

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK



Dear Members,

I am pleased to inform you that while drafting this communication, I received a government order appointing BNHS to the Rajasthan State Wildlife Board. We hope this will provide us with an opportunity to share our conservation management recommendations, based on the extensive studies we have conducted in Rajasthan.

July has been a very busy month for BNHS. On July 2nd, 2024, our President organized an open dialogue with you to brief you on the society's progress and gather your valuable suggestions for improving our operations. Thank you for participating in these online meetings; your input will help us enhance the workings of BNHS. I will keep you updated on the decisions that we had taken in this meeting.

While the Governing Council was discussing policies at Hornbill House on July 4th, a team of 12 BNHS scientists and researchers were working tirelessly in the Pench and Tadoba Tiger Reserves in Maharashtra. Their mission was to place GPS tags on 20 vultures to track their movements after release into the wild. They successfully completed this task in collaboration with local veterinarians, Forest officers, and Forest

department field staff. We hope these tagged vultures will explore the tiger habitats, locate wild carcasses, and eventually establish their own breeding grounds.

At the Jatayu Conservation Breeding Centre (JCBC) in Pinjore, Haryana, our vulture team worked closely with the Chief Wildlife Warden of Haryana, Mr Vineet Garg, IFS, to plan another mission: the release of 25 vultures in Haryana. We are grateful to the Chief Minister of Haryana, Shri Nayab Singh Saini for launching a special booklet, jatayu, to raise awareness among stakeholders about the need to provide a safe

environment for vultures in the state. The BNHS team in Haryana is also planning two workshops in early August for officers from the Forest, Animal Husbandry, and Food and Drugs Administration departments from five adjoining states, as well as the University professors. We hope these workshops will support the Vulture Safe Zone programme we have launched in these states and further our conservation efforts.

Following the recent deaths of lesser flamingos in Navi Mumbai, the Government of Maharashtra established a high-powered committee on July 5th, 2024. BNHS has submitted its representation to the committee, emphasizing the need to protect coastal wetlands used by migratory and local birds as high-tide roosting sites.

BNHS works closely with forest staff and officers across various states, and these relationships have strengthened over the years, making them an integral part of the BNHS family. This month, we mourn the loss of Mr G.V. Reddy, retired PCCF of Rajasthan and former Field Director of Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve. He supported the conservation of the Green Avadavat in Udaipur and the Lesser Florican project in Ajmer, Rajasthan, in recent years. We will remember his long and fruitful association with BNHS which will help BNHS to proceed ahead in Rajasthan.

Additionally, we lost one of our life members and former BNHS scientist, Dr Saraswathy Unnithan, who worked under Dr Sálim Ali. Her passing is a significant loss to the society.

One of our passionate life members, Mr Sushilkumar Agrawal, who is also the CEO of Ultra Media & Entertainment Pvt. Ltd., has a hobby of collecting and studying stamps (philately) and currency (numismatics) with a focus on interesting subjects. He has compiled a collection of stamps featuring parrots from different countries, an intriguing topic for law enforcement agencies like customs, wildlife and forest department given the illegal trade of these birds. The book on his collection will be released at Hornbill House at the end of August.

We have received several emails from members, both within India and overseas, offering their assistance to BNHS in various ways. I extend my sincere thanks to all of you. Many of our members have initiated state-level WhatsApp groups, and some have also started city-specific groups. I am especially impressed to see that these groups are actively discussing conservation issues and avoiding routine greetings. I hope

these groups will soon evolve into member-driven conservation and awareness campaigns.

Your Point Calimere Bird Migration Study Centre has announced several training courses for the 2024–25 migratory season. I hope you have seen these announcements on our website, social media platforms, and WhatsApp groups. The BNHS Central Marketing Department (Mr Sandesh Kadam, cmd@bnhs.org), Membership Department (Ms Shreeya Sontakke, membership@bnhs.org),

Programmes Department (Mr Asif Khan, programmes@bnhs.org), and Conservation Education Centres (Ms Kiran Thumma and others, cec-mumbai@bnhs.org) have compiled the annual calendar, which are now available on the website. Please feel free to contact them through email to reserve your preferred dates for the events.

If you're satisfied with the BNHS membership services, I would appreciate it if you could share your feedback via email.

I would also appreciate your assistance with the membership department in completing the online forms for the publication of the "Yearbook for Life Members." Additionally, we need to plan BNHS member meetings—one in Mumbai and another in a location outside of Mumbai. Please let me know if anyone is interested in taking on the responsibility of hosting one of these meetings.

The Conservation eNewsletter will now include activities from BNHS state-wide chapters. I encourage you to send event pictures and a brief paragraph to Mr Gopi Naidu (g.naidu@bnhs.org).

Lastly, your BNHS needs funds to continue running its projects and programmes. Please reach out to me at director@bnhs.org if you have any potential contacts or opportunities for support.

Kishor Rithe

Director