



BOMBAY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



DECEMBER, 2023

CONSERVATION NEWSLETTER

Dear Members,

We bring to you, our valuable members, the latest conservation newsletter of the BNHS, which is packed with updates from our field work, and the events we conduct for nature conservation.

This is our attempt to make sure you get to know about our work in real time, and that you are with us on our journey!

Meeting of IBCN State Coordinators



An online meeting of the State Coordinators of the Indian Bird Conservation Network (IBCN) was convened on December 16, 2023, to rejuvenate its activities, address pertinent bird conservation issues, and accumulate data on birds and Important Bird Areas (IBAs) throughout the country. Thirteen state coordinators actively participated in the session – Andhra Pradesh: Mr Mrutyumjaya Rao K.; Arunachal Pradesh & Tripura: Mr Peter Lobo; Bihar: Mr Arvind Mishra; Goa: Mr Parag Rangnekar; Gujarat: Dr I.R. Gadgil (Saurashtra); Ladakh: Dr Pankaj Chandan; Jharkhand: Dr Satya Prakash; Kerala: Dr P.O. Nameer; Madhya Pradesh: Dr Sangeeta Rajgir; Maharashtra: Dr Jayant Wadatar; Manipur: Mr R.K. Birjit Singh; Mizoram: Dr H. Lalthanzara and Rajasthan: Dr Himmat Singh Pawar. ■

Tiger spotted at record altitude of 3,640 m in India

Trap cameras, strategically placed by BNHS scientists Atharva Singh and Himadri Mondal, in collaboration with the Sikkim forest department, earlier this year at Pangolakha Wildlife Sanctuary in Sikkim, have captured an image of a tiger at an elevation of 3,640 m. This discovery sets a new record for the highest point in India where a tiger has been sighted, surpassing the previous record of 3,630 m in Dibang Wildlife Sanctuary, Arunachal Pradesh. BNHS, in partnership with the Sikkim State Forest Department, continues to monitor and conserve the sensitive habitats in high Himalaya, with community participation. ■



Exploring avian wonders in Rajasthan's deserts



Participants of the Ornithology Course during their exploration of the Desert National Park and Kheechan, Rajasthan, were mesmerized by the sight of thousands of demoiselle cranes and the Endangered great Indian bustard. This experience provided them with valuable insights into desert ecology and conservation practices. Guided by experts, the 17 birding enthusiasts enjoyed the immersive and educational adventure in the diverse avian landscapes of Rajasthan. ■

Raptor revelations in Melghat

In a recent wildlife camp organized by the BNHS and the Nature Conservation Society, Amravati, at Melghat Tiger Reserve, the participants were exhilarated by the extraordinary raptor sightings, including the majestic Brown Fish-Owl and the agile Shikra, in the central highlands of India. The camp's highlight was the discovery of a new bird record for the region – the Common Buzzard – an indication of the undiscovered treasures within the Melghat Tiger Reserve. A noteworthy moment of the camp was a rare opportunity to witness the elusive and Endangered Forest Owlet, believed to be extinct for over a century and only rediscovered in 1997. ■



SGNP Bird Monitoring Programme

The bird count for Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP) and Tungreshwar WLS in December 2023 recorded the Grey Francolin, a 'lifer' for SGNP, Mumbai's green haven. The Grey Francolin's calls were heard at the Shilonda Transect. The volunteers conducting the bird count also encountered a leopard at the Jambhumaal. These findings

are indicators of a thriving biodiversity in urban green spaces. We urged our members and bird watchers to actively participate in our citizen science initiatives and contribute to the cause of conservation.

If you wish to join us for the January count please visit www.bnhs.org for details. ■

Strengthening bonds and skills



Capacity-building workshop: Kaziranga National Park & Tiger Reserve (KNPTR) and BNHS collaboratively conducted a capacity-building workshop on bird identification for stakeholders at C.N.B. College, Bokakhat, Assam, on December 21, 2023, where 38 students from JDSG College and C.N.B. College participated. Dr Biswajit Chakdar, Scientist-A, BNHS served as the resource person, and field assistant Debabrata Das provided assistance throughout the programme. ■

Naturalist Training and Leadership Workshop:

The workshop kicked off with an engaging session by geologist Dr Sunayana Sarkar, unravelling the Earth's various facets, followed by a session by wildlife biologist Nikit Surve on fundamentals of camera trapping, which included a practical outdoor session.

While Saurabh Sawant enlightened the captivated audience of 24 participants about reptiles and amphibians, Dr Parvish Pandya and Dr Santosh Yadav spoke about birds and plants, respectively. The first module of the workshop ended with a talk on plant-animal interactions by Shardul Bajikar. This group will reconvene in a fortnight for part two of the workshop. ■



Empowering young advocates!



As part of the ongoing Mission LiFE initiative, EIACP Resource Partner on Avian Ecology at the BNHS-EIACP organized an event where students from Shri Bakaliwal Vidyalaya and Higher Secondary School performed a compelling skit on 'Plastic-Free India' in Phalegaon Village, Hingoli District, Maharashtra, on December 30, 2023. The event, graced by the presence of Shri Bhupender Singh Yadav, the Minister of MoEF&CC, contributes to shaping a sustainable future. ■

BNHS-EIACP @ Maharashtra Pakshimitra Sammelan



The participants captured selfies with the Mission LIFE Selfie board

The BNHS-EIACP was actively engaged in the 36th Maharashtra Pakshimitra Sammelan in Sangli, Maharashtra, held on December 23–24, 2023. Organized by the Bird Song Organization and Maharashtra Pakshimitra, the theme of the Sammelan this year was 'Bird Feathers'. The BNHS-EIACP team set up an informative stall showcasing various knowledge products related to avian ecology. ■



A lecture and hands on training for Zookeepers at Assam State Zoo, Guwahati was conducted on December 19, 2023



Embarking on a mission: The ongoing dog sterilization programme in Drass is fostering a healthier and happier community

Conservation Biology and Wildlife Management Training Program

BNHS in collaboration with Satpuda Foundation, Nature Conservation Society – Amravati, Aaranyak (Assam), and S.G.B. Amravati University has announced a 20-day course on "Conservation Biology and Wildlife Management". The objective of this course is to equip professionals from government wildlife agencies, non-governmental organizations, and universities with the skills needed to effectively manage wildlife habitats for sustainable development through research-based

conservation actions at micro, macro, and landscape levels; and to demonstrate how scientific studies in conservation biology can be utilized for wildlife management. The course participants will be introduced to several biodiversity conservation issues. The curriculum covers scientific reporting, proposal writing, and hands-on training with field equipment and essential computer software for data collection and management. ■



BNHS MISSION

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

Bombay Natural History Society
Hornbill House, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Road, Mumbai 400 001.
Tel: (91-22) 2282 1811; E-mail: director@bnhs.org; Web: www.bnhs.org