



BOMBAY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



JUNE, 2025

CONSERVATION NEWSLETTER

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK



Dear Members,

This month brought several pieces of good news! The Sarus Crane population in Maharashtra has risen to 34 in 2025, with Gondia district leading the count at 30 individuals. This was revealed during the annual Sarus count conducted by birders across the Vidarbha region. BNHS continues its study of the Sarus Crane and supports the Maharashtra Forest Department by providing regular guidance and expert input. While members from Uttar Pradesh—home to the largest Sarus Crane population in the country—may not find this development particularly significant, it is a crucial milestone for us. Strengthening and managing the dwindling populations in central Indian habitats is of utmost importance.

In another exciting development, the Chinese Rose Windmill butterfly *Papilio genestier* – a species native to the Sino-Tibetan region—was recorded in India for the first time. It was spotted in the high-altitude landscape of Mechuka, Arunachal Pradesh, by a team comprising Dr Monsoon J. Gogoi, Tajum Yomcha, and Duyir Buni Yedi.

We also received heartening news at Hornbill House: BNHS member Katie Bagli's books 'FLIGHT OF THE PINK-HEADED DUCKS AND OTHER STORIES' – published by BNHS – and 'STORIES OF TREES FROM INDIA', have been nominated for the Sahitya Akademi's Bal Sahitya Puraskar 2025 in the English category. We hope this recognition will help these important works reach more children across India and inspire them to engage in conservation.

Amidst the celebrations, we were deeply saddened by the loss of two eminent personalities. Mr Maruti Chitampalli, a retired forest officer from Maharashtra, author of 25 books on wildlife, and recipient of the Padma Shri, passed away this month. In November 2023, BNHS had the honour of felicitating him at his Solapur residence, presenting him with historical correspondence between himself and the late Dr Sálím Ali. He may well be the only forester to have authored such a rich body of work while still actively serving in the field.

We also lost our former Executive Member, Dr Saramma Marselin Almeida, a respected botanist who mentored and inspired hundreds of young students to explore and appreciate the remarkable world of plants.

While work at Hornbill House is important field visits remain essential to our mission, allowing us to connect directly with members, NGO partners, and government officials. I recently visited Ladakh, where BNHS has initiated a project to address the growing issue of Free-Ranging Dogs (FRDs) threatening wildlife. I had the pleasure of meeting Mr Tsewang Dorje Day, President of the Wildlife Conservation and Birds Club of Ladakh (WCBCL), and former President Mr Lobzang Visudha. Both have pledged their support to BNHS in tackling this issue.

It was equally enriching to meet Dr Tsewang Namgail, Director of the Snow Leopard Conservancy-India Trust, one of Ladakh's leading NGOs. We have agreed to collaborate on pressing conservation challenges in the region. Our work with the Indian Army continues, supporting them in making their establishments eco-friendlier.

From Ladakh's sub-zero temperatures, I travelled south to Tamil Nadu, where we addressed the importance of salt pans—critical habitats for migratory birds. The BNHS team had a productive meeting with Deputy Salt Commissioner Mr C. Raghu in Chennai. We also had a fruitful discussion with the dynamic Chief Wildlife Warden of Tamil Nadu Mr Rakesh Kumar Dogra, who assured us that action would be taken to resolve issues at Point Calimere Sanctuary. An additional meeting with Dr B. Balaji, Member Secretary of the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA), was promising. The trip concluded in Jaipur, where the State Board for Wildlife meeting, chaired by Chief Minister Mr Bhajan Lal Sharma, resulted in several key decisions for the protection of Rajasthan's wildlife habitats.

In other important updates, BNHS scientists are collaborating with experts from NIV Pune, NIHSAD Bhopal, and MAFSU Nagpur on a project focused on disease surveillance in wild birds. This kind of collaborative work becomes especially important when incidents like the recent rabies case in Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR) make headlines – the first instance where a stray dog in the buffer zone succumbed to rabies. Thankfully, the case is isolated, and proactive vaccination and monitoring efforts are now in place to prevent any further spread. This serves as a critical learning moment for all states where FRDs are present in key wildlife habitats.

(Contd. on next page)

We are pleased to report that our recent online interaction with BNHS members saw growing participation and engagement. We thank our President for initiating these dialogues on a regular basis to encourage broader involvement of our members in the Society's day-to-day activities.

We have noticed that many individuals working closely with BNHS in areas such as membership, programmes, education, research, and publications are not formal members. We invite all our well-wishers to officially join BNHS. Your membership will ensure uninterrupted access to our services and enhance collaboration.

Do not miss out on the 'Systema naturae' section in the latest issue of *Hornbill* magazine. We welcome your contributions as part of the BNHS 150-Year Omnibus Collection.

If you have not completed the Yearbook form for Life Members, you can do so here: <https://forms.gle/12gPTSyTs9P2khue7>

For assistance, feel free to reach out:

- Central Marketing: cmd@bnhs.org
- Membership: membership@bnhs.org
- Programmes: programmes@bnhs.org
- Conservation Education Centre: cec-mumbai@bnhs.org

For event reservations and content submissions, please send your photos and write-ups to Mr Gopi Naidu at g.naidu@bnhs.org.

Thank you for staying connected with us. For any suggestions or queries, I am always available at director@bnhs.org.

Kishor Rithe

Director, Bombay Natural History Society

BNHS inspects HAL Airport for Bird and Bat Hazard

In the wake of renewed concerns about air safety and bird strikes following the recent Air India crash near Ahmedabad airport, the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) has seen a surge in requests from the civil aviation sector for expert guidance and site-specific mitigation strategies.

BNHS, which has conducted in-depth bird hazard assessments at over 21 aerodromes and airports across India since the 1980s, was recently approached by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) in Bengaluru. Acting on instructions from the Karnataka Forest Department, HAL sought BNHS's expertise to address recurring threats from kites and bats at the HAL Airport.

The airport, which serves as a key airfield and testing facility for the Indian Armed Forces, also handles non-scheduled business and general aviation traffic, along with VIP and VVIP movements. Reports of recent and past bird strikes have raised alarms, prompting urgent intervention.

BNHS Director Kishor Rithe and Dr P. Sathiyaselvam, Deputy Director and Head of the Wetlands and Flyways Programme, conducted a field visit to HAL Airport to assess the situation. The BNHS team identified several factors contributing to the increasing presence of kites and bats within and around the airport premises. Chief among these were open drainage, untreated sewage, scattered plastic waste, food scraps, and nearby meat shops – all of which serve as attractants for scavenging birds and bats.

The HAL authorities had earlier commissioned a private consultancy to prepare a mitigation plan, which recommended capturing and translocating kites and bats from the airport vicinity. An SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) for this process



was submitted to the Karnataka Forest Department, which in turn requested scientific validation and technical oversight from BNHS. Responding to this, BNHS has now begun the groundwork to develop a scientifically sound and ecologically responsible SOP for the capture and translocation of birds and bats, tailored specifically for HAL Airport. In the meantime, the organisation has urged local civic authorities, especially the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), to take immediate action in controlling waste, improving sanitation, and managing open drains – critical steps in reducing the area's bird attractants.

With air safety taking centre stage, the HAL Airport case underscores the urgent need for integrated waste management and evidence-based wildlife hazard mitigation near aviation zones. ■

BNHS Celebrates World Environment Day 2025

Commemorated World Environment Day (WED) 2025 with an inspiring array of educational and participatory activities across India. The celebrations aimed to foster environmental awareness, promote sustainable practices, and connect communities, especially young minds, with nature and conservation. BNHS scientists and staff conducted a wide range of programmes including interactive sessions, nature trails, tree plantation drives, and creative competitions. These initiatives actively engaged participants of all ages, emphasizing the importance of protecting and restoring the natural world. ■

MAHA CSR Summit 2025: Bridging Policy and Planet for Biodiversity Action

In observance of World Environment Day 2025, the Maharashtra Institution for Transformation (MITRA) hosted a high-impact panel discussion titled "Policy to Planet: Aligning Governance, Science & Business for Biodiversity" on June 5th at the World Trade Centre, Mumbai. The event convened leaders from government, science, industry, finance, and defence to explore integrated approaches to biodiversity conservation.

Dr Kiran Mali, Deputy Director of the Mangrove and Marine Biodiversity Conservation Foundation of Maharashtra, showcased the Mangrove Foundation's initiatives in protecting coastal ecosystems, promoting climate resilience, and supporting local livelihoods.

Dr P. Sathiyaselvam, Deputy Director and Head the BNHS Wetlands and Flyways Programme, reflected on the Bombay Natural History Society's century-long legacy in species conservation and its role in shaping India's ecological discourse. He emphasized that biodiversity preservation is rooted in both rigorous science and committed stewardship. A short film, "The Truth About Mercy Feeding," was screened during his session, highlighting BNHS's collaborations with corporate partners to address emerging conservation challenges.

Representing the corporate sector, Mr Manish Tayade of Sterlite Technologies Ltd. (STL) stressed that CSR today transcends statutory obligations, aiming instead for meaningful co-creation between business and society. Mr Siddharth Bhatia of the India Climate Collaborative underscored the transition from fragmented funding



to systemic transformation, detailing innovations in climate finance, blended capital, and carbon markets. He noted that strategic capital design can catalyse large-scale ecological impact.

Dr Bhagwan Kapse, an expert in agrarian innovation, spoke on the importance of climate-resilient farming, agroforestry, and sustainable agriculture in enhancing farmer incomes while preserving biodiversity.

Lieutenant Colonel Chetan Dhawad addressed the intersection of climate change and national security, highlighting the Indian Armed Forces' role in protecting ecologically sensitive zones. He also spoke on the significance of green cantonments, which serve as urban 'lungs' contributing to environmental and biodiversity protection.

Together, these six perspectives – spanning governance, science, business, rural development, finance, and defence – offered a compelling vision for collaborative action. The summit underscored that through cross-sector partnerships and integrated policies, the goal must be a planet that thrives – not merely survives. ■

Launch of Birdle-India: A Game for Nature Lovers

On June 5, the BNHS-EIACP Centre, in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) and Raining Rock Studio (Switzerland), launched Birdle-India, an innovative digital game to celebrate biodiversity through gamified learning. The launch featured a live demo and Q&A with creators Mr Alberto Vaccari and Ms Lily Bickerstaffe. The app, which challenges players to identify birds through calls, traits, and images, saw 1,834 plays and 743 installations within 24 hours. A webinar on how to play is available at Birdle-India YouTube Webinar. Explore the game at <https://birdle.in>. ■



Creative Competitions at VCBC Rani

This year, the Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre (VCBC), Rani, Assam, was actively engaged in conducting educational outreach programmes across the state to raise awareness about the importance of vultures in maintaining ecological balance.

Biswanath District

On June 3–4, 2025, Mr Ghanashyam Gogoi and Mr Gitartha Borah conducted a two-day vulture conservation awareness programme across two schools in Biswanath district. The first session, held at Chibalipal High School, engaged 65 students from



Class 9 and 5 teachers. The second session took place at Gosai Chapori M.E. School with 45 students and 2 teachers in attendance.

Bhaskarjyoti Adarsha Vidyapith School

Bhaskarjyoti Adarsha Vidyapith School hosted a series of themed competitions for students across various grades on June 3–4. The events included 'Biodiversity in the Backyard' for Classes 1–4, 'Drawing and Painting a Vulture' for Classes 5–8, and a story-writing competition on vultures for Classes 9–10. On June 5, under the guidance of Mr Ghanashyam Gogoi, the school also held a painting and essay-writing competition for students from Classes 1 to 10. Prizes were awarded to the best entries in each category.



Additionally, a story writing and collage-making competition was organised with enthusiastic participation from students of St. John's School, Berigaon; PM Shri Loharghat Govt M.V. School, Loharghat; and PM Shri Anchalik Fulguri High School,

Borihat. Winners received vulture-themed T-shirts, distributed by Ms Aneena Lakshmanan and Mr Jayanta Kumar Rabha.

St. Xavier's School, Pamohi

On June 5, an awareness camp was held at VCBC Rani for students from St. Xavier's School, Pamohi. Mr Aniket Pawar delivered a talk on the ecological role of vultures and the importance of



environmental conservation. The session concluded with a quiz competition, with prizes awarded to the winners.

Mathurapur Higher Secondary School, Charaideo

On June 5, BNHS, VSZ Assam, and the Society for Green Conservation jointly organized a tree plantation programme at Mathurapur Higher Secondary School, Charaideo. Fifty saplings – Bogiboma, Urium, and Marogani – were distributed among



students and teachers, who were asked to submit GPS-tagged photos of the planted saplings. Certificates will be awarded on Vulture Awareness Day in September to students whose saplings thrive, promoting accountability and long-term care. ■

Plantation Drive at VCBC Bhopal

The BNHS-Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre (VCBC) in Bhopal organized a tree plantation drive on June 05, in line with this year's global theme: 'Save Vultures, Save Nature', focusing on land restoration and resilience against desertification and drought.

Staff members planted native and ecologically valuable species such as *Neem Azadirachta indica*, *Seesam Dalbergia sissoo*, *Banyan Ficus benghalensis*, and *Kadamba Neolamarckia cadamba*. These trees were chosen for their contributions to biodiversity, soil health, and climate resilience. This initiative aims to raise awareness about land degradation, promote sustainable land use practices, and engage the community in practical conservation efforts. It reflects BNHS-VCBC's long-standing commitment to ecological sustainability and calls on individuals and institutions to take part in similar green actions. ■



Art and Awareness in Bhagalpur, Bihar

The Bhagalpur Forest Division organized a week-long series of events focused on environmental awareness and education. The BNHS Bird Ringing and Monitoring Station (BRMS) partnered with the Forest Department to conduct various outreach programmes aimed at engaging school children in conservation efforts.

As part of the celebrations, a drawing competition was held on May 31, 2025 at the Primary School in Paswan Tola, Naugachia. A total of 45 students participated, creatively expressing environmental themes through their artwork. A second drawing competition took place on June 5, 2025 at Jai Prakash Udyaan in Bhagalpur. Seventeen students took part, creating artwork based on this year's theme: 'Beat Plastic Pollution'.

These events were designed to encourage creativity among young minds while fostering awareness about biodiversity, nature conservation, and the importance of maintaining a healthy environment.



Prizes were awarded to the winners by Mr Amit Kumar, Range Forest Officer, Bhagalpur, on World Environment Day. ■



Exhibition in Thane, Maharashtra

In Thane, the BNHS EIACP Department partnered with the Thane Municipal Corporation to celebrate WED. An engaging stall was set up to showcase avian ecology knowledge products. Dignitaries including Thane Municipal Commissioner Mr Saurabh Rao (IAS), MLA Mr Sanjay Kelkar, MP Shri Naresh Mhaske, and MLA Shri Niranjan Davkhare visited the stall and interacted with BNHS representatives. The team, including Mr Niraj Patel, Mr Yogesh Dhamnaskar, and Mr Rohan Chavan, received special appreciation for their contributions. ■

Citywide Exhibitions in Mumbai



The Central Marketing team successfully organized 14 exhibitions across Mumbai as part of WED celebrations, reaching nearly 5,000 people. These exhibitions held in the offices of AllCargo Logistics Ltd., Axis Bank Foundation, HDFC Ltd. (two offices), Larsen and Toubro Ltd. (two offices), RPG Foundation,

and Tata Consultancy Services (seven offices), highlighted BNHS's conservation efforts, publications, and merchandise.

Additionally, Ms Natasha Girkar delivered an educational lecture on migratory birds at HDFC Ltd., enhancing public understanding of avian ecology. ■

Community Events at CEC-Mumbai

The BNHS Conservation Education Centre (CEC) in Mumbai organised a series of engaging events between 5th and 8th June 2025, themed around 'Beat Plastic Pollution'.

Nature lovers, students, and BNHS members came together for a revitalizing 'Walk in the Woods' at the BNHS Nature Reserve. The event opened with a talk by Ms Priyadarshini Supekar, BNHS Education Officer, emphasizing the urgent need to reduce plastic usage and switch to sustainable alternatives. The highlight was an audiovisual session for 10th-grade students, led by Ms Aqsa Majgaonkar, focusing on the harmful impacts of plastic pollution and practical steps individuals can take. In total, 109 participants reaffirmed their commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable living. ■



BNHS Leads Corporate Nature Trail at Maharashtra Nature Park

As part of World Environment Week, BNHS organized a corporate nature trail for employees of Asian Paints at Maharashtra Nature Park (MNP), Mahim. Located in the heart of Mumbai, MNP is a model of urban ecological restoration.

Participants explored native flora, urban birdlife, butterflies, and wetland ecosystems, gaining insight into how urban green spaces contribute to climate resilience. The trail emphasized simple sustainable practices and the value of citizen science. Employees expressed enthusiasm for future nature-based initiatives, making the event a successful blend of environmental education and corporate engagement. ■



BNHS Engages Thyssenkrupp Employees on Conservation and Sustainability



As part of World Environment Week, the BNHS was invited by Thyssenkrupp Industries India Pvt. Ltd. to deliver a special talk on environmental conservation and potential corporate collaboration. The session introduced employees to BNHS's rich legacy since 1883, including its natural history collections and nation-wide conservation initiatives spanning wetlands, forests, and coastal ecosystems.

BNHS representatives encouraged participation through individual, academic, and corporate memberships, and explored how companies like Thyssenkrupp can partner on sustainability goals. The event concluded with a lively discussion on collaborative action and long-term ecological responsibility. ■

Nature's Story Circle with Katie Bagli



As part of World Environment Day celebrations, the CEC-Mumbai hosted a special event titled 'Nature's Story Circle' on June 1, 2025. The event began with a refreshing guided nature trail led by BNHS Naturalist Unmesh Paranjape, during which 12 participants explored the forest paths and gained fascinating insights into Mumbai's urban biodiversity.

Following the trail, renowned children's author Katie Bagli captivated both young and adult audiences with a storytelling session based on her book *STORIES OF FORESTS FROM INDIA*. Her engaging narration brought forest ecosystems and their vibrant characters to life, inspiring a deeper appreciation for nature and its conservation. ■

Ten Long-billed Vultures Transferred to Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad for Conservation Breeding from Pinjore

In a significant step toward the conservation of critically endangered vultures, ten Long-billed Vultures (*Gyps indicus*) were handed over on June 25 from the Jatayu Conservation Breeding Centre (JCBC), Pinjore, to Nehru Zoological Park (NZP), Hyderabad, under the National Conservation Breeding Programme.

The selected vultures, chosen based on health, age, and behavioural suitability, were transported to Hyderabad by road in a fully air-conditioned bus. Each bird placed in a custom-designed wooden crate to ensure safety and comfort during the journey. As per standard protocol, the birds were fed two days prior to transport to reduce travel stress.

The receiving team from NZP included Dr G. Babu Rao (Senior Biologist), Md. Abdul Gaffar (Junior Veterinary Officer), Sri Bushanam (Head Animal Keeper), K. Raja Kumar, S. Pavan Kumar, Md. Nizamuddin, and S. Venkatramulu (Animal Keepers and Assistant Animal Keepers). The team worked in close coordination with JCBC staff to ensure a smooth and secure handover.



This transfer marks a crucial milestone in the collaborative efforts of the Central Zoo Authority (CZA), the Forest Departments of Haryana and Telangana, and the BNHS to advance ex-situ vulture conservation in India. ■

BNHS Collaborates for Disease Surveillance at Ujani Reservoir

As part of the One Health Programme, BNHS – in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) – conducted wild bird sampling at Kumbhargaoon in the Ujani Reservoir, Pune district, on June 18–19, 2025. This programme aims to detect potential zoonotic diseases through the collection of tracheal and cloacal swabs, blood samples, and ectoparasites from wild birds.

The sampling team included representatives from the National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune; the National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (NIHSAD), Bhopal; Maharashtra Animal and Fishery Sciences University (MAFSU), Nagpur; and BNHS, led by Dr P. Sathiyaselvam from the Wetlands and Flyways Programme.

A total of 46 birds from 11 species were ringed, and samples were collected from 21 individuals across eight species. All collected materials were securely transported to NIV, Pune, for further analysis. Team members handling the birds have been registered with Symbiosis Women's Medical College for occupational health monitoring. ■



Second Phase of Bhagalpur Bird Atlas Survey Underway



The second phase of the Bhagalpur Bird Atlas (BBA) survey commenced from June 1, 2025, led by the Bhagalpur Forest Division with technical support from BNHS. The survey aims to document bird species distribution and abundance across Bhagalpur city during the non-migratory season.

A team of 23 local birdwatchers, nature enthusiasts, and volunteers participated in the initiative. The data collected will provide valuable insights into changes in bird diversity and habitat use, supporting informed conservation strategies and urban planning in the region. ■

University of Ladakh and BNHS Join Hands to Advance Wildlife and Biodiversity Research

In a landmark step toward strengthening biodiversity conservation and research in Ladakh's fragile ecosystem, the University of Ladakh (UoL) and the BNHS signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on June 06, 2025, in Leh.

The MoU aims to foster collaboration in wildlife research, education, and community-based conservation initiatives in the trans-Himalayan region. It was signed by Mr Nawang Tundup, Registrar, University of Ladakh, and Mr Kishor Rithe, Director, BNHS, in the presence of Prof (Dr) Saaket Kushwaha, Vice Chancellor of UoL, and Mr Praveensingh Pardeshi, President of BNHS. Also present were Dr Sonam Joldan, Dean, Dr Subrat Sharma, Dean (Research) from UoL, and Mr Niazul Khan, BNHS Project Investigator.

Under this partnership, the two institutions will launch joint research projects focused on regional biodiversity, develop certificate and diploma courses in wildlife sciences, facilitate Ph.D. programmes in Zoology and Botany, organize workshops, seminars, and field-based training, prepare wildlife management



plans and involve local communities in conservation, and offer internships and practical exposure in areas such as ecology, habitat management, biodiversity monitoring, and animal behaviour. The MoU also includes provisions for BNHS to utilize UoL's genome sequencing and GIS laboratories for joint research in Ladakh. ■



BNHS Strengthens Ties in Ladakh for Wildlife Conservation

In a follow-up to the academic agreement, BNHS leadership held a strategic meeting with leading conservation organizations in Ladakh on June 9, 2025. The meeting aimed to enhance cooperation with local stakeholders for biodiversity protection.

The discussion brought together key figures such as Dr Tsewang Namgail, Director of the Snow Leopard Conservancy India Trust (SLC-IT); Mr Tsewang Dorjey Daya, President of the Wildlife Conservation and Birds Club of Ladakh (WC&BC); and former President Mr Lobzang Visudha. BNHS Project Investigator Mr Niazul Khan also participated. The meeting emphasized integrating BNHS's scientific expertise with local knowledge and grassroots engagement, aiming for a unified, community-centric conservation strategy in this ecologically sensitive region. ■

Night Census Highlights Wildlife Presence Following Habitat Restoration in Pokhran

Following extensive habitat restoration work in the Pokhran region, the BNHS conducted a detailed night census on June 12, 2025, at two critical water bodies – Khetolai Village and Silotra Chacha Lake – to assess nocturnal wildlife activity. The restoration efforts were supported by the ICICI Foundation, the Indian Army, and the Bishnoi community.

Initially scheduled for May 12, 2025, on the occasion of Buddha Purnima, the census was postponed to the next full moon (June 12) due to heightened tensions along the Indo-Pak border. The survey was conducted from 8:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m., focusing on identifying species frequenting water sources at night – a vital activity during arid summer months.

Chinkaras *Gazella bennettii* made up 85% of all sightings, reinforcing the importance of water bodies for nocturnal wildlife.



A late-evening sighting of the great Indian bustard – a species usually active during morning or evening hours – was a significant highlight of the census. Sightings of desert cats and hedgehogs indicated healthy microhabitats, although a growing wild boar population raised concerns over habitat disturbance and interspecies competition. ■

Stone Enclosures Offer New Hope for Ground-Nesting Birds in Tungabhadra

In a proactive conservation initiative, stone enclosures have been constructed around vital nesting sites in the Tungabhadra backwaters to protect vulnerable ground-nesting bird species. The effort is a collaborative project between BNHS, GreenHbH (a local conservation NGO in Hagaribommanahalli, Vijayanagar), and the Vijayanagar Forest Department.

Species such as the blue-tailed bee-eater, small and Oriental pratincoles, little tern, and black-winged stilt depend on undisturbed soil, gravel beds, or open flats for nesting – habitats increasingly threatened by agricultural encroachment and trampling.

The stone boundaries, made from locally sourced materials, are designed to clearly demarcate breeding zones, limit entry of stray animals and livestock, blend naturally into the environment, and provide perch sites for birds like bee-eaters. While not predator-proof, these enclosures reflect an intuitive, culturally grounded approach rooted in ancient land stewardship practices.

Efforts are underway to develop a Community Stewardship Model, where local residents will serve as 'nest guardians'. These guardians will: Maintain stone



perimeters, guide visitors away from nesting areas and monitor disturbances or new colony formations. Plans also include educational signage to raise public awareness about the importance of these birds and the role of community action in conserving local biodiversity. ■

Increase in Indian Skimmer breeding population at Chambal – BNHS records 950 individuals

Chambal, June 2025 — The BNHS has continued its focused conservation efforts for the endangered Indian skimmer *Rynchops albicollis* in the National Chambal Sanctuary. Since 2017, BNHS has been working through the Guardians of the Indian Skimmer initiative to protect crucial nesting habitats along the Chambal River. The breeding population has increased to 941 Indian Skimmers at Chambal.

The 2025 nesting season began in early March, with around 950 Indian skimmers nesting at 24 key sites along the river.



Under the Nest Guardian Programme, trained local residents were deployed to monitor and protect nesting islands from common threats such as livestock intrusion,

free-ranging dogs, and human disturbance. In several locations, nesting sites were secured using temporary fencing and round-the-clock vigilance. Thanks to these measures, successful breeding was recorded at 15 sites, reaffirming the effectiveness of the programme and the dedication of those involved. BNHS extends heartfelt thanks to the General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC) for its continued financial support, and to the nest guardians for their unwavering commitment to protecting this iconic riverine bird.

Nesting Sites Monitored in 2025: (italicised site names experienced unsuccessful nesting attempts)

Jamurdi, *Nadigaon*, Atar, Dang Basai, Sabada, Nagar, *Varwasin*, *Harigir*, *Jaitpur*, Gorakha, *Babusingh Gher*, Kisroli, *Barsala*, *Jafarghari*, *Chuslai*, Raipur, Kuretha, Sahaspura, Ater, *Gadha Mandir*, Udi, Barechha, Kheda Chhibroli, and Bharreh. ■

Youth Empowered at Udhagamandalam to Champion Vulture Conservation

An impactful lecture titled 'Restoring Nature's Scavengers: Vulture Conservation Breeding in India' was held at the Government Arts College, Udhagamandalam, drawing enthusiastic participation from B.Sc. and M.Sc. Wildlife Biology students.

The session highlighted the ecological importance of vultures as nature's clean-up crew, conservation breeding strategies and successes, and the need for collaborative efforts to secure vulture populations. Students engaged in thoughtful discussions and emerged with a renewed commitment to wildlife conservation.

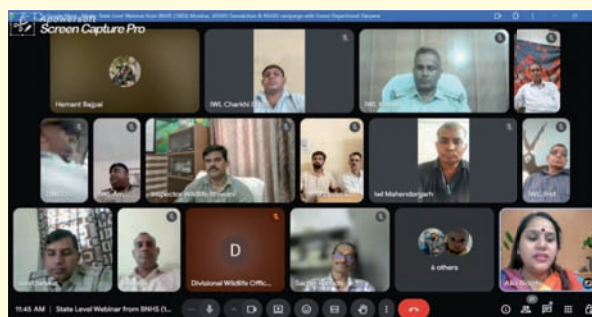


BNHS expresses gratitude to the faculty, students, and organizers for making the event a success. ■

Webinar Series Highlights Urgent Need for Vulture-Safe Veterinary Practices

The Vulture Safe Zone (VSZ) team in Haryana, in collaboration with BNHS, conducted a three-day webinar series from June 16–18, 2025 to sensitize frontline personnel on vulture conservation. The sessions engaged over 200 participants, including Divisional Forest Officers (DFOs), Chief Conservators of Forests (CCFs), veterinary officers, and para-veterinary staff from seven districts: Ambala, Yamunanagar, Panchkula, Kurukshetra, Karnal, Kaithal, and Jind.

Led by Dr Shravan Singh Rathore and Dr Raghavendra Sharma (Senior Veterinarians at VCBC Pinjore), and Mr Hemant Bajpai (Centre Manager, VCBC), the webinars addressed the drastic decline in India's Gyps vulture populations. Presenters highlighted the dangers of commonly used veterinary NSAIDs – diclofenac, aceclofenac, ketoprofen, and nimesulide – and advocated for the adoption of vulture-safe alternatives such as meloxicam and tolfenamic acid.



Participants were also introduced to principles of the Vulture Safe Zone model, carcass testing and habitat monitoring protocols, clinical care and safe handling of vultures, updates on ex-situ conservation and rewilding programmes. The webinars fostered critical dialogue between conservationists, veterinarians, and forest managers, reinforcing the importance of collaborative, science-based interventions to protect vulture populations across Haryana. ■

Forestry Students Visit BNHS Bird Migration Study Centre, Point Calimere

A group of 85 B.Sc. (Hons) Forestry students from the Forest College and Research Institute, Mettupalayam, Tamil Nadu, visited the BNHS Bird Migration Study Centre (BMSC) at Point Calimere on June 24, 2025. The students were accompanied by Dr P.S. Devanand (Associate Professor, Plant Breeding) and Dr P. Hemalatha (Associate Professor, Horticulture). The visit began with an introduction to the BNHS and its nationwide conservation efforts. BNHS staff — Mr S. Sivakumar (Scientist D), along with researchers Paul Antony B. and Rose Francis — highlighted the rich biodiversity and ecological importance of the Point Calimere region. Students were introduced to bird migration research methods, including demonstrations of bird ringing and field equipment. Mr T. Elanchezhian, Forester, Vedaranyam Forest



Division, also addressed the students, emphasizing the need to conserve Point Calimere's diverse habitats that support a range of bird species and other fauna. ■

SFS Officer Trainees from CASFOS, Dehradun Visit JCBC, Pinjore



As part of their training curriculum, SFS Officer Trainees from the Central Academy for State Forest Service (CASFOS), Dehradun, visited the Jatayu Conservation Breeding Centre (JCBC) on June 17, 2025. The session, led by Mr Jeff Francis (Conservation Biologist) and Dr Shravan Singh Rathore (Senior Veterinarian), included a detailed presentation covering: Vulture species and

their ecological role, history and objectives of JCBC, Conservation breeding techniques, Artificial incubation methods, and Vulture release and post-release monitoring. An interactive Q&A followed the session, allowing for in-depth discussion. The visit concluded with a group photograph marking the successful completion of the training. ■

Guest Lecture Inspires Future Conservationists in Tamil Nadu

A guest lecture on "Restoring Nature's Scavengers: Vulture Conservation Breeding in India" was successfully held at Government Arts College, Udthagamandalam. The event received an enthusiastic response from B.Sc. and M.Sc. Wildlife Biology students. The session explored the ecological importance of vultures, the vital role of conservation breeding programmes, and the challenges in safeguarding these endangered birds.

Key insights included the critical role vultures play in maintaining ecological balance, how conservation breeding is helping revive India's



vulture populations, and the importance of youth participation in protecting these keystone species. More than a lecture, the event served as a call to action for aspiring conservationists. The organizers expressed gratitude to the faculty and students for their active participation and commitment to wildlife protection. ■

Catching Them Young: Army Kids Learn Birdwatching and Conservation in Lucknow



The Central Command Unit of the Indian Army in Lucknow organized an interactive session on environmental conservation for children at the Army Sports Complex on June 16, 2025. The event, attended by around 200 children, featured a talk by Dr Rajat Bhargava, and was mentored by Brig. G. Praveen, Commander 71 Brigade; Col. Preetam Singh, KC; and other Brigade staff officers.

Dr Bhargava's session focused on 'How to Start Birdwatching in Your Own Campus' and the critical role students can play in conservation. The two-hour event sparked enthusiastic participation, with children asking thought-provoking questions such as: Why do eagles fly so high? What do ducks eat in water if

they are vegetarian? How many bird species live in the Lucknow Army campus and how can their population be monitored?

The talk began with an introduction to the BNHS and its work and concluded with an appeal for BNHS membership. Plans were also made to organize a similar session for adults in the winter, followed by a field trip to a nearby forest or wetland.

During his visit, Dr Bhargava also toured the Raj Bhawan Garden, where he noted a bird signage board acknowledging BNHS's IBCN (Indian Bird Conservation Network) programme. It was revealed that the initiative had been championed by BNHS IBCN Uttar Pradesh State Coordinator, Mr Neeraj Srivastava. ■

Healing with Herbs: BlackRock Hosts CSR Wellness Workshop with BNHS



Over 30 enthusiastic volunteers from the BlackRock came together on June 27, 2025, for a refreshing and insightful CSR Wellness Workshop, conducted in collaboration with the BNHS at BlackRock's Mumbai office. Centered around the theme 'Healing with Herbs', the session offered a hands-on experience in aromatherapy and herbal wellness, encouraging participants to reconnect with nature and embrace eco-friendly living.

The event kicked off with a warm welcome and an interactive icebreaker session, where the BNHS team introduced the fundamentals of herbal wellness and its growing relevance in the context of modern urban lifestyles. The discussion set the tone for a thoughtful exploration of natural self-care practices and stress-relief techniques. The first activity, DIY Herbal Tea Blending, invited participants to engage their senses with a carefully

curated selection of herbs including lemongrass, rose, chamomile, and peppermint. Led by Ms Aqsa Majgaonkar, Senior Education Officer at BNHS's Conservation Education Centre (CEC), the session highlighted the unique therapeutic properties of each herb. Volunteers then created personalized tea blends to take home. This was followed by a DIY Aromatherapy Sachet activity, where attendees crafted their own fragrant sachets using dried herbs like lavender, rosemary, and chamomile. Designed to improve sleep, boost focus, or ease stress, the sachets were a favourite among participants, who enjoyed mixing scents to suit their wellness goals. The workshop concluded with a practical segment on sustainability, offering simple yet effective tips on reusing sachets, refilling tea blends, and incorporating herbal wellness into daily routines in an environmentally responsible manner. ■

BNHS Engages Youth in Assam Through Vulture Conservation Awareness Programmes



Saikia Senior Secondary School



Khetri High School



R.K. Phukan High School



St. John's School



Carmel School

BNHS, through its Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre (VCBC) in Rani, Assam, has been actively conducting educational outreach programmes across the state to raise awareness about the importance of vultures in maintaining ecological balance.

Guest Lecture – Lakhimpur College of Veterinary Science: On June 11, a special lecture on vulture conservation was held at Lakhimpur College of Veterinary Science. The session, led by Mr Sachin Ranade, Mr Gitartha Borah, and Mr Ghanashyam Gogoi, aimed to educate future veterinarians on threats to vultures and the importance of safe veterinary practices.

Field Visit – St. John's School, Berigaon: On June 14, students from St. John's School, Berigaon, visited VCBC Rani for an experiential learning programme. The visit included a documentary on vultures, a presentation on butterflies by Mr Sachin Ranade, and live screening of vultures in the aviary. Mr Ghanashyam Gogoi and Ms Aneena Lakshmanan introduced birdwatching techniques, while Mr Aniket Pawar guided teachers on nest-building and nature-based school activities.

Awareness Programme – R.K. Phukan High School, Charing: On June 14, Mr Sthitapragyan Malik conducted an awareness session at R.K. Phukan High School, Charing. The session focused on the ecological significance of vultures, the threats they face, and encouraged student participation in conservation efforts.

Workshop Participation – Cotton College, Guwahati: On June 16, Ms Aneena Lakshmanan participated in a workshop titled 'Developing a Community Monitoring System for Wetlands' at Cotton College, Guwahati. The workshop explored strategies that can also support vulture habitat monitoring and community engagement.

Awareness Programme – Swahid Maniram Dewan College, Charing: On June 17, Mr Sthitapragyan Malik led an awareness session at Swahid Maniram Dewan College, Charing. The discussion covered vulture biology, threats from poisoning and NSAIDs, and the role of youth in environmental stewardship.

Stakeholder Visit – Manas National Park: Additionally, on June 17, Mr Aniket Pawar, along with Mr Sumit Arora and Mr Shashank Dalvi from the Centre for Wildlife Studies (CWS), visited Manas National Park. They met with Dr C. Ramesh, IFS (Field Director) and Shri Rohini Saikia, IFS (DCF Guwahati), to discuss expanding raptor and vulture conservation efforts in the region.

Awareness Programme – Carmel School, Rani: On June 18, Ms Aneena Lakshmanan led a vulture awareness programme at Carmel School, Rani. Guests from CWS, including Mr Sumit Arora and Mr Shashank Dalvi, were honoured with traditional Vulture Gamusas by Headmistress Ms Lavlina D'Souza.

Contd.

Contd.

Awareness Programme – Nitai Pukhuri High School, Sivasagar: On June 19, Mr Sthitapragyan Malik conducted a session at Nitai Pukhuri High School, Sivasagar, educating students on the importance of vultures in the ecosystem and encouraging their conservation.

Awareness Programme – Khetri High School, Kamrup Metro: On June 20, Mr Gitartha Borah and Mr Ghanashyam Gogoi conducted a conservation awareness session at Khetri High School, Kamrup Metro, focusing on vultures' ecological roles and threats to their survival.

Drawing Competition – Rabha Divas, Belguri Village: Additionally, on June 20, VCBC Rani organized a drawing competition in Belguri Village to mark Rabha Divas and honour Kalaguru Bishnu Prasad Rabha. The event, coordinated by Ms Aneena Lakshmanan and Mr Jayanta Kumar Rabha, concluded with prize distribution to the winners.

Awareness Programme – Dr B.N. Saikia Senior Secondary School, Khetri: On June 21, Mr Gitartha Borah and Mr Ghanashyam Gogoi conducted an awareness session at Dr Bhabendra Nath Saikia Senior Secondary School, Khetri, Kamrup Metro, encouraging student involvement in biodiversity conservation.

Awareness Programme – Dimoria High School, Kamrup Metro: On June 23, a vulture awareness session was held at Dimoria High

School, Kamrup Metro, by Mr Gitartha Borah and Mr Ghanashyam Gogoi. The session emphasized vultures' vital role in ecological balance and necessary action for their conservation.

Veterinary Awareness Programme – Jorhat: On June 26, a conservation awareness programme for veterinary practitioners was held in Jorhat. Dr Krishna Mohan gave a presentation on the importance of using vulture-safe drugs in veterinary practices. The session, attended by 20 veterinarians, was chaired by District Veterinary Officer Dr Ripunjoy Chakraborty.

Veterinary Awareness Programme – Bokakhat, Golaghat: On June 27, a similar session was conducted at the Bokakhat School of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry. Dr Krishna Mohan delivered a presentation and led a discussion on safe drug use in veterinary care. The event saw participation from five veterinarians and 49 paravets, and was chaired by District Veterinary Officer Dr Ranjan Kumar Patar.

Awareness Programme – Government Normal Practicing School, Sootea: On June 28, a vulture conservation awareness programme was conducted at the Government Normal Practicing School, Sootea, Biswanath District, by Mr Gitartha Borah and Mr Ghanashyam Gogoi. The session aimed to raise awareness about the vital role vultures play in maintaining ecological balance. ■

BlackRock Collaborates with BNHS for a Hands-On CSR Day in Nature



On June 21, 2025, 40 volunteers from BlackRock participated in a dynamic Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative at the BNHS Conservation Education Centre (CEC) in Goregaon (East). The event underscored BlackRock's commitment to sustainability and community involvement. The morning began with a safety briefing and orientation by BNHS staff. Volunteers then took part in a Trail Demarcation Activity, guided by BNHS Naturalist Hrishikesh Ghoghare and Field Assistant Dilip

Giri, with overall coordination by Senior Education Officer Aqsa Majgaonkar. Participants used eco-friendly materials to help mark and define walking trails, learning along the way about habitat protection and the ecological role of managed trails. The hands-on session was followed by a short refreshment break and an engaging presentation on forest biodiversity and the importance of responsible nature engagement. ■

Naturalist Training and Leadership Workshop



BNHS successfully conducted Part 1 of the 4th Edition of its Naturalist Training and Leadership Workshop, bringing together 22 participants from diverse regions and backgrounds. The workshop began with an early morning beach walk led by marine biodiversity expert Pradip Patade, where participants discovered shrimps, fan corals, brittle stars, and other intertidal life.

At the Conservation Education Centre (CEC), Mumbai naturalist Shardul Bajikar conducted the formal introduction and team-building sessions, followed by hands-on training in camera trapping techniques. In the evening, Bajikar led a session on plant-

animal interactions, followed by a botany-themed nature trail guided by Dr Santosh Yadav, a field botany expert. The group later experienced the forest at night, spotting fireflies, a bamboo pit viper, and mating whip scorpions near the centre.

The next morning focused on birdwatching, led by Dr Parvish Pandya (BNHS Governing Council Member), and included an AV session on bird behaviour. In the afternoon, outdoor expert Mr Avinash Khule delivered a dynamic workshop on outdoor ethics and leadership in nature.

The workshop concluded with a fascinating field visit to the 2,000-year-



old Kanheri Caves in Sanjay Gandhi National Park. Guided by archaeologist Dr Suraj Pandit, the session explored the historical and cultural stories etched in stone.

Participants left energized and inspired, with many eagerly anticipating Part 2 of the workshop, scheduled for July 2025. ■

TCS and Tata Group Join BNHS for Cleanup Drive at Nature Reserve



On June 21, approximately 150 volunteers from Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and other Tata Group companies came together to support a cleanup drive at the BNHS Nature Reserve in Goregaon. Equipped with gloves and collection bags, the volunteers combed the two approach roads leading from Film City

to the Reserve, removing over 100 kilograms of non-biodegradable waste. The collected items included alcohol and plastic bottles, food containers, plastic bags, wrappers, and gutka packets. This large-scale effort made a significant impact in restoring the Reserve's forest habitat by eliminating harmful waste. ■

Nature Trail Held in Memory of Naturalist Sunjoy Monga at CEC-Mumbai



CEC-Mumbai hosted a commemorative nature trail on June 29 in memory of renowned naturalist, birdwatcher, and former Governing Council member of BNHS, Sunjoy Monga. The event brought together nearly 75 of his close friends, fellow naturalists, forest department officials, and long-time associates.

The group, which included members of Mr Monga's family, walked along the forest road in Sanjay Gandhi National Park to Pongam Valley – a trail that had been his personal favourite. The walk was filled with sightings of various insects, reptiles, and mammals, and resonated with the calls of numerous bird

species – aptly reflecting Mr Monga's deep connection with the natural world.

Following the trail, participants gathered at the Centre to plant an Indian Laburnum sapling in his memory. The group later assembled inside the CEC auditorium, where attendees shared heartfelt memories, stories, and anecdotes celebrating Sunjoy Monga's enduring legacy.

Over the past four decades, Sunjoy Monga played a pivotal role in inspiring and mentoring three generations of nature enthusiasts and birdwatchers. His extensive body of work and numerous publications continue to educate and inspire lovers of the natural world. ■

BNHS Hosts Wildflower Walk in Goregaon Reserve

As part of its ongoing public engagement efforts, the BNHS Programmes Team organized a Wildflower Walk at the BNHS Nature Reserve in Goregaon this June. The recent monsoon showers had transformed the landscape, bringing the forest trails alive with a burst of seasonal blooms.

The walk was led by Dr Rajdeo Singh, Assistant Professor at St. Xavier's College, who guided BNHS members through the forest, highlighting the ecological importance and traditional medicinal uses of various native plants. Participants encountered a diverse array of species, including hill turmeric and the delicate mild and wine lily. The event offered an immersive learning experience and



fostered greater appreciation for lesser-known plant species and their roles in India's Ayurvedic traditions. ■

Citizen Scientists Record 55 Bird Species at SGNP

Over 35 volunteers participated in the monthly bird count at Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP) and Tungareshwar Wildlife Sanctuary, recording 55 bird species. These regular citizen science efforts provide crucial data for tracking avian diversity and habitat health, while also fostering community involvement in conservation.

To participate in future counts or learn more about BNHS programmes, visit www.bnhs.org or email: programmes@bnhs.org. ■



Monsoon Magic: Exploring the Wild at CEC-Mumbai

The monsoon season brought the forest to life as over 20 participants joined CEC-Mumbai for a vibrant Monsoon Forest Trail on June 22, 2025. The walk offered a unique window into the rainforest's seasonal transformation. Led by BNHS Naturalist Gaurang and Field Assistant Dilip Giri, the trail introduced participants to monsoon flora, amphibian calls, bird songs, and the subtle shifts in forest ecology. From mushrooms to wildflowers, the forest's hidden treasures were explored in depth.

Senior Education Officer Aqsa Majgaonkar coordinated the programme, ensuring a seamless, engaging experience.

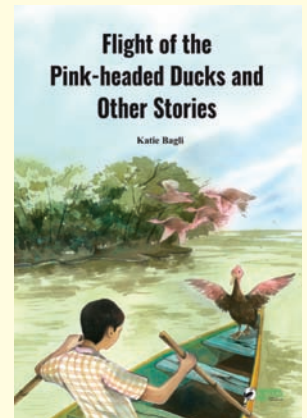
BNHS CEC extends its thanks to all attendees for joining in the monsoon celebration and invites nature lovers to stay tuned for more seasonal events. ■



Sahitya Akademi Nominates BNHS Book for Bal Sahitya Puraskar 2025

The Executive Board of the Sahitya Akademi, in its meeting held on June 18 under the chairmanship of President Sri Madhav Kaushik, approved the selection of 24 writers for the prestigious Bal Sahitya Puraskar 2025. The awardees were selected based on recommendations by a three-member jury constituted for each language, in accordance with the Akademi's prescribed rules and procedures. The final selection was made by the Executive Board through a majority or unanimous decision by the respective juries.

FLIGHT OF THE PINK-HEADED DUCKS AND OTHER STORIES by Katie Bagli, published by the BNHS, has been included in the list of books recommended in English by the prestigious Sahitya Akademi for the Bal Sahitya Puraskar 2025. The awards will be presented at a special ceremony scheduled to take place later this year. ■



BNHS Visits Bustard and Florican Breeding Centre

The BNHS team recently visited the Bustard and Florican Conservation Breeding Centre in Arwar, Ajmer district, jointly operated by the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and the Rajasthan Forest Department. This facility is central to India's avian conservation efforts, specifically targeting the great Indian bustard and the lesser florican, both critically endangered.

The foundation for this programme was laid in 2013 with the publication of a detailed recovery plan co-authored by WII and BNHS. A major milestone followed in 2018 with the signing of a tripartite agreement among WII, the Rajasthan Forest Department, and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to launch an ex-situ breeding programme.

Currently 12 lesser floricans and 9 great Indian bustards are housed at the Arwar facility, while 31 great Indian bustards (GIB) are under care at the Ramdevra facility, and 26 GIBs are being raised at the Sam Centre, both in Jaisalmer. The programme, led by Dr Sutirtha Dutta and his team at WII, reflects eight years of dedicated fieldwork and captive breeding. During a visit to the Centre, BNHS representatives commended WII's achievements



while acknowledging the challenges that lie ahead and reaffirmed commitment to support the programme through its conservation research across north-western India and the Deccan region. ■

Productive Partnerships

On June 16, 2025, the BNHS Director, accompanied by senior scientists, met with Mr C. Raghu, Deputy Salt Commissioner, at his office in Chennai to discuss ongoing conservation initiatives. The meeting began with the Director providing an overview of BNHS's long-standing contributions to biodiversity conservation. Dr P. Sathiyaselvam, Deputy Director, BNHS, presented a detailed account of the saltpan restoration work being undertaken in collaboration with Tata C-Sapes in Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu. The presentation highlighted the ecological significance of saltpans and the positive outcomes of the restoration efforts.

Impressed by the initiative, Mr Raghu expressed keen interest in the project's potential to support biodiversity, particularly avifauna. He recommended that BNHS share detailed documentation on the ecological role of saltpans and provide suggestions for developing bird-friendly saltpans with the Secretary of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry. He also advised copying the correspondence to his office for further consideration. In a strategic suggestion, the Deputy Commissioner proposed that BNHS consider leasing abandoned saltpans from the state government for 99 years, with the aim of sub-leasing them to local farmers under conditions that



promote bird-friendly practices. He also facilitated the next steps by sharing the contact details of the Salt Office Superintendents in Tuticorin and Adirampattinam regions.

The meeting was also attended by senior officials from the Commissioner's Office, including Mr A.K. Nayak and Mr Benny George. ■

BNHS and U.S. Consulate Interact on Marine Conservation

Ms Mahadi Sirat, Economic Specialist, and Ms Khan, Political Specialist at the U.S. Consulate General in Mumbai, visited Hornbill House to discuss BNHS's ongoing work in marine conservation. BNHS has been working on several unique marine conservation projects in west coast of India. ■



Warm Farewell to Mr Clemant Ben, APCCF Wildlife (West)



Mr Clemant Ben, who served as the APCCF of Wildlife (West) Circle in Mumbai, has been transferred to New Delhi to take on the role of Member Secretary at the Central Zoo Authority (CZA). BNHS has had the privilege of closely working with Mr Ben on several wildlife initiatives in the Mumbai region.

A warm farewell was organized in his honour, attended by BNHS Director Kishor Rithe and other staff members. On the occasion, Mr Rithe highlighted some of Mr Ben's significant contributions to wildlife conservation in the region. Mr Ben also spoke about various BNHS projects where he received timely input for effective wildlife management and expressed his hope for continued support from BNHS in his new role at the CZA. ■

Strengthening Member Engagement

Our recent online interaction with BNHS members saw a notable increase in participation and enthusiasm. These regular dialogues, initiated by BNHS President Mr Praveensingh Pardeshi, have been instrumental in fostering deeper member involvement in the Society's ongoing activities and mission. ■



Aasheesh Pittie – HH Bloomer Prize 2025

The Bombay Natural History Society extends its heartfelt congratulations to Aasheesh Pittie, a distinguished amateur naturalist and Life Member of the Society, on being awarded the prestigious HH Bloomer Prize for 2025. This recognition honours his exceptional contributions to ornithology and the advancement of avian knowledge – particularly through his meticulous bibliographic work on South Asian birds and his role as the founder-editor of *INDIAN BIRDS*, a leading ornithological journal. The award was formally presented at the Linnean Society's annual anniversary meeting held on May 22, 2025.

Mr Pittie has played a pivotal role in promoting birdwatching and ornithological research in the region, especially in the Deccan region, through his long-standing leadership of the Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh (now Deccan Birders). With a prolific body of work – including five books and over 280 published articles, notes, reviews, and media pieces – his impact on Indian ornithology is both profound and enduring.

On behalf of the wildlife and birding community, we salute Mr Pittie on this richly deserved honour and wish him continued success and accolades in the years ahead. ■



BNHS CEC Mumbai's Online-Hybrid Courses (2025–26) – Registrations Open:



BNHS Conservation Education Centre (CEC) Mumbai is pleased to announce that registrations are now open for the 2025–26 hybrid courses, blending online instruction with field-based learning.

CEC Mumbai – one of the city's earliest environmental education hubs—has long promoted awareness of Mumbai's biodiversity through nature trails, workshops, student programs, and CSR initiatives. The hybrid course model allows participants from across India to gain valuable environmental education regardless of location.

Join BNHS in its mission to build a nature-literate society – one course at a time.

Now accepting registrations for: Basic Course in Ornithology (Birds)

- Mode: Online + Hands-on field sessions
- Eligibility: Open to participants across India



Download the Brochure: [Click here](#)

Registrations Open: BNHS CEC Hybrid Courses 2025–26

Extended Deadline: July 15, 2025

For queries, contact:

Email: cec-mumbai@bnhs.org |

Phone: 95949 53425 / 95949 29107

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We are thrilled to welcome our newest Corporate Members Maharashtra Hybrid Seeds Company Pvt Ltd. (Gold Category) and Tata Power Company Ltd. (Gold Category) into the Bombay Natural History Society community — partners in conservation, champions of sustainability, and true stewards of nature.

Together, we will work towards restoring vital ecosystems and inspiring communities through action and education.

Let's make every step count – for wildlife, for our planet, for future generations.

Welcome aboard!

Let us protect species, restore habitats, and build a greener tomorrow – together.

Get in touch

Asif Khan: 98195 70758 | Sandesh Kadam: 9930 150531
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BASIC COURSE IN FIELD ORNITHOLOGY AND BIRD MIGRATION STUDIES



Join us in learning the art and science of bird migration monitoring.
Be part of India's growing network of citizen scientists protecting migratory birds across
the Central Asian Flyway. Enroll Now:

BNHS's Basic Course in Field Ornithology and Bird Migration Studies (Oct 2025 – Jan 2026)

The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) is pleased to announce six batches of its Basic Course in Field Ornithology and Bird Migration Studies, to be held between October 2025 and January 2026 at the BNHS Bird Migration Study Centre, located in Point Calimere, Tamil Nadu - a globally significant migratory hotspot.

About the Course: This specialized field-based course is designed to provide hands-on training in bird monitoring and migration studies, while fostering a network of birders and citizen scientists along the Central Asian Flyway.

Why Join?

- ❖ Field-based learning at one of India's most important migratory bird sites
- ❖ Practical sessions on bird identification, census techniques, and demonstration of bird ringing
- ❖ Classroom lectures on bird migration, monitoring tools, and data collection methods
- ❖ Focus on both shorebirds and migratory landbirds

Location: BNHS Bird Migration Study Centre, Point Calimere (Kodiyakarai), Tamil Nadu

Located at the southeastern tip of India, Point Calimere is a biodiversity-rich site, home to:

Endangered shorebirds like the Great Knot. Near Threatened species including Eurasian Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit, and Spot-billed Pelican, Spectacular Greater Flamingos, Eurasian Spoonbills, and large wader congregations. Rare sightings such as Sanderlings, Dunlins, Whimbrels, Pacific Golden Plovers, and more Migratory landbirds such as the Asian Brown Flycatcher, Indian Pitta, Paradise Flycatcher, Forest Wagtail, and leaf warblers. This rich diversity makes Point Calimere the perfect live classroom for bird migration studies.

Who Should Attend?

- Birdwatchers and nature enthusiasts
- Students of ecology, wildlife, or environmental science
- Aspiring ornithologists
- Researchers and conservation volunteers

Course Duration: Six batches from October 2025 to January 2026

Venue : BNHS Bird Migration Study Centre,
Point Calimere, Tamil Nadu

Field trips : Great Vedaranyam Swamp;
Point Calimere Wildlife Sanctuary;
Beach, Siruthalaikadu mudflats.

Registration Fee (per person): Rs. 5,000/- (for BNHS Members); Rs. 6,500/- (for non-Members)

Fee includes tent accommodation -Two person per tent; Facilities: cots, fan, charging points, pillow and blankets

Other expenses: Rs. 4,500/- (includes food, field visits, entry fee etc.);

Eligibility: No prior field experience is required – just a passion for birds and conservation.

Registration closes 7 days before start date of each batch

The payment details will be shared once the enquiry form is filled and confirmed the registration.

Resource Persons: Dr P. Sathiyaselvam, Mr Sivakumar S., Ms Parveen Shaikh, Mr Paul Antony B., Ms Rose Francis

For More information: Mr S. Sivakumar- s.swaminathan@bnhs.org; 94088 72745; Mr Paul Antony B.- p.antony@bnhs.org

Schedule for 2025-2026:

Batch I	October	17 - 19	Batch IV	December	19 - 21
Batch II	November	28 - 30	Batch V	January	9 - 11
Batch III	December	12 - 14	Batch VI	January	23 - 25

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Help us Preserve a Literary Treasure: Adopt a Rare Book

Introduction and Background

The BNHS Library holds a remarkable collection of rare books—treasures that house the wisdom of great thinkers from the past. These rare books are not just relics; they are a priceless heritage for humankind, preserving facts, ideas, and evidence on Natural History. These valuable resources are indispensable for present and future generations. Unfortunately, these literary gems face threats of deterioration due to climatic, physical, chemical, and biological factors. The loss of such irreplaceable materials would be devastating.

These rare books also contain crucial information about endangered flora and fauna, making them an important resource for students conducting research. The beautifully illustrated plates can be used for exhibitions in schools and colleges, and the wild stories in these books are excellent teaching aids for educators. By digitising these rare resources, we can make them more accessible for educational purposes and conservation awareness.

Why Your Support Matters

Preservation: Rare books are delicate and require expert conservation to prevent deterioration. Your donation will fund state-of-the-art techniques to preserve these literary treasures.

Accessibility: By adopting a rare book, you help make it accessible to scholars, students, and the public, ensuring its knowledge continues to inspire and educate.

Legacy: Your support ensures that these irreplaceable works will be preserved for future generations, keeping their historical and cultural significance alive.

How You Can Help

Adopt a Book: By contributing 1 lakh (for five years), you can adopt one of our rare books and support its preservation. Your donation will directly fund conservation efforts and ensure these books remain accessible for years to come.

Acknowledgement: Donors will receive an 80G tax-saving certificate, acknowledgement in our annual report, and recognition on the inner page of the book's front cover.

Books Available for Adoption

- 1. Nests and Eggs of Indian Birds (Vol. I, II, & III) by Allan O. Hume (1889–1908)**
This invaluable work, authored by Allan Hume, a pioneer in Indian ornithology, is a rare gem, especially significant because the BNHS houses a unique collection of bird eggs.
- 2. Indian Ducks & Their Allies by E.C. Stuart Baker (1908)**
This first publication of the BNHS features beautiful illustrations and holds great historical significance. It's essential to preserve this foundational book of our institution.

Thank you for considering this opportunity to make a meaningful impact.
For more information on how you can contribute to preserving these literary treasures,
please feel free to contact us at library@bnhs.org

Book Donations to the BNHS Library

The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) warmly invites individuals and organizations to contribute to the enrichment of our Library through the donation of books and relevant literature. Your generosity plays a vital role in expanding our knowledge base and supporting our mission to promote the conservation of nature and natural resources.

Over the years, donations – from rare, historic volumes to the latest publications – have significantly enhanced our collection, all in alignment with the Vision and Mission of BNHS. We remain deeply grateful to all who have supported us in this endeavour.

To help us manage donations efficiently, we kindly request you to follow the guidelines:

Submission Guidelines:

If you are considering a donation, please email a list of the books or literature you wish to contribute to library@bnhs.org and director@bnhs.org.

Please Note:

- Donors will not receive goods or services in exchange for their contributions.
- All accepted books will be catalogued in the Library’s accession register at the earliest possible opportunity.
- Due to space and operational constraints, donated materials will be incorporated into the main Library and Archives and will not be housed in a separate collection.

We sincerely thank you for considering a donation to the BNHS Library. Your support makes a lasting difference.

For more information on the Donation Policy, please contact the Librarian at library@bnhs.org



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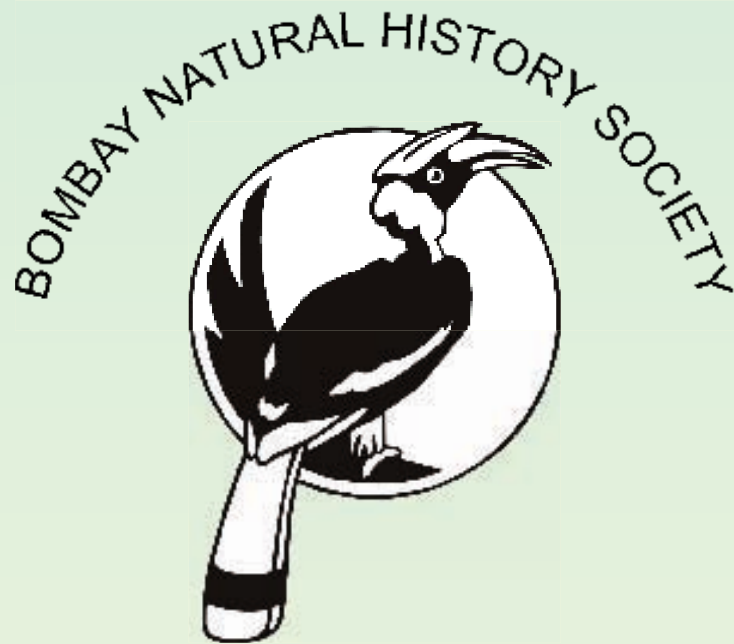
Published uninterrupted for over 135 years, the *Journal of Bombay Natural History Society*, the first issue of which was published in 1886, has reached its hundred and twenty-second volume. Possibly one of the oldest journals in the fields of conservation and biodiversity research, the *Journal* continues to be indispensable reading material for students of biology, Environmental Science, Statistics, and wildlife conservation, and a valued acquisition for scholars, academicians, researchers, and libraries.

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Vision: Premier independent scientific organization with a broad-based constituency, excelling in the conservation of threatened species and habitats.

Mission: Conservation of nature, primarily biological diversity, through action based on research, education and public awareness.

CONTACT US

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