



BOMBAY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



AUGUST, 2025

CONSERVATION NEWSLETTER

FROM THE DIRECTOR DESK



Dear Members,

It was a routine day for me at Hornbill House. I was editing a report when an elderly Life Member, Mr Suresh Malkani, knocked on the door and began a friendly conversation. He was accompanied by his young granddaughter, who was vacationing in India. I offered them a cup of tea, and during our conversation I was deeply impressed by his numerous field trips, fuelled by his passion for underwater wildlife photography. He generously offered to donate his stunning collection of old photographs to BNHS, which I gladly accepted. He also encouraged both his grandchildren to enrol as members.

BNHS is a membership-based organization, and our members are truly our greatest assets. Their contributions to society are invaluable. The other day, while attending an online meeting, I

overheard someone speaking outside my cabin. Later, I realized a member had visited but hesitated to meet me without a prior appointment. I felt bad about this and immediately requested the office to display a notice: 'BNHS members can meet without prior appointment'. Please feel free to walk in – we value your service to society, and it is always a pleasure to meet you when you visit Mumbai and the Fort area.

I was pleasantly surprised to receive a prompt response from the Union Minister, Mr Bhupender Yadav, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), inviting me to discuss the BNHS letter on grassland policy. We had a fruitful meeting, and he assured me that grasslands would be given the highest priority, on par with wetlands. Similarly, several Chief Wildlife Wardens across states/UTs have been very dynamic, and I regularly receive their communications seeking support and guidance.

BNHS is renowned for its research-based conservation work, especially on avifauna. Recently, blue rock pigeons became the centre of a controversy in Mumbai. The issue was raised in the assembly, prompting the Municipal Corporation to promise action regarding kabootarkhanas in the city. Some NGOs also approached the High Court, leading the Government to appoint an expert committee to resolve the matter. BNHS is part of this committee. We are hopeful that both the welfare of the pigeons and the health of the community will be safeguarded.

Your society has also taken an important decision that will benefit many of you. Ordinary BNHS members who have, over the years, paid annual/3-year/5-year membership fees totalling Rs 17,700 (equivalent to the Life Membership fee) will now be awarded Life Membership. Others can upgrade by paying the difference. Please contact our Membership Officer, Asif (WhatsApp: +919819570758), if you qualify or would like to upgrade your membership category.

BNHS has been an alma mater to countless individuals serving across India and abroad. Over the years, BNHS has supported not just individuals but institutions as well. SACON and WWF-India are just a few examples. BNHS has also been collaborating with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) for a long time. IUCN India, which BNHS supported from the very beginning, recently elected its new Governing Body. I was fortunate to visit their office in New Delhi this month, and it is thriving under the leadership of Dr Yash Veer Bhatnagar. We look forward to working jointly with IUCN on new projects.

You may recall the BNHS SEVA initiative we launched earlier this year for members. Many of you have already made significant contributions. For instance, our digitization project – focused on nearly a century of bird migration data – is being led by our member from the IT sector, Mr Deepak Rajanna. This herculean task was opened up for volunteers, and several members have enthusiastically joined, including Dhruv Swamini (Gurgaon), Asha Pradeep (Bengaluru), and Minal Mehta (Mumbai). They have been contributing tirelessly since April 2024 and are excited to be part of the BNHS SEVA initiative. I warmly invite more of you to engage with BNHS through this platform.

This initiative was recently featured on the BNHS Blog (<http://blog.bnhs.org>), which was also created voluntarily by one of our members, Oishimaya Sen. Please feel free to contribute to this blog in any language.

Do not miss 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 yet completed the Yearbook form for Life Members, you can do so here:

<https://forms.gle/12gPTSYS9P2khue7>

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

Tata Power and BNHS Launch Miyawaki Plantation to Boost Biodiversity at Mulshi Catchment

Tata Power, one of India's largest integrated power companies, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) to launch a large-scale Miyawaki afforestation initiative at its hydro generating stations in Mulshi, Maharashtra. The project, spread across 47 acres, aims to restore biodiversity, expand native green cover, and advance Tata Power's 'no net loss to biodiversity' commitment.

The MoU was formalised at Tata Power's Lonavala office in the presence of senior leaders from both organisations. Representing BNHS were Mr Praveensigh Pardeshi, President, and Mr Kishor Rithe, Director. From Tata Power, attendees included Mr Himal Tewari, CHRO and Chief – Sustainability & CSR; Ms Vaishnavi Prabhakaran, Head – Corporate Sustainability; Mr Parag Railkar, Chief – Civil & Estate; Mr Kumar Pritam, Chief – Hydro Projects; and Mr Ajay Konnur, Chief – Hydros.

Under the partnership, Tata Power will identify suitable land parcels around its lake catchment areas and share research-based insights on native species, while BNHS will lead on-ground plantation, monitoring, and ecological management. The project will roll out in three phases over five years in the villages of Adgaon and Barpe. Using the Miyawaki method, 2.7 lakh saplings of 54 indigenous species will be planted, restoring native habitats, enhancing carbon capture, improving groundwater recharge, and reducing siltation.

The Miyawaki technique, pioneered in Japan, is widely recognised for creating dense, self-sustaining native forests within limited spaces. By planting trees in multi-layered, carefully chosen species mixes, the method accelerates natural regeneration, improves soil fertility, and supports pollinators and wildlife. Applied in Mulshi's ecologically sensitive hydro catchments, it is expected to strengthen climate resilience and natural ecosystem buffers. ■



Eco-restoration and Climate-Resilient Fisheries Development at Ujani Reservoir

The BNHS, with support from Cipla Foundation, has launched a pioneering Wetland Restoration and Fisheries Development Programme at the Ujani Reservoir, Maharashtra. Located on the Bhima River, Ujani is a man-made wetland recognised as an Important Bird Area (IBA) that supports the Central Asian Flyway. Beyond its ecological significance, the reservoir provides irrigation, hydroelectric power, drinking water, and livelihoods through fishing and bird tourism.

However, this critical ecosystem faces mounting threats from invasive alien species (IAS) such as Ipomoea, water hyacinth, tilapia, African catfish, and suckermouth catfish. These species disrupt native biodiversity, degrade habitats, and cause heavy economic losses to fishing communities. The suckermouth catfish, in particular, has no market value and damages fishing gear, further eroding livelihoods.

To address these challenges, BNHS is implementing an integrated strategy that combines eco-restoration with fisheries development. Efforts include the removal of invasive plants and fish, restoration of native habitats, and promotion of sustainable fishery practices. By encouraging the cultivation of native species and training local communities in responsible fishing methods, the programme aims to build resilience against climate change while restoring ecological balance.



In addition, BNHS is engaging local youth by training emerging bird guides and the angling community, thereby linking conservation with ecotourism and alternative livelihoods. This dual focus ensures that biodiversity protection goes hand-in-hand with economic well-being, making conservation a shared responsibility and opportunity.

The initiative received a major boost with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between BNHS and the Maharashtra Water Resources Department at Mantralaya, Mumbai. The agreement, formalised in the presence of Hon'ble Minister Mr Radhakrushna Vikhe Patil, Additional Chief Secretary Mr Deepak Kapoor, BNHS President Mr Praveensigh Pardeshi, Director Mr Kishor Rithe, and Deputy Director Dr P. Sathiyaselvam, and Cipla Foundation Head Mr Anurag Mishra, marks a milestone in collaborative eco-restoration efforts. ■

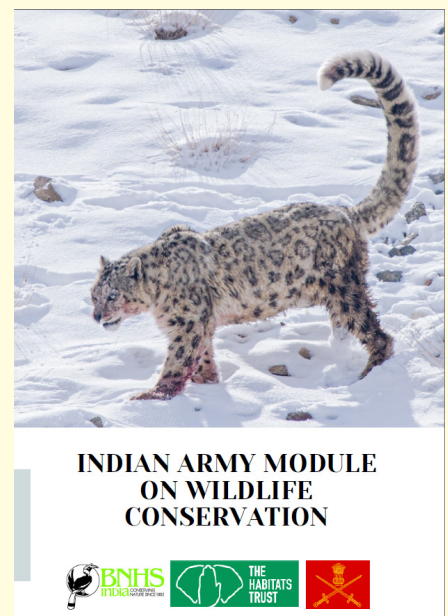
Indian Army and BNHS Launch Wildlife Conservation Module for Ladakh

The Indian Army, in collaboration with the BNHS and partner agencies in Ladakh, has developed a Wildlife Conservation Module that integrates ecological stewardship with national security. The initiative equips Army personnel with knowledge of India's biodiversity, practical conservation tools, and the Army's expanding role in protecting ecosystems alongside borders.

By combining BNHS's scientific expertise with the Army's operational experience, the module creates a field-ready framework for conservation in Ladakh – one of India's most strategic yet fragile regions. It also engages state departments and local communities, reinforcing the link between natural resource stewardship and long-term security in frontier landscapes.

The module provides guidance on monitoring Ladakh's unique wildlife, from snow leopards and Himalayan brown bears to Tibetan wild asses and black-necked cranes. It provides protocols for data collection, mapping, and habitat restoration, supported by illustrated field guides. Indian and global conservation laws, including the Wildlife (Protection) Act and CITES, are simplified to help Army personnel identify and respond to wildlife crimes. Field examples highlight the Army's role in anti-poaching patrols, wetland protection, disaster response, and waste management – particularly through Organic Waste Compost (OWC) machines that reduce wildlife conflict. The module also embeds environmental education into Army curricula, advocating for 'green soldiering' as an institutional ethos.

By aligning science with security, the Indian Army and BNHS are setting a benchmark for how military institutions can serve as both protectors and stewards of India's natural heritage. ■



Western Population of Finn's Weaver Nearing Local Extinction in Northern India

Finn's Weaver *Ploceus megarhynchus*, one of four weaverbird species found in India, is on the brink of disappearing from northern states. Endemic to India and Nepal, the bird was long considered elusive until its rediscovery in Kumaon terai in 1959, following two fruitless searches in 1934 and 1954, by the renowned ornithologist Dr Sálím Ali. Since 2016, the BNHS has been monitoring the species with support from the Dr Sálím Ali Fund, revealing alarming population declines.

Finn's Weaver has a very restricted distribution in the lower terai, from the plains up to 1,300 m. Two subspecies are recognized: *P. m. megarhynchus*, found in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and western Nepal, and *P. m. salimalii*, distributed in West Bengal and Assam.

Globally, Finn's Weaver is estimated at fewer than 1,000 individuals, with less than 500 adults in India as of 2017. In north India, populations have plummeted by 84–96% over the past 15 years. BirdLife International reclassified the species from Vulnerable to Endangered in 2021. However, BNHS now warns that the western population, *P. m. megarhynchus*, is 'almost extinct' in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

Historical records also highlight the sharp contraction in its range. BirdLife

International listed 17 locations for Finn's Weaver in India in 2001, based on data from 1866–2000. BNHS expanded this number to 47 through targeted surveys, but by 2017 the species was confirmed at only nine sites. Among these were three new locations – Haripura Dam in Uttarakhand, and Harewali Dam and Bhagwanpur Raini in Uttar Pradesh – identified with the help of former bird trappers.

While the eastern population shows some resilience, the situation in the west is dire. In 2024, BNHS recorded Finn's Weavers at Manas and Orang National Parks in Assam, and in 2025, a breeding colony was discovered in Kaziranga during a census by the Assam Forest Department. Birds were also seen nesting at Manas, suggesting that the eastern subspecies continues to survive in protected habitats.

The western subspecies tells a very different story. Despite extensive efforts in 2025 by BNHS, ornithologists, nature guides, and former trappers, no breeding colonies were found in Uttar Pradesh or Uttarakhand. Haripura Dam, once a key site, yielded no nesting records. At best, only two individuals were sighted there this summer, and three more were reported from Seohara in Bijnor district. Interviews with former bird trappers in multiple cities –

including Gorakhpur, Lucknow, and Kolkata – produced no evidence of the bird in the wild or in trade.

The decline is driven by heavy disturbances at breeding sites. At Haripura Dam, land managed by the Irrigation Department is auctioned for commercial fishing. Fishermen drain wetlands for harvest during the weaver's breeding season (May–August), destroying nesting habitat. Growing crow predation, fuelled by expanding human settlements, garbage, and grass collection, poses additional pressure.

BNHS recommends uplisting the species to Critically Endangered and establishing a Conservation Breeding Centre in the north Indian terai through the Central Zoo Authority and state governments. DNA studies of the two subspecies have also been proposed to determine whether significant genetic differences exist, which could further influence conservation priorities. The survival of Finn's Weaver now hangs in the balance. Without urgent interventions, the western population may vanish entirely, leaving only scattered eastern colonies to carry forward this unique species.

The BNHS report, Status of Finn's Weaver in India: Past & Present, offers detailed findings and is available at Finn's Weaver. ■



Draining Water for fishing at Haripura 2024 June

BNHS Advocates for Grassland Conservation in Meeting with Environment Minister

On August 22, 2025, BNHS Director Kishor Rithe and Deputy Director Dr Sujit Narwade met Union Environment Minister Shri Bhupendra Yadav to highlight the urgent need for grassland conservation. BNHS underscored that grasslands, often misclassified as 'wastelands', are vital habitats for species like the great Indian bustard, lesser florican, and caracal.

The Minister expressed concern over declining populations of grassland-dependent species. BNHS proposed establishing State Grassland Authorities – on the lines of Wetland Authorities – to strengthen legal and institutional protection. The meeting marks a positive step toward elevating grasslands in India's conservation agenda. ■

Panel Set Up to Address Health Risks of Pigeon Feeding in Mumbai

The long-debated issue of pigeon feeding in Mumbai has reached the courts, with the Hon'ble Bombay High Court (HC) directing the state government to establish an expert committee to examine its health impacts and provide recommendations.

In compliance, the government has formed a committee chaired by Vijay Kandewad, Director of the state's Public Health Services. The panel will study the health risks posed by pigeons' feathers and droppings, and evaluate whether feeding can be permitted in a regulated manner. BNHS Director Kishor Rithe has also been appointed as a member of the committee.

In its order dated August 13, 2025, the HC emphasised that protecting community health is of paramount importance and instructed the state government to notify the panel by August 20. The committee held its first meeting on August 29, 2025 and has been tasked with submitting its report within 30 days. ■



Sharp Decline in Lesser Florican Sightings in Shokaliya Sparks Alarm

BNHS's annual survey in Ajmer district, Rajasthan, has revealed a troubling drop in lesser Florican sightings. Only one male and three females were recorded this year, compared with five males last year.

Ajmer's agro-pastoral landscapes, once a breeding stronghold for the species, are under increasing pressure from land-use change, pesticides, and habitat fragmentation. BNHS is working with farmers, youth, and the Forest Department to promote habitat-sensitive practices. The survey findings underline the urgent need for landscape-level protection to safeguard the Florican's future. ■

Restoring the Thar: BNHS Studies Impact of Invasive Species Removal near Pokhran

With support from the ICICI Foundation, BNHS is evaluating the ecological impact after removing invasive *Prosopis juliflora* in and around the Pokhran Field Firing Range and neighbouring villages. The initiative seeks to restore native grasslands that support wildlife and pastoral livelihoods.

Early monitoring during the monsoon indicates the return of native grasses such as *Cenchrus*, *Dichanthium*, and *Lasiurus*. These signs of recovery offer hope for both biodiversity and local communities. The findings will help shape scalable restoration models for the Thar and other arid landscapes. ■



IUCN and BNHS Strengthen Collaboration for Conservation in India

A strategic meeting was held at the IUCN India office on August 22, 2025, bringing together Dr Yash Veer Bhatnagar, Country Head, IUCN, and Mr Kishor Rithe, Director, BNHS, to explore avenues for closer institutional collaboration.

Discussions focused on two key areas of mutual interest. The first was habitat restoration, with both organisations underscoring the importance of sharing field-based learnings to scale up science-driven restoration of critical ecosystems – particularly grasslands and arid zones. These efforts align with the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and support India's national biodiversity targets and evolving policy frameworks.

The second area was the revision and expansion of IUCN Red List assessments for Indian species. Both leaders highlighted the urgency of updating region-specific data on extinction risk, distribution, and conservation status. This initiative supports the IUCN's 2021–2030 Strategic Plan and India's Vision 2025–2030 for flora and fauna assessments.

The meeting reaffirmed the importance of multi-stakeholder engagement, capacity building, and data-driven conservation



action. Leveraging BNHS's field expertise and IUCN's global frameworks, the partnership is poised to strengthen species recovery, habitat resilience, and policy advocacy across India's diverse landscapes. ■

BNHS Launches Systematic Survey of Lesser Florican in Madhya Pradesh

BNHS, in collaboration with the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department, has begun a systematic survey of the critically endangered lesser florican *Sypheotides indicus* across western Madhya Pradesh. Timed with the breeding season, the survey will assess habitat conditions and record sightings in key sites such as Sailana (Ratlam), Petlawad (Jhabua), Jeeran (Neemuch), and Sardarpur (Dhar).

Field teams are conducting transect walks, habitat mapping, and community engagement to strengthen both scientific knowledge and local awareness. The findings will help shape long-term strategies for habitat restoration and policy interventions, offering renewed hope for one of India's most threatened grassland birds. ■



BNHS Launches Internship Programme for Grassland Conservation



BNHS has introduced a new internship programme to train young researchers in grassland ecology and species conservation. Focused on the lesser florican and great Indian bustard, the initiative offers hands-on experience in field surveys, habitat assessments, and outreach across Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.

Open to postgraduate students and early-career professionals in ecology and related fields, the programme provides mentorship from BNHS scientists, with opportunities for scientific publication. The initiative aims to build the next generation of conservation leaders dedicated to India's grassland ecosystems. ■

Workshop on Conservation Leadership through Eco-tourism and Livelihood Creation

From August 12–14, 2025, BNHS, with support from the ICICI Foundation and the Rajasthan Forest Department, organised a three-day workshop in Bikaner on Conservation Leadership through Eco-tourism for Livelihood Creation. The programme aimed to build capacity among wildlife enthusiasts and conservationists working across the Thar Desert, highlighting eco-tourism as a bridge between biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihoods.

Over 30 participants – including students, forest staff, and BNHS team members – took part in interactive sessions and field visits to Jorbeer Conservation Reserve, famous for its vulture congregations, and Nathania Gouchar, a community-managed grazing land. Experts from BNHS, the Forest Department, and other institutions led discussions on species interpretation,



habitat sensitivity, entrepreneurship, and policy frameworks. The workshop inspired participants to design locally rooted eco-tourism models that balance ecological integrity with community aspirations. ■

Vulture Conservation Team Expands Awareness Outreach in Assam and Meghalaya

The Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre (VCBC), Rani, conducted 25 awareness programmes in August 2025, including 19 school sessions and six community meetings. These activities reached nearly 2,000 students, teachers, and local residents across Assam’s Kamrup, Biswanath, Sivasagar, and Charaideo districts, as well as Meghalaya’s Ri-Bhoi district.

The sessions highlighted the importance of vulture conservation, ongoing reintroduction efforts, the concept

of ‘vulture restaurants’, and the need to plant tree species favoured by vultures. Plantation activities were carried out in collaboration with Smt Dimpi Borah, IFS, Director of Assam Forest School.

Through these initiatives, VCBC Rani continues to strengthen conservation values among students and communities, encouraging active participation in safeguarding these critically endangered scavengers.

Details of the School awareness meetings conducted by VCBC Rani

Date	School Name	District	No of attendees	
			Students	Teachers
04-08-2025	Athabari Higher Secondary School	Sivasagar, Assam	25	4
08-08-2025	Green Bud High School	Biswanath, Assam	45	3
08-08-2025	Huldah Buntain AG College	Kamrup, Assam	10	3
09-08-2025	Hachara High School	Sivasagar, Assam	50	2
11-08-2025	D.C. Gogoi Jokaichuk H.S.	Sivasagar, Assam	200	5
14-08-2025	Horipora High School	Sivasagar, Assam	50	3
18-08-2025	Jamuguri Higher Secondary School	Sonitpur, Assam	60	4
19-08-2025	Hologuri High School	Charaideo, Assam	55	2
16-08-2025	Jalukbari Jatiya Vidyalaya	Kamrup, Assam	60	5
18-08-2025	Jalukbari Jatiya Vidyalaya	Kamrup, Assam	100	15
20-08-2025	Sonapur Higher Secondary School	Kamrup Metro, Assam	80	3
20-08-2025	Adarsha Vidyapith High School	Sonitpur, Assam	20	2
20-08-2025	Larsing Khogwir School	Rhi-Boi, Meghalaya	70	6
22-08-2025	Holy Child English School	Sonitpur, Assam	25	4
23-08-2025	PM Shri Durung Adarsha Higher School	Kamrup Metro, Assam	100	7
23-08-2025	Khanaguri Govt. S.B. School	Biswanath, Assam	20	4
23-08-2025	Patsaku High School	Charaideo, Assam	150	2
26-08-2025	Kusumtola Anchalik Higher Secondary School	Biswanath, Assam	70	2
27-08-2025	Chatiya Academy	Biswanath, Assam	40	3
28-08-2025	Tyagbir Hembaruah College	Biswanath, Assam	50	4
29-08-2025	Naduar Jatiya Vidyalaya	Biswanath, Assam	30	2
30-08-2025	Amritopom Public School	Biswanath, Assam	45	2

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Details of Community meetings conducted by VCBC, Rani

Date	Community Area	District	No. of attendees
31-07-2025	Tewaripal village	Biswanath, Assam	20
01-08-2025	Central Range Office	Biswanath, Assam	15
15-08-2025	Garopara Village	Kamrup, Assam	50
17-08-2025	Mataikhar Village	Kamrup, Assam	50
19-08-2025	Bagdoba Village	Kamrup, Assam	200
21-08-2025	Chaygaon Village	Kamrup, Assam	40



School awareness programme with the students of Adarsha Vidyapith HS, Sonitpur district



Amritopom Public School Kusumtola-Biswanath Assam



Community awareness programme with the Mataikhar Community in Kamrup District



Plantation programme by VCBC, Rani at Bagdoba village in collaboration with Assam Forest School



School awareness programme with the students of Green Bud High School, Biswanath district



School awareness programme with the students of Patsaku HS, Charaideo district

BNHS-JCBC Pinjore Strengthens Vulture Conservation in Haryana

The BNHS, in collaboration with the Haryana Forest Department, organised a series of awareness programmes and advocacy meetings across Panchkula District to promote vulture conservation and strengthen support for the Vulture Reintroduction Programme in Haryana.

On World Elephant Day (August 12), the BNHS-JCBC team conducted an engaging event at Government Middle School, Kutbewala, Kalka, attended by 65 students, teachers, and staff. The programme highlighted the ecological importance of elephants and vultures through interactive presentations, quizzes, storytelling, and a screening of BNHS's documentary *Vanishing Vultures*. The enthusiastic Q&A session reflected growing interest among young learners in wildlife protection.

Earlier in the month, Gaushala-focused campaigns were held at Panchkula Gaushala Trust (August 7) and Gauvan Sewa Dham (August 11). Caretakers and staff were sensitised to the dangers of using banned veterinary drugs such as Diclofenac, Ketoprofen, Aceclofenac, and Nimesulide – deadly for vultures – and encouraged to adopt safe alternatives like Meloxicam and Tolfenamic Acid. Posters and educational materials were distributed, and surveys conducted to assess current veterinary practices.

At the policy level, BNHS held advocacy meetings with key stakeholders. Discussions with the Haryana Gau Seva Aayog (August 8 and 25) addressed Gaushala surveys, harmful drug regulations, and innovative measures such as linking cow sanctuaries with 'vulture restaurants'. Meetings with officials of the Animal Husbandry & Dairying Department (August 13, 14, and 19) resulted in commitments to circulate directives reinforcing the ban on harmful NSAIDs and to organise training



sessions for paravets on vulture-safe drugs. The Joint Director also proposed including BNHS presentations in departmental meetings to ensure wider outreach.

Together, these initiatives – spanning schools, Gaushalas, veterinary practices, and government agencies – reflect BNHS's holistic approach to vulture conservation in Haryana. By uniting students, livestock managers, veterinary professionals, and policymakers, BNHS continues to build momentum for safeguarding vultures and securing a healthier future for India's ecosystems. ■

BNHS Life Member Proposes Postal Collaboration for Vulture Awareness

BNHS Life Member and Director of the Postal Department, Mr Pawan Dalmia, visited the BNHS Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre in Bhopal on August 3. During the visit, discussions focused on strengthening the involvement of BNHS members in Madhya Pradesh through birding events and awareness programmes.

Mr Dalmia proposed a collaboration with the Postal Department to release a special postal card on International Vulture Awareness Day (IVAD), similar to the postal card issued on International Tiger Day. He also suggested organising an online coordination meeting for BNHS members across Madhya Pradesh to strengthen networking, enhance communication, and collaboration, and participation. ■



BNHS Inaugurates Basic Course in Ornithology

The BNHS-Conservation Education Centre (CEC), Goregaon, inaugurated its online-hybrid Basic Course in Ornithology on August 10, 2025 with enthusiastic participation from across India. Designed for beginners, the course offers a structured introduction to bird study. The inaugural session began with an orientation by Ms Priyadarshini Supekar, Education Officer, followed by an expert talk on 'Introduction to Ornithology' by Mr Asif Khan, Programme Officer. His presentation covered bird anatomy, behaviour, migration, and identification, providing a strong foundation for the participants.

A nature trail through the BNHS Nature Reserve, led by naturalists Mr Unmesh Paranjape and Mr Meehir



Pawar, gave participants a first-hand experience of the forest's monsoon biodiversity. The session concluded with a briefing on course deliverables and a screening of camera-trap footage from the reserve. ■

Induction Lecture at St. Xavier's College

On August 18 2025, as part of the MoU between BNHS-CEC and the Department of Zoology, St. Xavier's College (Autonomous), Mumbai, Ms Aqsa Majgaonkar, Senior Education Officer, delivered an engaging induction lecture on 'Green Route to Scientific Roots'.

Attended by 35 students, the lecture set the tone for the academic year by highlighting the links between biodiversity, conservation, and scientific inquiry. Drawing from real-world conservation work, Ms Majgaonkar inspired students to connect classroom learning with field-based experiences. The session reinforced BNHS's vision of nurturing scientific temperament and environmental responsibility among young minds. ■



Zoetis India CSR Activity at BNHS-CEC

On August 11, 2025, BNHS-CEC, Mumbai, hosted a CSR programme for employees of Zoetis India. The day began with an introduction to BNHS and a guided trail through the BNHS Nature Reserve, led by Ms Priyadarshini Supekar and Mr Dilip Giri.

Participants then engaged in bund-building and forest clean-up activities, contributing directly to water conservation and habitat protection. The session highlighted the ecological importance of bunds in retaining rainwater, recharging groundwater, and reducing soil erosion. ■



CSR Engagement with BlackRock Employees

On August 24, 2025, BNHS-CEC hosted 30 employees from BlackRock for a CSR programme blending conservation, creativity, and teamwork. Coordinated by Ms Aqsa Majgaonkar, Senior Education Officer, the day featured seed bomb making, bund-building exercises, and interactive nature-based activities.

Guided by BNHS naturalists, participants learned practical conservation skills while fostering collaboration and problem-solving. The programme concluded with a screening of the BNHS documentary on the great Indian bustard, leaving participants with a renewed commitment to environmental stewardship. ■



Nature Trail for VIBGYOR High School

On August 12, 2025, fifteen students from VIBGYOR High School visited BNHS-CEC, Mumbai, for a hands-on learning experience in biodiversity and conservation. Led by Education Officer Ms Priyadarshini Supekar and naturalist Mr Unmesh Paranjape, the trail introduced students to the rich flora and fauna

of the BNHS Nature Reserve. An audiovisual presentation on the reserve's biodiversity further deepened their understanding.

The session concluded with reflections and Q&A, inspiring students to take a keener interest in conservation and environmental stewardship. ■



BNHS Outreach at Rassaz International School

On August 14, 2025, BNHS Education Officer Shardul Bajikar engaged over 150 students of Rassaz International School, Mira Road, in an interactive session on 'Water and Life'. The talk sparked lively discussions and encouraged students to explore connections between ecosystems, biodiversity, and everyday life. ■

BNHS Monsoon Nature Walks Draw Enthusiastic Participation

The Conservation Education Centre (CEC) of BNHS has brought the forest alive this monsoon with its popular Monsoon Nature Walks, held every Sunday through the rainy season. The series has attracted enthusiastic participation and delivered memorable encounters with the region's rich biodiversity, highlighting the magic of the natural world in its wettest months.

The inaugural walk on August 3 set the tone, with 23 participants joining Education Officer Shardul Bajikar and naturalists Bhushan Jadhav and Ameya Parkar. Amid lush greenery and intermittent showers, the group observed mantises, langurs, spitting spiders, butterflies, and a variety of lizards. The walk ended dramatically when a bronze-back tree snake suddenly fell from a tree, leaving participants in awe of the forest's surprises.

The following week, the second edition of the series drew an even larger and more enthusiastic crowd. Highlights included a grey junglefowl's loud territorial call and the thrill of following a leopard's fresh tracks as the forest echoed with alarm calls from langurs, macaques, and spotted deer. An Indian Red Scorpion and a female scorpion fly added to the trail's excitement, while discussions on forest ecology and predator-prey dynamics deepened the experience.

The third walk tested participants with heavy rains, as gurgling

streams turned into torrents. Guided by naturalists Dilip Giri and Bhushan Jadhav, the group of 16 spotted mantises, stick insects, and caterpillars, along with birds such as a jungle owlet and a shikra. Despite the challenging weather, participants expressed their appreciation for the guides' insights and the unique perspective the monsoon brought to the forest.

The fourth outing offered a more tranquil experience, with 14 participants enjoying the peaceful forest, punctuated only by bird calls and occasional alarm calls. Sightings included a herd of spotted deer, jewel bugs, a Gongylus mantis, and a dazzling array of butterflies – each discovery reinforcing the richness of monsoon biodiversity.

Across all four walks, participants consistently praised the knowledge shared by BNHS naturalists and the opportunity to immerse themselves in nature's rhythms during the rains. The series has not only showcased the ecological wonders of the season but also inspired participants to appreciate and protect local biodiversity.

With positive feedback and strong participation, the Monsoon Nature Walks continue to grow in popularity, reaffirming BNHS's commitment to conservation education through hands-on, experiential learning in the wild. ■



Members' Trail at Maharashtra Nature Park

On August 3, 2025, BNHS organised a special members' trail at Maharashtra Nature Park (MNP), a reclaimed green space in central Mumbai. Participants explored native flora, butterflies, birdlife, and wetlands while learning about the park's ecological restoration and its importance as an urban 'green lung'. The interactive walk also sparked discussions on sustainability and citizen science.

Members appreciated the experience and expressed keen interest in joining more such initiatives that connect urban communities with nature. ■



BNHS Members' Trail at Sálim Ali Point

On August 17, 2025, BNHS members explored the Sálim Ali Point Trail, the highest point in the BNHS Nature Reserve at Goregaon, while learning about seasonal herbs, wildflowers, and insects. Naturalists also discussed the ecological significance of the city's forest cover in protecting Mumbai's water resources.

The walk highlighted the role of BNHS-CEC, established in 1993, in promoting conservation awareness through nature trails, workshops, and courses. The centre continues to be a hub for environmental education and citizen engagement. ■

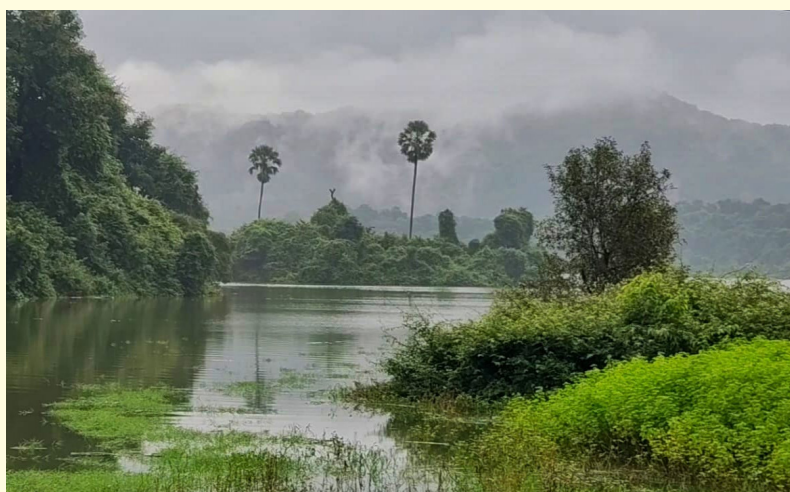


Citizen Scientists Record 45 Bird Species During August Bird Count

The August Bird Count at Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP) was conducted on August 31, 2025, with more than 40 BNHS members and volunteers taking part. The group recorded 45 bird species during the survey.

These monthly bird counts form an integral part of the BNHS citizen science programme, providing valuable long-term data on avian diversity, population trends, and habitat health in one of Mumbai's most vital green spaces. The initiative not only contributes to conservation research but also encourages greater public engagement with nature.

Those interested in joining future counts can visit www.bnhs.org or write to programmes@bnhs.org for details. ■



Exhibition: 'Fragile Feathers' at Colaba, Mumbai

BNHS member Ms Samia Kapadia organized an exhibition in collaboration with BNHS at Strangers House Gallery, Colaba, from August 17–26, 2025. Titled 'Fragile Feathers', the exhibition featured photographs, archival imagery, soundscapes, and AI-generated storytelling to portray the delicate existence of Mumbai's birdlife. The immersive showcase highlighted both the beauty and the vulnerability of avian life in the city. ■



Independence Day Celebration at BNHS

The 78th Independence Day of India was celebrated with great enthusiasm at all the offices of the BNHS.

At the BNHS-Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, the event began with the hoisting of the Indian Flag by senior staff member Mr Raphick Uddin, followed by the planting of three trees of cultural and ecological importance – Golden Flamboyant *Peltophorum pterocarpum*, Gulmohar *Delonix regia*, and Mango *Mangifera indica* were planted. Each of these species supports biodiversity, enhances green cover, and carries cultural significance.



BNHS-CEC celebrated the Day with a nature walk along the Shilonda Trail in Sanjay Gandhi National Park. Fifteen participants joined BNHS naturalists for a refreshing forest experience marked by unique sightings. Highlights included harvester ants, a praying mantis ootheca, and a striking patch of the parasitic Purple Witch (Ghost Flower). Crossing lively forest streams added to the festive spirit, making the morning both memorable and enriching. ■

A Tribute to Radhyesham Bishnoi: Honouring a Conservation Hero

The BNHS Governing Council has extended support of ₹ 2,00,000 to the family of Radhyesham Bishnoi, recognising his lifelong dedication to wildlife conservation.

Radhyesham, a devoted guardian of the desert, tragically lost his life in a road accident near Jaisalmer while monitoring the habitat of the critically endangered great Indian bustard (GIB). A member of the Bishnoi community, his courage and unwavering commitment to conservation went beyond professional duty – he became a symbol of resilience and sacrifice in protecting India's natural heritage.

This support stands not only as financial aid, but also as a pledge to honour his legacy. Behind every species saved are human stories of struggle, dedication, and love for the land. BNHS stands with Radhyesham's family, celebrating a life that will continue to inspire



future generations – with every beat of the bustard's wings, every restored patch of grassland, and every young conservationist moved by his story. ■

BNHS Library Resumes Operations

We are pleased to inform you that the BNHS Library has reopened on July 10, 2025, following the successful completion of essential repair work.

Operating Hours

Monday to Friday: 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.



We appreciate your patience and understanding during the closure period and apologize for any inconvenience caused. We look forward to welcoming you back and hope you continue to enjoy the resources and services we offer.

For any reference-related queries, please feel free to contact us via email.

Thank you for your continued support.

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



Join the BNHS Corporate Membership Programme

Make your CSR truly matter – for nature, for people, for the planet

Why partner with the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS)?

- ❖ Be featured in *Hornbill*, BNHS's prestigious magazine
- ❖ Engage your team through nature volunteering & EcoDay events
- ❖ Exclusive perks: sustainable gifts, magazine access, discounts & more
- ❖ Promote your CSR story while contributing to SDGs 13, 15 & 17



Membership Tiers:

- ❖ Silver (1 Year): ₹ 50,000/-
- ❖ Gold (3 Years): ₹ 1,50,000/-
- ❖ Platinum (5 Years): ₹ 5,00,000/-



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
membership@bnhs.org | cmd@bnhs.org



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 Black-tailed Godwit. Spectacular Greater Flamingos, ducks and large wader congregations. Regular sightings of migratory birds such as Sanderlings, Dunlins, Whimbrels, Pacific Golden Plovers, and 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: Four 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.; bmscpointcalimere@bnhs.org

Schedule for 2025–2026:

Batch I	November 28–30	Batch III	January 9–11
Batch II	December 19–21	Batch IV	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

Give the Gift of Membership!

Share your love for natural history with your family and friends. Explore the woods together! Your gift of a BNHS membership will help us continue our important work to conserve our natural environment through research and education.

TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP



Annual Membership	₹ 1,416/-
Three-year Membership	₹ 3,748/-
Five-year Membership	₹ 6,080/-
Life Membership	₹ 17,700/-
Student Membership (below 25 years; College ID Proof compulsory)	₹ 450/-



Get your JBNHS subscription today!

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.

We are sure that you would like to subscribe to this invaluable auxiliary to biological research in India, with a vast database on the Indian subcontinent, particularly in ornithology, which starts at ₹ 1,000/year.

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