



# SANCTUARY NATURE FOUNDATION

Impact Report 2022

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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).

## A COMMITMENT FOREVER

Every day, I am gratified to see young people, whose world I am sworn to protect, take charge. All too few people of my generation realise that every last human endeavour is subject to the rules of nature... what scientists call the biosphere. This includes the economy, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the little blue marble that is our only home.

It is from such truth-seeds that the Sanctuary Nature Foundation was born more than four decades ago, around a warm campfire, on a cold Ranthambhore night. It was under an ancient banyan tree that the late Fateh Singh Rathore virtually coerced me into launching *Sanctuary Asia* magazine. And our mission today is precisely what it was in the 1980s... to scatter truth-seeds so they may grow into protective shields... to keep our children, safe and happy... when we are gone.

We have been blessed to be supported by many who share Sanctuary's dream. The DSP group's Hemendra Kothari – Chairman, and his two daughters Aditi Kothari Desai and Shuchi Kothari, have steadfastly supported our mission as have Nadir Godrej, Chairman & Managing Director – Godrej Industries Ltd. and the entire Godrej family. Aditya Agarwal, Managing Director and his team at Morningstar work with us to ensure that our 45-village-contact programme in Ranthambhore is empowering children and elders with nature knowledge and technological skills. Through their support for our community upliftment field work, the H T Parekh Foundation helps us reach nature education to the children of Kolkata and the Sundarban Biosphere. IndusInd Bank actively helps Sanctuary to bring environmental and climate education to school children in Delhi, Nagpur, Bengaluru, Coimbatore, Hyderabad and Panna. To honour the memory of the late Anant Bajaj, Paryavaran Mitra, the Bajaj Electrical Foundation has enabled us to reach biodiversity and climate education to thousands of Mumbai school children in over 50 schools.

Sanctuary, which started as a magazine four decades ago, is now a veritable movement with a network of over one million people, young and old. Our Mud on Boots Project empowers and supports diverse grassroots conservationists across India by fuelling its Project Leaders financially, raising their profiles, and connecting them to organisations and experts who help them implement their biodiversity missions across diverse Indian landscapes.

Launched in 2015, Sanctuary's Community-Owned Community-Operated Nature (COCOON) Conservancy Project is a rewilding initiative outside India's Protected Area Network of Sanctuaries and National Parks that serves to mitigate human-animal conflict by converting failed and marginal farms into biodiverse habitats, while ensuring that local farmers become beneficiaries of enhanced biodiversity.

In October 2022, on invitation from the Department of Tourism, Jammu and Kashmir, Sanctuary helped organise the Union Territory's first Bird Festival. Expected to be an annual fixture on the calendar, we hope to turn biodiversity protection into a source of livelihoods for local communities through the Festival.

Ours has been a long and very fulfilling journey, one that we are sworn to continue and are committed to forever.

“Sanctuary, which started as a magazine four decades ago, is now a veritable movement with a network of over one million people, young and old.”



**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.

**HOW DO WE NURTURE OUR FUTURE CITIZENS?**

Sharm el Shaikh hosted COP 27 and by all accounts the achievements were nothing to write home about. COPs come and go but human greed, avarice and insensitivity scale new heights. Emotional appeals seem to have failed, economic rationale for preserving ecosystems seems to fail, cost of climate change and its devastation seems to cut no ice, frequent disasters seem to be forgotten. So, what will shake us out of this desire for collective suicide and how will we climb out of this hole that we have dug ourselves into. Will people have to die on the street? Will we wait for the mass migrations that will be enforced on large geographies of the world especially the poorer ones? Will we wait for more pandemics that will kill many more millions? Will we wait for wars to breakout for basic access to natural resources or civil strife to engulf us? Will we wait for huge sectors of industry and agriculture to be laid waste by the emerging unviability and the resultant unemployment for millions?

How does the generation who cannot vote take charge? Today's power structures seem to ignore them. The simple but powerful truth is that we are literally confiscating large chunks of their future away from them and condemning them to live in a world which can only guarantee them a cursed life of unhealthy living with shortages and depravity. I think the question for all of us to answer is that! How do we let the today's young find empowerment enough to influence choices that impact their future? How can we feel for this earth enough to let it nurture the future citizens of this world who are the rightful owners?

“The nations who will win are those that recognise and define success as one which ensures the well-being of their citizenry through securing their quality of life through good education, good health, clean air, green spaces, food and water security. Embedding a sustainable strategy that protects wild spaces, biodiversity and water sources is crucial to a successful development journey in any society.”

**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.

“The consistency with which SNF has championed the cause of conservation, is an inspiration for everyone working in this field. What is perhaps most remarkable, is that in this journey, SNF has rigorously promoted those on the field with its Mud on Boots Project, and at the same time, it keeps igniting young minds with its Kids for Tigers’ mission. I congratulate SNF for the amazing work they have done this year and I wish them the very best for all the crucial projects lined up for the coming year.”



### 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.”

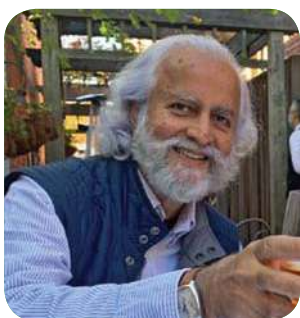


### Norma Alvares

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.

“Emerging from the travails of the pandemic, the Sanctuary team has pursued their mission with renewed vigour. In 2022, the Sanctuary Nature Foundation has expanded the Kids for Tigers Programme to cover 10 cities and also supported the Mud on Boots programme in far flung regions. Congratulations Sanctuary.”

## Advisory Board Members



### Praveen Gupta

A former insurance CEO, he believes insurers have a critical and urgent role to play in nurturing our environment. He spends a lot of his time in writing and speaking about the unfolding climate and biodiversity crisis. Much of what he does can be tracked on [www.thediversityblog.com/](http://www.thediversityblog.com/)

“I always wanted to write for Sanctuary since I saw its first issue in 1981. Honoured that Bittu invited me to co-author with him on a cover story, earlier this year. Dreams do come true!”



### Cara Tejpal

Writer and Wildlife Conservationist.

She was previously the head of conservation initiatives for Sanctuary Nature Foundation and a commissioning editor for *Sanctuary Asia* magazine.

“Beyond chronicling India’s conservation and natural history for over four decades, Sanctuary unwaveringly champions the underdog. The commitment to supporting grassroots workers, movements and campaigns, often against tremendous odds, is invaluable and inspiring.”



# SANCTUARY MORE THAN FOUR

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 22](#)).

1999

The first Sanctuary Wildlife Service and Photography Awards was held at NCPA, Mumbai ([more on page 50](#)).

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 39](#)).

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 34](#)).

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 40<sup>th</sup> 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.

2021

Sanctuary helped conduct the first bird festival in Jammu and Kashmir in October 2022 ([more on 58-59](#)).

2022

## Sanctuary Wildlife Service Awards Returns to In-person Audience at the NCPA (December 2, 2022)



A group of colorful caterpillars, primarily yellow and orange with red spots and black stripes, are hanging from thin, vertical, dark lines. The caterpillars are positioned at various heights and are illuminated from the side, creating a dramatic, glowing effect against a dark background. The overall composition is vertical and rhythmic.

# OUTREACH & COMMUNICATION



# PUBLICATIONS

“Around 6<sup>th</sup> grade, I discovered *Sanctuary Asia Cub* magazine in my school library, and soon got a subscription for the magazine at home. Among a lot of other influences, the magazine was instrumental in making me sensitive to environmental and wildlife issues. Needless to say, it was the right kind of reading at the right age!”

Surabhi Sharman,  
@warmwordsliterarycompany

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.**

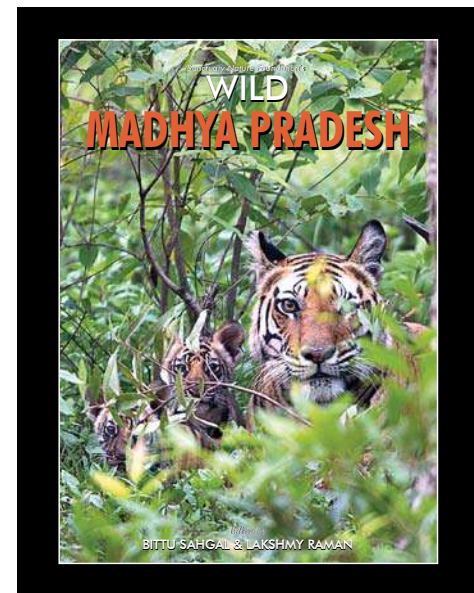
*Sanctuary Asia's* six issues in 2022 offered readers insight into the current state of India's wilds and the most pressing conservation issues in the country, from the discovery of and significance of new species, the vital role that economics plays in conservation, updates from the frontlines of the climate crisis, women's invaluable contributions to conservation across the nation, and more (see more on page 44). In October 2022, Sanctuary published 'The Future of Tourism' special issue (see facing page).

*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 2022, we added a few new pages to *Sanctuary Cub* including one on state wild symbols and have been receiving positive feedback on our constant effort to make the magazine interesting and relevant to our youth.

Read all the articles we covered in 2022 on [www.sanctuarynaturefoundation.org](http://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 in India. *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 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. In 2022, we published a guidebook on the Sundarban Tiger Reserve.

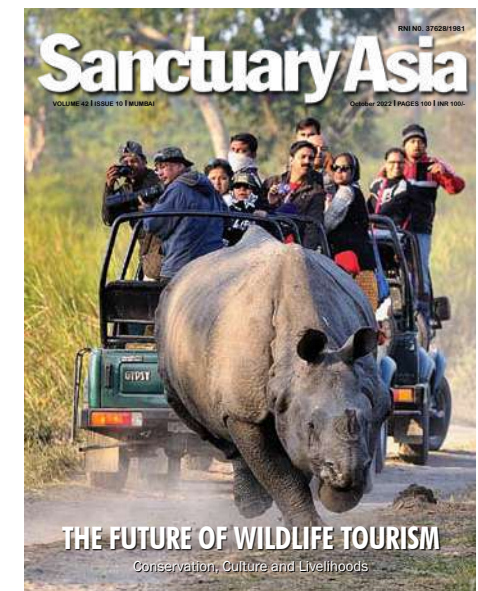


SANCTUARY PUBLICATIONS	
<b>Inheritance Series</b>	
Kaziranga	2005
Revised edition	2007
Bharatpur	2006
Corbett	2007
Sundarbans	2007
Bandhavgarh	2008
Periyar	2008
Tadoba	2015
<b>Guide Books</b>	
Corbett	2009
Pench	2013
Kaziranga	2014
Achanakmar	2017
Barnawapara	2017
Bhoramdeo	2017
Kanger	2017
Tamor-Pingla-Samarkot-Guru Ghasidas	2017
Nameri	2018
Sundarban	2022
<b>WILD Series</b>	
Maharashtra	2012
Revised edition	2015
Chhattisgarh	2017
Madhya Pradesh	2018
<b>Other Coffee Table Books and Publications</b>	
Forever Stripes	2007
India Naturally	2008
Sankhala's India	2008
Lest We Forget	
PLAN B	2008
Mobilising to Save Civilisation (English & Hindi)	

# THE FUTURE OF TOURISM – SPECIAL ISSUE

Around 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, Sanctuary has become a binding force and springboard for countless conservationists who are now leading impactful campaigns and initiatives across the world. Our October 2022 issue was dedicated to understanding how tourism can be a compelling incentive for communities, governments and business to support wildlife conservation. We looked at the many pitfalls of tourism as well as the several positive stories of people and organisations that are charting the course of sustainable and ethical tourism.

Fittingly, the cover featured a highly distressed rhino charging toward a safely-distanced photographer's vehicle



while hordes of tourists carried on their cacophonous chatter, unaware of their effect on the magnificent pachyderm in Kaziranga National Park. The scene brought to mind Friedensreich Hundertwasser's sage advice: "You are a guest of nature... behave!" – which Sanctuary believes ought to become a compass for tourists, tourist policy makers and tourism professionals.

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

## REWILDING INDIA, ONE PARCEL OF LAND AT A TIME

It is now clearer than ever that *Nature Needs Half* to give our planet a fighting chance to repair the damage we have

inflicted on the biosphere. Tourism, when undertaken sustainably, strategically and thoughtfully, presents an economically viable, low-footprint, and high-impact solution to the urgent need to restore and rewild larger parcels of land. **Francesca Cotta** looked at five inspiring rewilding stories in India to learn how tourism and rewilding can positively intersect.

## OFF THE TIGER TRAIL

Our Protected Areas have become hotspots for tourists who consider their trips successful only if they spot a tiger. From gorgeous butterflies of Arunachal Pradesh to stunning tiny critters of the Western Ghats, *Sanctuary* introduced many other wonderful creatures that merit dedicated trips through a Photo Feature.

## HOW NOT TO BE A TOURIST

Responsible tourism demands that all stakeholders accept that protecting the integrity of the habitat and its wild denizens is in their own interests. With caution and awareness, we can protect nature, and ourselves, while travelling. We covered some examples of what we do NOT need to see happening.

## MEET RAJ BASU

**Bittu Sahgal and Lakshmy Raman** spoke about sustainable tourism with Raj Basu, Founder of Help Tourism and Advisor to state governments in the East Himalayan and Indo-Burman regions. This tourism trailblazer has been quietly transforming one village at a time in east and Northeast India, Nepal, and Bhutan,

**The Sanctuary Interview Meet Raj Basu**

*Founder of Help Tourism and Advisor to state governments in the East Himalayan and Indo-Burman region on tourism, with a special focus on rural tourism, Raj Basu does not like to be in the limelight. He would rather focus on his agenda of empowering communities through rural tourism.*

**Bittu Sahgal and Lakshmy Raman** spoke with this down-to-earth tourism trailblazer who has been quietly transforming one village at a time in east and Northeast India, Nepal and Bhutan, empowering communities to take pride in their way of life, and creating ways to enhance livelihoods, all with the goal of protecting our wilds.

More at [www.sanctuarynaturefoundation.org](http://www.sanctuarynaturefoundation.org) | People

**Y**ou were a small-town boy and never too far from nature... Yes, my father was an engineer on the railways with a comfortable job and so I spent a lot of time with my maternal grandparents, uncles, and aunts. My mother, the eldest in a large family, was only 17 when I was born and I was the only grandson, and a pampered one at that. Until around the age of five, I grew up in a double-storied wooden house in the beautiful heritage town of Jaldighar, only an easy pace to the Sanctuary's famed natural beauty. The Kankra river (later renamed) flows through the town and just past the house courtyard and we had a boat pulled up to the market and other places in town. Birlong was a constant and we often heard jacks in the evening. A devastating flood on the Rana destroyed my grandparents' home and my mother and I moved to Sigur to live with my father and my paternal grandmother and grandfather, who had retired from the Chengmai tea estate on the Bhutan border. Even there, 20 minutes out of town, was the Sankra forest where the Mahasabha Wildlife Sanctuary and the legendary Bishalpur forest, where the "Bhakti Mantra" comes from here and the Kanyasulk, the revolt against the British by Bhanu and others, believed to be the first freedom struggle, began here. The close forest that seemed impenetrable to the British, housed small animals that served as carriers of disease for local children and youth, without any class barriers.

Sigur was a small trading town then, which began developing because of the Nagai Himalayan railway, today a world heritage site. So, this wonderful landscape that I grew up in, raised on stories about the freedom struggle and connected to the wilderness around my love for nature and mountains here.

**W**hat about your education? I was a naughty child and my grandmother complained that I was unmanageable, which resulted in me being sent away to boarding school – the Ganga Chak Group School in Manasgiri in Class 6. Interacting with boys from every part of the country taught me a lot about life and it is to be Indian. As a boy, I was full of art, books, and camping, and all

that surrounded me. I am really grateful to that period, which gave me a real sense of being global and independent. That schooling, I attended till college in Sigur, where I would often skip classes to hike and explore the Bhangal Himalayan region. One of my first long and memorable treks was on Sandhighat, now known as the Singalila National Park. That was the beginning of a long association with the region and I would keep visiting, sitting in tree planning programmes, trekking, mountaineering, camping and more. I was part of the North Bengal Engineers Club and had lots of opportunities for adventure and connecting with nature. After my graduation, I completed a one-year certificate course in wildlife management, where I scored the highest grade, and immediately found a job as a research assistant for tiger projects in various habitats – in the Sundarbans, Bhas and Nandapada. This not only allowed me to do what I love best – be in the wild, but it also gave me valuable opportunities to interact with NGOs and conservationists and wildlife.

**BELOW:** Nandapada's wild beauty from the base of the carbon, Bhatra, and foothills of Jaldighar. Below: people on the banks of the river, and the forest in their day. Also: the natural beauty of the parkland.

“Love the unique concept shared in *Food for Thought*. This ensures that the traveller gets the complete experience of deep diving into local cultures and cuisines, and makes sure the traveller takes back something special from their travel.”

– Adventureseekers.in, Pune



**BELOW** Our October 2022 issue was dedicated to understanding how tourism can be a compelling incentive for communities, governments and business to support wildlife conservation.

“ It doesn't seem very long ago, when sitting in an office, I had pondered whether I could truly make something out of that lifelong itch to be in the wilderness, to view and observe wildlife as much as I could. Years and years of second-guessing myself, and then in 2018, I jumped off the springboard to depths unknown. Yet here I am today doing what I scarcely thought was a real-life possibility and never imagining that four years later, the publication I grew up with, that fuelled my passion for the wild, would have the story of our journey dotting its pages. Incredibly thankful and honoured for this privilege. ”

Shashank Birla, Mumbai



empowering communities to take pride in their way of life, and creating ways to enhance livelihoods, all with the goal of protecting our wilds.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Jayesh Paranjape, a conservationist who organises specialised tours across India, highlighted how culinary tourism – an upcoming sector of the tourism industry – can become an economically viable livelihood for rural or forest communities in India.

HEALING HILLS OF HIMACHAL

Divyakshi Gupta wrote about her healing experience of slow living in Himachal Pradesh. Her time there taught her to coexist with nature and live sustainably, as the locals do.

STARTING A SAFARI TOUR OUTFIT IN INDIA

Shashank Birla penned down valuable, hard-won lessons from his experience starting Wilderlust Expeditions LLP in India. What began as a business idea borne out of a passion for wildlife took painstaking efforts to become a sustainable safari tour outfit today.

WALKING WITH THE RIVER

Bageshwer Singh and Pooja Chand undertook a 10-day walk with the river Sindh, from Narwar to Badarwas, as a part of Veditum India Foundation's Moving Upstream: Sindh Fellowship. They wrote about how their journey unfolded as they experienced the river's dynamic flow and biodiversity.

GOA: A POTENTIAL FOR SAFE TOURISM

Tallulah D'silva elaborated on how a safer brand of tourism, one carefully linked to protecting forests and wildlife, is possible in Goa, and described examples that already exist in small pockets. However, planners and policymakers must have considerable vision and determination to make this a reality.

WILD EXPERIENCES LED BY COMMUNITIES

Bhavna Menon wrote about her work with the Last Wilderness Foundation, where she works with the Pardhis who live near the Panna Tiger Reserve, to create unique experiences for visitors led by the community, which empower them and their way of life.

THE SPIRIT OF WILD TRAVEL

Shatakshi Gawade showcased organisations and individuals who curate programmes that create an opportunity for travellers to experience the true colours of a new place – the biodiversity, the landscape, the people, the magic.

KANHA, TEEMING WITH WILDLIFE NOT TOURISTS

C. Gangadharan Menon shared why Kanha National Park, with its polite but strict, disciplined management that respects the needs of wildlife over tourists, is his preferred wildlife destination.

In 2022, 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, puts out a monthly newsletter (launched in 2020) that is sent out to just under 10,000 recipients, who receive updates on our projects, publications, campaigns, events and more. We also organised webinars on subjects of interest to our audience, held our annual debate and awards in person and later telecast on social media. 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 networks on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp and email reach out to over half a million people across the world. A look at our social media numbers (as of December 18, 2022):

- Facebook: @sanctuaryasiapage (257 K followers), @sanctuaryasiagroup (257 K followers)
- Twitter: @SanctuaryAsia (32 K followers)
- Instagram: @sanctuaryasia (128 K followers)
- YouTube: Sanctuary Nature Foundation (10 K subscribers)

FACEBOOK FEATURE

Sanctuary's Facebook group - Sanctuary Nature Foundation (https://www.facebook.com/groups/sanctuaryasia/) was spotlighted by Facebook India's #FBpeMilega "A campaign created to feature groups, stories and pages that have inspired our audience to learn and grow in big and small ways." Our feature video (https://fb.watch/hvDvEw7tu/) garnered over two million views and inspired several new members to join our online community and share all things wildlife, photography and conservation.

AUTHOR FOCUS

This year we saw a rising shift in social media trends, from images to short-content videos increasing our engagement. Sanctuary invited authors to submit videos of their work that we then shared on our varied social media handles. This enabled writers to showcase their enriching time in the field and gave them a platform to build their network by engaging with our followers directly.

HOW NOT TO BE A TOURIST

Our photofeature from the October 2022 issue titled 'How Not To Be a Tourist' had a powerful impact on social media. Every share and comment kicked off a conversation about responsible tourism, our followers tagged us under posts promoting ill-advised experiences and behaviour that could harm the habitat and its wild denizens. On demonstrating what we do NOT need to see happening, we encouraged a dialogue on what we MUST see happening.

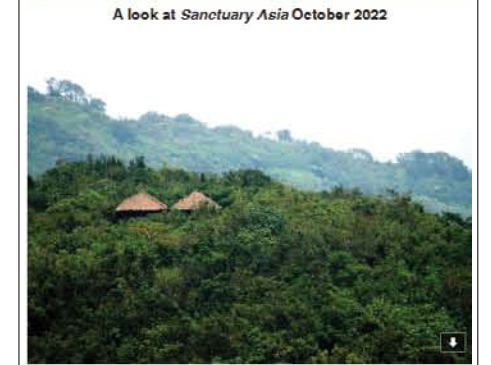
ALT-EFF PARTNERSHIP

Sanctuary partnered with All Living Things Environmental Film Festival (ALT EFF) for their third edition of the virtual film festival that ran from November 17 to 27. Sanctuary's editorial team watched and reviewed 10 of the 55 films in the programme, of which 33 were exclusive India premieres. The films were categorised according to themes such as conservation, climate change, activism, the ecosphere, indigenous wisdom, urbanisation, food politics, capitalism and sustainable living. Each offered the opportunity to spend time contemplating the lives of all organisms on Earth – from plankton, rare birds, insects and jellyfish, to humans among others.

#Wednesday Spotlight

Over the past year, we continued spotlighting the conservation efforts of our current and alumni project leaders by curating and sharing inspiring stories from the field in our weekly Wednesday posts dedicated to the Mud on Boots Project (see page 35).

The image seen below is from the weekly Wednesday post.



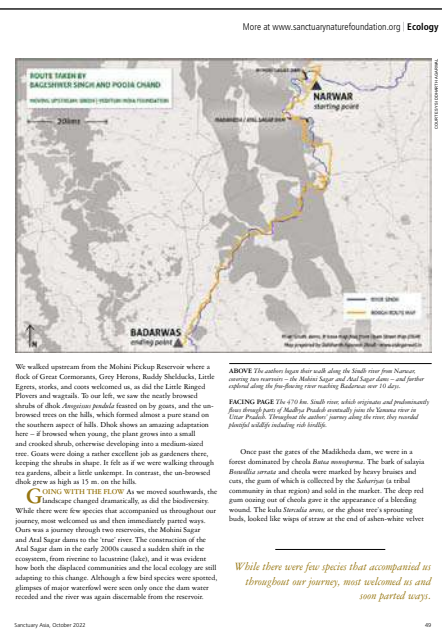
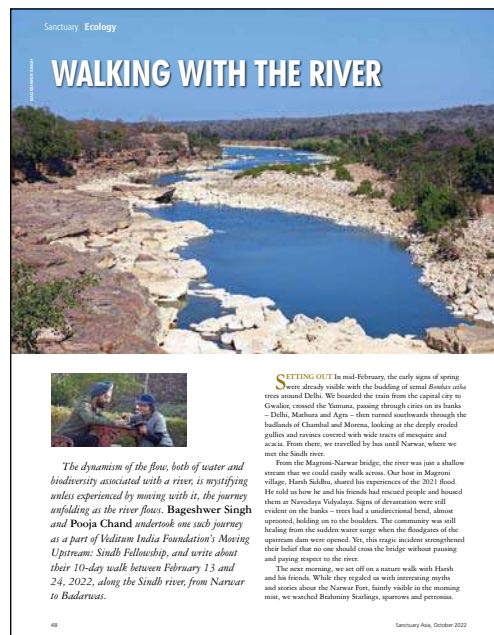
COVER STORY  
**Revisiting India, One Parcel of Land at a Time**  
 One year into the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration, it is time to re-evaluate how we have managed our land. Tourism, when undertaken sustainably, strategically and thoughtfully, presents an economically viable, low-footprint, and high-impact solution to the urgent need to restore and revitalize larger parcels of land. Francesca Catta looks at five inspiring rewilding initiatives in India – in Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Goa, Assam and Kerala – to learn how tourism and rewilding can positively intersect. The proprietors behind these projects share their uplifting and hearteningly successful stories for our shared future through their stories of rewilding, in a manner that is locally rooted to the social and ecological realities of where they are. Photo: Venkat Kulkarni. [READ MORE](#)



PHOTO FEATURE  
**How Not to be a Tourist**  
 The woods are lovely, dense and deep – but to continue to enjoy their grandeur, we have some promises to keep. Wildlife travel operators, resort owners and tourists benefiting from travel to wild spaces must be sensitised to the imperative of opting for sustainable tourism practices... not just to 'save the world' but to secure their own economic survival. Responsible tourism demands that all players accept that protecting the integrity of the habitat and its wild denizens is in their own interest. With caution and awareness, we can protect nature, and ourselves, while travelling. Check out some examples of what we do NOT need to see happening. Photo: Steve Winter. [READ MORE](#)



INTERVIEW  
**Meet Raj Basu**  
 Biju Galgati and Lalcherry Naman speak about sustainable tourism with Raj Basu, Founder of Heli tourism and advisor to state governments in the east-himalayan and indo-burman region. His tourism trailblazer has been quietly transforming one village at a time in east and northeast India, Nepal, and Bhutan, empowering communities to take pride in their way of life, and creating ways to enhance livelihoods, all with the goal of protecting our wilds. Photo: Raj Basu. [READ MORE](#)



PROJECTS





## 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.

“The best way to evoke interest about climate change in children is to ask a simple question. What's your favourite bird or animal? The Kids for Tigers programme has pioneered and elevated this understanding.”

– Rituraj Phukan,  
Kids for Tigers,  
Assam Coordinator



**24** years since inception | **39** cities across India | **800** schools reached | **1 million+** children and teachers impacted



## 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 – 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 2022

After two years of pandemic-imposed online activities, Kids for Tigers was able to return to outdoor and in-person activities. Between nature walks, art sessions, and environmental campaigns, the project has been able to widen its reach and deepen its impact among our youth.

### KIDS FOR TIGERS SUPPORTED BY ANANT BAJAJ PARYAVARAN MITRA AND BAJAJ ELECTRICALS FOUNDATION

"The Sanctuary Nature Foundation is grateful for the Bajaj Family for choosing to honour the late Anant Bajaj's memory by supporting our Kids for Tigers' mission. He loved tigers and nature deeply and always maintained that young children needed to be introduced to nature in their most formative years."

### JUNE 5, 2022: WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY CELEBRATION AND LAUNCH OF KIDS FOR TIGERS, MUMBAI

On the occasion of World Environment Day 2022, which was convened under the theme, 'Only One Earth', Kids for Tigers, in association with the National Centre for Performing Arts (NCPA) at Nariman Point, Mumbai, organised a fun outdoor fest for the first time since the pandemic! Throughout the day, exciting events, nature trails, installations, art, workshops, film screenings and games brought much mirth, fun and learning for kids and their parents alike. Kids also signed the 'Save the Tiger Signature' scroll and wrote entries on the 'Wishlist for a Greener Mumbai' campaign, which will be submitted to the Chief Minister. This event was also an opportunity to relaunch Kids for Tigers Mumbai after the pandemic.

### AUGUST 8, 2022: EDUCATIONIST ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP, MUMBAI

After two years of online webinars, we organised the Educationist Environmental

Leadership Workshop, led by Dr. Parvish Pandya, Consultant Director, Science and Conservation, Sanctuary and Dr. Anish Andheria, President and CEO of Wildlife Conservation Trust, at Mumbai. A total of 52 teachers attended the workshop, which focused on biodiversity and climate change, and how educationists could seamlessly integrate such knowledge into the subjects they teach.

### SEPTEMBER 3, 2022: ONLINE VERSION OF EDUCATIONIST ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP, MUMBAI

An online workshop was conducted to update teachers who were unable to attend the earlier session about Kids for Tigers activities and plans for the year.

### SEPTEMBER 24, 2022: NATURE TRAIL, MUMBAI

A nature trail was conducted at Mumbai's Sanjay Gandhi National Park, led by Dr. Pandya and expert naturalists Dr. Ketki Marthak, an ENT specialist, and Vikrant Chaurasiya, a teacher. The trail was



a huge success and participants thoroughly enjoyed exploring the forest, which was lush and vibrant post-monsoon.

### NOVEMBER 19, 2022: SAVE THE TIGER EVENT AND NATURE TRAIL, MUMBAI

Post Diwali vacation, Kids for Tigers returned to make a big splash with the 'Save the Tigers' Programme, which included an Eco-Quiz Competition, Just-a-Minute (JAM) Extempore Competition, and a nature trail at the Conservation Education Centre (also known as the BNHS Nature Reserve). This nature trail was open not only to students and teachers, but also to parents, who were keen to learn more about the programme and explore this urban wilderness. Seventeen schools participated in the Eco-Quiz Competition, JAM Extempore Competition, and nature trail session. Priyanka Barge, ACF SGNP, also attended the event and motivated students to consider a career in conservation. First prize winners of the competition were given a one-year BNHS membership.

### DECEMBER 20, 2022: BUTTERFLY GARDEN IN MY SCHOOL BACKYARD

Gardening for butterflies is much more than choosing aesthetically lovely plants to make the garden look beautiful and colourful. It is planned keeping in mind the need to meet the two basic requirements of butterflies – host plants and feeding or nectar plants. To educate students about the lifecycle of butterflies, pollination, the importance of butterfly conservation and to inculcate a love for plants and animals, Kids for Tigers conducted a hands-on Butterfly Garden building session with kindergarten students of the Bombay International School. Students enjoyed the session and were amazed to learn all these wonderful things about butterflies.

### AUDIO-VISUAL (AV) SHOWS:

One of the major ways in which Kids for Tigers connect to students is through AV Shows in their school. With support from the Anant Bajaj Paryavaran Mitra and Bajaj Electricals Foundation, we conducted various slide shows across Mumbai for students of diverse backgrounds and age groups.

Education is the most critical influencing agent, which can be used to change the world. It is crucial that we educate ourselves and our kids about the importance of environmental protection in order to make the world a better place to live in. When we are educated about our environment, we grow up to be responsible citizens and this will make a positive change for our only home, Planet Earth. We will learn to utilise our resources more efficiently and lead a sustainable life leading to peaceful coexistence.

– Ekta Bhैया, Kids for Tigers, Nagpur Coordinator



RIGHT Kids for Tigers launch on June 5<sup>th</sup>, World Environment Day at NCPA.



ABOVE LEFT Kids for Tigers' National Coordinator Amandeep Kaur, interacting with students of the Rishi Valmiki Eco School, Manori during their Audio-Visual Show.

BOTTOM LEFT Preeti Takle, Kids for Tigers, Mumbai Coordinator; Dr. Parvish Pandya, Consultant Director, Science and Conservation and Priyanka Barge, Assistant Conservator of Forest, SGNP, with the winners of the Quiz Competition at the Conservation Education Centre.



**TOP** Kids performing at the Kids for Tigers Fest in Kolkata.

**MIDDLE 1** Suchandra Kundu, Honorary Wildlife Warden of Kolkata, interacts with students during a Nature Trail.

**MIDDLE 2** Students from Techno P.S. Garia school during the Kids for Tigers Audio-Visual Show.

**ABOVE** Teachers participating in the Kids for Tigers' Environmental Leadership Workshop in Kolkata.

## KIDS FOR TIGERS SUPPORTED BY H T PAREKH FOUNDATION

The programme, being run in 45 schools in Kolkata, has been working to create awareness amongst school children for tiger and wildlife conservation. The Sanctuary team has been able to undertake this work with the support of the H T Parekh Foundation and the Society of Heritage and Ecological Researches (SHER).

### AUDIO-VISUAL SHOWS

The Kids for Tigers AV shows allow us to engage students and educators, enrich their knowledge and make them sensitive toward India's wonderful but vanishing biodiversity. Throughout the year, we conducted several AV shows throughout Kolkata, including 11 in November and December, 2022. Some of the schools covered include: Jahar Nandi Vidyapith, Lee Memorial Girls High School, Silver Point School, Techno India Public School Garia, St. Stephen's School Bowbazar, Joseph Day School, Techno India School Konnagar, Duff School for Girls, Harrow Hall, Chowringhee High School and Hartley's High School.

### NATURE TRAILS

Most kids today suffer from Nature-Deficit Disorder as they spend less time outdoors, and this is 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. Spending time outdoors is beneficial for kids and adults alike as it helps to reduce stress, encourage positive feelings and also improve attention restoration. To develop and nurture this bond between kids and nature, Nature Trails are conducted on a regular basis. Four nature trails were conducted throughout the year to connect students to nature and wildlife around them. The first two trails were conducted on December 2 (for girls) and December 3 (for boys) at the Central Park, Salt Lake – Bonobitan. Two trails were also conducted on December 19, 2022 at the Chintamani Kar Bird Sanctuary.

### TEACHERS' ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP

The annual workshop was held on November 15. A wonderful group of 102 teachers from registered Kids for Tigers' schools attended the workshop to learn how they can integrate environmental education into their regular subjects.

### TIGER FEST

On December 14, more than 600 students and teachers from various Kids for Tigers' registered schools of Kolkata and the city outskirts gathered at the La Martiniere for Girls School's auditorium to participate in the Tiger Fest. Students from 41 schools

performed on stage to convey the message of tiger conservation with special emphasis on the Sundarban and human-wildlife conflicts. Posters, dance and music recitals, skits, short plays, elocution, recitation, and power-point presentations on the theme 'Vote for the Tiger' were all part of the five-hour-long fest. Participants received a certificate and schools received a special Tiger Fest plaque that was presented by the Honorary Wildlife Warden of Kolkata, Suchandra Kundu. Refreshment packets were given to all participants including teachers and students.

### FIRECRACKER FREE DIWALI CAMPAIGN

Firecrackers are an integral part of celebrations worldwide. But studies confirm that the chemicals used emit harmful toxins, including heavy metals that harm the environment, animals, birds, and human health. This Diwali, the Government of West Bengal allowed only green fireworks during Kali Puja, as directed by Kolkata High Court. Students from Kids for Tigers' schools across India pledged to similarly celebrate Diwali in an Earth-friendly way! Students recorded messages saying no to firecrackers and encouraging the use of traditional clay diyas, which are biodegradable, eco-friendly and beautiful, as part of an awareness campaign. The videos were published on our social media accounts including Facebook and Instagram.

This campaign was part of a national communication strategy to highlight for both teachers and students, the umbilical connection between climate change, air and water pollution and biodiversity depletion.

### SAVE THE HANGUL CAMPAIGN

A video message to showcase support and spread awareness about the importance of the state animal of Jammu and Kashmir – the hangul was recorded and shared widely.



## KIDS FOR TIGERS – SUPPORTED BY INDUSIND BANK

Apart from Mumbai, Kolkata and Sundarban, Kids for Tigers has been launched in six new cities – Bengaluru, Nagpur, Coimbatore, Hyderabad, Panna and Delhi, with the support of IndusInd Bank. The Bank supports and designs sustainable CSR programmes, that primarily empower and benefit marginalised and weaker sections of society, high-risk and high-stressed communities. Their guidance principles include strong commitment to bring about grassroots level change in our country as they support projects that promote environmental education among children.

Under the initiative, Kids for Tigers will be particularly working closely with underprivileged schools that lack the infrastructure and funds to focus on environmental topics with students. We believe that all young people have the legitimacy to ask for a better world. To do this they must learn about our natural world and understand that its value, how all this is linked to our health, food and water security and economy.

### WHY ARE WE DOING IT?

- To bring awareness about the tiger-forest-climate change-people relationship among school students.
- To create leaders for wildlife and nature conservation, who will be known as Kids for Tigers – Tiger Ambassadors. These ambassadors will feel passionately for the tiger and be ready to spearhead a massive effort to protect them.
- To mitigate the effects of human-wildlife conflict through knowledge and awareness.

### WHAT HAVE WE DONE SO FAR?

**Registrations:** We have registered 83 schools under this project across six cities. These include 17 in Bengaluru, 8 in Coimbatore, 11 in Delhi, 16 in Nagpur, 5 in Hyderabad and 26 in Panna.

### TEACHERS' WORKSHOP, NAGPUR: NOVEMBER 26

Our first Teachers' Workshop was held to familiarise teachers with the rationale and the calendar of activities planned for Kids for Tigers in the weeks and months ahead. A total of 35 teachers from 16 schools participated. Dr. Tejinder Singh Rawal, one of Nagpur's most respected conservationists, addressed the teachers about 'Biodiversity and its Current Situation' using interesting anecdotes that had teachers transfixed. Dr. Bahar Baviskar, President and wildlife veterinarian, Wild-CER and One Health practitioner, also spoke to

the teachers about conservation work being undertaken at the grassroot level in the Vidarbha area. This was followed by a session by Harshwardhan Dhanwatey, Trustee of Tiger Research and Conservation Trust (TRACT), and one of Nagpur's most dedicated tiger defenders. He shared a video on the tigers of Chandrapur and Tadoba. Ekta Bhaiya, Kids for Tigers, Nagpur Coordinator, then presented the Kids for Tigers Audio-Visual show themed 'Only One Earth', which was the global focus for World Environment Day 2022. The teachers gave feedback that the sessions were engaging, and that they would like more such sessions held in the future for the benefit of the students in their charge.

### NATURE TRAIL, NAGPUR: DECEMBER 16

A nature trail was conducted at the Balasaheb Thackeray Gorewada International Zoological Park to introduce the biodiversity of a city, often known as the 'tiger capital of India' to its youth. **Pandurang Pakhale**, Assistant Conservator of Forest and Sanctuary Wildlife Service Awardee 2017, led the trail along with biologist Shubham Dhanraj Chhapekar, and forest guides Sandip Bhalavi and Kabir Buddha. The trail was thoroughly enjoyed by the 110 students and their teachers from nine schools who explored the wilderness.

### TEACHERS' WORKSHOP, BENGALURU: DECEMBER 17

The Teachers' Workshop was conducted at Venkatappa Art Gallery Auditorium, Kasturba Road, Cubbon Park and was attended by 34 teachers from 18 schools. The chief guest was S. Karthikeyan, Chief Naturalist, Jungle Lodges and Resorts. Teachers enjoyed the informative sessions, which also included the Kids for Tigers Audio-Visual show. The teachers requested the Kids for Tigers Coordinators to visit their school and conduct Audio-Visual shows for their students.

### NATURE TRAIL, HYDERABAD: DECEMBER 22

A nature trail was conducted at the Butterfly Park of Sanjeevaiah Children's Park, which is spread over 4.5 acres, with over 60 varieties of flowering and nectar yielding plants, complete with a waterbody of 1.2 acres and green pathways. About 50 species of butterflies have been recorded in and around Hussainsagar including the striped tiger, pioneer, plain tiger crimson rose, common bush, brown blue tiger and so on. Sanjeevaiah Park is a treat with a colourful range of shrubs,

creepers and trees with flowers. B. Srinivas, IFS, interacted with the students who joined the trail and enlightened them with various facts about wildlife, plant-animal interactions, and so much more.

### TEACHERS' WORKSHOP, DELHI: DECEMBER 23

The Teachers' Workshop for Delhi was conducted at Springdales School, Pusa Road. The workshop was graced by chief guest **Neha Sinha**, author, environmentalist and Sanctuary Wildlife Service Awardee 2017. Following her session, Bhavya Arora, Kids for Tigers Delhi Coordinator, conducted the Kids for Tigers Audio-Visual show. The teachers felt highly motivated after these sessions and wanted to implement the practical lessons they learned about wildlife, nature and environment conservation in their schools.

### WHAT IS OUR NEXT STEP/PLAN?

Over the next three months, we plan to complete the following activities in all the cities mentioned above.

- Audio-Visual shows across all the registered schools
- Complete pending Nature Trails
- Complete pending Teachers' Workshops in all the cities
- Conduct a Tiger Fest in all the cities
- Conduct an Annual Camp for each city at a nearby national park, sanctuary or tiger reserve



**ABOVE** Teachers after the Kids for Tigers' Teacher's Environmental Leadership Workshop in Bengaluru.

# RANTHAMBHORE VILLAGE CONTACT PROGRAMME SUPPORTED BY MORNINGSTAR INDIA

## 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 creating awareness on how nature and wildlife protection can keep us safer. 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 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 village youth, thus giving them alternative livelihood opportunities through our skill development programme.
- To create community leaders for conservation.
- To uphold economic, systematic, cultural, artistic and environmental values while encouraging ecological protection.
- To develop alternative eco-tourism opportunities.

## WHAT HAVE WE DONE SO FAR?

Our project site at Ranthambhore has remained busy throughout the year. Several clean-up drives, day and night film screenings, safaris, art-for-conservation drawing competitions, wildlife photo-exhibitions and more were organised. With temperatures soaring in Rajasthan in the summer, water baths were made available

for birds with the help of local community volunteers. The local community has also been engaged in various discussions and interactive sessions with Govardhan Meena, the Kids for Tigers Sawai Madhopur Coordinator, to increase awareness about wildlife and conservation issues. Various rescue operations were also conducted throughout the year and the rescued animals were released safely back to the forest after conducting a thorough medical check-up.

## SESSIONS ON WILDLIFE EDUCATION AND AWARENESS HAVE:

- Increased appreciation and respect for the forest and its wildlife.
- Enhanced the environmental attitudes, values and knowledge of 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

Learning the 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. We are also looking into ways women can be involved. During the pandemic, they were given an opportunity to make masks, which were then distributed free during various activities. With newly-acquired skills, the community is hopeful about being able to earn extra revenue, which in turn will allow them to lead a respectable life.

Our local coordinator Govardhan Meena is a relentless warrior who has been undertaking several activities including book distribution for students, clean-up drives with student volunteers, drawing, quiz and essay competitions on wildlife themes, film screening on Ranthambhore and conservation issues, nature trails, night film screenings, poster exhibitions, and rallies. Additionally, he takes students



COURTESY: DR. PARVISH PANDYA

on safaris into the tiger reserve and on museum visits. He also aids with wildlife rescue operations.

## MORNINGSTAR TEAM VISIT

In May 2022, a visit to Ranthambhore was organised for our CSR donors Morningstar India. Their team, which included Aditya Agarwal, Managing Director, India; Shreyas Shah, Finance Director; Divya Pillai, Associate Director, Finance and Accounts; Perpetual Mathias, Associate Director of Talent Management and Nilofer Thakkar, Associate Manager, Corporate Solutions accompanied Sanctuary's Executive Editor Lakshmy Raman, Consultant Director, Science and Conservation Dr. Parvish Pandya, and Consultant, Projects & Natural History Saurabh Sawant. They visited the two computer labs supported by Morningstar for the village children to learn the requisite tech skills and help them become more job savvy. These labs have a dedicated teacher who is guiding and teaching the students. The first batch of 50 students have also signed up for the Rajasthan State Course in Information

Technology (RS-CIT), a basic computer course certified by the state, the fees for which is being sponsored by the Village Contact Programme. The students will appear for their test in January 2023. The team also visited three local villages and interacted with the locals to understand their issues at the ground level.

Post the visit, Morningstar donated 20 more computers to the Computer Labs, making 30 computers available overall for the students.

## WHAT IS OUR NEXT STEP/PLAN?

- Undertake more initiatives that will:
- Increase the employability of youth as their skillset will improve by attending our 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 knowledge of how wildlife conservation and management relate to the economy and environment, both currently and in the future.
  - Generate livelihoods for locals of Ranthambhore.



SANCTUARY NATURE FOUNDATION



SANCTUARY NATURE FOUNDATION

ABOVE Young adults of Ranwal village during a clean-up drive around the Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve.

TOP Students of Saraswati Secondary School perform a nukkad-natak on tiger conservation in their school.



SANCTUARY NATURE FOUNDATION

TOP Sanctuary Nature Foundation and Morningstar teams with principals of various schools and IT students from the computer lab during an interaction at Ranwal village in Sawai Madhopur.

LEFT Students from various village schools participated in the 'Save the Tiger' Rally to raise awareness before Global Tiger Day 2022.

# PROJECT: SUNDARBAN – BAGH SANKALP AND BAGH BACHAO INITIATIVE SUPPORTED BY H T PAREKH FOUNDATION

## WHAT IS THE PROGRAMME?

With climate change affecting the Sundarban – 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 through education and awareness. Sanctuary Nature Foundation has been effective in fighting these and many other issues on the ground through our local collaborators. The Bagh Sankalp – Pledge for Sundarban and Bagh Bachao programme intends to expand the education of school kids and communities in the Sundarban, 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 Sundarban 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.

**BELOW** A naturalist elaborates on the importance of mangroves to students during a Nature Trail at the Sudhanyakhali Campus in the Sundarban Biosphere Reserve.

## 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 ecosystem, the quality of their own lives and their socio-economic security.
- To create a core group of young ‘Tiger Ambassadors’ who feel passionately for tigers and are ready to spearhead a massive effort to protect them.
- To empower women and children from communities in Sundarban 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 knowledge and awareness.



## WHAT HAVE WE DONE SO FAR? COMMUNITY CONSULTATION MEETS

Empowerment programmes related to education, capacity building and livelihood skills have been initiated. During the community *baithaks* (gatherings), concerns such as human-animal conflict, unsustainable fishing, and poaching, and the best way to address these and other problems were discussed. Recognising the fact that women are drivers of the quality of life in the Sundarban, we also consulted with women involved in fishing, crab or prawn seed collection. A special consultation meeting was also arranged for Sundarban youth. Much of the population here live below the ‘poverty line’ and are dependent on the forest to meet their basic needs. During the discussions, potential alternative livelihoods that reduce dependency on the forest and decrease potential exposure to wildlife attacks were also encouraged.

## NATURE ORIENTATION AND AWARENESS SESSIONS

Kids show astonishing sensitivity to things around them, especially the living world. This interest in the natural world is believed to be on account of children’s unique, inborn tendency to seek information and learn about their surroundings. To fuel this natural curiosity, we conducted various Nature Trails on land as well as through boat safaris. Students from diverse age groups participated in these sessions. Many students were school dropouts as they lacked the resources to support their formal education. Nature Awareness tours were also organised for the women of Sundarban. Many of these

women mentioned that they have never been to the forest as a leisure activity.

## ART FOR CONSERVATION

Nature is the ultimate expression of art and kids are the best storytellers. The Sanctuary Nature Foundation and SHER supported by the H T Parekh Foundation organised various Art for Conservation events throughout the year in the Sundarban. The theme for the drawing competition was ‘Sundarban, Mangroves and Tigers’. All participants received a box of colours, drawing board and participation certificates.

## FOOTBALL MATCH: FEBRUARY 14

The people of West Bengal are passionate about football. A football match, which attracted over 6,000 spectators, was organised in association with the Kumirmari Gram Panchayat and four Joint Forest Management Committees of the Sundarban Tiger Reserve at Kumirmari Island. Eight teams took part in the event, which was used as an opportunity to address conservation issues, human-animal conflicts, alternative livelihood options and more with the community.

## TEACHERS’ ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP: FEBRUARY 2 AND OCTOBER 29

The Bagh Sankalp initiative conducted two Environmental Leadership Workshops for teachers of various schools from various islands surrounding the Sajnekhali Wildlife Sanctuary of the Sundarban Tiger Reserve. The first of these workshops was held on

Sanctuary Nature Foundation

Sanctuary Nature Foundation

Sanctuary Nature Foundation

Sanctuary Nature Foundation

Sanctuary Nature Foundation



**ABOVE** Winning team receiving the trophy after the football match.

**MIDDLE** Kids birdwatching on a boat ride in the Sundarban.

**TOP** A film screening at night in a village in the Sundarban Tiger Reserve to create awareness about nature conservation.

**TOP LEFT** Students during the Art for Conservation competition on Bali Island in the Sundarban.



Sanctuary Nature Foundation





SANCTUARY NATURE FOUNDATION

the 'Bagh Sankalp' boat when 30 teachers from 15 schools were taken for a nature orientation tour around the Sundarban Tiger Reserve. This event was also used to commemorate World Wetland Day.

The second workshop was held at the Community Conservation Centre Bagh Bon located at Pakhiralaya and was attended by 42 teachers from 20 schools. These workshops were conducted to help educators transform their way of thinking and link education to act in meaningful and engaging ways. The focus of the workshop was "Role of a teacher working in this human-tiger interaction zone of climate-fragile Sundarban system in building an ecologically responsible village society". The teachers expressed awareness about climate change and human-wildlife conflict and also lauded the project's rationale and provided suggestions. They also unanimously stressed on the need to make students ecologically and alternatively skilled so they do not opt for traditional forest-dependent livelihoods. Various high-profile forest officials attended the workshop and interacted with the participants during these workshops.

### JOURNALIST WORKSHOP: NOVEMBER 7

The media (digital and print) can play a crucial role in environmental education. To increase the regional journalists' awareness about how Sundarban's iconic wildlife and habitats are inextricably linked to its people's survival and well-being, we conducted a workshop for them. Regional journalists can play a big role in garnering support from communities and encourage appreciation about wildernesses and showcase the value of



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ABOVE Joydip Kundu, Bagh Sankalp Coordinator, Sundarban orienting teachers about the rationale behind the programme.

MIDDLE Cycle Rally participants at the Sundarban Range Office, Pakhiralaya.

TOP Kids on their way for a Nature Trail at the Sudhanyakhali Campus

RIGHT Prof. Anindita Majumdar spoke on issues of human-wildlife interactions in the delta. Her presentation highlighted the history of human-animal coexistence and how climate change has created an imbalance.

FACING PAGE Dr. Parvish Pandya, Consultant Director, Science and Conservation, Sanctuary Nature Foundation, orienting naturalists during the Nature Guide Training Programme in Sundarban.

nature and biodiversity. Their stories on topics such as climate change, community conservation models, sustainable lifestyle adaptations along with stories of impact of human activities on wildlife, nature and the landscape will help bring positive policy changes. Stories can also highlight the difficulties faced by communities so we can work toward site-specific solutions. The day-long Journalist Workshop was attended by 36 correspondents working in the South 24 Parganas for print, electronic and digital platforms of different media houses at Bagh Bon centre in Pakhiralaya. Dr. Arijit Chattopadhyay guided the participants on how their reporting can be made interesting and asked them to focus beyond megafauna. Dr. Anindita Majumdar spoke on issues of human-wildlife conflict, the history of coexistence in the Sundarban and how the changing climate can impact the future. Also present was Jones Justin, Deputy Field Director, Sundarban Tiger Reserve, who addressed several topics.

### CYCLE RALLY: NOVEMBER 25

As an extension of the nature awareness tours, a cycle rally was organised that traveled from Pakhiralaya to Gosaba via Rangabelia, Aarampur and then concluded at the Sundarban Tiger Reserve's Range Office. With the objective of reaching out to a large section of the dense population of one of the largest and significantly located islands of Sundarban Biosphere Reserve, the route was strategically selected in consultation with the local forest range office as it was the peak tourist season and the cycle rally would attract a lot of attention. The rally carried the message of 'Save Sundarban' that reached crowded areas in the local market and areas known



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to be a tourist hub. The rally consisted of local youth and a few high school students and spanned between the late afternoon hours to the evening.

### NATURE GUIDE TRAINING PROGRAMME: DECEMBER 10 AND 11

In Sundarban, the real responsibility of educating the community and tourists is largely shared by forest guides appointed and trained by the Forest Department. They speak to the tourists that flock to Sundarban every year to visit eco-tourism spots and routes in the Sundarban Tiger Reserve. This makes it important that the guides have the requisite skills and knowledge not just about the apex species – the tiger – and the mangrove swamps, but also about the rich biodiversity, ecosystems, conservation issues including climate and challenges faced by locals. We partnered with the Wildlife Protection Society of India and organised a two-day training workshop for forest guides with the support of the Forest Department of the Sundarban Tiger Reserve. The workshop was organised at the Interpretation Centre, Sajnekhali Wildlife Sanctuary on December 10 and 11 and attended by 35 guides. It included various indoor sessions and outdoor activities to empower them with guiding skills, etiquette, birdwatching techniques, climate change awareness, biodiversity protection, and local conservation issues. The forest guides were addressed by Jones Justin, Deputy Field Director, Sundarban Tiger Reserve; Anil Mistry, WPSI, Sundarban; Prof. Shubhankar Banerjee, New Mexico University, U.S.A; and Dr. Parvish Pandya and Saurabh Sawant from the Sanctuary Nature Foundation,

Mumbai. This interactive programme also focussed on solving their day-to-day problems while dealing with tourists and on ways to incorporate vital information about conservation in their interactions to get tourists interested in dialogue. In the long-term, the aim is not just to increase tourism but to create more environment conservation-savvy tourists who respect and will help protect the Sundarban. Sanctuary has also produced a pocket-sized field guide with useful and interesting information about the reserve that will help both guides and tourists. The draft hardcopies were distributed to the guides and forest staff during the workshop to receive feedback before finalising the publication. We are also in the process of producing a one-pager poster on climate change and one on tourism guidelines. The workshop was well-received and feedback was excellent. Certificates signed by Tapas Das, Field Director, Sundarban Tiger Reserve; WPSI and Sanctuary Nature Foundation were awarded to the guides on completion of the workshop. In the future more capacity building and skill training workshops are expected to be organised.

### 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 threats involved in doing so.

“The highly motivated Nature Guides at Sundarban Tiger Reserve are lucky to have knowledgeable, proactive officers such as the dynamic Field Director Tapas Das, IFS, and Dy. Dir. Jones Justin, IFS. The guides were fully engaged through the two-day training programme conducted by the Sanctuary Nature Foundation, and said that the knowledge gained on biodiversity and conservation issues would help them enhance the experience of visitors.”

– Dr. Parvish Pandya, Consultant Director, Science and Conservation, Sanctuary Nature Foundation

### WHAT IS OUR NEXT STEP/PLAN?

The long-term success of this intervention will be ensured by the consistent efforts that will continue next year too. Here's a glimpse into the nature of some of the activities that we plan for the future in several villages:

- Launch of Bagh Bachao boats
- Health-watch for women
- Plastic collection drive
- Clay modeling
- Student visits to anti-poaching floating protection camps
- Eco Day celebrations (World Water Day, Endemic Bird Day celebration, Biological Diversity Day, World Turtle Day, World Environment Day, World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought, State Forestry Week, Snake Day, Global Tiger Day and many more)
- Children's team for Bagh Bachao at a tribal village
- Interaction with fishing communities
- Medical check-up camp for locals
- Bengali New Year's Day celebration with students
- Collection of garbage by school kids
- Distribution of aromatic paddy seeds
- Mangrove plantation
- Rally with kids and biodiversity quiz
- Awareness meet on organic farming
- More Nature Guide Training Programmes



## 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 contributions 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 the 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 Indian states and the Union Territory of Ladakh. The project has also extended support and spotlighted small grassroots organisations and citizen groups that are campaigning for environmental protection or addressing conservation issues. The Mud on Boots Project has continued to grow. To read about the work of our present and alumni Project Leaders, visit our [website](#).

“ The Mud on Boots Project is one of the best examples of how conservation efforts can be strengthened at the grassroots level. The way alumni across the country are winning not only awards but also the trust and participation of local communities who are joining them in their efforts speaks volumes about the kind of impact it is having. This is both encouraging and commendable. With the project network growing, I can only expect good things to happen for grassroots conservation.”

– Lansothung Lotha,  
Range Forest Officer,  
Nagaland Forest Department



Project Leaders [Dechin Pema Saingmo](#) and [Pema Tsering Romo](#) attended the Central India Green Hub Festival, held in Bhopal in July 2022. The duo delivered a presentation on their conservation journey and highlighted their work on conserving the wintering habitat of the *Thung-Thung Karmo* (Black-necked Crane) in Zemeithang valley, Arunachal Pradesh. During this trip, made possible with the support of WWF-India, they also interacted with wildlife conservationists, filmmakers and Green Hub fellows, and attended the screening of movies on numerous topics.



**6** years since inception | **14** states and 1 Union Territory | **26** project leaders | **4** small grantees

### Where are our Project Leaders?



MAP NOT TO SCALE. BORDERS NEITHER AUTHENTICATED NOR VERIFIED.



ON THIS PAGE (BOX) Dechin Pema Saingmo and Pema Tsering Romo attended the three-day-long Central India Green Hub Festival in Bhopal and delivered a presentation on their ongoing work to conserve the wintering habitat of the Black-necked Crane in Jemeithang, Arunachal Pradesh.

FACING PAGE TOP Phuntsog Dolma inspects the 17 high-altitude flora raised under polyhouse conditions at the Pashmina Goat Farm, Upshi (Ladakh).

FACING PAGE BOTTOM Amir Kumar Chhetri sharing ways to coexist with elephants and leopards with residents of Soongachi Tea estate, Dooars region West Bengal.

After successfully running a crowdfunding campaign called 'Muddy March' in March 2022, the Mud on Boots Project provided small grants to two incredible grassroots projects – 'Moving Upstream: Mahakali Project' of Veditum India Foundation and 'Urur-Olcott Apprenticeship Programme' of Palluyir Trust. The former is designed to create grassroots documentation about Indian rivers, riparian communities and anthropogenic activities, along with establishing a relationship with riparian communities, and the latter is a nature-based learning programme designed for young children from coastal communities to engage in fieldwork on their home beach and other biodiversity areas of Chennai.

We generated funds to support our alumni project leader Malhar Indulkar for a year-long project aimed at conserving and regenerating native forests in landslide-prone areas of Ratnagiri District, Maharashtra.

We also secured seed money to extend project leader Vishal Ahuja's on-going rewilding project in Chamba, Himachal Pradesh by supporting him to establish a nursery of native plant species in Chamba, Himachal Pradesh.

On October 17, 2022, project leader Radheyshyam reported the death of a female Great Indian Bustard (GIB) after being electrocuted by high-tension electric lines in Jaisalmer District, Rajasthan. He was informed about this distressing news by a trusted member of the local herding community. Radheyshyam has tenaciously patrolled the 50 sq. km. GIB habitat outside the demarcated area of the Desert National Park in Rajasthan and has relentlessly documented, highlighted and reported threats to wildlife here. On April 18, 2022, he submitted a memorandum to Bhupendra Yadav, Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India appraising him of threats to wildlife in the region.

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.

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2022

- Project leaders Dechin Pema Saingmo and Pemba Tsering Romo's efforts to garner support for protecting the wintering home of the Black-necked Crane came to fruition as members of the local Monpa community reached a consensus on regulating and monitoring anthropogenic activities such as sand mining and use of stone crushers throughout the wintering period (late November to early March). This breakthrough is a result of the duo's relentless interactions with community members in the past one year. In August 2022 several guidelines and restrictions on anthropogenic activities in and around the wintering habitat were drafted and signed by all participants including the Gaon Burahs (village headmen), local political leaders and youth of all six villages in Zemithang valley.
- The solar fences that were installed by Project Leader Amir Kumar Chhetri, his colleagues at the Coexistence Project and members of the local community in Panihora forest village in 2021 have proven efficient in deterring wild animal (especially elephants and wild pigs) movement in agricultural fields. While approximately 50 per cent of the cultivated maize crop in Amir's home village was saved from depredation, some local farmers even monetised the abundant harvest through sales in the local market. The solar fence also alleviated non-monetary cost of negative interactions with wildlife by drastically minimising the time spent in tongs (watch towers) to safeguard crops. Additionally, many farmers who had stopped cultivating because of crop depredation have started cultivating paddy this year after witnessing the success of the previous paddy season. The solar fences were installed at Panihora forest village in northern West Bengal and are being maintained under the leadership of project leader Amir Kumar Chhetri.
- Project leader Vishal Ahuja went on an exposure cum field trip to Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, and Kerala. He spent five days working with and learning from experts at Nature Conservation

In the pre-monsoon season of 2022, Project Leader Vishal Ahuja led community members from four villages (Rathiyar, Chataar, Talai and Dugli) in Chamba valley, Himachal Pradesh to plant 860 saplings of native fruiting trees. These plantations are part of Vishal's long-term plan of restoring the abandoned terrace farms and degraded forest patches as a strategy to foster farmer-wildlife co-existence in the valley. Vishal's long-term plan is supported by the Forest Department of Chamba, who provided all the saplings for the pre-monsoon plantations.

- Foundation, Valparai (Tamil Nadu) about restoring degraded forests and technical aspects of raising nurseries of native plants. He also learned about different aspects of conservation, reforestation, and nursery management at Pitchandikulam forest in Puducherry and witnessed the success of reforestation efforts at Nilgiri Biosphere Nature Park, Anaikatti. He hopes to use the technical and qualitative knowledge acquired during this trip to address challenges, upgrade, and even improve his long-term habitat restoration approaches in and around Kalatop-Khajijar Wildlife Sanctuary, Chamba (Himachal Pradesh).
- During his routine foot patrols around the Desert National Park, Pokhran (Rajasthan) in the breeding season of the critically endangered Great Indian Bustard (GIB), project leader Radheyshyam Pemani Bishnoi sighted several nests. Each time, he made sure to quietly move on as he believes that protecting the GIB also means keeping one's distance and avoiding any contact so that the birds can live free and wild in their habitat. Many of the nests he sighted had two eggs. Later in the breeding season, Radheyshyam spotted a few female GIBs with healthy looking chicks.
- In an attempt to find ways to reduce pressure on pastures and support the conservation of wild plants in Rong valley (Ladakh), project leader Phuntsog Dolma conducted trials on ex-situ propagation of important native flora. Out of the 17 most important high-altitude fodder plants sown by Phuntsog with help from colleagues at the Pashmina Goat Farm at Upshi in February 2022, 10 have shown successful germination and excellent growth. Her efforts were appreciated by the District Sheep Husbandry Officer (Leh) who agrees that such trials can yield important insights to guide future large-scale cultivation of high-altitude flora to foster human-wildlife coexistence as pastures support both wildlife and the traditional livelihoods of the Ladakhi people.

"We received a small grant from Sanctuary Nature Foundation's Mud on Boots Project, which we utilised towards Veditum's Moving Upstream Fellowship programme. The understanding and freedom we received from friends at Sanctuary were great. The continued conversation also led to publishing a story from the fellowship in Sanctuary Asia magazine"

– Siddharth Aggarwal, Founder, Veditum India Foundation



MUD ON BOOTS

### LOOKING AHEAD

This year we shared the call for nominations for the 2023-2025 batch on various online platforms and received an unprecedented number of nominations. After carefully evaluating all nominations and completing the selection process, the next batch of Mud on Boots project leaders were announced in the December 2022 issue of Sanctuary Asia magazine. We narrowed down the selection based on four criteria – mentorship availability, access to other opportunities, project urgency, and potential for growth. The final five projects we have chosen to support represent a diversity of personalities, landscapes, species, and approaches to biodiversity conservation. While we continue to work with the current batch of project leaders who inspire us with their hard work and dedication towards conservation, the Sanctuary team is looking forward to working with the new batch of project leaders and their mentors in 2023.

### NEW MUD ON BOOTS LEADERS

Shashank Ladekar and Kanhaiya Udupure from Gondia district, Maharashtra; Jesu Das from Mandya district, Karnataka; Saddam Husain Lodha from Haridwar district, Uttarakhand; Sahebram Bediya and Chamru Bediya from Ranchi district, Jharkhand and Asukhomi Community Reserve

Management Committee from Zunheboto district, Nagaland.

Given that our project leaders hail from rural backgrounds and therefore usually have limited access to opportunities to interact with different cultures, and perspectives in meaningful ways, a session on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) is being planned for the incoming batch. This will be an opportunity for our grassroots conservationists to work towards personal growth along with achieving new professional skills and knowledge.

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

**A FAREWELL SESSION**

Project Coordinator Neyi Jamoh organised a virtual farewell cum experience-sharing session for the outgoing batch. Vidya Venkatesh, Director, Last Wilderness Foundation, joined as a guest speaker and shared her learnings from almost two decades of experience in the conservation field. Former Project Director Cara Tejpal and ex-Project coordinator Maitreyee Mujumdar also joined the session and interacted with the project leaders.

ABOVE Five new projects that will be led by six project leaders and members of a community reserve management committee have been selected as part of the Mud on Boots Project 2023-2025.

This year Mud on Boots Project Coordinator Neyi Jamoh travelled to three project locations i.e., Panihora forest village in northern West Bengal, Rong valley (Ladakh) and Chamba, Himachal Pradesh and witnessed the inspiring work of project leaders Amir Kumar Chhetri, Phuntsog Dolma and Vishal Ahuja respectively. Visiting project leaders in their landscapes has been an essential component of the project as it provides the opportunity to meet the humans behind the exemplary grassroots conservationists we work with.

## WHAT HAVE WE DONE SO FAR?

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

The programme is in its initial stages of development. We will shortlist 10 colleges from Mumbai to participate in this programme. We have created a questionnaire survey to be filled by participants. Based on their responses, a series of workshops, talks, nature walks and other activities will be planned. We also plan to double the number of colleges in 2023-24.

## PROJECT: SEEK SANCTUARY – COLLEGE CONTACT PROGRAMME 2022

The Sanctuary Nature Foundation and Carbon Copy, supported by Morningstar, implemented a college programme in early 2022 to spark informed action among young people destined to be tomorrow's leaders and who 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 audience, crucial to the task of Planet Management.
- To catalyse, inform, motivate and mentor 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.
- 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.

### PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

This skill share programme seeks to empower students. The plan for 2022-2023 is as follows:

- **College Contact:** A total of 15 colleges, pan-India were selected in the first phase, out of which 12 were finalised for participation in the programme.
- **Lecture Series:** These will be focused on climate awareness and will include an orientation webinar, plus skill share webinars to enable participants to interact with experienced environmental communicators and domain experts including (proposed) Lord Nicholas Stern, Vance Martin,

Pavan Sukhdev, David Quammen, Jo Puri, Vandana Shiva, Navroz Dubash, Aditya Agarwal, Raj Phukan and Aarti Khosla.

- **College Debates:** Students from 12 colleges will participate in debates spanning a year. A month-long mentoring programme to develop ideas and articulation to create a constituency of young people that are aware and proactive with 15 debates on various propositions that discuss climate change.
- **Institutional Climate Position Paper:** The Carbon Transition – This inter-collegiate competition will encourage students to unite and to think critically and articulately. Students will be asked to write 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 a carbon transition.
- **Calculating individual, family and institutional carbon footprints.** This will show students how carbon calculations are estimated, carbon footprints are evaluated and to lead 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 the carbon impact of their college.
- **Workshops and Webinars** on sustainable living, energy awareness, rooftop gardening, composting and waste management.
- **Short Film Production:** 'Reclaiming our Climate Future'. These will be short 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 and scaled up efforts with measurable impacts.
- **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, biodiversity 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. More sites have been shortlisted including one in Assam where we will be working with Sanctuary Young Naturalist 2022 winner **Munmuni Payeng** (see page 56) and her father **Jadav Payeng**, a 27-acre coffee plantation outside Nagarhole Tiger Reserve, the Panna Cocoon Conservancy, Madhya Pradesh, the Dara Cocoon Conservancy, J&K and the Satpura Cocoon Conservancy, 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 include the Wildlife Conservation Foundation – Kashmir (Nadeem Qadri), Forsyth Lodge – Satpura (Aditi Mody), and Sarai at Toria – Panna (Dr. Raghu Chundawat and Joanna Van Gruisen). They are all 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 human 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 and 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

In Madhya Pradesh, the Sanctuary Nature Foundation is collaborating with a local conservation trust, Baavan, Bagh Aap Aur Van to bring synergy between two similar ideas, at a site-specific project in an area that is part of a wildlife corridor of the Panna Tiger Reserve. Baavan has identified two villages, Banke and Ghirauli, which are inhabited by communities dependent on agriculture and livestock, primarily cattle. The vagaries of climate and agricultural insecurity mean it is difficult to make a decent livelihood here. The villages are far from the main tourism zones of the park and currently receive 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 disenchanted by the "show me a tiger" brigade. Additionally, we envisage supporting Baavan in their programmes designed for community upliftment, including the improvement of school infrastructures, community health, better animal husbandry practices and vocational/skill-based training for youth.



### 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.

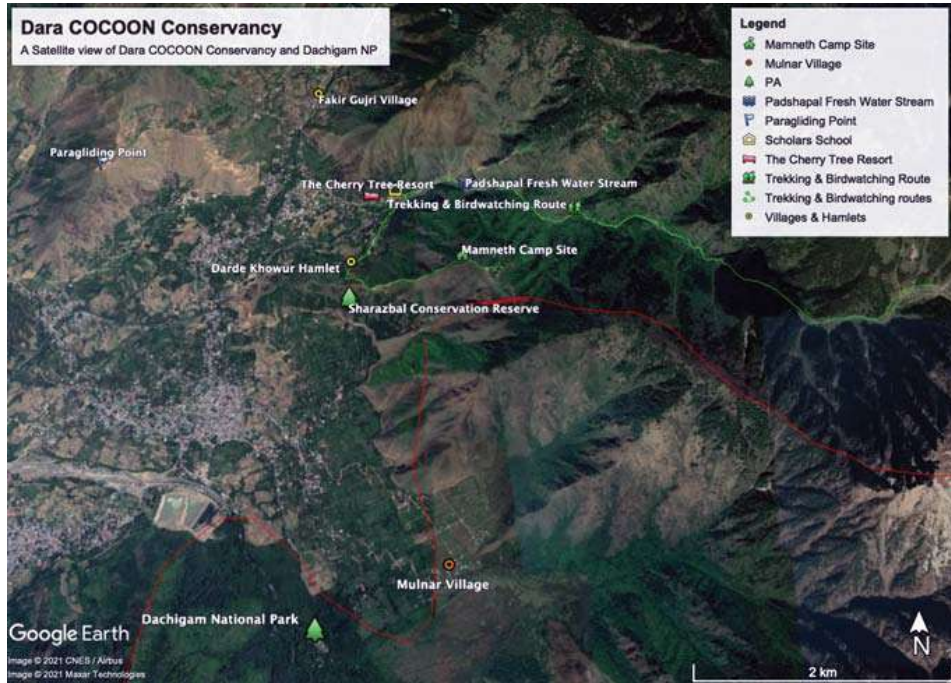
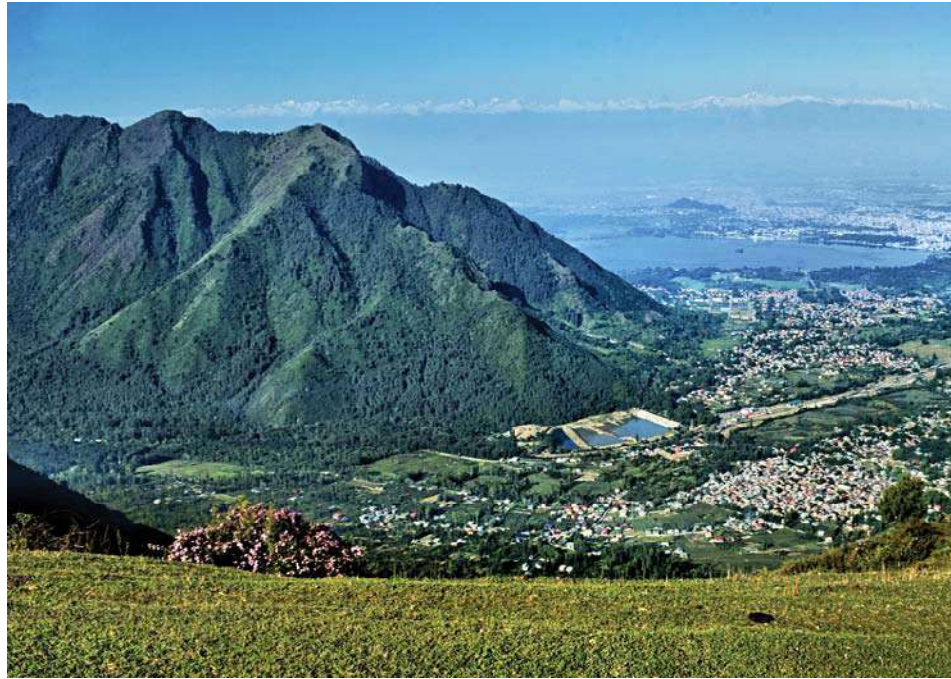
“Sanctuary Nature Foundation's Community Owned Community Operated Nature (COCOON) Conservancies are designed as social upliftment programmes that create sustainable, dignified livelihoods, with rewilding and enhanced biodiversity as measurable, collateral benefits.”

COURTESY WCF

LEFT Nearly 200 locals from Padshapal ravine, Dara Dard Khower hamlet and Faqir Gujri village participated in clean-up drives. The trash collected was mostly plastic bottles and polythene wrappers; it was handed over to the Srinagar Municipal Committee for disposal.



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
- Ecotourism 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

Through inclusive conservation programmes, we expect that an organic rewilding could be achieved within five years across a 50 sq. km. of land that would allow expanding 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. Our local collaborators in Panna are Dr. Raghu Chundawat and Joanna Van Gruisen of the Sarai at Toria and their Baavan Trust.

**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

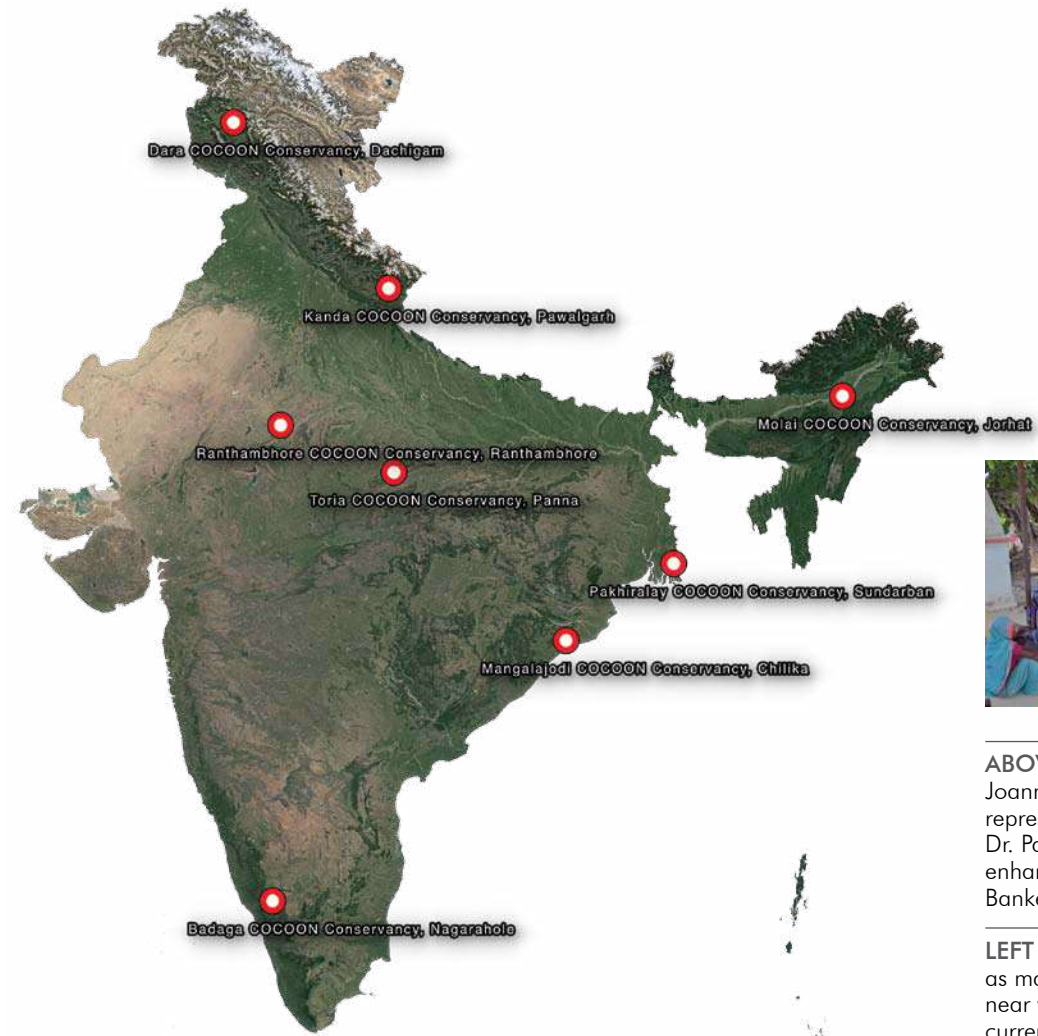
boundary of the tiger reserve makes it difficult for people to access the park. The Gond and Korku tribal communities have lived here for aeons and they manage to eke out a living by cultivating small pieces of leased agricultural land. Other communities are largely marginal farmers whose livelihood 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](mailto: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 Chundawat and Joanna Van Gruisen, along with Sanctuary representatives Saurabh 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, 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.”

### THE OIL PALM PARADOX COVER STORY, FEBRUARY 2022

Palm oil has earned itself a bad name, not because it is an inherently 'bad' crop, but because humans have taken to clearing vast forests to make way for monoculture plantations that they drench in pesticides. At this nascent stage in India's own palm oil boom, we are in a unique position to grow the right way. With volumes of evidence available from Indonesian and Malaysian misadventures to learn from, **Umesh Srinivasan** explained why palm oil farming expansion in India should not – and need not come at the cost of natural habitats, particularly those in the biodiverse hotspot of the Northeast, or the rainforests of the A&N Islands, or the Western Ghats for that matter.



ZAKHUMA DON

We also worked with @artistswithanimals on a conceptual illustration of a clouded leopard in Northeast India's verdant, biodiverse forests gazing at a future similar to that of species such as the Bornean orangutan, whose rainforest habitat has been destroyed by oil palm cultivation.



ARTISTS WITH ANIMALS

#### READERS' COMMENTS

**Shibnath Banerjee** Palm tree plantations have ruined orangutan and Harpy Eagle habitats, we must not make the same mistake in India.  
**@artistswithanimals** Habitat destruction on account of aggressive palm oil cultivation is an issue destroying forests across the globe. The orangutans of Southeast Asia have already fallen prey to this eco-crisis. And now, this problem has arrived home, causing trouble to the endangered clouded leopards living in the forests of Northeast India. Will we simply sit and watch as they become companions to the orangutans in this ecological catastrophe, or will we act now?

### SAVING A GIANT FEBRUARY 2022

**Ayushi Jain** shared with readers how the key to protecting species in legally unprotected areas depends totally on communities, such as the one that chose to champion the survival of the Cantor's giant softshell turtle.



AYUSHI JAIN

#### READERS' COMMENT

**@\_ayuushh** It's amazing to see you making impossible things possible in wildlife, about species people aren't even aware about!

### BEHIND HER LENS PHOTOFEATURE, APRIL 2022

Sanctuary asked women identifying wildlife and environmental photographers to share the stories behind their most difficult and prized images, and we were humbled by their responses.



JAINY MARIA

#### READERS' COMMENTS

**Calmwilderness** Blissful! It's indeed a visual treat seeing such rare finds with such beautiful compositions.  
**Akkirasoi** Wildlife photographers who break the bias by making some beautiful frames.

### WOMEN IN CONSERVATION APRIL 2022

Our April 2022 issue highlighted the work of women-identifying conservationists, researchers, and on-ground field staff who are making an impact in their area of study and protecting the future of our planet in diverse ways, despite barriers of patriarchy and tradition being a constant thorn in their side. Our Photofeature, cover story and almost all of our articles were written by or featured brilliant women working in conservation – from speleologists and conservationists to filmmakers, educators

and birders. These women are challenging norms, whether it is breaking glass ceilings as in the case of **Dhriti Banerjee**, the Zoological Society's first woman Director, or blazing new trails as **Usha Lachungpa** has done over a 40-year-long vibrant career as a conservationist, or scaling great heights like **Gowri Varanashi** and her all-female crew of climbers regularly do!



COURTESY DHRITI BANERJEE

#### READERS' COMMENTS

**Anushka Kawale** The stories of these women are incredible, Dhriti Banerjee's was my personal favourite. It's so inspiring to see so many women in this field doing amazing work while overcoming all kind of barriers!  
**Akshaya Elizabeth Zachariah** Sanctuary Asia's April issue special is a must-read. Smashing the patriarchy are these absolutely relentless, passionate women who are working for a better tomorrow. I was delighted to read every piece, every image taken and every project... all led by women! The entire magazine needs to be absorbed and understood. I am immensely grateful for these fierce people in conservation. The cover art by Meena Subramaniam is stunning in all its detail.

### THE AEGIS OF THE FOREST: AN ACCOUNT OF ASSAM'S FEMALE RANGERS APRIL 2022

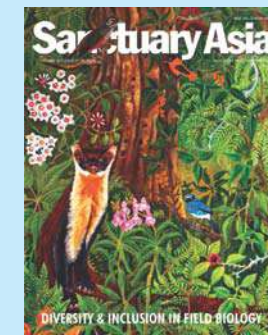
**Ivy Farheen Hussain** met with four female rangers of the elite State Rhino Protection Force (SRPF), who are changing societal constructs and inspiring youth, while protecting Kaziranga's wildlife.



IVY FARHEEN HUSSAIN

### DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN FIELD BIOLOGY COVER STORY, APRIL 2022

At its core, the world of environmental conservation is diverse and multidimensional, with people transcending barriers of all sorts in order to do what needs to be done to protect the future of the planet. Yet, barriers of patriarchy and tradition have remained a constant thorn in the side for many. Our cover story in the April 2022 issue highlighted the voices of some amazing women as they shared their journeys in science, conservation and the impactful work they do to conserve our natural world.



#### READERS' COMMENT

**Meena Subramaniam** I have been reading Sanctuary from its inception but never imagined in my wildest dreams that one day I would grace the cover. This issue features women in science and conservation. Women, both young and old, who rock climb for nature, form bird brigades, conserve sharks, to four female forest rangers in Assam and many more diverse subjects.

### CAUTION: PLANETARY BOUNDARY AHEAD! AUGUST 2022

Creative conservationist **Sara Mahdi** broke down the Planetary Boundaries framework, which identifies the processes and mechanisms on Earth that control the planet's equilibrium. The creators of the Planetary Boundaries concept characterised its purpose as providing "a safe operating space for mankind."

#### READERS' COMMENTS

**@Herpomania** An eye-opening call to wake up, @sarumahdi writes a brilliant piece.  
**Abinaya Kalyanasundaram** Easily one of my favourite pieces from @SanctuaryAsia's August issue.  
**Sara Mahdi** The beautiful photographs in this piece are a demonstration of India's compromised but highly resilient natural capital.

### OWL TALES PHOTOFEATURE, JUNE 2022

Intriguing and mysterious, owls are fascinating birds. Most species are solitary, nocturnal and possess a startling array of adaptations that make them fierce hunters. But people, especially in the Indian subcontinent, have a rather complicated relationship with these birds. **Prachi Galange** curated stunning images of these nocturnal raptors in India, with snippets of their adaptations, behaviour, and their complicated relationship with humans.



MITUL PATEL

#### READERS' COMMENTS

**Vaishali Balanagendran** What a wonderfully curated compilation of images of this bird! Images and accompanying captions were insightful and fun to read and much needed for these misunderstood birds that are vilified across the country, even though they are important for the environment. Great work, Sanctuary team.  
**Shrikanth Nayak** Delighted by the opportunity to spread awareness about the issue of roadkill. The photofeature and the captions for the images are well written and capture the reader's attention.

## HOW TO NOT BE A TOURIST

### PHOTO ESSAY, OCTOBER 2022

Wildlife travel operators, resort owners and tourists benefiting from travel to wild spaces must be sensitised to the imperative of opting for sustainable tourism practices... not just to 'save the world' but to secure their economic survival. **Responsible tourism** demands that all stakeholders accept that protecting the integrity of habitats and its wild denizens is in their interest. With caution and awareness while travelling, we can protect nature, and ourselves.



STEVE WINTER

#### READERS' COMMENTS

**Mitu Guha** My heart breaks every time I see these inhuman activities being meted out to these creatures.

**Aditi K.** There are official tiger parks in Thailand even today. Large tourist companies take hordes of visitors to these parks. Such companies should be equally fined and banned for promoting animal cruelty. And how are zoos and animal shows any better?

**Ravikiran Patel** There is a serious ignorance among tourists. They feel they are helping by offering food. These kind of activities can be drastically reduced if local tour operators are trained.

**Hari Gopalakrishnan** Tour operators and tourists should both be responsible citizens and refrain from such activities.

**Abhik Palit** This is certainly not an isolated incident and while the image is poignant and powerful, this scene plays out literally thousands of times around the country every single day. Accustomed to human food, there are increasing incidences of macaques snatching things out of people's hands, vehicles and shops as well. It's a long and uphill battle to prevent these incidents. What is really required is communication and enforcement to stop people feeding wild macaques on roadsides.

## SCALING UP PANGOLIN CONSERVATION IN INDIA

### DECEMBER 2022

**Purva Variyar** wrote about the Wildlife Conservation Trust's collaborative efforts with the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department to scientifically rehabilitate rescued and confiscated highly endangered Indian pangolins back into the wild.



ADITYA JOSHI/ICT

## TAKE ACTION

### SANCTUARY CUB, JANUARY 2022

Relocating African Penguins from South Africa to Gujarat is pointless and cruel. Keeping penguins in captivity will not help in the conservation of the species.



PUBLIC DOMAIN

#### READERS' COMMENTS

**Shivya Nath** What madness is this? Capture animals from their natural, wild habitat and put them in a cage for human entertainment? How awful @gujsciencecity @gujarattourism.

**Pankaj** The fight then must be for every other creature that has been put in the zoo.

**Ayushi J.** Exactly the thought I had when I saw that there are penguins in Gujarat Science City! So pointless! Why not focus on educating people and trying to conserve local species instead?

**Vicky** This is ridiculous. Why are we doing that? Even importing African cheetahs is not right. @cmogujarat does not want to share its lions with neighbouring states within the country and it is importing penguins for a billionaire's pet park.

## CHAMBA, OF SACRED LANGURS

### SANCTUARY CUB, MARCH 2022

Vishal Ahuja wrote about Chamba, a beautiful valley in Himachal Pradesh that harbours rich wildlife including an endangered species of langur that sparked his journey in conservation. Less than 500 mature individuals are now left in the wild.



VISHAL AHUJA

#### READERS' COMMENTS

**Ayan Kamath Mehra** What beautiful animals! Thank you for doing so much for them. I hope to see a Himalayan langur in the wild.

**Deepak Garg Sharma** Great images and inspiring work, Vishal Ahuja sir!

**Amitava Dutta** Enjoyed reading the article. What a beautiful creature!

## TAKE ACTION

### SANCTUARY CUB, SEPTEMBER 2022

Teachers Against the Climate Crisis (TACC), a forum of educators across India that "seeks to promote understanding and engagement about different aspects of the climate crisis among students and teachers" recently spoke up against the National Council of Educational Research and Training's (NCERT's) decision to delete important chapters from the Geography syllabus. In a statement, TACC said that while they understood that cutting out topics that are outdated or overlapping will help reduce the students' heavy workload, they questioned the decision to cull important chapters.



PUBLIC DOMAIN/WIKIPEDIA

#### READERS' COMMENTS

**Ankita Akodiya** The NCERT syllabus needs to be revised and the current environmental issues should be updated. The Chipko movement helped me in shaping myself for what I am doing today. These are important events wherein the community came together to protect what's dear to them.

**Uditchandra Pal** As it is we come out of school knowing very little about our natural surroundings. Now, we are further deprived of what we really should know about. Day by day we widen the gap between us and nature.

**Ravish Radhakrishnan** The whole education system is increasingly politicised. Environmental degradation for development has already caused destruction and deforestation.

**Ashwini Krishna** I remember this image so profoundly. Not just NCERT, I guess a lot more changes have to be brought in parallelly to our education system, all the fields that exist and integrate the awareness about the impact our inventions, especially the economy led ones, have on our relationship with the earth. Perhaps begin an education and awareness campaign for the prominent elders first, who have lost their balance and connection with themselves, nature and the workings of Earth.

**Dharmik Savaliya** Shame, NCERT! You should not just add this old syllabus but also add chapters on the climate crisis. You have to cultivate awareness in our youth about climate change so they understand what is causing floods, heat waves, rapid tectonic movements, and more. They must learn what to do to improve the health of Earth.

**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.**



EVENTS



**The Sanctuary Wildlife Photography Awards 2022:**

FIRST PRIZE: ANIRBAN DUTTA – *In a Fell Swoop*



**The Sanctuary Wildlife Photography Awards 2022:**

SECOND PRIZE: ABHIJIT SOMVANSHI – *Battle of Wills*

## THE SANCTUARY WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS 2022

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 two decades 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 human-wildlife interactions when forest animals are forced to adapt to urban environments and minuscule insects, which discerning nature lovers bring to the notice of the larger public.

**In 2022, the in-person ceremony returned after a hiatus of two years**

**to celebrate our Wildlife Photography and Service Award winners.**

On the evening of December 2, 2022, the Sanctuary Photography and Wildlife Awards, sponsored by DSP Mutual Fund, co-sponsored by Godrej Industries and Morningstar India, and supported by CSR Partners IndusInd Bank, H T Parekh Foundation and Bajaj Electricals and Associates Wildlife Conservation Trust and CarbonCopy, was presented at the iconic National Centre for Performing Arts (NCPA), Mumbai. This year, the Sanctuary Wildlife and Photography Awards were presented together with the inimitable Ira Dubey, television host and acclaimed theatre and film actor, playing host to an audience of over a thousand Sanctuary Nature Foundation supporters. The awards ceremony included a photo-exhibition, a musical rendition by Sassy Songbirds and presentation of around 20 shortlisted images with brief natural history descriptions. Bittu Sahgal announced the winning images, and invited the first and third prize winners (the second prize winner was unable to attend) on stage. The first, second and third prize winners were each awarded Rs. 1,50,000, Rs. 75,000 and Rs. 50,000 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
- Cara Tejpal, writer and conservationist
- Dr. Parvish Pandya, Consultant Director, Science and Conservation *Sanctuary Asia*
- Saurabh Sawant, Consultant, Projects & Natural History, *Sanctuary Asia*
- Lakshmy Raman, Executive Editor, *Sanctuary Asia*
- Bittu Sahgal, Founder, and Editor of Sanctuary Nature Foundation



**The Sanctuary Wildlife Photography Awards 2022:**

THIRD PRIZE: ANAND BORA – *A Messy Conflict*

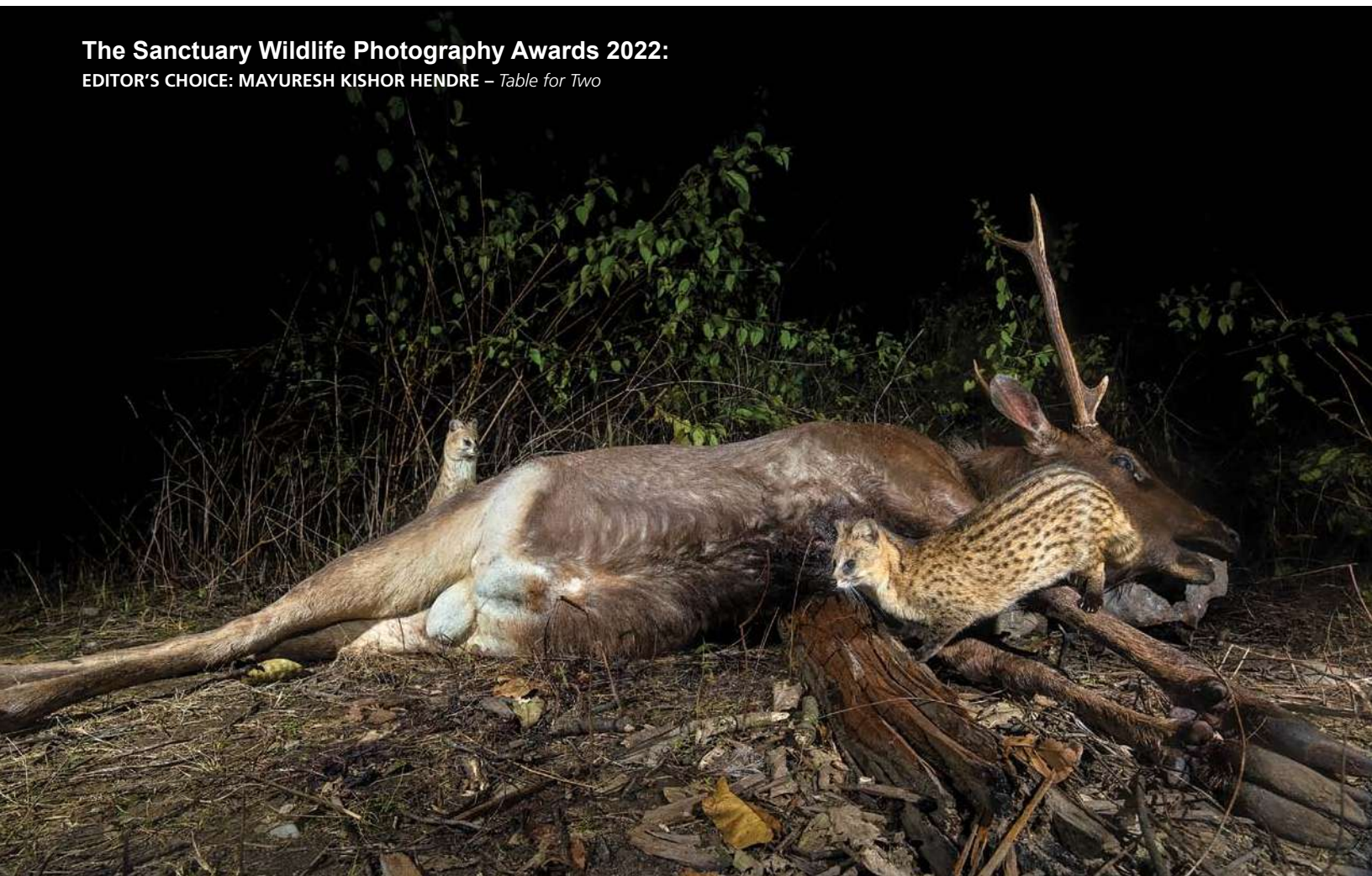


**LEFT** The Sanctuary Wildlife Awards 2022 would not have been possible without the ardent support of our principal sponsors over the past two decades – Hemendra Kothari, Chairman and Aditi Kothari Desai, Vice Chairperson & Director on the Board, DSP Investment Managers Pvt. Ltd. We are also grateful to be co-sponsored and supported by Aditya Agarwal, Managing Director, Morningstar India Pvt. Ltd. and Nadir Godrej, Chairman and Managing Director, Godrej Industries.

**The Sanctuary Wildlife Photography Awards 2022:**  
 CERTIFICATE OF MERIT: DR. LALITH EKANAYAKE – *Outrunning a Rampage*



**The Sanctuary Wildlife Photography Awards 2022:**  
 EDITOR'S CHOICE: MAYURESH KISHOR HENDRE – *Table for Two*



**FIRST PRIZE** went to Anirban Dutta for his image 'In a Fell Swoop'. A swarm of termites dips around a street lamp as an agile Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus* swoops in to pick morsels from the insect cloud. This dream-like image masks the chaos of its setting – a busy petrol pump. The photographer merged three images using in-camera multiple exposures, but the image was created in his mind before it was captured. For his creative skills and evocative imagery, Anirban Dutta was unanimously selected as the Sanctuary Photographer of the Year 2022.

**SECOND PRIZE** went to Abhijit Somvanshi for his image 'Battle of Wills'. Two carnivores face off in the dry, grassy habitat of the Pench Tiger Reserve in high summer – a pair of Indian jackals *Canis aureus indicus* and a Changeable Hawk Eagle *Nisaetus cirrhatus*. The eagle accepted the interlopers' challenge, attacking and

locking one of the jackals in a fierce fight while the other quietly began eating. Eventually, the tussle ended mutually, with them accepting each others' presence as they shared the meal. For capturing this stunning moment in the high-octane drama of survival between two species, Abhijit Somvanshi was awarded the second prize.

**THIRD PRIZE** went to Anand Bora for his image, 'A Messy Conflict'. This image from Nashik captures a desperate cat wanting to do little more than get away from its tormentors. A local political leader jumped into the fray in a badly calculated attempt to catch the cat. Though injured, he escaped with his life. As did the leopard that was safely trapped and released by forest officials. Anand Bora was awarded a prize for his visual documentation of a dramatic conflict that mercifully ended well for men and animal.

“ This chaotic, busy image depicts the amazing behaviour of an opportunistic drongo feasting on an insect cloud. Winged termites emerge in huge numbers for breeding, in what is known as the nuptial flight, and often fly around street lamps. I planned the whole scene before capturing it through this shot. This appreciation from the Sanctuary Nature Foundation inspires me further. ”  
 – Anirban Dutta



CERTIFICATE OF MERIT – PRATHAMESH GHADKAR *Magic in Macro*

**CERTIFICATES OF MERIT:** Amith Kiran Menezes, Angad Achappa, Dr. Lalith Ekanayake, Prathamesh Ghadekar and Vijay Parmar

**HONOURABLE MENTIONS:** Riaz Cader, Anirban Dutta, Chandrasekar Das, Chaithanya Krishnan and Kenneth Lawrence

**EDITOR'S CHOICE:** Mayuresh Kishor Hendre

To see all the images: [www.sanctuarynaturefoundation.org](http://www.sanctuarynaturefoundation.org)

All of us at the Sanctuary Nature Foundation 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 have been fighting to protect species and wildernesses for four decades and we are delighted that

our annual, much-awaited event could return to NCPA where we could meet and interact with each other. We were also delighted to spotlight some exceptional people at the event this year. We owe our loyal, strong and purposeful constituency a huge debt of gratitude for being the wind under our sails.

“ You rarely see these animals together in one frame with their eyes locked and staring at each other, so when I was in the tiger reserve catching that moment, I knew this would be a striking shot. It gave me a taste of their utter power and desire to rule their domain as they began to fight over the food and attack each other. I was ecstatic to be there and capture the struggle on camera. I wanted to share this moment with everyone, and *Sanctuary Asia* seemed like the perfect forum for it. ”  
 – Abhijit Somvanshi

“ For me this image was a testament of the sheer power of the leopard even when it is cornered, as well as the confusion and conflict that results when humans come face to face with wildlife. I was three to four metres away when I clicked this image. ”  
 – Anand Bora



**LIFETIME SERVICE AWARD**

**DR. VIBHU PRAKASH, SCIENTIST, CONSERVATIONIST AND SPECIES PROTECTOR**

"It was quite an intimidating moment when I went up to the dais to receive the Lifetime Service Award from Sanctuary Nature Foundation in front of distinguished guests at an impressive auditorium like the NCPA. The experience was surreal to receive the award and listen to glowing tributes on my work on vulture conservation in India. I am humbled and grateful for being appreciated."

**GREEN TEACHER AWARD**

**SUPRABHA SESHAN, EDUCATIONIST, FOREST CUSTODIAN AND EARTH DOCTOR**

"Community care, wildlife and habitat protection and environmental service are meant to be everyone's spontaneous contribution to their lifeworlds. I've never thought of it as something to be outsourced to someone else, for we humans are all members of community, and dependent on each other, like all non human members of the same community, We can do what every other creature (plant, animal, fungus, bacterial) does, we can make the world a better place, we can leave behind an exuberant community, we can serve our young. This is what Green Teachers do. That *Sanctuary Asia* affirms my life in service to the natural world (including humans) is a wonderful thing. Thank you!"



**THE SANCTUARY WILDLIFE AWARDS 2022**

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.

**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 set high personal standards for others to follow.  
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.



**TESTIMONIALS:**

"I am grateful to Sanctuary Nature Foundation for the huge endorsement of my humble efforts. This recognition is perhaps the first, and certainly the biggest, for climate action in India. It comes at a time where indigenous people led nature restoration has been acknowledged as the key to combating climate change. There cannot be a better motivation to scale up the fight for a better future."

– Rituraj Phukan

"Thank you so much for inviting us for the Sanctuary Wildlife Awards 2022 event. It was just amazing. No words to express the elegance of the event. Thank you Kids for Tigers."

– Sharda Mandir High School

"So glad we attended the Awards event. Every single awardee and spotlightee was inspiring. We now feel even more motivated to do more environmental-related work with students."

– Cathedral Middle School

"What a smooth show it was... Including tech. This was an interesting event. After three years of lockdown, online awards and zoom meetings, everyone has grown into such a cohesive team. Truly wonderful. All challenges were met and all hurdles were crossed without fluster."

– Anahita Uberoi

"A truly enriching experience to be able to see the amazing work that is being done by the Sanctuary Nature Foundation and to be able to meet the incredible people who are contributing towards the conservation of our planet at the grassroots level. Their passion, dedication and selflessness are truly inspiring."

– Dr. Deeba Khalid Peer,

Deputy Director, Publicity,  
Department of Tourism, J&K

"Thank you for being the light that has shone for over four decades now, on those faces in the crowd. Thank you for having us be a small part of this incredible story."

– Faraway Originals

"What a wonderful and inspiring evening it turned out to be! With the pandemic bringing out everybody and everything to a halt, it was really heartwarming to be back in the NCPA and spending a lovely time witnessing India's wildlife warriors. Thank you Sanctuary for a fabulous evening."

– Shardul Bajjar

DSP MUTUAL FUND PRESENTS

THE SANCTUARY WILDLIFE AWARDS

Sanctuary NATURE FOUNDATION

Co-sponsors: Godrej | MORNINGSTAR | IndusInd Bank

CSR Initiatives Supported By: H T Parekh FOUNDATION | BAJAJCS Electricals

## WILDLIFE SERVICE AWARD

**Arun Venkataramanan**  
CONSERVATIONIST, EDUCATOR AND  
FOREST NURTURER

"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."



COURTESY ARUN V.

## YOUNG NATURALIST AWARD

**Munmuni Payeng**  
CONSERVATIONIST, PUBLIC SPEAKER  
AND LEADER

"Thank you Sanctuary Nature Foundation for the Award. It was my father who taught me to plant trees and I have been seeing how a forest was created. It keeps motivating me to keep on working toward making the Earth green again little by little. I truly believe – If there is a tree, there is life."



COURTESY MUNMUNI PAYENG

## THE 2022 WINNERS

On December 2, 2022, the Sanctuary Nature Foundation, sponsored by DSP Mutual Fund, co-sponsored by Godrej Industries Ltd. and Morningstar India and supported by CSR Partners IndusInd Bank, H T Parekh Foundation and Bajaj Electricals and Associates Wildlife Conservation Trust and CarbonCopy, presented the Sanctuary Wildlife Service Awards 2022 at the National Centre for Performing Arts (NCPA), which was attended by over 1,000 supporters.

The Sanctuary Wildlife Service Awards honoured eight men and women, from across India, who have unhesitatingly and bravely shouldered the burden of nurturing and protecting wild India. Their commitment and steadfastness to nature conservation show us how the monumental task of protecting our natural resources lies with each one of us. These are the heroes whose steps we hope many more will follow.

### LIFETIME SERVICE AWARD:

**Dr. Vibhu Prakash**

*Scientist, conservationist and species protector*

Dr. Vibhu Prakash's name is synonymous with vulture conservation in India. He has played an instrumental role in the banning of veterinary use of diclofenac – the drug that caused the decline in vulture populations. With over four decades of raptor studies and vulture conservation behind him, he continues his vital work in the field.

### YOUNG NATURALIST AWARD:

**Munmuni Payeng**

*Conservationist, public speaker and leader*

Munmuni Payeng is currently one year into a rewilding mission in collaboration with local community members who share her family's mission of creating a forest of one million native trees on sandbars close to the Molaikathoni Forest.

### GREEN TEACHER AWARD:

**Suprabha Seshan**

*Educationist, forest custodian and earth doctor*

Suprabha Seshan and her colleagues have painstakingly nursed a rainforest habitat with a myriad plant species back to life. As a long-term custodian of the Gurukula Botanical Sanctuary in Wayanad, Kerala, she undertakes much of its educational and outreach activities, including supporting restoration initiatives in the Western Ghats.

### WILDLIFE SERVICE AWARDS:

**Rituraj Phukan**

*Climate warrior, wildlife protector and adventurer*

Rituraj Phukan is a fearless and vocal advocate for climate change action and environment protection. Through his untiring speaking and teaching engagements in over a hundred educational institutes and at international

forums, Rituraj focuses on warming, water and wildlife.

**Ramana Athreya**

*Ecologist, conservationist and astrophysicist*

Dr. Ramana Athreya is a vital bridge between academia and on-the-ground conservation in Arunachal Pradesh. He works hard to untangle the complexities of biodiversity conservation and community sustenance. He has been mentoring the Bugun tribal community to involve them in protecting the Bugun *Liocichla*, a bird he first described in 2006, and its habitat.

**Panchami Manoo Ukil**

*Birder, author and conservationist extraordinaire*

By conducting the first ever bird walks in Odisha, Panchami Manoo Ukil helped create a culture of birdwatching in the state. Her efforts opened up Mangalajodi to the outside world and helped turn local boatmen into expert bird guides.

**Shabir Husain Bhat**

*Naturalist, guide and wild whisperer*

A passionate naturalist, Shabir Husain Bhat is one of Dachigam National Park's most dedicated conservationists. Even a short walk with Shabir through the magical forests of Dachigam reveals the wonders of the park. No wonder, visitors who have walked with him call him the 'Encyclopaedia of Dachigam'.

**Arun Venkataramanan**

*Conservationist, educator and forest nurturer*

Through discussions, nature education camps, birding trips, tree walks, and environmental education, Arun Venkataramanan is transforming minds. An alternative school founded by Arun and his friends for children from all socioeconomic backgrounds emphasises sustainable living and has a holistic approach to education.



DR. BILAL NASIR ZARGAR

## JAMMU AND KASHMIR BIRD FESTIVAL, 2022

The first ever *Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) festival* took place from October 3 to 8, 2022 and was organised by the Department of Tourism, Jammu and Kashmir, in collaboration with the Sanctuary Nature Foundation. The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) was the expert partner for the festival. The festival's primary objective is to promote avifaunal conservation and encourage an interest in birdwatching. The series of bird walks, talks and workshops that took place during the festival also highlighted the richness and unique value of J&K's biodiversity to the local youth – school students, university students and birding enthusiasts – who attended the event. This first edition of the J&K Bird Festival laid the foundation for what will be an annual event where expert ornithologists from within J&K and India, meet and interact with keen birders and nature lovers, and share their experience and expertise with them. The idea is for new vistas for birding, trekking and camping to open up in J&K, and this will in turn help create a significantly large number of jobs and livelihoods for the youth of J&K, at the intersection of conservation, hospitality and education. The J&K Bird Festival 2022 was held in Pahalgam and Srinagar, but its scope envelopes the entire J&K territory. With the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Sanctuary Nature Foundation and the Department of Tourism, an official commitment has been made to nurture and enable local bird ambassadors for the winged wonders of the Union Territory.

### PRE-FESTIVAL EVENTS

Pre-festival events were conducted in the months leading up to the official bird festival. Sanctuary Nature Foundation's visit to Kashmir: Dr. Parvish Pandya, Consultant Director, Science and Conservation and Saurabh Sawant, Consultant, Projects & Natural History, Sanctuary Nature Foundation, visited Kashmir between April 22 and May 30, 2022 to conduct bird walks along with local birders. On some of these visits, they were joined by school students, members of the Wildlife Conservation Trust, and members of the J&K Forest Department, Forest Protection Force, and Department of Wildlife Protection (South Division), as well as interested residents from nearby areas. They visited the wetlands of Pampore, Astanmarg, Dara, Dachigam National Park, Pahalgam and the Shankaracharya hills.

### REGULAR BIRD WALKS FOR SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND NATURE-BASED ORGANISATIONS:

In the months leading up to the festival, bird walks were also conducted regularly for members of various educational institutions and nature conservation organisations based in Kashmir. Each event was led by an experienced local birder, and was well attended by both students and local birders. There were close to 1,300 participants in the 27 walks conducted in birding locations such as Pampore, Astanmarg, Dara, Dachigam National Park, Pahalgam, Shankaracharya hills, Khanmoh Conservation Reserve, Bandipora/Ganderbal and Dal Lake.

“I was delighted to be present at the inaugural event of the J&K Bird Festival, which really was a one-of-a-kind event. This festival will help invite people from across the country and the world to visit our beautiful region for birdwatching and nature!”

– Sarmad Hafeez, Secretary Tourism, Government of J&K, Civil Secretariat, Jammu/Srinagar

FACING PAGE TOP Spotted Forktail

FACING PAGE BOTTOM The different organising teams and participants gather in Pahalgam during the Jammu and Kashmir Bird Festival.



GOBIND SAGAR BHARDWAJ



COURTESY WCF

Local school students and volunteers from WCF and the Iqbal Islamiya Mission High school, Kral Sangri Brain, Satisar Educational Institution Pampore, and Green Valley School, Srinagar at the Run for Birds event, held on October 2, 2022.



PRAACHI GALANGE

A Grey Wagtail.



COURTESY WCF

One of the pre-festival activities – birding at Shankar Acharya Parbat, Srinagar.

**SANCTUARY SHOWCASES  
THE J&K BIRD FESTIVAL**

**Social Media Promotion and Creatives**

Teasers were created compiling images from bird photographers in J&K to spread awareness about the festival and the diverse avian species of the region: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CjPQzSIJDAb/>

The creatives prepared for the teaser were also used in the photoexhibitions. Instagram and Facebook stories during the event: <https://www.instagram.com/stories/highlights/17968965982882723/>

An article about the J&K Bird Festival was published in the December 2022 *Sanctuary Asia* issue. Sanctuary has also published several articles about Jammu and Kashmir in the past:

Celebrating A Rich Avian Heritage: Jammu & Kashmir Bird Festival <https://sanctuarynaturefoundation.org/article/celebrating-a-rich-avian-heritage%3A-jammu-%26-kashmir-bird-festival>

J&K Bird Festival in the news: The bird festival was covered by different local and national news outlets. Some of them are *Hindustan Times*, *The Print*, *Current Affairs*, *News on Air*, *ANI News*, *JK Update* and *Pampore Town YouTube channel*.

Organisation and participation in the Bird Festival: Pre-festival events (see previous page) and events on days of the Bird Festival from Oct 6-8, 2022 (see right and facing page).

Standeers, Banners/Hoardings and Flyer: We designed standees to display the event schedule for visitors and guests. They were placed at various venues in Pahalgam. Additionally banners and a flyer were also created.



Dignitaries and volunteers on stage at the inauguration of the J&K Bird Festival at the indoor auditorium at Pahalgam Centre.

**DAY 1:  
OCTOBER 6, 2022 OPENING CEREMONY:**

With the opening ceremony, held at the auditorium at the Pahalgam Convention Centre, the first J&K Bird Festival was officially launched. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Department of Tourism (Government of J&K) and Sanctuary Nature Foundation, followed by the unveiling of the festival logo. The Chief Guest Sarmad Hafeez, Secretary of Tourism, was joined on stage by other dignitaries such as Dr. Asad Rahmani, conservationist and former Director of BNHS; Bittu Sahgal, Founder of Sanctuary Nature Foundation; and Farooq Gillani, retired additional principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Kashmir). The four each briefly addressed the audience. The event was attended by expert birders from the BNHS, members of the Indian Forest Service (IFS), school students and volunteers from Sanctuary and interns studying Travel and Tourism in Srinagar Department. Mementos were distributed among the guests,

participants and volunteers as a token of love and appreciation.

**PHOTO EXHIBITION AND PAINTING SESSION:**

During the first half of the day, a photo gallery exhibition on the birds of Kashmir and the Himalayan region, and a painting session was organised for school students on the lawns of the Pahalgam Convention Centre. The festival organisers also interacted with members of the press.

**DAY 2: OCTOBER 7, 2022  
BIRD WALK:**

Participants hiked in the Overa-Aru Wildlife Sanctuary for an early morning birdwatching session with experienced birdwatchers and photographers such as Dr. Parvish Pandya, Sanctuary Nature Foundation; Dr. Asad Rahmani, ex-Director, BNHS; Bivash Pandav, Director, BNHS; Saurabh Sawant, Sanctuary Nature Foundation; Intesar Suhail, Wildlife Warden, Shopian; Megh Roy Choudhury, wildlife photographer; and Alka Vaidya,



Dr. Madhumita and Dr. Mrugank from the BNHS demonstrate the mist net mechanism for trapping birds for ringing.

expert birder. During the walk through the forest, Dr. Asad Rahmani, Dr. Parvish Pandya and Saurabh Sawant described different aspects of bird behaviour and adaptations.

**WORKSHOP ON BIRD RINGING:**

Dr. Madhumita Panigrahi, BNHS, explained the process of bird ringing for research purposes with a presentation and display of different equipment such as pliers, rings and nets. She and Dr. Mrugank Prabh, BNHS, spoke of the precautions required during ringing and the different methods that can be used. They shared details of how bird photographers could share information with the BNHS of ringed birds they spot. Thirty people participated in the workshop held at Pahalgam.

**WORKSHOP ON WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY:**

Megh Roy Choudhury conducted a beautiful and spirited presentation on 'How to be a better wildlife photographer'. She spoke of

photographing for the love of wildlife and nature and not for social media. Everyone present, including non-photographers, thoroughly enjoyed her session because of her beautiful photographs and her passion for wildlife conservation. Thirty people participated in the workshop held at Pahalgam.

**DAY 3: OCTOBER 8, 2022**

For the final day of the bird festival, all participants and guests visited the wetlands of Pampore. The enthusiastic girls of Satisar Educational Institute spoke about the importance of the wetlands for biodiversity and as aquifers, and their willingness to take on their protection and preservation. The photoexhibition of birds of Kashmir was set up near the Chatlam Wetland, which was attended by school students, the Forest Department, Fisheries Department, Wildlife Department, team members of Sanctuary Nature Foundation and BNHS, experienced birders and photographers, and various volunteers of WCF.

**BANNER/HOARDING**



ABOVE Painting and Photo Gallery viewing session on the lawns of the Pahalgam Centre on Day 1 of the J&K Bird Festival.



Participants deeply immersed in the birding experience at Overa-Aru Wildlife Sanctuary on the morning of Day 2.



Bittu Sahgal presenting the *Sanctuary Asia* coffee table book *Wild Maharashtra* to Prof. G. M. Bhat

“The wetlands of Pampore tehsil are a time capsule – the sediments under these wetlands are a repository of the climate history of thousands of years. They are a sinkhole for carbon dioxide and home to a variety of bird species. We need to preserve and protect these wetlands. Our students are aware of this natural history.”

– Professor G.M. Bhat, a geology expert and Chief Advisor, The Nature University

## THE SANCTUARY DEBATE 2022

The Sanctuary Debate 2022, supported by Godrej, Morningstar and CarbonCopy was held on June 18, 2022 at the NCPA's iconic Experimental Theatre in Mumbai. Since 2017, Sanctuary Nature Foundation has been organising an Oxford Union-style debate, between some of the most credible and erudite speakers, all focused on the cross-section between economics, biodiversity, climate change and health. This year's debate, in the backdrop of a heatwave in India that saw temperatures reach 45°C in April 2022, against the 42°C-mark of April 2021, in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, was a reminder that climate action is now a life-or-death matter.

Justice Gautam Patel, Mumbai High Court, took charge as Chair of the House for The Sanctuary Debate 2022 and read out the speakers' rules, before reading out the stark proposition for the benefit of the six speakers and the audience.

**"This House Believes that Environmentalists have become Merchants of Dystopia and Doom."**

The Orwellian prediction of a world out of control played on minds as the motley audience trooped into the NCPA. It was inconceivable that anyone could possibly support the proposition, given the global scale, frequency and intensity of the killer floods, fires, cyclones, droughts and disease – once the stuff of dystopian fiction, which today dominates social media, television screens, United Nations agencies, the boardrooms of the largest global corporations, and virtually every government in the world. At the start of the event, a quick pre-debate poll conducted by Justice Patel saw a mere seven out of the 130 members of the audience voting for the proposition. The rest voted against. But that was the very purpose of the Sanctuary Debate – to encourage people who disagreed to express themselves freely, without being disagreeable. The complete Sanctuary Debate 2022 can be viewed on [The Sanctuary Debate 2022 - YouTube](#).



**Do YOU Believe That Environmentalists Have Become Merchants of Dystopia and Doom?**

### Speakers AGAINST the Motion



**Aarti Khosla** "This is not dystopia; this is reality. And that is the problem, that the reality that we have today is much worse than dystopia. Environmentalists are doctors, academics, researchers, they are politicians. Some are even CEOs. In the end, anyone who places clean air, clean water and good life at the heart of decision making is essentially an environmentalist."



**Meenakshi Menon** "The planet is not at risk, the people are at risk. There are enough documented cases, including Chernobyl, where we have seen that [if we] leave the planet alone, it can heal itself. But people are not like that; people are not going to be able to survive. Environmentalists suggest holding up a mirror. The picture you see is not pleasant."



**Praveen Gupta** "There is no dystopia. There is science, there is anticipation, and there is a resolve to fix whatever we might be headed towards otherwise. There are new types of risks, evolving risks, and there are a range of possibilities; the choices are very much in front of us, the crisis is staring us in our faces, and the choices have to be made now."

### Speakers FOR the Motion



**Rohit Bansal** "It's about being part of the solution, to look beyond the binary, to see exactly how the environmental movement can go back to **Sundarlal Bahuguna**, to Chandi Prakash Bhatt, to our own leaders who have in the past fought for the needs of the country... rather than flagbearing people, who 'hold the mirror' but probably also hold an agenda which they sometimes don't understand adequately."



**Sunil Alagh** "In India we have around eight hundred or nine hundred million people who are poor. Telling them about the environment will have no meaning at all, as they talk about economic growth for themselves. How do you strike a balance between economic growth and social justice? Rather than just raising the problem, it's about time you came up with solutions."



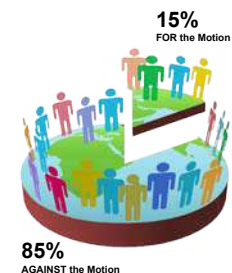
**Ram Divedi** "Ninety-two per cent of debates talk only about the impact of human-made carbon emissions on climate change. Climate change is a big problem for sure. However, why does the world media, why do all the environmentalists only talk about that? It's because it's a commodity market and you can create a carbon credit."

### Chair

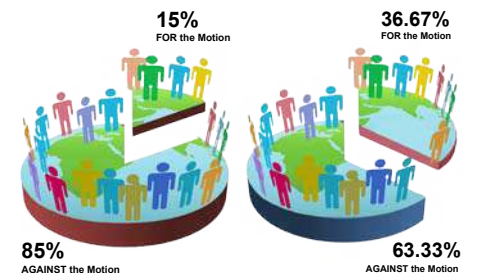


**Justice Gautam Sirish Patel** "This [proposition] is a question that is evidently alive in many walks of life, in the minds of many leaders, policymakers and worried parents."

### PRE-DEBATE VOTING



### AFTER DEBATE VOTING





BEHIND THE SCENES



# Sanctuary

NATURE FOUNDATION

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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*.

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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**



Consultant Director, Science  
and Conservation

**PRACHI GALANGE**



Senior Consultant Photo  
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**SAURABH SAWANT**



Consultant, Projects &  
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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.

**NEYI JAMOH**



Project Coordinator,  
Mud on Boots

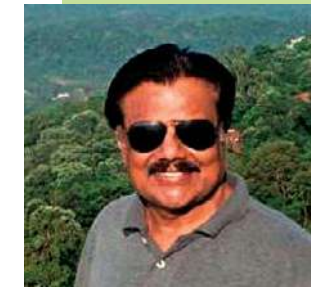
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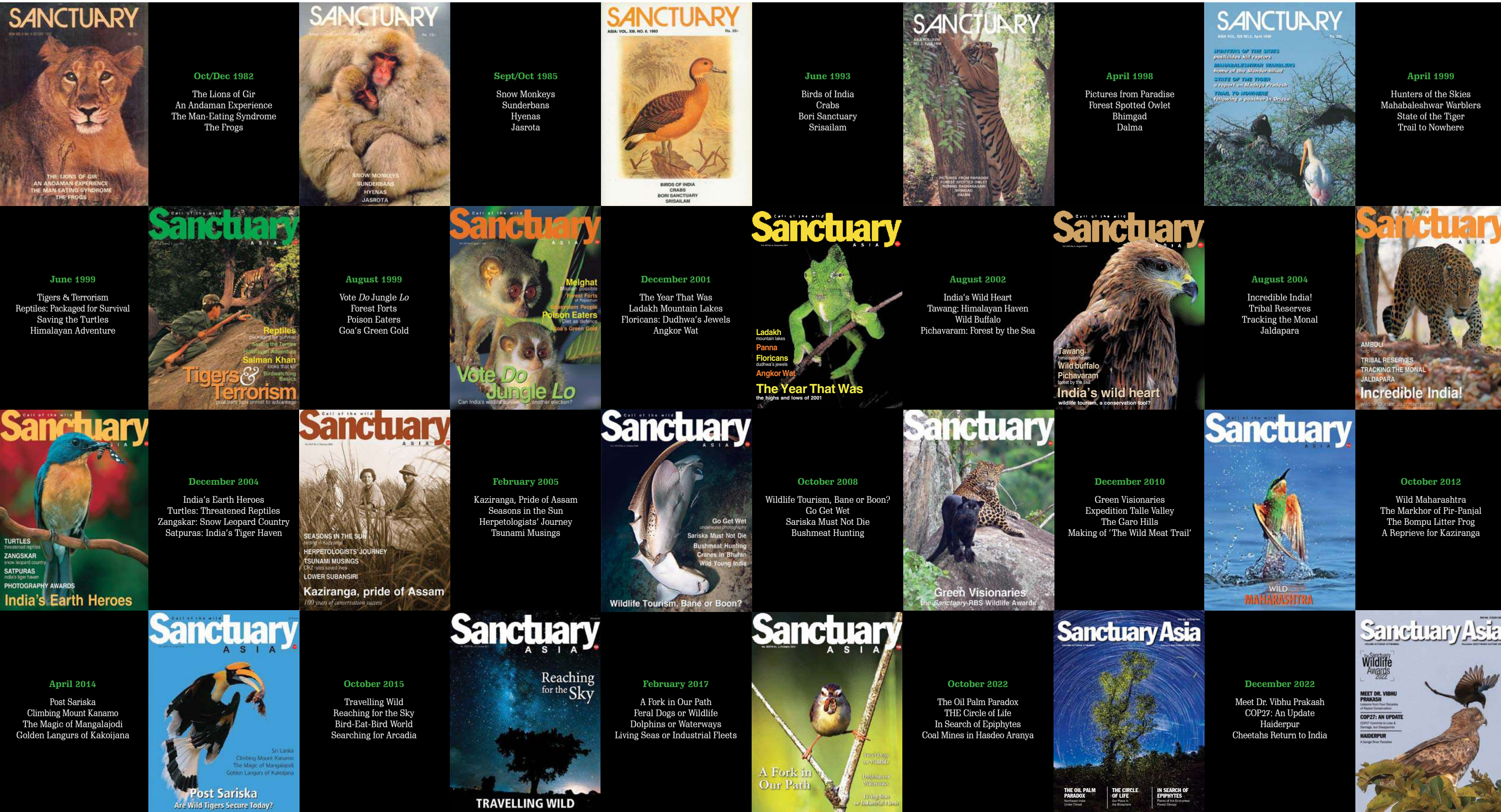


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**Corporate Office:**

Sanctuary Nature Foundation, Maker Chambers V, Nariman Point, Mumbai - 400021.

**Mailing Address:**

No. 146, Sanctuary Asia, Pragati Industrial Estate, N.M. Joshi Marg,  
Lower Parel (East), Mumbai - 400013.

**HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR DONATIONS OR OUR PROGRAMMES? CONTACT US AT:**

Advertising and Business: [nishita@sanctuaryasia.com](mailto:nishita@sanctuaryasia.com)

Subscriptions: [subscriptions@sanctuaryasia.com](mailto:subscriptions@sanctuaryasia.com)

Editorial: [editorial@sanctuaryasia.com](mailto:editorial@sanctuaryasia.com)

Kids for Tigers: [amandeep@sanctuaryasia.com](mailto:amandeep@sanctuaryasia.com)

COCOON Conservancies: [parvish@sanctuaryasia.com](mailto:parvish@sanctuaryasia.com)

Mud on Boots: [neyi@sanctuaryasia.com](mailto:neyi@sanctuaryasia.com)

Other inquiries: [admin@sanctuaryasia.com](mailto:admin@sanctuaryasia.com)

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