loving the natural world in the age of the Anthropocene has not been easy. Deep in the grasp of ecological grief or climate anxiety, with the future she had envisioned for herself seeming increasingly uncertain, she has still been able to find hope in these heartbreaking times.

COMMUNITY CONSERVED AREAS

A member of Kalpavriksh, **Neema Pathak Broome** coordinates the Conservation and Livelihoods Programme. Here, she provides an introduction to community conserved areas: what they are, how they are managed, the biodiversity within them and finally, the ways in which we can support them.

OF WILDLIFE AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Joanna Van Gruisen came to India in 1981 from the U.K. to make wildlife documentaries and has lived here ever since. She shares insights on being a wildlife photographer and filmmaker in India over four decades that perfectly overlap with the inception of *Sanctuary*.

THE WILD ON CAMERA

Akanksha Sood Singh, multi award winning Indian natural history filmmaker, writes about how in the last 20 years, she has brought hidden stories from the natural world to the world through her films, in the hope to create entertainment that inspires and compels meaningful change.

CONSERVATION MEETS TECHNOLOGY

Shashank Srinivasan, a cartographer, drone pilot, and conservation technologist, is the founder of Technology for Wildlife. In this piece, he elaborates on the role technology can play in conservation efforts if understood and executed strategically and sensitively.

COMMENTS FROM THE SANCTUARY TRIBE

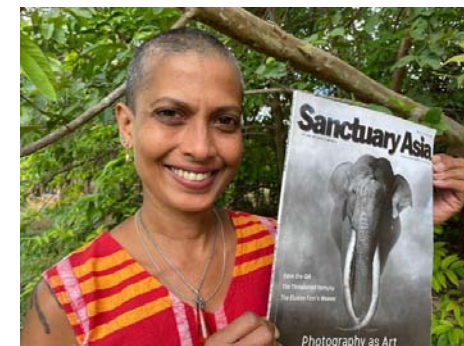
To celebrate 40 years of *Sanctuary*, we asked those we consider longtime friends and family to our Foundation to write us a letter, telling us what the magazine means to them. Here are some of the responses:

Sanctuary was an essential part of my childhood with many cover images, which I still remember vividly. It was my first peek into the forests of India. I remember thinking it was like a *National Geographic* magazine but about things that are closer to home. I support the **Mud on Boots** initiative, which is doing important work.

Gautam Pandey, Award-winning Wildlife Filmmaker

When I first came across *Sanctuary* magazine, I sat on the floor, leaning against a filing cabinet, and was lost to the world for what seemed like hours. *Sanctuary* was my first window into India’s natural history. Later, I started my writing career by publishing in the magazine, which gave me the encouragement that set me on my path.

Janaki Lenin, Journalist & Writer – Draco Books



When I was 17, I began proofreading articles for *Sanctuary*! And then when I finished my undergraduate studies, I sent in exactly one job application and it was to *Sanctuary*. It is responsible for my entire career.

Swati Hingorani, Senior Programme Officer – IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature)

I have known *Sanctuary* since its first issue in 1981. It was the first nature magazine in India. It was filled with lovely images that helped in spreading the message of conservation to a very large audience.

Dr. Asad Rahmani, Author & Director – Bombay Natural History Society (Retired 2017)



Winning the title of *Sanctuary* Photographer of the Year in 2005 (my first award in this field!) gave me the confidence I needed to pursue a full-time career in wildlife photography and filmmaking. I owe it all to *Sanctuary*.

Kalyan Varma, Emmy-nominated Wildlife Filmmaker & Photographer

Sanctuary magazine has been my lighthouse and anchor – lighting my ways and keeping it real for me. What I learned from the *Sanctuary* family built my bones as a conservationist. Bittu sir’s Commentary on the front and his Last Word on the back have made me dust myself off and GET TO WORK! *Sanctuary* occupies prime real estate in my mind, heart and soul.

Sara Mahdi, Creative Conservationist & Science Communicator

Sanctuary has influenced and shaped my life. I was fortunate to work there briefly (1997-98) and it provided me with a solid grounding for conservation journalism. It is a wonderful network of conservationists from where I have drawn strength. I have been part of Kids for Tigers and hope to be more involved! *Sanctuary* has inspired me and a generation of conservationists.

Prerna Singh Bindra, Author & Environmental Journalist



“The 40th anniversary is a splendid issue. The cover with its marvellous art by Svabhu Kohli is an attractive graphic that symbolically visualises the role of the magazine in a mesocosm of life. The content strikes a good balance between reminiscing and looking forward in a challenging age.”

– Ian Lockwood, Author and photographer, Sri Lanka



IN THIS PAGE **Janaki Lenin** (extreme left) with her copy of *Sanctuary Asia*. She is a prolific writer who has contributed several articles to *Sanctuary* that have started much-needed conversations. **Kalyan Varma** was a recipient of the *Sanctuary* Wildlife Photographer of the Year award in 2005 for this image (top left) of a worker jumping ant murdering the queen. **Prerna Bindra** (left) with the famous *Huli Vesha* dancers of Karnataka at the *Sanctuary* Wildlife Service Awards, 2007, the year she received the *Wildlife Service Award*.

COMMENTS FROM THE SANCTUARY TRIBE

“There’s a synecdoche for planet Earth: one Little Ringed Plover amid garbage in a riverbed. But we can reverse this. The final sin isn’t consumption, or even waste. The final sin is despair. That’s the one to resist, and we can. Because what else matters?”

– David Quammen, author of *Spillover*



It was 14 years ago when I won both the first and second prize in this competition (Sanctuary Wildlife Photography Awards 2007), and it was also the year I changed my career from web designing to full time photography. Thank you Sanctuary Asia.

Sachin Rai,
Wildlife Photographer

Congratulations on the landmark and the legacy Sanctuary Asia! And what gorgeous art to mark the occasion Svabhu Kohli!

Rohan Chakravarthy,
cartoonist, illustrator and author

Words fail... Sanctuary Asia, 40 Years of Conservation. A part of my life that has brought me maximum joy, meaning, fulfillment, hope, and inspiration has

been the small role I’ve been privileged to play in the life of this magazine and the extraordinary people behind it. To all the lives, human and wild, that you have and will continue to change for the better... celebrating you here in New York City on your 40th!

Jennifer Scarlott,
New York

As a child, I would spend a few hours reading every article when my father got home a copy of *Sanctuary Asia*. It was the only magazine that held my attention. I used to think, “why can’t it be published fortnightly instead of bi-monthly?” In the next few years, while walking around ponds, *Sanctuary Asia* introduced me to frogs discovered in the Western Ghats and to observing holes on coconut trees, which revealed Rose-ringed Parakeets. From meeting my idols to seeding my curiosity towards nature, *Sanctuary Asia* introduced me to the natural world and conservation during my formative years, made me dream of how my life would be if I were one such person in the field.

K. Ramnath Chandrasekhar,
Conservation Educator, Chennai

For the last 20 years my treasures of the Jungle are on my study table. Kept the old *Sanctuary* issues like golden bricks in my *almirah*. Thanks a lot.

Suprio Mukherjee

Many, many congratulations to Bittu Sahgal and *Sanctuary Asia*. May there be many more 40s!

Vivek Menon,
Founder and Executive Director,
Wildlife Trust of India

DIGITAL PRESENCE

In 2021, we saw the rhythms of the ‘new normal’ in effect, as the COVID-19 pandemic continued to affect millions of people. Having strengthened our digital presence to keep up with these sweeping changes the previous year while our team continued to work remotely, we have only seen more online engagement this year.

Sanctuary has continued to publish our magazine digitally every month on the dot, put out a monthly newsletter (launched in 2020) that is sent to just under 10,000 recipients, who receive updates on our projects, publications, campaigns, events and more. We have also organised several webinars on subjects of interest to our audience. Let’s dive a little deeper into our digital impact...

SOCIAL MEDIA

Since COVID-19 has pushed us to embrace the conveniences and opportunities that come with the virtual world, our team has been working hard to

better understand the kind of messaging that would move people and interest them online. While there is so much more to do, *Sanctuary*’s social media networks on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube and email reach out to over half a million citizens across the world. Here’s a look at our social media numbers (as of December 14, 2021):

	@sanctuaryasiapage 260 K followers
	@SanctuaryAsia 30.7 K followers
	@sanctuaryasia 122 K followers
	Sanctuary Nature Foundation 8.35 K subscribers

THE ETHICS OF WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY

Sanctuary is committed to ethical photography and would like to bring this critical issue to the forefront. Ahead of the Sanctuary Wildlife Awards 2021, jury members Dr. Anish Andheria, President, WCT and Bittu Sahgal, Founder-Editor of *Sanctuary Asia*, shared examples and tips on how to identify harmful practices and prioritise the wild instead of fixating on getting a “perfect” photograph. This event was live on *Sanctuary*’s Instagram page.

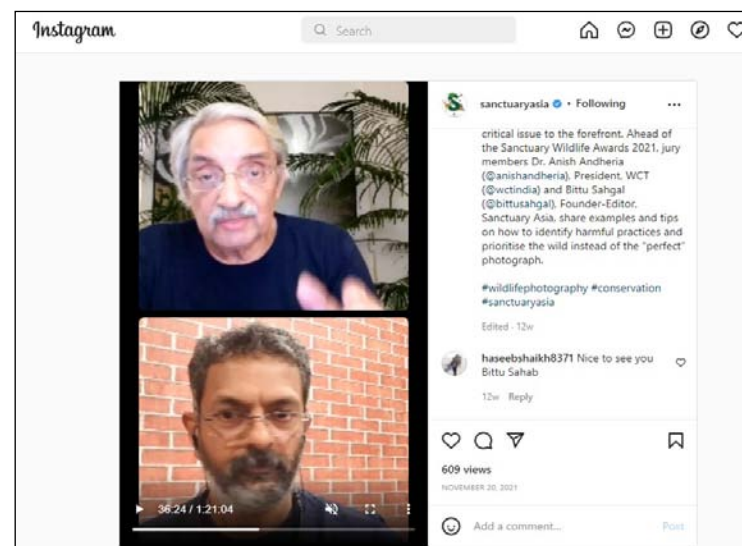
ALT-EFF FILM FESTIVAL PARTNERSHIP

Sanctuary partnered with All Living Things Environmental Film Festival (ALT EFF) for their second edition of the virtual film festival. Our team reviewed 13 out of the 44 films in their 2021 catalogue. *Sanctuary*’s Cara Tejjal also interviewed **Kunal Khanna**, the founder of ALT EFF, ahead of the launch of the second edition. As part of the partnership, *Sanctuary* offered readers a 20 per cent discount on all tickets to the festival.

A look at Sanctuary Asia August 2021

COVER STORY: Their Only Home
And deserts and scrublands, wet and dry grasslands, tropical and temperate forests – the Indian subcontinent is blessed with a unique mix of habitats, diverse geographies, and microclimates. Not surprisingly, hundreds of species are found here, and nowhere else in the world. *Sanctuary*’s Assistant Editors, Divya Kulkar and Abhinaya Kalpanasundaram picked out a few of India’s lesser-known endemics to showcase the stunning diversity of our beautiful country. Photo: Julie. [READ MORE](#)

PHOTO FEATURE: Emerging Life
Perched on the edge of bracket fungi in Amboli, Maharashtra, this purple tree crab is on high alert, probably having spotted the photographer. Its stunning bluish purple colouration inspired its species name: *Ghiatana atropurpurea*, which means dark purple in Latin. As the microscope descends on India’s coasts, the Earth bursts with new plant and animal life that is at once splendid and crucial for the planet. Photo: Saee Bhurke. [READ MORE](#)



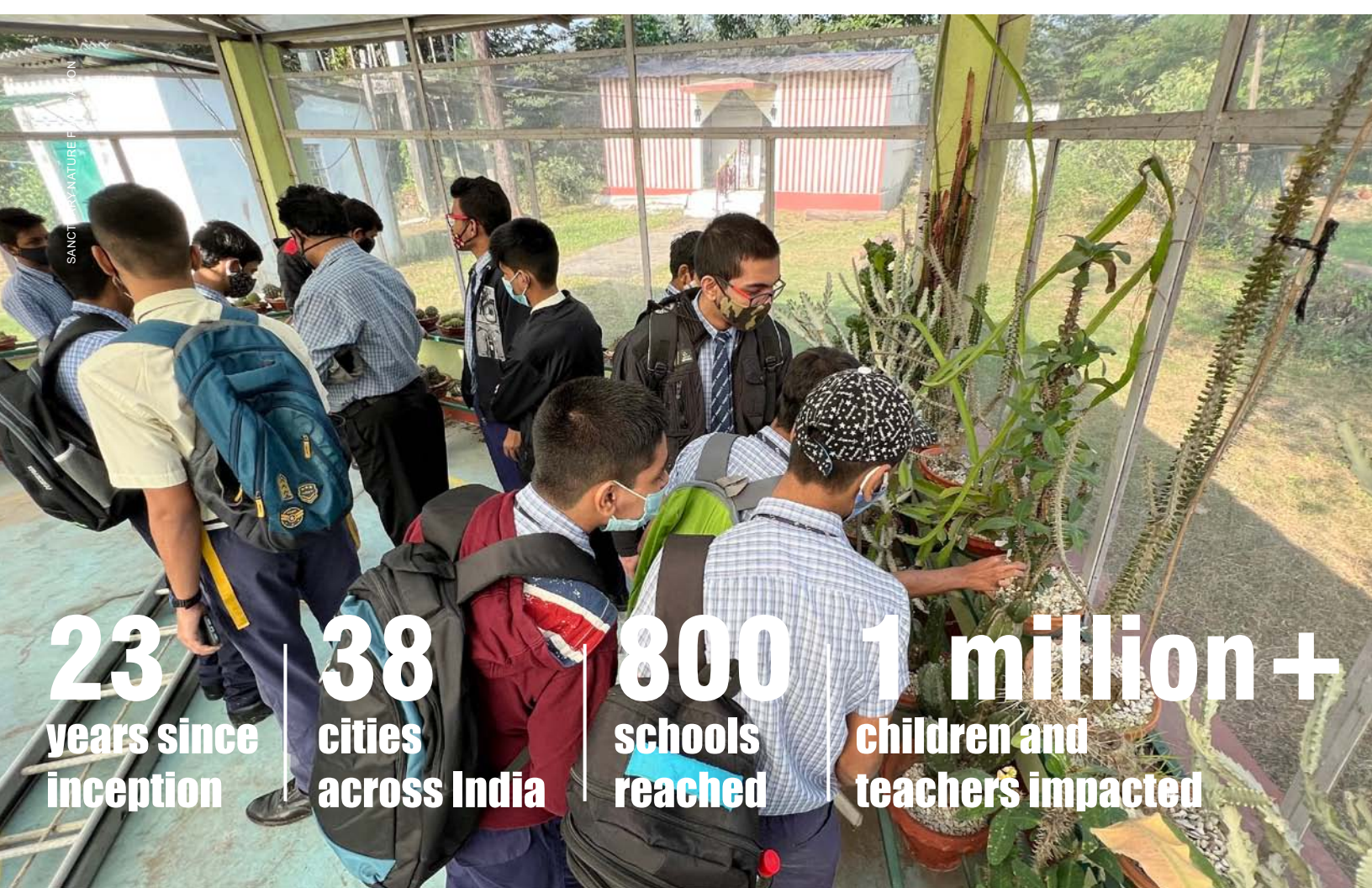
#INOURLFILTH

Starting October 2020, *Sanctuary* curated an online series #InOurFiltH to inspire followers to lobby for better waste management systems in their villages/cities/towns. The series continued into 2021, with hard-hitting images of wildlife forced to navigate human trash in their wild habitats garnering the attention of several thousand people across the world. The series was covered in *Scroll.in*, *Outlook India*, *The Wire*, *The Week* amongst other publications. The image seen on the right, titled ‘Dry Run’, was part of the series.

In the outskirts of hot and arid Jaipur city, an Indian fox picks up a plastic cup. This dainty canid is endemic to the subcontinent, and is known for its crepuscular behaviour, wide-range of vocalisations and omnivorous diet that includes everything from termites, to fruit, to partridge. Yet, despite its dietary range, it certainly isn’t meant to be chewing on plastic!

According to earthday.org, the world uses 500 billion plastic cups every year, and another 16 billion disposable coffee cups. These billions of cups are used just once, but pollute our precious Earth forever. The global corporations that flood our markets with consumer goods are the world’s worst plastic producers and polluters. According to Greenpeace, companies such as CocaCola, PepsiCo, Nestle, Unilever, Procter & Gamble, and Colgate-Palmolive feature amongst the top 10 companies that are “flooding the planet with throwaway plastic”. While individual actions are wonderful and important, the truth is that producer accountability is essential to addressing waste management at a national and global scale. Photographer: Vishwas Thakker

PROJECTS



23 years since inception | **38** cities across India | **800** schools reached | **1 million+** children and teachers impacted

PROJECT: KIDS FOR TIGERS

1999-Present

In 1999, Sanctuary launched *Kids for Tigers*, an environmental education programme whose core purpose is to introduce children to nature in a gentle and reassuring manner. It snowballed into one of India's largest mass movements to save the tiger, inspiring millions of children in schools across India. At the centre of our mission lies the need to communicate the rationale for conservation to children, using the tiger as a metaphor for all of nature. Despite the myriad problems that grip India's wilderness, we communicate to

kids the brighter side of things; that nature is resilient and self-repairing, that the tiger will spring back to safe numbers if we offer it seclusion and protection. We highlight the connection between biodiversity, forests and water, and explain how forests help us fight climate change. All this is done via carefully created fun activities and lessons. We are determined not only to leave a better planet for our children but also better children for our planet! To read more about the programme and for details on how to become a part of it, head to our [website](#).

“ Thanks to Kids For Tigers, about one million children across the length and breadth of urban and rural India have been motivated to bridge the gap between NATURE and US. Now, they are active participants in the process and evolution of a NEW PLANET. ”

– Madhu Bhatnagar
(Consultant) Head Environment Consciousness Programme – The Shri Ram Schools
Consultant EDUCARE-Environment Programme.



MAP NOT TO SCALE. BORDERS NEITHER AUTHENTICATED NOR VERIFIED.



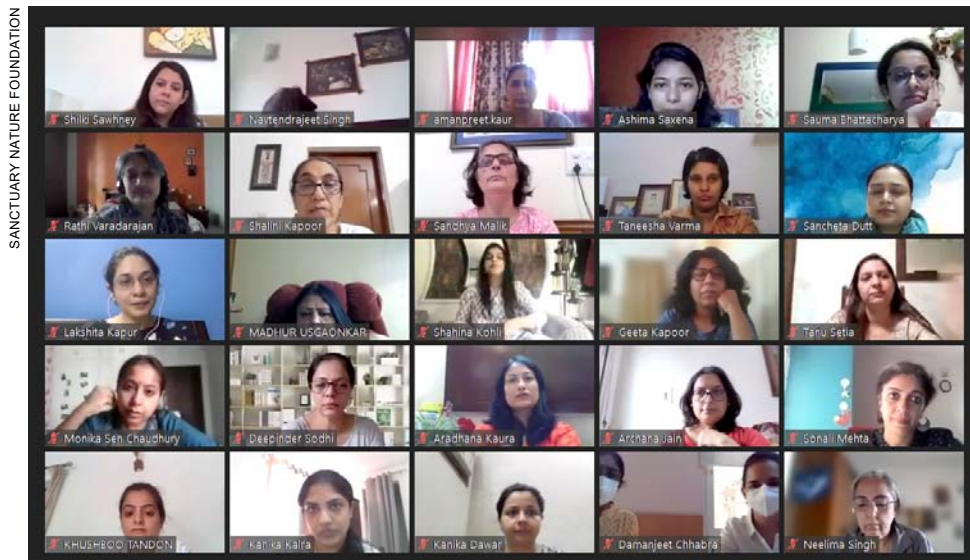
KIDS FOR TIGERS ACTIVITIES

There are no dull moments with Kids for Tigers! Kids make a lot of positive noise through tree planting drives, rallies, fests and more. Our coordinators help our Kids for Tigers students and point teachers from across India's cities organise exciting activities that help discover secrets about our exceptional natural treasures, including the one that symbolises it all, our very own tiger!

Here's what happens when a school joins the Kids for Tigers network.

- Stage 1:** Registration of schools and introduction to the programme.
- Stage 2:** Teachers' Training Workshop for educators.
- Stage 3:** Audio-Visual shows linking tigers with climate change.
- Stage 4:** Nature walks – especially to gauge students with an affinity and commitment to the environmental imperative.
- Stage 5:** Petition drives, tiger parades and rallies, creative art competitions, fests, Wildlife Week events, and information-rich notice boards and school projects.
- Stage 6:** National Camp.
- Stage 7:** Conclusion, feedback, gifts/certificates to teachers and/or principals, trophies to schools and a road map for the next year.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2021



THE SANCTUARY EDUCATIONISTS' ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP WEBINAR 2021-22

Teachers are our unsung heroes and through Kids for Tigers we aim to stimulate their commitment to environmental imperatives and communicate this to children. We organised four Teachers' Environmental Leadership Webinars between June and August 2021, conducted with the help of schools like, The Shriram School, Aravali, the Shriram Millennium School, Hyderabad and The Kalyani School, Pune. These workshops were led by Bittu Sahgal, Dr. Parvish Pandya, Director, Science and Conservation, Sanctuary Nature Foundation, Preeti Takle, Mumbai Coordinator, Kids for Tigers, Rituraj Phukan, Northeast Coordinator, Kids for Tigers and Amandeep Kaur Bamrah, National Coordinator, Kids for Tigers. Over 1,300 teachers attended the webinars.

GLOBAL TIGER DAY – POSTER MAKING COMPETITION

We celebrated Kids for Tigers Global Tiger Day virtually for the second year. To mark the importance of this day, we conducted a drawing competition for all the little warriors of Mother Earth to keep them engaged and motivated during the extended lockdown. More than 500 students participated in this contest from around the country. The contest was organised in two categories Junior (III to V) and Senior (VI to VIII) with the theme 'Bagh Bachao, Bharat Bachao'. A select few were published in *Sanctuary Cub* September 2021 magazine. All the participants were given a free digital subscription of *Sanctuary Asia* and *Sanctuary Cub*.

VIRTUAL ECO DAY CELEBRATIONS

Throughout the year, we celebrated over a dozen 'Eco Days', from Van Mahotsav and World Frog Day to World Sparrow Day. Quizzes on relevant topics were organised to celebrate each of these eco days, with over 6,500 (students and teachers) participants.

BIODIVERSITY BOOTCAMP: ESSAY COMPETITION

An essay competition was organised by the Sanctuary Nature Foundation and The Climate Reality Project India to celebrate the International Day of Biological Diversity. Students of classes eight and nine were invited to submit an essay about their favourite animal, conservation challenges and solutions. The top 10 essays were selected and the winners were invited to present their essays on May 22, 2021 at the Biodiversity Bootcamp, which was conducted on Zoom. A digital certificate was presented to all the participants along with a one-year free subscription to *Sanctuary Magazine*. Some of the best essays were published in *Sanctuary Cub*. This competition was organised and coordinated by Amandeep Kaur Bamrah along with Rituraj Phukan and Preeti Takle.

VIRTUAL AUDIO-VISUAL SHOW

Several virtual audio visual shows were conducted across the country by Bittu Sahgal, Preeti Takle, Dr. Parvish Pandya and Amandeep Kaur Bamrah. On the occasion of World Environment Day 2021, Bittu Sahgal hosted two of these shows: one, for the members of Nehru Science Centre, Mumbai and the other, for the members of the Asiatic Library, Mumbai.



ENVIRO FEST – CHANDIGARH

On the occasion of Global Tiger Day, Kids for Tigers conducted various activities, such as an audio visual show dedicated to the striped predator – 'In Tiger's Wonderland' for the students of Brookfield International School.

An audio visual show, a quiz and various other interactive sessions like wildlife storytelling session about tigers and other wildlife of Indian forests were conducted. A session on stories from the field was conducted where Govardhan Meena (Ranthambhore) and Jyoti Sharma, Sanctuary Young Naturalist Awardee 2017 shared why tigers are important for them.

KOLKATA NATURE TRAILS

Most kids today suffer from nature-deficit disorder as they spend less time outdoors, and it's taking a toll on their health and well-being. Research has shown that children do better physically and

emotionally when they are in green spaces. We at Kids for Tigers understand that it is extremely important to develop and nurture the bond between kids and nature and hence we conduct nature trails on a regular basis. Students from three schools in Kolkata and their teachers gathered at Kolkata's heritage park Eden Gardens for three consecutive days – November 29, 30 and December 1, 2021 for our Kids for Tigers Nature Walks. All the COVID-19 protocols were followed to ensure safety of the participants.

PARENTAL SUMMIT – 12 LECTURE SERIES

Sanctuary partnered with Global Tipping Point Summit to provide them four Change Facilitators – Preeti Takle, Rituraj Phukan, Heeta Lakhani, Nikita Pimple – who conducted three sessions each, to guide the members of the Action Project group, who will take actions themselves and also motivate others (their family, kids and friends) to adapt to a sustainable lifestyle. These sessions were planned and coordinated by Amandeep Kaur Bamrah.

“ Kids for Tigers in Goa was launched in 2013. Students and teachers have visited forests and engaged with different ecosystems. Today, many students have gone on to lead environmental campaigns. The youth collective part of *Amche Mollem* campaign are testimony to the impact of the Kids for Tigers programmes in Goa. ”

– Tallulah D'Silva, Goa Co-ordinator, Kids for Tigers



ABOVE LEFT Students from St. Stephen's School, Bowbazar, Kolkata take part in a nature walk on November 30, 2021.

BOTTOM LEFT A poster created for the Global Tiger Day competition by Vinayak Rabul Vijayan of class V from The Shriram Millennium School, Faridabad, Haryana.

BOTTOM RIGHT A screengrab from the virtual audio visual show conducted on World Environment Day 2021.



ABOVE Over 1,300 teachers attended the Sanctuary Educationists' Environmental Leadership Webinars that were held between June and August 2021.



PROJECT: MUD ON BOOTS

(2017-Present)

The *Mud on Boots* Project is Sanctuary's unique booster programme designed to recognise and support grassroots conservationists across India. The project focuses on supporting individuals from local communities whose contribution to wildlife conservation are overlooked because of a lack of affiliations, educational qualifications, mainstream opportunities and language barriers. Over a two-year period, such individuals receive a monetary grant and strategic support from Sanctuary Nature Foundation. Such support can include communications, field trips, expert input,

publicity and more! Since its inception in 2017, the *Mud on Boots* project has supported over two dozen grassroots conservationists from 14 different states and one Union Territory across India. The project has also extended support to small grassroots organisations and citizen groups that are campaigning for environmental protection or addressing conservation issues. Owing to the pandemic, 2021 has been an exceedingly difficult year. Despite this, the *Mud on Boots* Project has continued to grow. To read about the work of our present and alumni Project Leaders, go to our website.

“It has been a great experience working with the *Mud on Boots* Project, especially because the team is so flexible and accommodating to the needs of the Project Leader and their projects. The effort that they put into making a personal relationship with understanding the Project Leader is what I have liked the most.”

– Priyanka Das, Co-ordinator of The Coexistence Project



An exquisite *new field guide* published by the Nature Conservation Foundation – India spotlights the rugged flora of Ladakh. Researched and written by Project Leader Phuntsog Dolma and Dr. Konchok Dorje, the book is a valuable addition to India's natural history documentation. Over the past four years, Dr. Dorje and Phuntsog have trekked across the region to collect, identify, and document plant species, recording nomenclature, botanical features and indigenous uses, and capturing excellent photographs of 193 species of plants.



5
years since inception

14
states and 1 Union Territory

26
project leaders

2
small grantees

“ Collaborations are essential to the Mud on Boots Project. The team is keen to forge new collaborations and partnerships with individuals and organisations who have the same vision as Sanctuary. ”

The first photographic record of a tiger in Mizoram’s Dampa Tiger Reserve in seven years was captured this year. The camera trap was placed by forest guard Zakhuma Don, who has patrolled Dampa’s forests for many years and is an alumnus of the Mud on Boots Project. Zakhuma set up the camera trap (borrowed from WII) in February 2021, and retrieved it three months later in mid May. When going through the images, he found the picture of the tiger and sent it forward to the authorities for confirmation. Dampa has been referred to as a “tiger reserve without tigers” after the last census in 2018 brought forth no proof of the big cat’s presence.

This year the Mud on Boots project had the privilege of extending a little support to four community conservation collectives. We provided a library of over 100 Hindi language nature and science books to Mae in Uttarakhand; facilitated funds for Hathi-Sathi Foundation in West Bengal; facilitated communication materials for the Save Karpu (*karpu* translates to pangolin in the Karbi language) campaign led by a youth-collective in Assam and donated 120 children’s books along with six issues of *Sanctuary Cub* magazine for students in six schools across Zemithang Valley in Arunachal Pradesh.

Three of our Project Leaders Radheshyam Pemani Bishnoi, Amir Chhetri and alumni Project Leader Shiv Kumar were featured by the Young Naturalist Network – Chennai in their special series ‘In Nature’s Defence : The tales of wild India’s unrecognised soldiers’.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2021

- Project Leaders Dechin Pema Saingmo and Pemba Tsering Romo helped conduct training sessions on camera trapping methods and analysis in anticipation of a statewide snow leopard population estimation in Arunachal Pradesh. The sessions were attended by over 60 participants including forest guards, field biologists, research officers and Range Forest Officers from eight Forest Divisions.
- Project Leader Phuntsog Dolma created participatory pasture maps after undertaking several field visits to meet with livestock owners and identifying pastures near their villages. This is probably the first effort of its kind to create a participatory map of pastures in Ladakh. Phuntsog’s efforts were appreciated and acknowledged by the Forest Department.
- Following a week-long training on solar fence construction and maintenance by WWF India in Dekargaon, Assam, Project Leader Amir Chhetri installed solar fences to deter wild animal movement into crop fields in Panijhora forest village, West Bengal. He recorded the total crop area that was damaged by elephants and wild pigs before and after the installation of the fences. He also set up three camera traps to monitor the movement of wild animals.
- Project Leader Radheshyam Bishnoi patrols 50 sq. km. of the Pokhran landscape in Rajasthan to monitor the



Foxes in Pokhran, Rajasthan photographed by Project Leader Radheshyam Pemani Bishnoi during wildlife patrols.

In September, alumni Project Leader Sunil Harsana spoke about his journey as a conservationist and work protecting the unique landscape of *Mangar Bani*, Haryana, with more than 50 graduate students from SIES College, Mumbai. This year, Sunil also discovered ancient cave paintings in Mangar Bani that have drawn the attention of archaeologists across India, and strengthened the demand that Mangar Bani be notified as a Protected Area.

- critically endangered *Great Indian Bustard* (GIB). This year, Radheshyam has also rescued over 50 birds and animals injured in road accidents, victims of electrocution, or attack by feral dogs. While documenting the unique biodiversity of the landscape, Radheshyam documents incidents of feral dog attacks on wildlife. His documentation, prompted Mud on Boots Project Coordinator Maitreyee Mujumdar to write an appeal for urgent and humane intervention to address the impact of feral dogs on wildlife in India to the Animal Welfare Board of India and relevant officials of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- Project Leader Vishal Ahuja has spent this year championing rewilding initiatives in Chamba, Himachal Pradesh. Vishal and a team of volunteers have planted over 703 native trees in various local farmlands and degraded lands around the Kalatop Khajjiar Wildlife Sanctuary. Vishal also regularly interacts with local farmers and landowners to convince them to keep a small part of their farmlands for habitat restoration in the interest of biodiversity conservation. With a focus on restoring the degraded habitats and fodder resources of the endangered Himalayan grey langur, Vishal is working with the local Forest Department to plan and design a methodology for a population census of the species.



COURTESY: PEMBA ROMO



Pemba Romo

“With the support, guidance and learnings from the many conservation awareness talks received through the Mud on Boots Project, I have become more confident about articulating conservation and biodiversity based concepts to people of all age groups.” – Pemba Tsering Romo

CHALLENGES

The Mud on Boots Project runs on public donations. It has been exceptionally hard to raise funds this year because of the ongoing pandemic. The resulting lockdown also put a halt to fieldwork for several months of the year.

LOOKING AHEAD

The Sanctuary team is looking forward to working with the new batch of Project Leaders and their mentors on community conservation and rewilding projects across four states and one union territory in India.

A crowdfunding campaign has been planned for March 2022 to cover the deficit in fundraising for the new batch.

The pending disbursement of funds to two grassroots organisations working for wildlife rescue and rehabilitation will be completed in 2022.

A virtual Mud on Boots leaders, partners and alumni meet has been slated for 2022. This will be an opportunity for our grassroots conservationists to learn about one another’s works, interact with senior wildlife professionals, and nurture a feeling of team work.

Collaborations are essential to the Mud on Boots Project. The team is keen to forge new collaborations and partnerships with individuals and organisations who have the same vision as Sanctuary.

We at the Sanctuary Nature Foundation have huge respect for those whose boots are muddy from the hard work and toil that wildlife conservation in the field demands. The Mud on Boots Project is our ongoing salute to such individuals.



Vishal Ahuja has been facilitating the rewilding of abandoned agricultural terraces in Chamba valley to bring back native flora and fruiting trees.

PROJECT: BAGH BACHAO – RANTHAMBHORE VILLAGE CONTACT PROGRAMME

WHAT IS THE PROGRAMME?

Sanctuary's relationship with the Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve goes back four decades. The foundation has been able to unite the women and children of over 45 villages surrounding the tiger reserve.

The primary sustenance of villagers currently comes from agriculture. However our awareness programme has successfully drawn several kids from the Moghiya community to become tiger champions/defenders while their parents were once poachers. Since the pandemic, the Sanctuary Nature Foundation has been working with the locals to help them avoid contracting COVID-19 and seeking their help to prevent the next pandemic. We also work with the families, forest guards and rangers of Ranthambhore, most of whom come from the villages around the park.

WHY ARE WE DOING IT?

- To provide COVID-19 healthcare support and relief, and create awareness to stop the next pandemic.
- To bring awareness about the tiger-forest-water-climate change-people relationship among school children and villagers who live near the park periphery.
- To link the benefits of these programmes with nature protection.
- To mitigate human-animal conflict and reduce the pressure on forest resources.
- To improve the relationship between communities living around tiger reserves and the Forest Department.
- To increase the skill sets of Moghiyas and the village youth, thus giving them alternative livelihood opportunities through skill development programmes.
- To create community leaders for conservation in the region.
- To uphold economic, systematic, cultural, artistic and environmental values while also encouraging ecological protection.
- To develop alternative livelihoods including eco-tourism opportunities.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE SO FAR?

Sanctuary has conducted various nature trails, night film screenings, rescue operations, art-for-conservation sessions, and clean up drives. We have also distributed 150 ration kits to families affected by the COVID-19 economic crisis

SESSIONS ON WILDLIFE EDUCATION AND AWARENESS HAVE:

- Increased appreciation and respect for the forest and its wildlife.
- Enhanced and augmented the environmental attitudes, values and knowledge of the local communities.
- Helped in building skills that prepare individuals and communities to collaboratively undertake positive environmental action to protect the wilderness around them.
- Enabled students and villagers to apply knowledge to solve problems related to wildlife conservation and management.
- Allowed students to better understand how wildlife conservation and management relates to the economy and environment, both currently and in the future.

COMMUNITY UPLIFTMENT EFFORTS

With a newly acquired skill, they are now able to earn extra revenue, which in turn will allow them to lead a respectable life.

Basics of computers will increase the employability of the youth, while basic English and Math will improve their overall academic performance, enabling them to opt for higher education as well as build confidence to seek more opportunities in various fields.

Women were given an opportunity to make masks, which were then distributed free during various activities.

WHAT IS OUR NEXT STEP/PLAN?

- We believe that the programme will:
- Increase the employability of youth as their skill set will improve by attending computer, English and Math classes.
 - Give adults the confidence to use their traditional knowledge of the forest and animals to protect them.
 - Provide a greater and comprehensive knowledge of how wildlife conservation and management relates to the economy and environment.
 - Generate livelihoods for the locals.

SETTING UP A COMPUTER LAB FOR VILLAGE KIDS

Morningstar donated 10 computers to Sanctuary to set up a lab in two villages of Ranthambhore. These computer labs will have a dedicated teacher who will be teaching children the basics of computers.

PROJECT: SUNDARBANS – BAGH SANKALP CAMPAIGN

WHAT IS THE PROGRAMME?

With climate change affecting the Sundarbans – the world's largest delta – its inhabitants, both humans and animals, face survival threats each year. Be it cyclones, human-animal conflict, unsustainable fishing, poaching and more; these problems can only be addressed with education and awareness. Sanctuary Nature Foundation has been effective in fighting these and many other issues on the ground through our local collaborators. This programme intends to expand the education of school kids and communities in the Sundarbans, to ensure their survival along with the protection of this unique ecosystem and its wildlife. The project includes education and awareness activities for kids in Sundarbans as well as for students in the nearest metro of Kolkata. Along with it, community empowerment programmes related to education, capacity building and livelihood skills will be initiated. The pilot programme will run from January 2022 to March 2022 and even as we establish contact and win the trust of the local women and children, we plan to extend the programme for a longer duration from April 2022 to March 2024.

WHY ARE WE DOING IT?

- To build strong relationships with schools through teachers and principals and gain their support in empowering a new generation of informed Indians to recognise the umbilicus between protecting the Sundarban ecosystems, the quality of their own lives and their socioeconomic security.
- To create a core group of young 'Tiger Ambassadors' who feel passionately for the tiger and are ready to spearhead a massive effort to protect them.
- To empower women and children from communities in the Sundarbans with knowledge and skills to lead more secure and sustainable lives.
- To train youth to earn a living from nature-based livelihood alternatives, which will simultaneously reduce anthropogenic pressure on the environment and help protect biodiversity.
- To mitigate the effects of human-wildlife conflict through increased knowledge and better awareness.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE SO FAR?

Since January 2022, Sanctuary has been conducting activities such as:

- Nature orientation tours by boat to

various forest locations with carefully selected local students who would serve as ambassadors for our Bagh Bachao campaign in their villages

- Community meetings with local women who will be briefed on issues relevant to their health and well-being.
- Village consultations to help cope with human-wildlife conflict in the Sundarbans, with the help of slide shows and simple printed leaflets.
- Interior design of village orientation cum community centre as a nature interpretation centre in Pakhiralaya village.
- Exploration of alternative livelihoods for fisher folks, honey tappers and agriculturists.

WHAT HAVE WE ACHIEVED?

We have been able to achieve the trust and support of the local communities along with support from the Forest Department. Communities dependent on the forest or involved in traditional methods of fishing, crab collection, prawn collection, and honey collection are willing to take up alternative livelihood options and not depend on forest resources as they understand the risks and threats involved in doing so.

WHAT IS OUR NEXT STEP/PLAN?

The long-term success of this intervention will be ensured by the consistent efforts that will continue from April 2022 onwards. Here's a glimpse into what we plan:

- Launch of Bagh Bachao boats
- Conservation through art
- Health-watch for women
- Plastic collection drive
- Clay modelling
- Student visits to anti-poaching floating protection camps
- Meet with women involved in fishing, crab and prawn seed collection
- Eco Day celebrations like World Water Day, Endemic Bird Day, Biological Diversity Day, and so on
- Children's team for Bagh Bachao at a tribal village
- Interaction with fishing communities
- Medical check-up camp for locals
- Collection of garbage by school kids
- Distribution of aromatic paddy seeds
- Mangrove plantation
- Rally with kids and biodiversity quiz
- Awareness meet on organic farming
- State Forestry Week
- Nature guide training programme
- Teacher training programme



SEEK SANCTUARY – COLLEGE CONTACT PROGRAMME 2021-2022

In a rapidly changing world, reeling under the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate issues threaten to destabilise not just our economy, but the biosphere itself. The *Sanctuary Nature Foundation* and *Carbon Copy*, supported by *Morningstar*, are jointly set to implement a college programme to spark informed action among young people destined to be tomorrow's leaders and have the greatest legitimacy to ask for a more secure future.

OBJECTIVE

- **To impart knowledge and awareness of our umbilicus with the biosphere, at the tri-junction of climate, biodiversity and economics. We wish to inspire young persons to act to protect our biosphere and become spokespersons for tomorrow. Our overarching objective is to provide transformative experiences for the youth of India to prepare them to make more informed, effective and sustainable decisions, inside and outside campuses.**

GOALS

- To engage and expand our young audience, who are crucial to the task of *Planet Management*.
- To catalyse, inform, motivate, mentor and offer young women and men, so they are able to confidently speak their minds, based on science, economics and ethics.
- To bring the issue of our climate crisis upfront and centrestage, where young people can discuss, ideate, engage and innovate solutions.
- To encourage young people to be involved in the transition from carbon to non-carbon energy.
- To serve as a hub for programmes that encourage college communities to assume responsibility in creating a more just, sustainable and resilient society for all.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

This year-long skillshare programme seeks to empower students through:

- **College Contact:** A total of 15 colleges, pan-India country will be selected in the first phase.
- **Lecture Series:** These will be focused on climate awareness and will include an orientation webinar, plus skillshare webinars to enable participants to interact with experienced environmental communicators and domain experts

including (proposed) the following: Lord Nicholas Stern, Vance Martin, Pavan Sukhdev, David Quammen, Vance Martin, Jo Puri, Vandana Shiva, Navroz Dubash, Aditya Agarwal, Raj Phukan and Aarti Khosla.

- **College Debates:** Students from 12 colleges will participate in debates spanning over a year; there will be a month-long mentoring programme to develop ideas and articulation that will create a constituency of young people that are aware and alert; 15 debates on various propositions that discuss climate change.
- **Institutional Climate Position Paper:** The Carbon Transition – This inter-collegiate competition will compel students to unite to think critically and articulately. Students will be asked to write out papers, which their teachers will read and shortlist for submission. Each college will combine the best ideas and will be asked to present a single paper to represent their institution's best strategy for the carbon transition.
- **Calculating individual, family and institutional carbon footprints.** This will introduce students to how carbon calculations are estimated, carbon footprints are evaluated and to online Sanctuary-moderated brainstorming sessions and activities.
- **Institutional Energy Audits:** Students will be guided on how to perform energy audits in collaboration with their faculties and to come up with realistic solutions to lower their College's carbon impact.
- **Workshops & Webinars** on sustainable living, energy awareness, rooftop gardening, composting and waste management.
- **Short Film Production:** 'Reclaiming our Climate Future'. These will be under five minute video communications on how young people can influence climate action. This might include campaigns, documentation of campus activities as listed above, duly cut into films that showcase how common purpose can be forged through multiple individual efforts that can when scaled up, create measurable impact.
- **Local field visits** to rewilded sites to understand the impact of biodiversity restoration and the collateral benefits that flow to communities. These sessions will focus on natural history and climate science.

PROJECT: COCOON CONSERVANCIES (2015-Present)

Sanctuary's COCOON Conservancies are at the core of our purpose – rewilding with social and environmental justice. The Sanctuary Nature Foundation has successfully rewilded 105 acres of marginal farmland at Gothangaon village, south of Nagpur, next to the tiger forests of the Umred Pauni-Karhandla Wildlife Sanctuary. Three more sites have been shortlisted - the **Panna Cocoon Conservancy, Madhya Pradesh, the Dara Cocoon Conservancy, J&K** and the **Satpura Cocoon Conservancy Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh**. The sites were chosen from over 15 potential locations and are at various stages of progress. All are designed as site specific projects that will deliver sustainable, dignified livelihoods, with enhanced biodiversity being a measurable, collateral benefit. Our partners/hosts are Wildlife Conservation Foundation – Kashmir (Nadeem Qadri), Forsyth Lodge – Satpura (Aditi Mody), and Sarai at Toria – Panna (Dr. Raghv Chundawat and Joanna Van Gruisen). All three are local collaborators who share our vision. These proposed conservancies will offer us proof of concept by demonstrating that Cocoon Conservancies can be scaled up as win-win initiatives for communities and the biodiversity next to them

THE DARA COCOON CONSERVANCY

At the Dara Conservation Reserve, adjacent to the Dachigam National Park, the beneficiaries here are not landowners. They are herders – Bakarwals. They know the Himalaya better than almost any other humans alive.

Apart from nature tourism, including birdwatching, nature walks, expeditions, trekking, hiking, exploration trips, camping and more, communities in villages such as Faqir Gujri and Dara Dard Khower offer a

glimpse of sustainability and right livelihoods in real life. The majority are goat herders but increased human-animal conflict, lack of good grazing grounds have left them hamstrung. Today they subsist on income from daily wages and most of them have lost their livestock and their traditional way of life. Sanctuary is working with local partners to find ways for their knowledge of the Himalaya and their skills to be turned to ecotourism, treks, birdwatching and adventure tourism. Also to turn them into protectors and ambassadors for rewilding *outside* the Protected Areas next to which they live.

THE PANNA COCOON CONSERVANCY

This is part of a larger wildlife corridor that connects satellite Protected Areas around the Panna Tiger Reserve. The villages we have identified are Banke and Ghirauli, which are inhabited by proud communities dependent on agriculture and livestock, primarily cattle. Human-wildlife conflict is a major threat, as are the vagaries of climate and agricultural insecurity. The villages are fairly distant from the main tourism zones of the park and currently receive little or no direct benefit from the local tourism industry. We have surveyed the area and believe that rewilding could help them offer authentic, intimate ecotourism experiences for people disenamoured by the "show me a tiger" brigade.

Additionally, we envisage programmes designed for community upliftment include the improvement of school infrastructures, community health, better animal husbandry practises and vocational/skill-based training for youth. Through community-led conservation programmes expect that an organic rewilding could be achieved within three to five years across a 50 sq. km. parcel of land that would allow expanding

“Sanctuary Nature Foundation's Community Owned Community Operated Nature (COCOON) Conservancies are designed as social upliftment programmes that create sustainable, dignified livelihoods, with rewilding and enhanced biodiversity as measurable, collateral benefits.”

WHAT HAVE WE DONE SO FAR?

The programme held its introductory session on February 13, 2022 where students and professors had an introduction with Sanctuary, Morningstar and Carbon Copy mentors. Prachi Galange presented an overview of the programme, with details of what to expect through to May 2022.

The programme is in its initial stages of development. We have shortlisted the following seven colleges, which will give us a sense of how we can scale up the initiative in the years ahead.

1. Acharya Narendra Dev College, New Delhi
2. Nirmala Institute of Education, Panaji, Goa
3. Nar Bahadur Bhandari Government College, Gangtok, Sikkim
4. Sophia College (Autonomous), Mumbai, Maharashtra
5. Madras Christian College, Chennai, Tamil Nadu
6. Government Degree College Pampore, Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir
7. The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Faculty of Science, Vadodara, Gujarat

We plan to double the number of colleges we reach in 2022-23.

BELOW Nearly 200 locals from Padshapal ravine, Dara Dard Khower hamlet and Faqir Gujri village joined in for clean up drives. Trash collected comprised mainly plastic bottles and polythene wrappers; it was handed over to the Srinagar Municipal Committee for disposal.



MISSION

To collaborate with communities living adjacent to wildernesses in India to create sustainable, dignified livelihoods, with enhanced biodiversity being a collateral benefit.

VISION

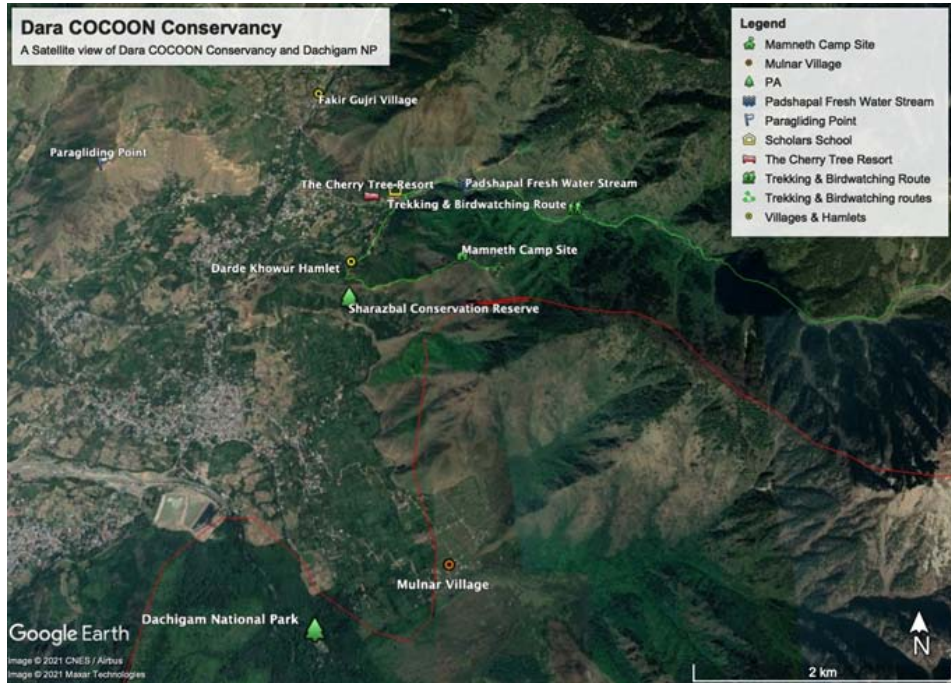
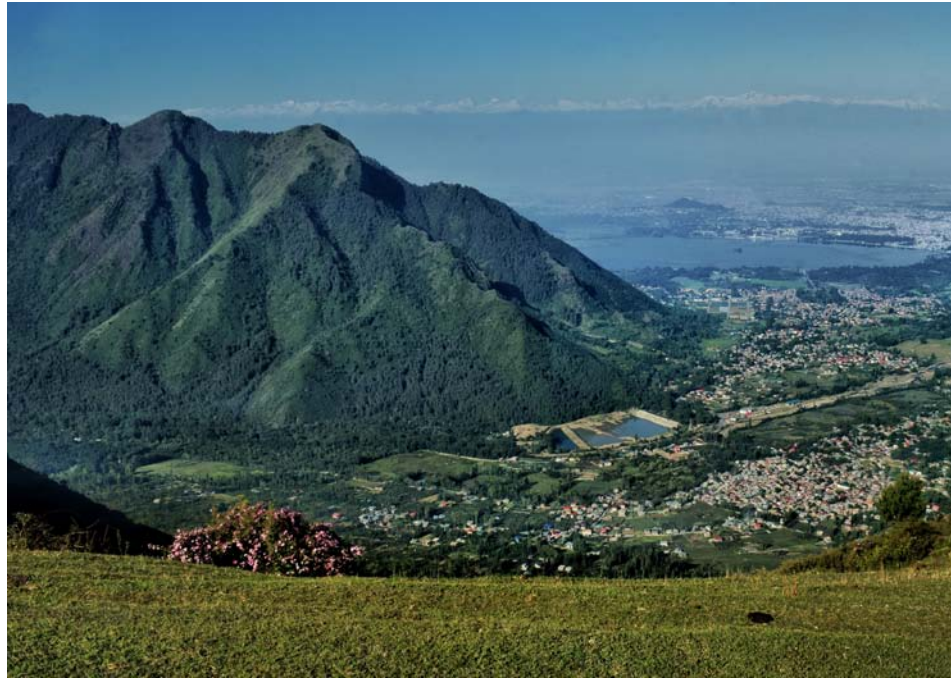
To demonstrate to planners, politicians, and village youth that the quality of life of the people of the Indian subcontinent has everything to do with restoring health to the biodiversity of its ecosystems without which no human aspirations have any hope of success.

VALUES

COCOON Conservancies focus on solutions that are both ecologically and economically practical.



OVAS SHAFI



ABOVE The Dara Conservation Reserve is located next to the Dachigam National Park, which is about 22 km. from Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir. It harbours a stunning diversity of wildlife and offers great opportunities for birdwatching.

RIGHT A Google Earth map showing the location of the COCOON Conservancy project in Dara.

Our Approach:

SHORT TERM

- Community collaborations
- Socioeconomic and Biodiversity Rapid Baseline Assessment
- Trust Building and Tripartite Agreement between Sanctuary Nature Foundation, Community and Local partners
- Media Documentation
- Rewilding initiatives
- Skill Training and Capacity Building

MEDIUM TERM

- Socioeconomic and Biodiversity Documentation, Monitoring and Evaluation
- Setting up COCOON Conservancy Research Station
- Conservation Information Centre
- Continued Capacity Building for alternative and sustainable livelihood sources
- Eco-tourism initiatives
- Healthcare and sanitation

LONG TERM

- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Exchange programme between COCOON Conservancy's local stakeholders
- Securing large area and corridors under COCOON Conservancies

populations of wild species from Panna to find refuge. A site for the development of a community-cum-conservation centre has already been identified and we intend this facility to become one that encourages women and children to rise to their own potential to the advantage of the entire community.

THE SATPURA COCOON CONSERVANCY

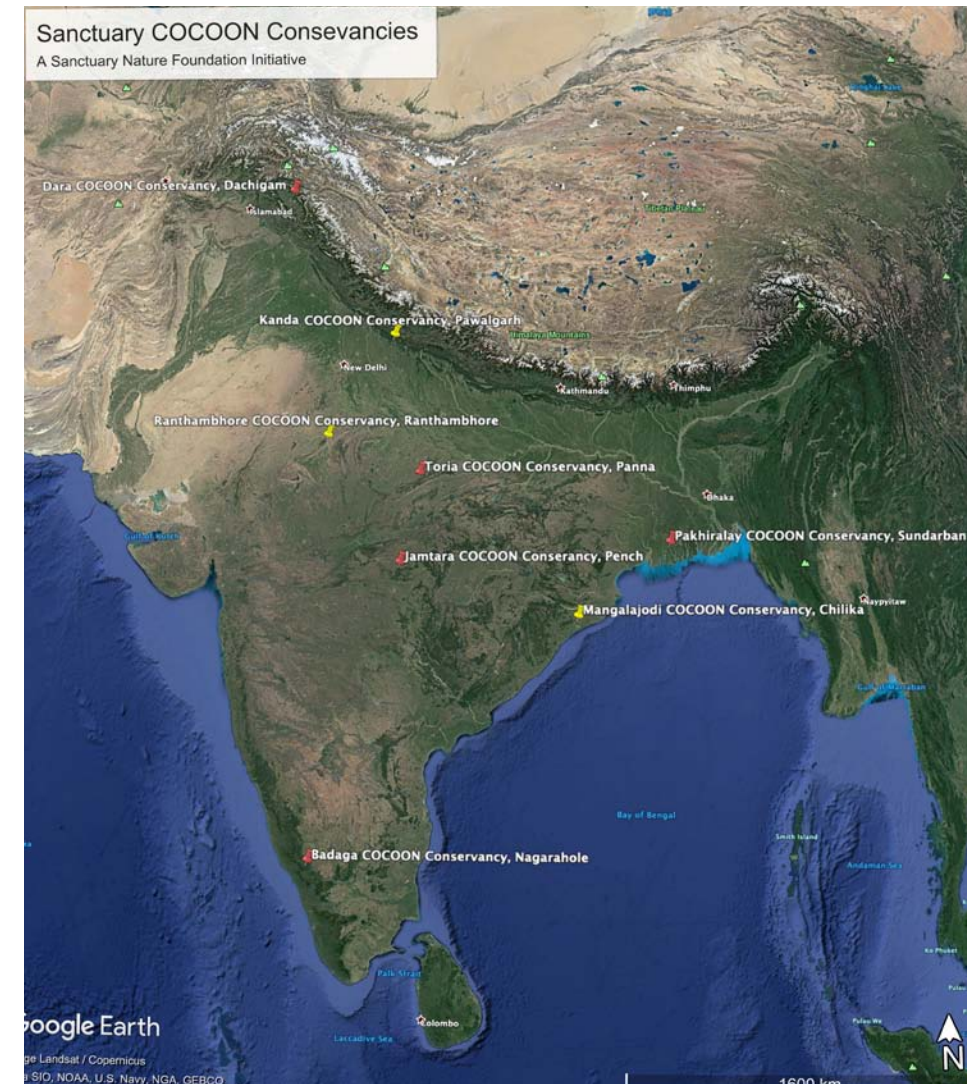
The Satpura Tiger Reserve is probably one of India's most potential tiger recovery habitats. It is also perfectly suited for sustainable tourism, but has thus far failed to draw the attention of tourists. Very few organisations working on community upliftment are active here. This could be because the river system that forms the boundary of the tiger reserve makes it difficult for people to access the park. The Gond and Korku tribal communities have lived here for aeons and they manage to eke out a living by cultivating small pieces of leased agricultural land. Other communities are largely marginal farmers whose livelihood is constantly threatened by the vagaries of agricultural life next to a biodiverse forest, coupled with

recent climate insecurities. Settlements on the periphery are relocated forest villages from the core of the Protected Area inhabited by people who possess limited livelihood options and skills.

Our strategy is to consult with communities for their upliftment, based on skill development, ecotourism, hospitality training and handicraft creation. This would reduce their dependence on farming, but we would encourage them NOT to sell their lands, which we would help them to rewild. Such parcels of land would strengthen the connecting corridors between Territorial and Forest Divisions. Tourism in such rewilded areas would offer visitors much more organic experiences, for which they would be willing to pay the communities directly. Sanctuary has identified some sites here that would work for the creation of Community-cum-Conservation Centres that would benefit villagers, as well as scientists, researchers, and organisations working for community development.

For more information on these and other conservancy possibilities, please reach out to parvish@sanctuaryasia.com.

COCOON Conservancies serve to act as effective buffers to absorb the biodiversity that spills over from protected core areas, thus reducing human-animal conflict. By locating such conservancies in corridors, the objectives of widening and refreshing the gene pool is also met. The land-holding will continue to be in the hands of the community but would serve as biodiverse nature refuges capable of offering communities assured livelihoods and economic security in an era of climate change.



ABOVE Dr. Raghu Chundawa and Joanna Van Gruisen, along with Sanctuary representatives Sauvabh Sawant and Dr. Parvish Pandya discuss livelihood enhancement with community members at Banke village, Panna.

LEFT Sanctuary COCOON Conservancies, as marked on the map, have been proposed near wilderness habitats across India, currently in varied stages of negotiation.

IMPACT STORIES



ARTICLES THAT MADE A DIFFERENCE

The Sanctuary Nature Foundation believes that whether it's legacy, or a battle, or a campaign – it doesn't begin and end with any one person. It's a long-distance relay... a marathon relay. And that is what we have been doing for 40 years. Our stories, campaigns, projects raise public awareness

about issues as wide ranging as species loss, human rights, economic stability, food security, water security, health security... Our goal is to bring people together so we do not work in silos. Here are a few key stories that we wanted to highlight. As Sanctuary Nature Foundation founder, Bittu Sahgal says:

“Sanctuary is like the Grand Central Station for conservation in India. We are enablers that shine spotlights on other people's work and put them together and work towards conflict resolution... somewhat like marriage counsellors.”

ROADS TO NOWHERE PHOTO ESSAY, FEBRUARY 2021

Down the decades, *Sanctuary* has tirelessly campaigned against ill-planned linear projects proposed inside and near our Protected Areas. A vast majority of roadkills remain unrecorded across India's network of roads and railways. The death toll from the last decade includes at least 16 tigers and 150 elephants. Insisting on the vitality of sensitive infrastructure planning, in February 2021, *Sanctuary* presented a photostory of roadkills submitted by observant conservation photographers from around the country.



READERS' COMMENTS

Evelyn Aldous Thank you for the work you do. Raw images like this will shock us into action. I truly wish to have a positive update from you soon.
Nathaniel Tarlow India needs to build wildlife movement corridors (usually bridges with greenery) in a lot of places. These road tragedies are taking a real toll. India is such a delicate place for wildlife given its human population. India must safeguard the ecological treasures that are within its borders.
Bomi Manekshaw More power to you. We need to build more consciousness to influence the powers that be.

DAWN TO DUSK ON DECCAN GRASSLANDS NGO PROFILE, FEBRUARY 2021

Although there has been no national census of the Indian grey wolf *Canis lupus pallipes*, estimates range between 2,000 and 3,000 individuals, fewer than the number of tigers! Once roaming across the arid and semi-arid landscapes of Rajasthan, Punjab, the Deccan Plateau and Coimbatore Plateau, the species suffers due to loss of habitat and prey, which has turned them into victims of human-wildlife conflict. In this article, Shailendra Ghorpade chronicles the life and threats of the few remaining packs of the Indian grey wolf that can be found in Koppal district, Karnataka, and the work of the Deccan Conservation Foundation (DCF) towards their protection.



Impact Just days before the article was published, the Karnataka government announced the decision to [designate the state's first wolf sanctuary in Koppal district, Karnataka](#), in what was a small, but exciting, victory for the efforts of the Deccan Conservation Foundation. Using field data collected over five years, DCF prepared a baseline study and proposal for the 800-plus acre sanctuary in partnership with the Karnataka Forest Department.

WHERE ART MEETS CONSERVATION APRIL 2021

Art has the ability to reach out to diverse audiences. It transcends the borders of language, class, caste and religion. It binds together very complex, scientific, social and emotional information and displays it so it can be understood by all, which is of utmost importance when it comes to protecting our planet. Art Director for *Current Conservation*, Manini Bansal conversed with seven wildlife artists working at the intersection between art and wildlife conservation about their techniques, processes, and why art is a vital tool for conservation communication in the digital age.



READERS' COMMENTS

Nikhil Sundar Sometimes art fills every part of you. Seeing Barkha Lohia's page reminded me of my childhood and reflected in so many ways what I've been trying to find for a long time.
Sanjay Deshpande The biggest difference between humans and nature is that nature never differentiates between its children on the scale of colour, size, or gender. Art is actually a branch of the tree called nature.
Sushant Jadhav Brilliant stuff, conveys everything in a single picture

WOMEN IN HERPETOLOGY COVER STORY, APRIL 2021

The field of herpetology has long been dominated by men, despite the growing number of accomplished women herpetologists working in the field over the past few decades. Drawing from their own experiences and those of their peers, Ashwini V. Mohan and Sneha Dharwadkar dissected the reasons behind this gender bias, through surveys and by speaking to several women herpetologists in the field, and proposed effective ways to make the field more inclusive. This first-of-its-kind piece received several well-deserved accolades for the authors.

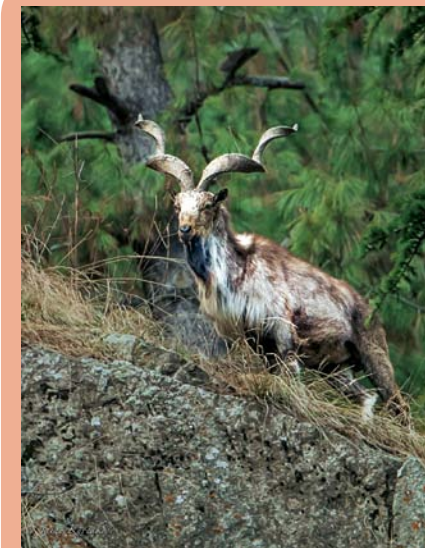


READERS' COMMENTS

Anuja Mittal, Mumbai Ashwini V. Mohan and Sneha Dharwadkar's article highlights the many reasons why women are underrepresented in herpetology in India. Here's the first step in acknowledgement and awareness, leading to a better future for all HERpers!
Anushka Kawale, Mumbai Probably one of the best pieces I've read in *Sanctuary Asia*. It talks about the plight of women in STEM fields like herpetology and how it's important to recognise this in so many aspects.
Sarita Fernandes, Goa A much-needed article on gender roles, challenges and field work hurdles faced by brave women working in the critical field of herpetology.

THE MAGNIFICENT MARKHOR JUNE 2021

Markhor are the world's largest mountain goats. Scattered herds are found across the scrublands, open woodlands and mountains of central Asia, Karakoram and the Himalaya in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and northern India. Here, they are endemic only to Kashmir and found nowhere else in the country. While spotting even one is rare, Samyak Kaninde spotted an entire herd at the Kazinag National Park. He also writes about the Wildlife Trust of India's markhor recovery project that is working with nomadic communities in the goat's last remaining strongholds across the landscape.

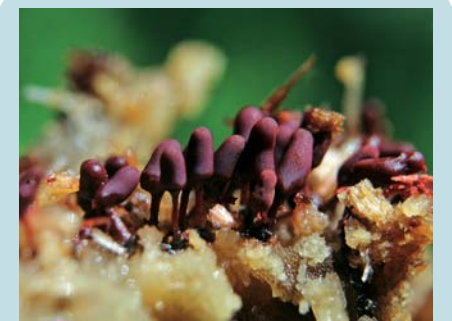


READERS' COMMENTS

Sameer Khazir, Markhor Recovery Project, Wildlife Trust of India, Kashmir Thank you and your team for featuring our conservation work [The Magnificent Markhor] in *Sanctuary Asia*. It will strengthen the conservation action in our project areas and boost our efforts.

THE SECRET WORLD OF SLIME MOLDS JUNE 2021

When *Sanctuary's Young Naturalist Awardee 2020*, Suhaib Firdous Yattoo, first spotted a tiny, glistening mushroom-like creature growing on a piece of moist wood, his interest was piqued when he learned that this creature was in fact another form of the same slime-like organism that was creeping across the forest floor. Myxomycetes are a phylum under the kingdom Protista. These remarkable living beings show characteristics of both protozoans (single-celled microorganisms) and fungi. And they have the insane ability to change their physical form based on prevailing environmental conditions. Suhaib wrote with reverence about Kashmir's little known, yet ubiquitous, organisms – shapeshifting myxomycetes.



READERS' COMMENTS

Dr. Shyammala Shah, Mumbai Not only are the photographs amazing but the article is extremely articulate. I will share this article with my students who are just being introduced to biological classification.
Suhaib Firdous Yattoo, Kashmir The issue brought the hidden parts of Jammu and Kashmir to limelight, whether that be in terms of its biodiversity or different landscapes. I received many positive comments for my article.

“Science needs to be more gender inclusive. Creating more access to higher education, funding for research, scholarships to support academic studies, all of these are necessary steps to level the playing field.”

– Ashwini V. Mohan and Sneha Dharwadkar,
Women in Herpetology

“Pilibhit’s unfolding story of tiger-human conflict is a stark reminder that wildlife conservation has no clear-cut solutions and processes, but must adapt and transform by evolving along with the changing relationship between people and the wild.”

– Keshav Agarwal, wildlife writer

INDIA’S GREAT BIG DOG PROBLEM CAMPAIGN, AUGUST 2021

There are an estimated 60 million dogs in India, the fourth highest in the world, of which 35 million are free-ranging. Feral dog populations across the country pose a major threat to wildlife, particularly around Protected Areas. These dogs have been detected in camera traps in almost all of the 50 tiger reserves according to the Status of Tigers Co-predators and Prey in India 2018 report. A pan-India online survey published in 2017, reports dog attacks on 80 species of Indian wildlife, of which 31 are listed under a threatened category on the IUCN Red List. *Sanctuary* has repeatedly advocated for better waste management and mass sterilisation drives to control feral dog populations, and continues to do so.



READERS’ COMMENTS

Tricia Fazzino, U.S.A I realise how little people truly comprehend the level of poverty and suffering that then leads to these types of animal suffering. Happy to support your organisation that truly helps in a boots on the ground way, that then leads to education and sympathy from locals (who themselves are suffering but can offer a different level of compassion than previously taught). You’re amazing and the world is a better place because of you. Thanks for educating us all in so many ways and for the souls you save.
Akshita, Wildlife Illustrator Amazing read. Unfortunately, not many people talk about this subject, and more than half of the population is unaware of the consequences! Thank you for sharing this matter with us.

THE SUGARCANE TIGERS OF PILIBHIT AUGUST 2021

Over the past nine years, Amaria has been home to “sugarcane tigers” – big cats that were born or grew up on sugarcane farms, where they are more comfortable than in forests. Last year, 10 adult tigers were confirmed from Amaria, plus three cubs. Now, they have begun moving further, to Lalaurikhera, over 30 km. from the nearest core forest of the Pilibhit Tiger Reserve. Keshav Agarwal wrote about the big cats that have made croplands their home, and the challenges this status quo poses for humans and wildlife.



READERS’ COMMENTS

Kritika Ranjan An excellent article on the cane tigers of Amaria block bordering the Pilibhit Tiger Reserve. There have been no tiger attacks, but the villagers live in constant fear and demand relocation of tigers. However, relocation may not solve the problem, as new tigers will move into the territory.
Naveen Mishra I have been to Pilibhit once. People there are really scared of the tigers.
Saksham Shukla I was lucky to be born in Pilibhit. Human-animal conflict is common here and authorities must do more to ensure wildlife conservation as well as human safety.

PAKKE’S IRREGULARS AUGUST 2021

In June 2021, ‘casual’ or ‘temporary’ frontline staff working in the Pakke Tiger Reserve, Arunachal Pradesh, went on a day-long strike to protest the non-payment of their wages since December 2020. This included members of the Special Tiger Protection Force (STPF), who constitute the backbone of wildlife protection in Pakke. Pranav Capila had visited the tiger reserve in January 2020, staying with and walking on patrol with STPF personnel. He wrote about the systemic woes that plague Pakke’s Special Tiger Protection Force on the frontlines of conservation. *Sanctuary* has always advocated for better wages and working conditions for our real heroes on the frontlines, and this essay by Pranav Capila spotlighted this urgent issue that needs redressal.



READERS’ COMMENTS

Sangeeta Patel Why is such important work not appreciated? Really a shame.
Anand Madabhushi, Sanctuary Kids for Tigers Coordinator, Hyderabad Having interacted with many personnel during my visits to tiger reserves and having seen their working conditions, the news that they were not paid wages and had resorted to a day-long strike was heartbreaking. I am glad *Sanctuary Asia* has highlighted this in the August issue.
Shradha Rathod Must read. Beautifully written by Pranav Capila.

FOUR DECADES OF CONSERVATION COVER STORY, OCTOBER 2021

For our 40th anniversary special issue (see more on page 17), the cover story was a nine part essay featuring authors from a diversity of spheres, each chronicling the four decades of conservation in their field. Aparajita Datta penned an essay on her Eastern Himalayan sojourn, Ghazala Shahabuddin on Western Himalaya, Aditya Panda on the tigers of Eastern Central India, Neelima Vallangi on the climate crisis and anthropocene, Neema Pathak Broome on the vital Community Conserved Areas, Pranay Lal on the vitality of our soil, Joanna Van Gruisen on wildlife photography, Akanksha Sood Singh on wildlife videography and Shashank Srinivasan on conservation technology.



READERS’ COMMENTS

Ian Lockwood, Sri Lanka The 40th anniversary is a splendid issue. The content strikes a good balance between reminiscing and looking forward in a challenging age. The sections of writers in the four decades of conservation are diverse and include several notable personalities – Ghazala’s (we worked together at the PHCC in the early 1990s), Neema’s Community Conserved Areas (I know her from my time working in Pune nearly 20 years ago) and Joanna’s piece (she helped me get my first exhibition off the ground in 2001 in New Delhi) reflecting back on photography make delightful reads.

The Goal: Support the Sanctuary Nature Foundation so that we continue to bring you stories that educate and usher change. Our stories focus on

- Working with key partners, field biologists, scientists, photographers, writers, corporates, government agencies and local communities across India to create awareness about our biodiversity and the impact of degradation of habitats and decline of wildlife
- Upliftment of communities and generation of alternative livelihood opportunities
- Recognising grassroots conservationists each of whom are contributing steadfastly to biodiversity conservation and community engagement in distinct and measurable ways
- Working with government agencies, social media giants and advertisers to highlight key conservation threats
- Communicating the consequences of climate change
- Mobilising communities and decision makers
- Actions required to slow down the pace of species extinction and to protect our wild spaces.

Crowdfunding and soliciting funds is vital to our existence. We require your support. [Donate now.](#)

“Today I know we do not bring big change alone, but by simply doing our part. Most importantly, I have learnt to not give up hope in this heart-breaking process with no visible end in sight, once again by leaning into the healing power of nature when despair for the world grows in me.”

– Neelima Vallangi,
Love in the Anthropocene



EVENTS



The Sanctuary Wildlife Photography Awards 2021:

FIRST PRIZE: GANESH CHOWDHURY – *Entangled in the Ganges*



THE SANCTUARY WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS 2021

One of the most important pillars of *Sanctuary magazine* is the excellent wildlife and conservation images shared by talented photographers from across India, that bring our articles to life. For this purpose the Sanctuary Wildlife Photography Awards were constituted more than 20 years ago. Sanctuary was the first to initiate wildlife photography awards in India and every year we receive stunning wildlife and heartbreaking conservation images. We are witness to the camera becoming a vital tool for conservation, helping record rare natural history moments, capturing conservation issues and proof of climate change. And each year we receive thousands of images from almost every state of India, from remote habitats, of species ranging from a few millimetres in size to animals which are so threatened that only a handful survive. We have become record keepers of rare natural history moments that researchers have spent years in the field to study and of increasing roadkills, forest animals forced to adapt to urban environments and minuscule insects, which discerning nature lovers bring to the notice of the larger public.

In 2021, the ceremony was held online along with the Sanctuary Wildlife Service Awards 2021, on the evening of December 4, 2021. The event was sponsored by DSP Mutual Fund, co-sponsored by Godrej Industries and Morningstar India and supported by the Wildlife Conservation Trust, Carbon Copy and IndusInd Bank, presented the awards online at a virtual ceremony.

Dia Mirza, actor, producer and UNEP Goodwill Ambassador, along with Bittu Sahgal, Founder, Sanctuary Nature Foundation and Editor of *Sanctuary Asia* magazine hosted the event. The pre-awards ceremony began with a 3D video walkthrough of around 40 shortlisted images with a brief natural history description. Bittu Sahgal announced the winning images, and briefly interviewed the top three winners for the vision behind their images. **The First, Second and Third Prize winners were each awarded Rs. 1,50,000, Rs. 75,000 and Rs. 25,000 respectively. The Certificates of Merit were awarded Rs. 2,500 each.**

Over 2,000 entries were received, which were shortlisted and winners selected by a world-class jury panel:

- Steve Winter, globally celebrated National Geographic Conservation Photographer
- Dr. Anish Andheria, Conservation biologist, wildlife photographer and President, Wildlife Conservation Trust
- Nayan Khanolkar, Educationist, Conservation Biologist and Wildlife Photographer
- Rita Banerji, Environmental Documentary Filmmaker and Founder– Director, Green Hub
- Meena Subramaniam, Nature and Conservation Artist
- Cara Tejpal, ex-Director, Conservation Head, Communications and Strategy, Sanctuary Asia
- Dr. Parvish Pandya, Director, Science, Natural History and Photography, Sanctuary Asia
- Saurabh Sawant, Researcher, Naturalist, Wildlife Photographer and Filmmaker
- Lakshmy Raman, Story Teller, Executive Editor, Sanctuary Asia
- Bittu Sahgal, Founder, and Editor of Sanctuary Nature Foundation



The Sanctuary Wildlife Photography Awards 2021:

SECOND PRIZE: SANDEEP DAS – *Three's A Crowd*

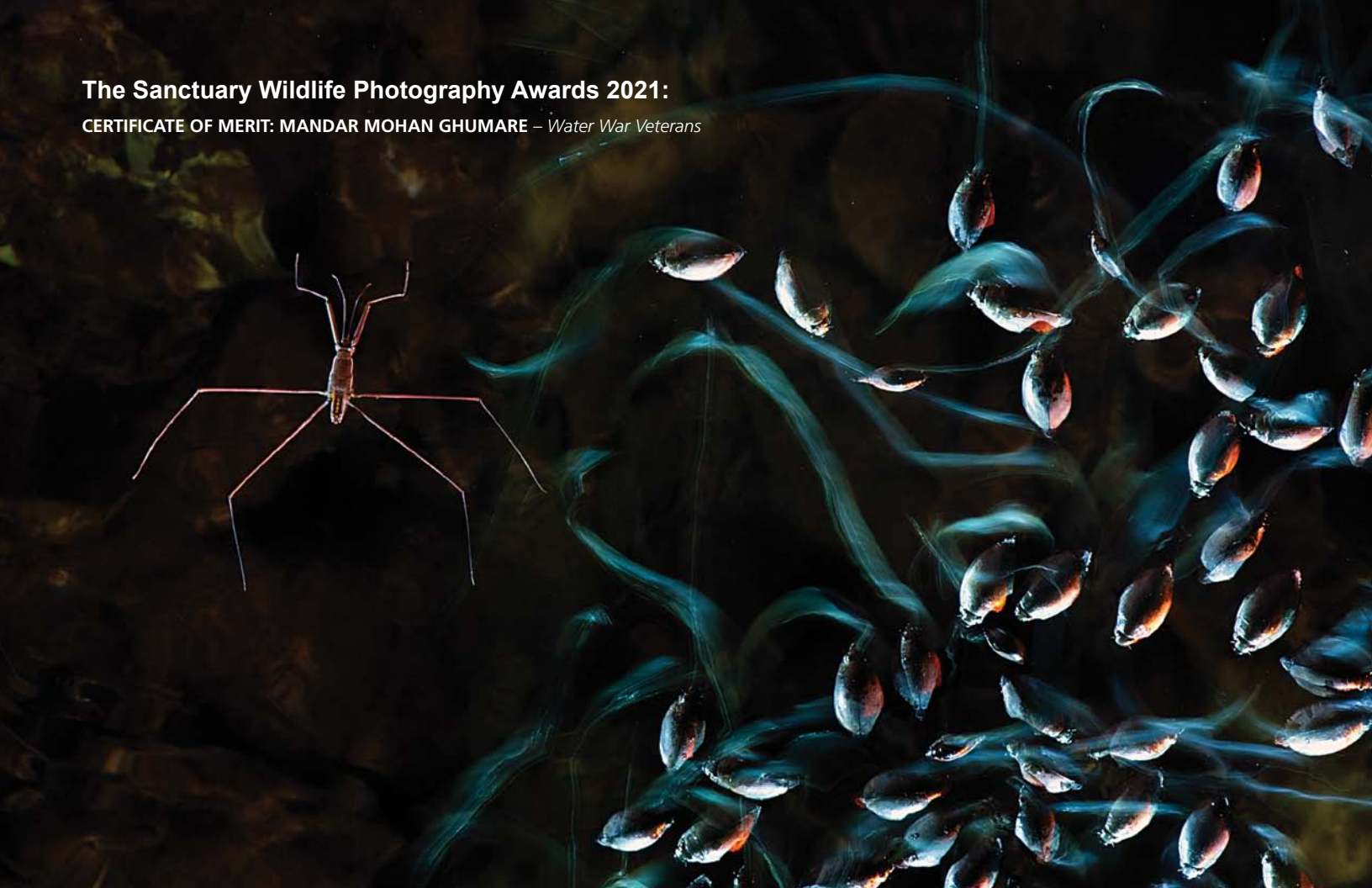
The Sanctuary Wildlife Photography Awards 2021:

THIRD PRIZE: SRIDHAR SIVARAM – *Collision Course*



The Sanctuary Wildlife Photography Awards 2021:

CERTIFICATE OF MERIT: MANDAR MOHAN GHUMARE – *Water War Veterans*



FIRST PRIZE went to Ganesh Chowdhury for his image 'Entangled in the Ganges'. A Gangetic dolphin rises from the depths of West Bengal's murky Hooghly river to scoop up a fish caught in a gill net. These freshwater dolphins once flourished in the deep parts of the Gangetic river system, but today they're categorised as Endangered. The callous damming of rivers and horrific pollution levels have made their waters near uninhabitable. In the Hooghly, where fish populations are in decline, river dolphins have been observed helping themselves from the innumerable fishing nets cast into and strung across the river. The nets can become cruelly entangled in the dolphins' beaks, ultimately leading to injury, starvation or death. By some estimates, this year nine dolphins died along a mere five kilometre stretch of the river in just five months as a result of such entanglements. This astonishing image allows us to observe the beauty of the dolphin while illustrating the dangers to its survival.

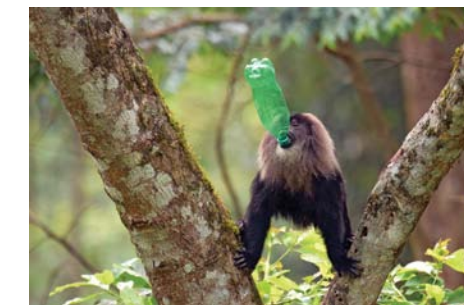
SECOND PRIZE went to Sandeep Das for his image 'Three's A Crowd'. Every year, as the rains begin to sweep across Kerala, adult purple frogs emerge from their burrows for just one day of romance and reproduction. From his burrow, the male frog calls loudly for a mate, and when she arrives, he climbs onto her back for amplexus. She then carries him to a torrential stream where she will lay her

eggs, which are fertilised by him. They then part ways and retreat underground for another year. But here, in the Thrissur Forest Division, the amorous plans of a mating pair have gone awry. The female purple frog finds herself ensnared in a sticky string of common Indian toad eggs, and an over-enthusiastic toad has clambered atop her mate, adding to the load on her back! This exceptional natural history moment is documented skilfully in this textured image.

THIRD PRIZE went to Sridhar Sivaram for his image, 'Collision Course'. Dangerously tilted, limbs flailing, three men on a motorbike try desperately to maintain their balance as they collide with a wild leopard in Rajasthan's Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve. Seconds later they fail in their attempt and tumble onto the frightened animal. Miraculously, no serious injuries were sustained and the big cat fled into the safety of the forest. This accident took place on the controversial Mandir Marg that connects to both the main entrance of the reserve and a renowned Ganesh temple. Though conservationists have long lobbied for the management of pilgrim traffic on this road, more than one million devotees are believed to traverse it annually. Over the years, unregulated tourism has led to such close encounters with wild animals and disturbance to their habitat. The photographer accepted the award, but declined the prize money and requested Sanctuary to put it to good use.

“Through this image, I wish to show the world how dolphins die by getting entangled in fishing gill nets. It is my humble service to work towards saving nature. For 17 years, I have been involved in studying and following these Gangetic dolphins. I pledge my life to protect not just dolphins, but all wildlife around me. I feel very lucky that this picture has been recognised with this award.”
– Ganesh Chowdhury

“The image seemed funny when I first saw it, but it's not really funny for the purple frogs, which have a very brief period in a year within which they have to get to their breeding site, lay their eggs and go back before sunrise. Once the sun rises, there are many other predators waiting to devour them. In a breeding frenzy, these frogs will try to mate with anything they come across.”
– Sandeep Das



HONOURABLE MENTION: KIRUBHA BOSE – *PET Peeve*

Certificates of Merit: Shashwat Jaiswal, Sourabh Bharti, Rajesh M. Chaudhary, Mandar Mohan Ghumare, and Alok Kar

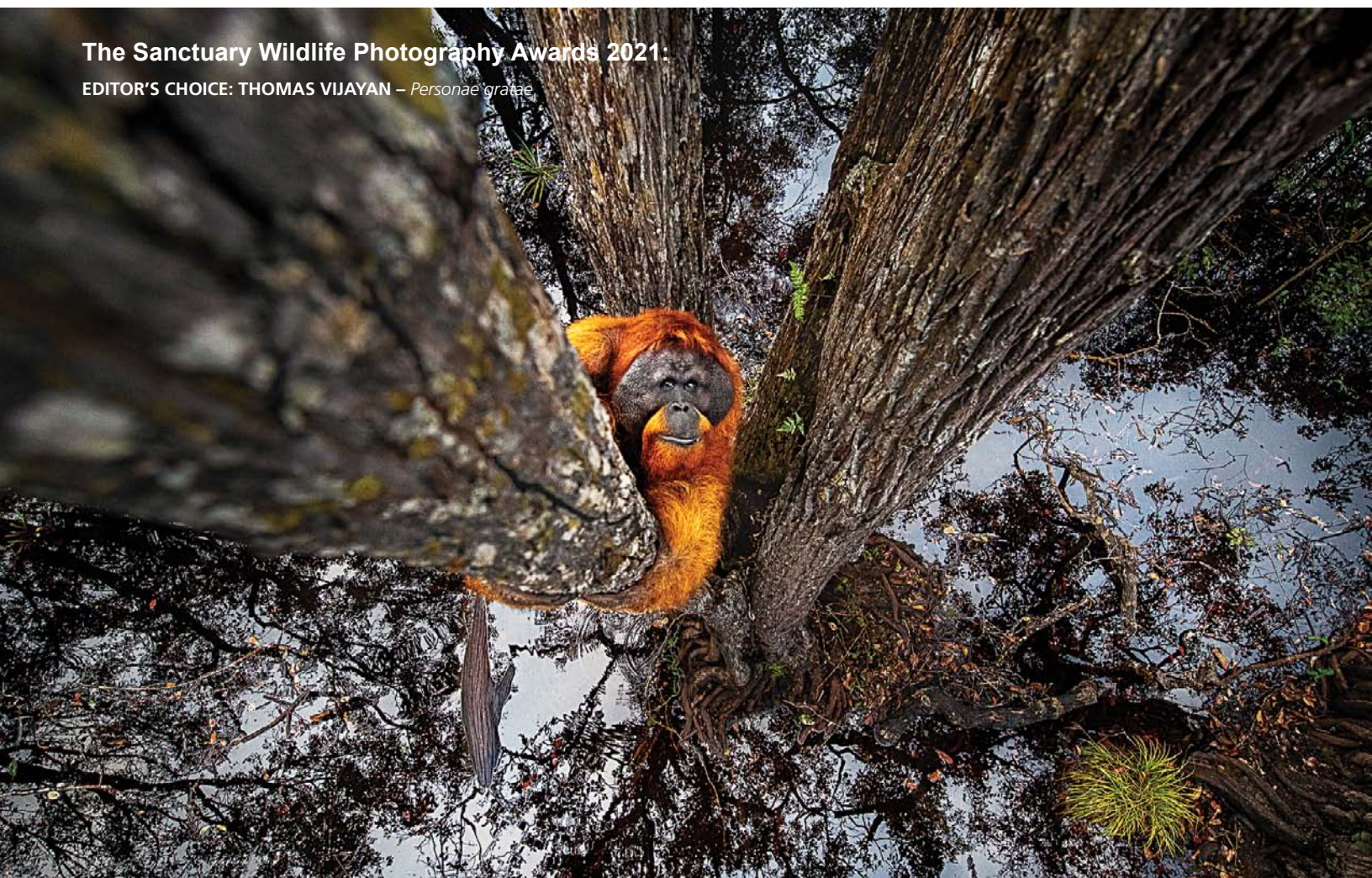
Honourable Mentions: Lucky R. Jaiswal, Apurv Dilip Jadhav, Sitaram Dinkar Raul, Kirubha Bose, and Amith Kiran Menezes

Editor's Choice: Thomas Vijayan

“This was a very sad, but not unusual incident, depicting the man-animal conflict we see regularly in most places. Amidst a crowd of vehicles and pilgrims on the temple road, the leopard, which was trying to cross the road, got so scared that it wanted to cross as fast as possible and in that chaos, it hit the bike coming down the slope.”
– Sridhar Sivaram

The Sanctuary Wildlife Photography Awards 2021:

EDITOR'S CHOICE: THOMAS VIJAYAN – *Personae gratae*



To see all the images, www.sanctuarynaturefoundation.org

All of us at Sanctuary are gratified to see the evolution of wildlife photography into a strong conservation tool. This is one area where technology has been genuinely put to good use. We at Sanctuary have been fighting to protect species and wildernesses for four decades and all our ceremonies have been at venues where humans could meet and interact

with each other. This time however, the awards ceremony was virtual and while the hugs, backslapping and handshakes were missing, instead of the usual 1,000+ people who witness our 'shows' we were gifted an amazingly large viewership. We owe our loyal, strong and purposeful constituency a huge debt of gratitude for being the wind under our sails.

WILDLIFE LEGEND AWARD:

Dr. Jane Goodall, DBE

LEGENDARY SCIENTIST, ETHOLOGIST, CONSERVATIONIST AND MESSENGER OF PEACE

"It is truly a great honour to receive an award in a ceremony that honours wildlife champions from across India, and especially as it is being awarded by an organisation that does amazing work for wildlife, an organisation I greatly admire. I look forward to collaborating with your organisation."

PUBLIC DOMAIN/DANIEL EPSTEIN



LIFETIME SERVICE AWARD

Dr. Anwaruddin Choudhury

RETIRED CIVIL SERVANT, WILDLIFE RESEARCHER AND PROTECTOR, ARTIST AND AUTHOR

"Thank you Sanctuary Nature Foundation for the award, I am humbled. I started working in my childhood, which eventually turned into scientific study. I have been in the field for four decades now, and it is hard to pinpoint any one moment that moved me. [I have learned that] Awareness and motivation can benefit wildlife and conservation."

PHOTO: ANWARUDDIN CHOUDHURY



THE SANCTUARY WILDLIFE AWARDS 2021

Instituted in the year 2000, the Sanctuary Wildlife Awards honours the several exceptional men, women and children who are working to protect our wildernesses. Individuals from varied fields are considered through nominations – forest officers, entrepreneurs, artists, economists, students, writers, filmmakers... the common thread is their commitment to nature and wildlife conservation.

Recipients of the Awards have subsequently had their work recognised widely by the conservation community and found access to aid for their ongoing projects in the form of support or funding. Each year, we invite nominations and entries from the Sanctuary network – readers, supporters, writers, naturalists and photographers – looking for the best and brightest in India's biodiversity conservation canvas. Winners are selected as the recipients of one of four prestigious titles. This year, a new award was instituted:

Wildlife Legend Award: To honour a living legend in wildlife conservation, whose work has brought humanity's understanding of wildlife to new levels and has redefined global conservation practices. Their life story, their legacy and words continue to pave the way for aspiring protectors of the wild.

Lifetime Service Award: To honour protectors of wild habitats who have been in action for decades, inspiring millions, sparking movements, unearthing natural history knowledge, building conservation strategies, shaping communities...

Award: Rs. 1,50,000.

Green Teacher Award: To honour skilled educators who challenge norms and inspire youth to connect with the wild and join the conservation community as informed, concerned individuals.

Award: Rs. 50,000.

Wildlife Service Award: To honour inspired wildlifers, forest employees, researchers, villagers... anyone currently involved with in-situ nature conservation who have displayed extraordinary courage, dedication and determination and inspired others.

Award: Rs. 50,000.

Young Naturalist Award: To honour driven youth leaders who set an example for their peers and older generations alike, through their thirst for knowledge and conservation entrepreneurship... motivated by hopes of their own future on planet Earth.

Award: Rs. 25,000.



Welcome to

The Sanctuary Wildlife Awards 2021

Please wait, we will begin shortly.



TESTIMONIALS:

Joining in from Golaghat, Assam. Loved the ceremony. Thank you for being an inspiration to all of us.

– Pranay Lal

So happy to see a journalist recognised for his writings on conservation issues. There are few such dedicated, honest and brave writers in my experience as Arun Singh.

– Raghu Chundawat, Panna

Congratulations on a fabulous Sanctuary Awards Live Stream. The flow of events, the interesting way it was put together and presented, the incredible photographs, the speakers and their messages, all were woven together brilliantly.

– Aparna Munjal, Environment Team, The Shri Ram School, Aravali

The show was spectacular. I felt proud to be a part of the Sanctuary trustees team. Congratulations on an outstanding programme. It went seamlessly from one segment to another. And a big pat on the back to all those who did the research work to find these awardees from little known places and highlight their work.

– Norma Alvares, Goa

I watch this event year after year and it's always so heartening. Thank you for recognising these grassroots heroes and giving them a platform to showcase their achievements. You are so right that wildlife health is as important and directly connected to human life. More people need to be educated about how nature should be cared for and nurtured.

– Radhika Khanna, Mumbai

The magazine has brought so many Indians in touch with wildlife, and the Sanctuary Wildlife Awards has been the wind under the wings of so many young and struggling conservationists.

– Aditya Panda, Odisha

Many congratulations to the team of Sanctuary for a fantastic award ceremony. In spite of the limitations of the pandemic you had a lovely line up of individuals who must be celebrated.

– Bahar Dutt, Delhi

LEFT The Sanctuary Wildlife Awards 2021 would not have been possible without the ardent support of our principal sponsors over the past two decades – Hemendra Kotbari, Chairman and Aditi Kotbari Desai, Vice Chairperson & Director on the Board, DSP Investment Managers Pvt. Ltd. This year, we were proud to also be supported by Aditya Agarwal, Managing Director, Morningstar India Pvt. Ltd. and Nadir Godrej, Chairman and Managing Director, Godrej Industries.

WILDLIFE SERVICE AWARD
Amche Mollem Campaign
 A DREAM, A VOICE AND A PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT



CHEVON RODRIGUES

YOUNG NATURALIST AWARD
Radheshyam Pemani Bishnoi
 WILDLIFE CONSERVATIONIST, ANIMAL RESCUER
 AND PHOTOGRAPHER



COURTESY: RADHESHYAM BISHNOI

THE 2021 WINNERS

On December 4, 2021, the Sanctuary Nature Foundation, sponsored by DSP Mutual Fund, co-sponsored by Godrej Industries and Morningstar India and supported by the Wildlife Conservation Trust, Carbon Copy and IndusInd Bank presented the Sanctuary Wildlife Awards 2021 as an [online virtual ceremony](#) that was streamed live on Zoom, YouTube and Facebook to a global audience.

This year, the Sanctuary Wildlife Service Awards and the Sanctuary Wildlife Photography Awards were held together on the same night. The event was hosted by Dia Mirza, Actor, Producer, UN Environment Goodwill Ambassador and United Nations Secretary-General Advocate for Sustainable Development Goals. This year, 12 inspiring change makers from across the country were honoured.

LEGEND AWARD:

Dr. Jane Goodall, DBE

Legendary scientist, ethologist, conservationist, and messenger of peace
 Compassionate, courageous and undeterred, Jane Goodall is a living legend whose life story and legacy has become synonymous with hope.

LIFETIME SERVICE AWARD:

Dr. Anwaruddin Choudhury

Retired civil servant, ornithologist, mammalogist, artist, and author
 Born in Shillong, Meghalaya in 1959, Anwaruddin Choudhury has spent close to four decades documenting and protecting Northeast India's Eastern Himalaya and other tracts.

YOUNG NATURALIST AWARDS:

Ayushi Jain

Researcher, community conservationist, and student
 A promising young biologist, Ayushi Jain is weaving science, conservation and good old-fashioned community outreach to protect an endangered species of turtle, the Cantor's giant softshell.

Ramya Nair

Researcher, anthropologist, and conservationist
 Ramya Nair is challenging exclusionary conservation working with the Yimkhiung Naga community to document the biodiversity of their ancestral forests.

Radheshyam Pemani Bishnoi

Wildlife conservationist, animal rescuer, and photographer
 As resilient and adaptable as the desert landscape he seeks to conserve, Radheshyam perseveres against all threats to the Thar ecosystem and wildlife.

GREEN TEACHER AWARD:

Yuvan Aves

Writer, naturalist, educator, and activist.
 Sanctuary's youngest Green Teacher Award recipient yet, Yuvan's expertise in creating Earth-centric and Child-centric curricula is sought after by alternative educational institutions across India.

WILDLIFE SERVICE AWARDS: (JOINT AWARD)

Dr. Ravikant Khobragade and Prajakta Hushangabadkar

Respectively Veterinary officer with the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve Forest Department; and Wildlife Biologist at the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve.

Dr. Ravikant and Prajakta's quiet and dedicated work with the wildlife of tigerland is little known, but truly inspirational.

Dr. Ravikant Khobragade exemplifies the very best in veterinary medicine, showcasing not just technical skills but also compassion and dedication. Prajakta is a stellar biologist and her work with the Forest Department, involving wildlife surveys and supporting communities is making a real difference to India's wilds.

Fakim Anti-Poaching Squad

Forest guardians, community conservationists, and team players
 Former hunters-turned-forest-protectors, the squad began their fight to protect their precious home in 2018, in the Fakim Wildlife Sanctuary, Kiphire district, Nagaland.

Arun Singh

Journalist, nature lover, and conservationist
 For a quarter century Arun Singh has consistently reported on hidden realities and questioned lobbies that work to profit from India's survival assets by masking, or twisting ecological truths.

Amche Mollem Campaign

A dream, a voice, and a people's movement

The Amche Mollem campaign is an example of the power of the collective that has been protesting three linear infrastructure projects – a railway line, a transmission line and a highway – all cutting through the forests of Mollem.

Usha Lachungpa

Naturalist, researcher, and conservationist
 Over the last four decades, Usha has woven strong and lasting links between the state government and NGO networks to the advantage of biodiversity protection of the Sikkim Himalaya.

BEHIND THE SCENES



Sanctuary

NATURE FOUNDATION

MEET THE TEAM

The **EDITORIAL & DESIGN** team rolls out communications for the Foundation and maintains our web presence, engaging with our readers and supporters through impact reports, newsletters, social media, guidebooks, coffee-table books and of course, the two magazine editions, *Sanctuary Asia* and *Sanctuary Cub*.

BITTU SAHGAL



Editor, Sanctuary Asia.

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TARA SAHGAL



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Senior Editor

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UMESH BOBADE



Art Director

QAMRUDDIN SHAIKH



Art Director & Image Editing

MALAIKA SHAH



Social Media Editor

Our in-house **NATURAL HISTORY** experts ensure our on-ground efforts and events run smoothly, maintain our world class Photo Library and engage with the extended conservation community to organise project collaborations.

DR. PARVISH PANDYA



Director, Science and Conservation

PRACHI GALANGE



Senior Consultant Photo Editor & Naturalist

SAURABH SAWANT



Consultant, Projects & Natural History

Our ongoing **PROJECTS** Kids for Tigers and Mud on Boots are making an impact on thousands of men, women and children through environmental education, and funding and support for grassroots conservation work.

CARA TEJPAL



Ex-Director, Conservation Head, Communications and Strategy

MAITREYEE MUJUMDAR



Ex-Project Coordinator, Mud on Boots

NEYI JAMOH



Project Coordinator, Mud on Boots

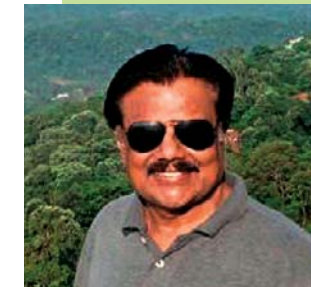
AMANDEEP KAUR BAMRAH



National Coordinator, Kids for Tigers

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Director, Advertising & Marketing

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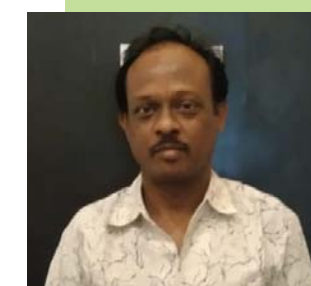
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