



BOMBAY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



FEBRUARY, 2025

CONSERVATION NEWSLETTER

The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) has had an exciting start to the year with a series of events and initiatives that combined education, conservation, and public participation. These activities catered to diverse audiences, from schoolchildren and families to budding naturalists and wildlife enthusiasts.



Dear Members,

February was a hectic month for me, as I spent most of it travelling. In the first week, I was in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan; in the second week, I visited Gir National Park in Gujarat; and in the third week, I travelled to Cambodia.

I am pleased to share that BNHS's grassland conservation work in Rajasthan, under the leadership of Dr Sujit Narwade, is bringing about significant changes on the ground. Gir National Park has made remarkable progress over the past decade in community-based lion conservation, e-surveillance for wildlife tourism, and monitoring the dispersing lion population. Additionally, initiatives such as tagging the lesser florican and other species have set an example for other states to learn from and replicate. Today, the lion population has reached 674, spreading across the Greater Gir landscape, including Saurashtra, from Amreli to Porbandar and

finally to Barda WLS, which was the original home of the Asiatic lions. However, the true success of lion conservation will be achieved only when they reclaim their historic range outside Gujarat, similar to how tigers have expanded across India.

Saving Asia's Vultures from Extinction (SAVE) is a consortium of NGOs working across South Asian countries such as India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Cambodia. Led by the UK-based RSPB and BirdLife International, SAVE recently held its annual meeting in Cambodia, where BNHS's groundbreaking work was highly commended by its partners. India remains the only leading country that has successfully bred over 800 Gyps vultures through conservation breeding programmes, released 84 birds into the wild and also banned harmful NSAIDs. In contrast, Pakistan has managed to raise only 37 birds, while Nepal has bred fewer than 50 vultures in its conservation centres, which has been stopped now. Bangladesh and Cambodia have not initiated breeding programmes, instead choosing to focus on creating Vulture Safe Zones by eliminating the use of NSAIDs such as diclofenac, ketoprofen, aceclofenac, and nimesulide. Alongside Pakistan and Nepal, these efforts contribute to regional vulture conservation. India, however, has gone a step further by successfully breeding over 800 vultures, releasing 84, and banning harmful NSAIDs. The country is actively working toward making its entire territory a Vulture Safe Zone. BNHS has demonstrated that species conservation is possible when governments and expert NGOs collaborate effectively. The efforts to establish India as a Vulture Safe Zone are significantly contributing to the recovery of wild vulture populations. As a result, India now has an estimated 20,000 wild vultures across three Gyps species – the largest population in Asia.

I am excited to share another major milestone. This year, our three conservation breeding centres in Pinjore, Bhopal, and Rani (Assam) successfully produced 105 eggs, out of which around 59 have hatched (27 WRV, 25 LBV, and 7 SBV). This is the highest recorded success in the past 20 years in India. Our centres will now build the capacity of other stakeholders in India and internationally who are interested in vulture conservation breeding programmes. Additionally, the vulture release programme will be extended this year to Kaziranga Tiger Reserve in Assam and Melghat Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra.

During my visit to Rajasthan, I was delighted to meet the dynamic Chief Wildlife Warden, Ms Shikha Mehra (IFS), who approved several long-pending BNHS proposals. This means that our conservation vision for Rajasthan will be strengthened through collaboration with the Forest Department.

Furthermore, the BNHS marine conservation team recently conducted a workshop in Ratnagiri as part of a series of workshops planned along the west coast to address marine megafauna stranding. Special thanks to Vice Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan, for facilitating a dedicated workshop for officers of the Indian Navy's Western Command in Mumbai. Rear Admiral Anil Jaggi, Flag Officer Commanding (Maharashtra Naval Area), commended BNHS's efforts and assured greater support from the Navy in marine conservation and climate change mitigation efforts.

BNHS's bird banding and tagging programme continues to yield valuable observations. This month, Dr P. Sathiyaselvam and his team tagged two bar-headed geese at Nagi Dam in Jamui District, Bihar.

BNHS has also made significant progress in improving its publications. I encourage you to check the "Systema naturae" section in the latest *Hornbill* magazine and consider contributing your observations to the BNHS 150-year Omnibus Collection.

Lastly, if you have not yet completed the online form for the publication of the Yearbook for Life Members, please click here to submit your information: <https://forms.gle/12gPTSyTs9P2khue7>. For assistance, please contact BNHS Central Marketing (cmd@bnhs.org), Membership (membership@bnhs.org), Programmes (programmes@bnhs.org), or the Conservation Education Centre (cec-mumbai@bnhs.org). For event reservations or submissions, feel free to reach out via email, and do not forget to send event photos and brief write-ups to Mr Gopi Naidu (g.naidu@bnhs.org).

Thank you for staying connected. I am always reachable at director@bnhs.org.

Kishor Rithe

Director, Bombay Natural History Society

First-Ever GPS-GSM Tagging of Migratory Birds in Bihar

On February 22, 2025, BNHS deployed GPS-GSM tags on two bar-headed geese at Nagi Dam Bird Sanctuary in Bihar's Jamui District. This marks the first time such tracking technology has been used on migratory birds in the state. The two geese, named Gagan and Vayu, will provide critical data on migration

routes, stopover sites, and behavioural patterns, aiding in wetland conservation strategies.

The Bhagalpur Forest Division has now requested BNHS's support in procuring GPS-GSM tags for 20 greater adjutant storks, further strengthening Bihar's commitment to avian conservation. ■



BNHS Marks World Wetlands Day 2025 with Engaging Initiatives

On February 2, 2025, the EIACP RP on Avian Ecology at the BNHS set up an informative exhibition stall at Parvati Arga Wildlife Sanctuary in Gonda District, Uttar Pradesh, to commemorate World Wetlands Day.



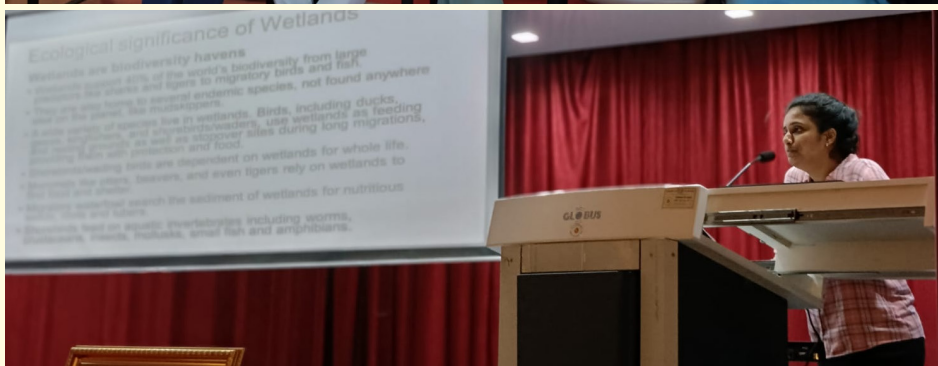
The exhibition highlighted the importance of wetlands in biodiversity conservation through educational posters and knowledge-sharing material. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Sri Yogi Adityanath and Union Minister of State for Environment, Forest, and Climate Change Shri Kirti Vardhan Singh visited the stall, where Programme Officer Mr Nandkishor Dudhe briefed them on BNHS-EIACP's knowledge products and conservation initiatives.



The exhibition received an overwhelming response, reflecting the growing public interest in wetland conservation. Such initiatives are vital in fostering environmental consciousness and encouraging collective action to safeguard wetlands for a sustainable future. ■

BNHS Contributes to World Wetlands Day Event in Navi Mumbai

On February 1, 2025, the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) participated in a World Wetlands Day event organized by the Navi Mumbai Environment Preservation Society (NMEPS) at Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil College, Navi Mumbai. As part of the programme, Ms Natasha Girkar from BNHS delivered a session on the ecological significance of wetlands and the urgent need for their conservation. The event included competitions such as elocution and short-video contests, with participation from students from eight colleges. A distinguished panel of environmental activists and legal experts shared insights on conservation strategies. The event was graced by the presence of Sh. Deepak Khade, Divisional Forest Officer, Government of Maharashtra, as the Chief Guest. ■



World Wetlands Day Celebration in Phalodi

On February 1, 2025, in Phalodi, Rajasthan, an event was organized to commemorate World Wetlands Day, highlighting the importance of wetland conservation. Distinguished speakers, including BNHS Director Kishor Rithe and District Collector Shri Harji Lal Atal, emphasized strategies for sustainable wetland management, particularly focusing on sites such as Khichan and Rajasthan's unique wetland ecosystems. ■



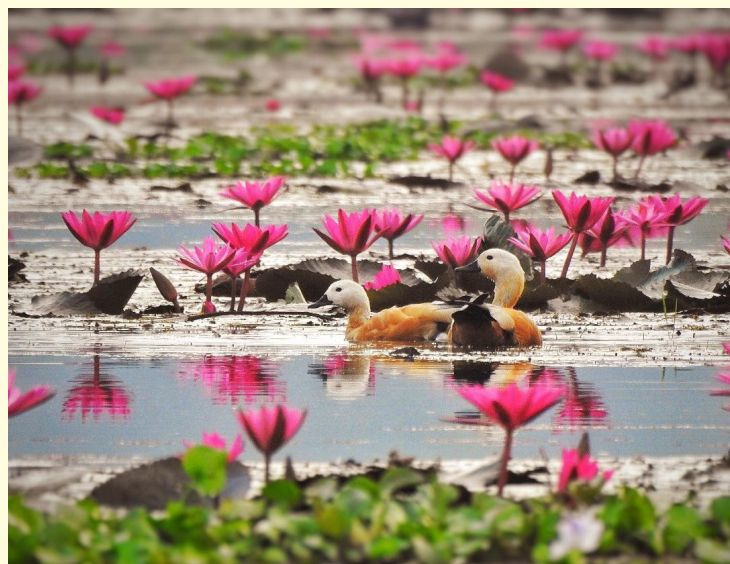
Lunkaransar Lake Faces Pollution Threat



BNHS team members visited Lunkaransar Lake in Bikaner, which has been designated as a wetland by government notification. This salt lake, locally known as "Lun", serves as a crucial habitat for migratory birds. However, pollution from city sewage poses a significant threat to the lake's ecosystem. Immediate conservation measures are needed to safeguard this vital refuge for avian species. ■

Maguri-Motapung Beel Recovery Following Baghjan Oil Well Fire

Maguri-Motapung Beel, an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBBA) in Assam, suffered severe ecological damage in 2020 due to the Baghjan oil well fire, a gas leak, and a subsequent fire. This catastrophe led to a decline in migratory bird populations. However, ongoing conservation efforts by local communities and researchers have facilitated the wetland's gradual recovery. Recent surveys indicate an increase in sightings of key avian species. Strengthening community-driven conservation and eco-tourism initiatives will be crucial for the long-term restoration of this vital habitat. BNHS with help of local people is exploring the possibility of considering the Maguri wetland as a proposed Community Conserved Area (CCA). ■



Sighting of Common Cranes in Maharashtra



A majestic flock of 27 common cranes was spotted soaring gracefully over Omerga in Maharashtra's Dharashiv district. These striking birds, distinguished by their elegant plumage, slender necks, and long legs, are known to migrate to this region during the rabi (winter) crop harvesting season. The abundance of food sources in the fields provides an ideal environment for these cranes, creating a spectacular sight for birdwatchers and nature enthusiasts. BNHS is monitoring migratory cranes in India as member of Middle East Crane Conservation Group. ■

Russian Scientists Conduct Crane Migration Study in Rajasthan

Dr Valentin Ilyashenko and Dr Elena Ilyashenko from the Severtsov Institute of Ecology and Evolution, along with Dr Nadezhda Dorofeeva from the V.E. Flint Crane Working Group of Eurasia, conducted an expedition to the Thar Desert in Rajasthan. Their research focused on studying wintering habitats of migratory cranes. They meticulously observed the desert's unique ecological conditions to enhance scientific understanding of crane migration and their adaptation to human-dominated landscapes. With the help of these scientists, BNHS aims to track the movement of migratory cranes, facilitating the development of effective conservation strategies for their wintering grounds. ■



BNHS Strengthens Wildlife Protection Efforts in Pokhran with help of the Indian Army

Dr Sujit Narwade, Deputy Director of BNHS, recently met with key conservation and military officials at the Pokhran Field Firing Range (PFFR) in Rajasthan. The meeting, attended by Shri Sanjay Kumar, spearheading the Military Intelligence at PFFR, and Assistant Forester Kamlesh Kumar Bishnoi, focused on collaborative initiatives to curb wildlife hunting. Their efforts have led to a significant decline in illegal hunting activities, particularly around sensitive areas near PFFR, ensuring better protection for species such as the great Indian bustard. ■



Training Session for Tamil Nadu Forestry Training College at BNHS Bird Migration Study Centre

BNHS Bird Migration Study Centre (BMSC) at Point Calimere, Tamil Nadu, hosted 125 Forest Guard Officer trainees from the Tamil Nadu Forestry Training College, Vaigaidam. The first batch of 62 trainees visited on February 10, followed by 63 trainees on February 16, under the guidance of Forest Range Officer Mr K.R. Palanisamy and Forester Mr L. Muthukumar.

Led by Scientist D.S. Sivakumar, the BNHS team provided insights into bird migration research, bird marking techniques, and the significance of Point Calimere's migratory shorebirds. Senior Researcher Paul Antony B. demonstrated ringing and colour-flagging techniques, while Researcher Rose Francis explained bird marking materials and equipment.

The training also included a guided field visit where participants observed migratory and resident bird species in their natural habitat. Mr T. Elanchezhiyan, Forester of the Vedaranyam Range, also attended the session. ■



BNHS Conducts Marine Megafauna Stranding Response Workshop in Ratnagiri



The BNHS and the Mangrove Foundation, Maharashtra, successfully conducted a Marine Megafauna Stranding Response Workshop in Ratnagiri, aiming to equip local stakeholders with the skills necessary for effectively handling stranded marine animals. The workshop focused on scientific knowledge and practical response techniques for incidents involving whales, dolphins, sea turtles, and other marine megafauna along Maharashtra's coastline.

The session brought together 130 participants from various sectors, including fishermen, forest department officials, researchers, police, coast guards, maritime department officials, reporters, and local community members. Discussions emphasized the importance of rapid response, proper documentation, and conservation efforts.

During the inaugural session, BNHS Director Shri Kishor Rithe, DFO-Dakshin Konkan Mrs Kanchan Pawar, Deputy Superintendent of Police Shri Mainkar, and Assistant Commissioner of Customs Sandip Krushna highlighted the significance of such initiatives. The workshop also featured a demonstration of the JALCHAR mobile application for reporting marine megafauna sightings.

Experts from the Coastal Conservation Foundation, Mumbai, provided insights into the diversity of marine mammals along the west coast and guided participants on standardized rescue protocols. Dr P. Sathiyaselvam, Deputy Director, BNHS, conducted an elaborate session on seabird handling and diversity. Additionally, Ms Dhanashri from the Mangrove Foundation briefed fishermen on compensation schemes for net damage and the release of significant species caught in fishing nets.

This initiative aligns with BNHS's ongoing efforts to strengthen coastal conservation measures and foster community involvement in marine biodiversity protection. With increasing reports of marine animal strandings, such workshops play a crucial role in safeguarding the region's rich marine ecosystem. ■



Bird Conservation Training for Begusarai Forest Division

On February 14, 2025, BNHS conducted training sessions for frontline staff of the Begusarai Forest Division in Bihar. The programme aimed to enhance skills in avian biodiversity conservation, covering bird identification, census techniques, and the Asian Waterbird Census (AWC). Participants were also engaged in a field session for hands-on bird identification and a bird-ringing demonstration to improve conservation capacity. ■



BNHS Conducts Marine Megafauna Stranding Response Workshop for the Indian Navy



The BNHS and the Mangrove Foundation, Maharashtra, successfully conducted a Marine Megafauna Conservation and Climate Change Workshop for the Indian Navy. The workshop aimed to enhance naval personnel's capacity to understand changing marine ecosystems and handle megafauna conservation.

The event was inaugurated by Rear Admiral Anil Jaggi, Flag Officer, Western Naval Command, along with senior officers who actively participated in the sessions. BNHS Director

Mr Kishor Rithe, senior naval officials, and Mangrove Foundation representatives emphasized the significance of marine conservation efforts. The workshop also featured a demonstration of the JALCHAR mobile application for reporting marine megafauna sightings and strandings.

Experts from the Coastal Conservation Foundation, Mumbai, provided insights into marine mammal diversity along India's coast and guided participants on standardized rescue protocols for stranded marine life. Dr P. Sathiaselvam, Deputy Director, BNHS, conducted a detailed session on seabird handling and diversity. Additionally, Ms Dhanashri from the Mangrove Foundation briefed naval personnel on mangrove conservation projects.

A panel discussion on shoreline management featured APCCF Dr Ben, APCCF Shri Ramarao, and Shri Aman Mittal, CEO of MITRA, who highlighted funding opportunities and strategies for marine conservation. Fisheries experts, including retired Joint Commissioner Shri Jadhav and Deputy Commissioner Shri Bhadule, presented challenges and initiatives in sustainable fishery management. This initiative aligns with BNHS's ongoing efforts to strengthen coastal conservation measures and enhance collaboration between defence forces and conservation organizations. ■

Thematic Training on Vulture Conservation and Rescue



A two-day thematic training programme on vulture conservation and rescue was held on February 10–11, 2025, at Assam Forest School, Jalukbari, and the Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre (VCBC) in Rani, Kamrup. Organized by Smt. Dimpi Bora, IFS, Director of Assam Forest School, in collaboration with the BNHS, the event aimed to enhance the capacity of frontline forest staff in vulture monitoring, threat mitigation, and rescue response. Dr Jogen Chandra Kalita, Dean of the Department of Science at Gauhati University, attended as the Chief Guest. Expert sessions were conducted by Mr Sachin Ranade, Senior Centre Manager at VCBC, and Mr Aniket Pawar, Biologist at VCBC. Smt Jayashree Noiding, DFO, Guwahati, and Smti Dimpi Bora, Director of Assam Forest School, shared their experiences in vulture rescues.

The first day featured expert-led sessions on vulture identification, conservation efforts, and tracking released vultures. Mr Ranade discussed the ecological role of vultures, the success of VCBC in breeding programs, and challenges such as poisoning incidents. He emphasized the need for a 'Vulture Restaurant' model to provide safe food sources and attract ecotourism while controlling stray dog populations. Mr Pawar explained the significance of post-release monitoring, highlighting how tracking tagged vultures helps identify threats and study habitats. Smti Jayashree Noiding shared her experience in managing vulture poisoning incidents in Demow, where coordinated efforts between forest staff, BNHS, and veterinarians resulted in successful rescues. She underscored Demow's importance as a vulture conservation site in Assam. Smt Dimpi Bora recounted her initiatives in Kamrup District, where she tackled poisoning threats through community involvement, quick response teams, and awareness programs.



On the second day, about fifty participants visited VCBC, Rani, for hands-on training in vulture handling. Experts guided them through safe handling procedures, health assessments, and rescue protocols. Community representatives from the Rabha community shared their support for vulture conservation and how eco-friendly initiatives have benefited them.

The training program successfully enhanced the knowledge and preparedness of forest officials, fostering stronger collaboration between BNHS and the Forest Department. This initiative marks a significant step toward protecting vultures in Assam, reinforcing the importance of collective efforts in their conservation and reintroduction. ■

BNHS participates in the Assam Sahitya Sabha Programme



The Seventeenth Biennial Session of the Assam Sahitya Sabha took place from January 31 to February 4, 2025, at Bhattadev Khetra, Pathsala, Bajali, Assam. On this occasion, Assam Sahitya Sabha President and Minister Ranjit Kumar Das officially inaugurated the Bhattadev venue. This was followed by the distinguished dramatist Saurabh Kumar Ray inaugurating the main entrance, while Keshab Mahanta, Minister of Science, Technology, and Climate Change, inaugurated the Guru Prashad Das Science Mela.

At the science mela, a team from the Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre in Rani set up a stall showcasing the Vulture Conservation Breeding Programme along with informative posters on vulture conservation. The team delivered a comprehensive presentation on vulture conservation, discussing the causes of vulture population decline and emphasizing their crucial role in maintaining ecological balance. Over the course of three days, approximately 600 attendees visited the BNHS stall, showing keen interest in the subject. Many senior citizens underscored the need for greater awareness of vulture conservation. Additionally, several YouTubers covered the BNHS stall, providing a platform to share the objectives and vision for vulture conservation with a wider audience. ■

BNHS Participates in SAVE Meeting

The 14th SAVE (Saving Asia's Vultures from Extinction) meeting was held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, from February 16–22, 2025. The event brought together representatives from RSPB, BirdLife International, and delegates from ten Asian vulture range countries. Mr Kishor Rithe and Mr Sachin Ranade represented BNHS and also visited the Vulture Feeding Station at Siem Pang Wildlife Sanctuary.

The BNHS team presented on four key topics: the progress of India's vulture breeding program, the Vulture Safe Zone initiative, strategies to tackle poison bait threats, and transboundary cooperation for South Asian vulture conservation. They actively participated in technical discussions, providing valuable insights. During the field visit, they interacted with members of Rising Phoenix to understand their community-driven ecosystem conservation efforts involving local farmers. ■



Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University visit VCBC in Rani, Assam

On February 14, 2025, a team of ten students and two faculty members from Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, Pookode, Wayanad, visited VCBC in Rani, Assam. The team was addressed by Mr Aniket Pawar, who gave a presentation on VSZ. Mr Ranade explained the rationale behind VCBC's activities and demonstrated vulture behaviour using CCTV footage. The students expressed their gratitude and satisfaction, noting that the knowledge gained would be valuable for their wildlife biology course. ■

Site Selection and Stakeholder Meetings for Vulture Release Aviary in Biswanath, Kaziranga



On February 12, 2025, a team from the Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre (VCBC) visited Biswanath, Kaziranga, to finalize a site for a vulture release aviary and engage with key stakeholders for future collaboration.

Accompanied by Mr Khagesh Pegu, IFS, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Biswanath, and Mr Utpal Bora (RFO), the team inspected potential locations at Tewaripal on the northern bank of the Brahmaputra within the 6th addition of Kaziranga National Park. Considering elevation, accessibility, and environmental suitability, they selected a site in front of the Tewaripal Beat Office for the aviary. Before the site visit, the team met Dr Durga Kathel, District Veterinary Officer (DVO), Biswanath, to discuss reducing NSAID use among local veterinarians, increasing participation in district veterinary meetings, and ensuring vulture-safe food sources. Following site selection, M. Sachin Ranade and the team met Mr Munindra Nath Ngatey, ACF, District Commissioner, Biswanath, who expressed strong support for the conservation effort and assured administrative and logistical assistance.

The visit successfully finalized the vulture release aviary site, strengthened partnerships with the Forest and Veterinary Departments and District Administration, and secured commitments for ongoing conservation efforts. ■



Vulture Conservation Awareness Meeting with ACET, Assam

On January 11, 2025, the Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre (VCBC) collaborated with the Assam Catholic Educational Trust (ACET) in Guwahati for the 'One-Day Conclave on Renewing Strategies for Education in Northeast India'.

The event was attended by distinguished guests, including Mr Sanjoy Kumar, IAS, Secretary of the Education Department, Government of India; Justice Kurian Joseph, retired Supreme Court Justice; Prof. Kandarpa Das, Vice Chancellor of Girijananda Chowdhury University; and Fr Paul Pudussery, an anthropologist. Several other senior educators, principals, administrators, and secretaries involved in education in Northeast India also participated.

Ms Aneena Lakshmanan, Conservation Biologist, represented VCBC at the meeting. Informational posters and displays on vultures were presented to introduce the subject to attendees. Fr Paul Pudussery praised the series of workshops conducted by the VCBC team in schools, commending their efforts in raising wildlife awareness among young minds. The conclave facilitated knowledge exchange with representatives from 200 schools across Assam. ■



BNHS and Veterinary College, Khanapara, Assam collaborate for Vulture Conservation

On February 25, 2025, BNHS and the Veterinary College, Khanapara, Assam Agricultural University, signed an MoU to collaborate on research, education, awareness, and veterinary care for vultures. Mr Sachin Ranade, representing BNHS, was accompanied by Mr Aniket Pawar and Mr Dhiraj Rabha. Mr Ranade highlighted the longstanding association between the two institutions, noting that ten students from the college had previously contributed to BNHS projects, particularly the Vulture Breeding Programme. He emphasized that this partnership would play a crucial role in ensuring a safe future for vultures. The event was attended by Dr B.N. Saikia, Dean of the college, along with Dr Anil Dekha and other department heads. ■



Jaipur Bird Festival 2025

The Jaipur Chapter of the Green Peepal Society, in collaboration with WWF-India and the Rajasthan Forest Department, and supported by Incredible India, Jaipur Development Authority, and RIICO, organized the two-day Jaipur Bird Festival titled "A Celebration of Birds and Wetlands" on February 1-2, 2025. Shri Arjit Banerjee, IFS, PCCF & HOFF, Rajasthan Forest Department, was the Chief Guest. Other notable attendees included Dr M.K. Ranjitsinh (Retd. IAS), Shri Ravi Singh, Secretary General and CEO of WWF-India, Dr Asad Rahmani, former Director of BNHS, Shri Rahul Bhatnagar (Retd. IFS), President of Green Peepal Society, and Shri Vikram Singh (Retd. IAS), Vice President of Green Peepal Society and workshop coordinator.



Dr Rajat Bhargava, Assistant Director of BNHS, also participated in the event. Highlights included a Raptor Exhibition by WWF-India, the Birding Buddies Workshop by Early Bird India, a conference on wetlands, and a philately and photographic exhibition. The event also featured the release of the book *LIVING WITH BIRDS* and an interactive session with its author, Dr Asad Rahmani. The second day included field visits to Jhalana Leopard Reserve and Sambhar Lake. ■

Vulture Conservation Awareness Programme in Pench TR

On February 15, 2025, BNHS conducted an awareness programme on the vulture conservation project, jointly run with the Maharashtra Forest Department, at Pench Tiger Reserve. The session was led by Conservation Biologist Manan Singh Mahadev at the Sher Khan Hall, Amaltas Tourism Complex, Sillari. A total of 93 participants, including trainee Forest Guards from the Forest Training Institute, Jalna, attended the programme. ■



BNHS Strengthens Conservation Education Initiatives



Following the BNHS teacher training workshop at Chandrapur Forest Academy, trainers have continued to engage with teachers through WhatsApp, encouraging them to report their school activities regularly. Currently, two to three teachers from across Vidarbha report their activities daily. Even media outlets have started covering these educational efforts, reflecting growing interest and awareness among children. ■

BNHS and RAJUVAS Collaborate on Wildlife Veterinary Care

On February 3, 2025, a team from the BNHS convened at the Rajasthan University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (RAJUVAS) in Bikaner to discuss strategies for improving wildlife veterinary care. The event featured expert-led discussions on integrating modern technology in wildlife monitoring, enhancing veterinary training for field professionals, and fostering collaborations between academic institutions and conservation organizations. These initiatives aim to advance animal health management and bolster conservation efforts. ■



BNHS Hosts #RediscoverNature Evening Walk



As part of the #RediscoverNature Collective Campaign, BNHS hosted an evening walk at its 33-acre forest reserve near Film City, Goregaon. This week's theme, 'Find in Nature,' encouraged participants to step outside and explore urban green spaces and wild habitats.

During the walk, participants spotted the Indian paradise-flycatcher, sunbirds, red spurfowl, and Tickell's blue flycatcher. A notable find along the trail was an old leopard kill, highlighting Mumbai's unique coexistence with wildlife.

The #RediscoverNature campaign, a collaborative effort of 23 organizations, aims to inspire individuals to reconnect with nature in their daily lives. Through such experiences, BNHS hopes to foster a deeper appreciation for nature. For more information, visit our Instagram page @bombaynaturalhistorysociety. ■

Field Camp to Bharatpur-Chambal for online course participants

CEC-Mumbai successfully organized a field camp to Bharatpur-Chambal for participants of the Leadership Course in Biodiversity Conservation and Basic Course in Ornithology from February 27 to March 2, 2025. The camp was led by Ms Priyadarshini Supekar (Education Officer).

Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary (Keoladeo National Park) is renowned as a paradise for birdwatchers, hosting resident and migratory birds alongside diverse mammals. BNHS-CEC designed the camp to provide participants with hands-on experience in birdwatching, habitat study, and conservation awareness.

Following their Bharatpur experience, participants travelled to Chambal, another significant birding site. A boat ride along the Chambal River allowed them to observe Indian skimmers and other avian species. The river, home to crocodiles and gharials, also provided an opportunity to study these reptiles in their natural habitat.

BNHS Scientists Ms Parveen Shaikh and Mr Omkar Joshi, currently working on the Indian Skimmer project, shared their extensive knowledge, enhancing participants' learning experience. ■



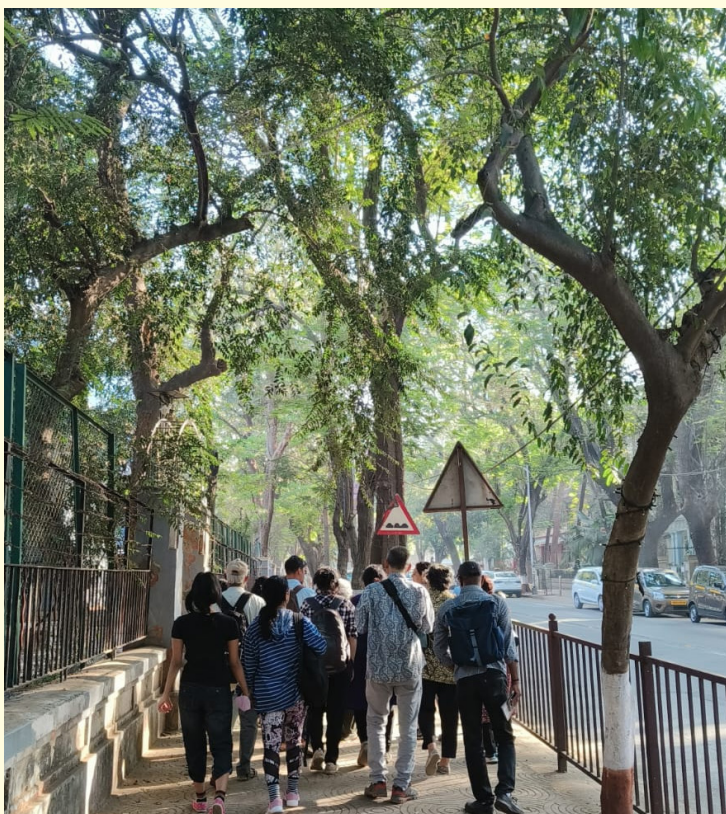
Nature Trail for City College

BNHS CEC-Mumbai successfully conducted a nature trail for students of S.P. Jain College on February 7, 2025, focusing on sustainable CSR and the importance of nature conservation. Ms Priyadarshini Supekar (Education Officer) inaugurated the event with an introduction and brief instructions on responsible behaviour in a forest environment. Students, divided into smaller groups, embarked on a guided walk through the BNHS Nature Reserve, led by a BNHS Naturalist. They observed the forest ecosystem, learning about its rich flora and fauna, followed by an audio-visual presentation featuring biodiversity videos. A total of 83 students and four teachers participated in this enlightening experience at CEC Mumbai. ■



BNHS Organizes Guided Tree Walk in Mumbai

BNHS members participated in a guided Tree Walk through Five Gardens and Dadar Parsi Colony, exploring the diverse flora of this historic urban landscape. Participants examined tree species such as putranjiva, Indian cork tree, gulmohar, and neem, learning about their ecological significance. The event underscored the importance of urban green spaces in biodiversity conservation. ■



SGNP Bird Count



The February Bird Count at Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP) and Tungareshwar Wildlife Sanctuary took place on February 23, with over 45 dedicated volunteers documenting 81 bird species. A significant highlight of the count was the sighting of the Vulnerable greater spotted eagle at Jambhulmaal and the Bhoot Bangla Transect, underscoring the ecological importance of these protected areas.

Citizen science initiatives like this bird count contribute valuable data for avian conservation and habitat monitoring. Those interested in participating in future counts can visit www.bnhs.org or email programmes@bnhs.org for more information. ■

Concluding Session for Basic Courses in Herpetology, Botany, and Butterfly Studies

BNHS CEC-Mumbai successfully hosted the concluding session for the Basic Courses in Herpetology, Botany, and Butterfly Studies on February 15, 2025.

These hybrid online courses, offered by BNHS CEC-Mumbai, provide a foundation for amateur nature enthusiasts interested in biodiversity. Each course includes inaugural sessions, field visits, online webinars, and a final wrap-up session where experts share their knowledge and experiences.

The concluding session, led by Ms Priyadarshini Supekar (Education Officer) and Mr Dilip Giri (Field Assistant), brought together participants from across India. They shared their insights and experiences gained during the course, followed by a nature trail and an on-field camera trap demonstration.

Nine participants attended this full-day session at CEC Mumbai, engaging in interactive discussions and hands-on learning. ■



BNHS-EIACP release a poster on Storks of India

The BNHS-EIACP has released a poster titled Storks of India, showcasing eight species of storks found across the country. These large, long-legged wading birds play a crucial role in wetland ecosystems. A digital copy of the poster is available for download here. For further inquiries, please contact eiACP@bnhs.org. ■



Bird Census at Menar Wetland Complex

From February 7–9, 2025, the BNHS team conducted a bird census at the Menar Wetland Complex in Udaipur. Accompanied by schoolteacher Darshan Menaria, Forest Department staff, and members of the Foundation for Ecological Security (FES), the team employed multiple survey methods to ensure a comprehensive assessment of bird diversity and population. ■





BNHS Outreach at Phalodi Government College

On February 1, a BNHS representative delivered a talk at Government College, Phalodi, on the demoiselle crane and other avian species found in the Thar Desert. The presentation underscored the ecological importance of the demoiselle crane's migratory patterns and its role in maintaining the desert ecosystem. ■

BNHS Exhibitions and Public Engagement

BNHS's Central Marketing Department actively engaged with the public through exhibitions this month. They organised an exhibition from January 25 to February 2, 2025 at Hornbill House grounds, during the annual Kala Ghoda Arts Festival held in Mumbai drawing around 300 visitors daily. Additionally, the team participated in the 'Maharashtra Pakshimitra Sammelan' in Ahmednagar, where a stall was set up on February 1 and 2, 2025, attracting about 200 visitors. These efforts aim to raise awareness about conservation and strengthen community participation in environmental initiatives. ■



WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP

Khichan-Jorbeer,
(Rajasthan)

MARCH 14-16, 2025



Our Mentor
Mr Nayan Khanolkar

LAST DATE FOR REGISTRATION

March 10, 2025

REGISTRATION FEES

₹ 15,000 per participant

(Includes course fees, local travel and safari charges only)

For more details visit: www.bnhs.org

About BNHS Conservation Education Centre (CEC Mumbai) / BNHS Nature Reserve CEC Mumbai is a 33-acre forest reserve that serves as a habitat for Mumbai's leopards and diverse biodiversity. Situated between Sanjay Gandhi National Park and the urban forest of Film City, it is one of Mumbai's pioneering environmental education centers. Since its inception, CEC Mumbai has played a crucial role in raising awareness about the city's biodiversity through nature trails, workshops for educators, corporate CSR programmes, and various public outreach initiatives.

CEC Mumbai also plays a pivotal role in offering BNHS online-hybrid courses, allowing participants from across India to engage in structured biodiversity education. These courses provide valuable opportunities for individuals who may not have access to in-person training.

For more information on these courses, follow BNHS CEC Mumbai on Instagram: @bnhscec_mumbai

Connect with CEC Mumbai: cec-mumbai@bnhs.org



Online-cum-field Courses for Amateurs – 2025–26

Leadership Course in Biodiversity Conservation (LeadBio)

Duration: 11 months (July 2025 to May 2026)

***Fee:** ₹ 14,556/- (non-BNHS Member)
₹ 13,150/- (BNHS Member)

Basic Course in Herpetology

Duration: 4 months (July 2025 to October 2025)

***Fee:** ₹ 9,556/- (non-BNHS Member)
₹ 8,150/- (BNHS Member)

Basic Course in Botany

Duration: 6 months (July 2025 to December 2025)

***Fee:** ₹ 9,556/- (non-BNHS Member)
₹ 8,150/- (BNHS Member)

Basic Course in Butterfly Studies

Duration: 6 months (August 2025 to January 2026)

***Fee:** ₹ 9,556/- (non-BNHS Member)
₹ 8,150/- (BNHS Member)

Basic Course in Ornithology

Duration: 11 months (August 2025 to June 2026)

***Fee:** ₹ 14,556/- (non-BNHS Member)
₹ 13,150/- (BNHS Member)

Qualification required for all courses: Matriculation
Study Material and Medium of Instruction: English

Write to cec-mumbai@bnhs.org
Mobile: 095949 53425/095949 29107

REGISTRATION STARTS SOON ...

For more information follow us on
instagram @bnhscec_mumbai
(BNHS-CEC, Mumbai)

*Course fee excludes camp fees.

CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS CONSERVATION OF NATURE



Big Cats Calendar 2025



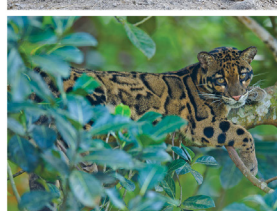
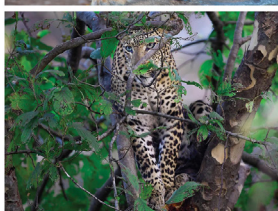
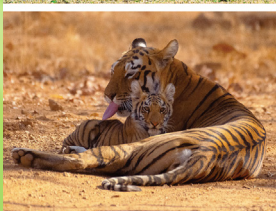
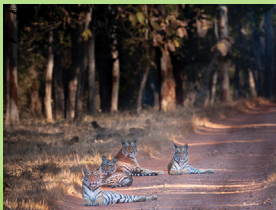
Praveensingh Pardeshi

MAR
2025

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
31					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Tiger

Maya raised more than 4 litters in her 12 years reign around Pandharpur (area with a meadow and a beautiful lake); this cub was her last litter, an competing males repeatedly tried to displace Maya's previous males, sometimes killing current cubs to mate with Maya.



Wall Calendar 2025

7 SHEETER SPIRAL BOUND
SIZE 19" x 13.75" | RATE 250 EACH

to buy a Wall Calendar
contact:

Mob: 99301 50531

Email: cmd@bnhs.org



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



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

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