



BOMBAY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

From the DIRECTOR DESK



Dear Members,

Your BNHS has continued its tradition of inviting its research staff to the Annual Research Seminar (ARS) to present and discuss the outcomes of their research projects and explore opportunities for translating research into conservation action. This year, ARS 2026 was held at the Central University of Rajasthan (CURAJ) in Ajmer. CURAJ proved to be an ideal academic institution, with its strong repository of advanced research on the Aravalli mountain range. Our staff thoroughly enjoyed their stay on campus, particularly their interactions with the faculty members and students. I sincerely thank the Vice Chancellor, Dr Vilas Bhalerao, for making this collaboration possible.

The BNHS Rajasthan team prepared a technical report based on their study of the CURAJ campus, which was released by the Vice Chancellor and our President, Mr Pravinsingh Pardeshi. Expert trainers from the Piramal Foundation conducted team-building sessions that encouraged staff to openly share their thoughts, concerns, and experiences.

One important observation from these sessions was that many of our Junior Project Fellows (JPFs), who join BNHS soon after completing their Bachelor's or Master's degrees to gain practical field experience, often miss their parents and loved ones. This reminded me that all of us, especially the senior members of BNHS, have a responsibility to provide them with a supportive and family-like environment. Equally touching were the experiences shared by colleagues from our service departments, who have spent more than 10–15 years at BNHS. They spoke about the challenges they faced while building their lives in Mumbai, transitioning from young professionals to family persons. I consider these two groups of employees to be the very foundation of BNHS.

Around nine trustees participated in the ARS and were delighted to witness the remarkable transformation of BNHS across the country. They interacted extensively with the staff and assured them that they would work towards strengthening employee welfare initiatives.

We also visited the agricultural fields at Shokaliya near Kishangarh and were deeply impressed by the community-oriented approach adopted by our scientist, Dr Sujit Narwade, and his entire team. When conventional research and conservation methods fall short, innovation becomes the key to success. The trustees visited several potential agricultural landscapes that could be restored as suitable habitat for the Lesser Florican. I am confident that BNHS will make significant investments in the near future to conserve the Lesser Florican and restore its grassland habitats in Rajasthan.

I visited Ladakh from July 18 to 23, where we held a series of meetings with General Pande, Mr S. Rajesh, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, and Mr Mandeep Mittal, Deputy Conservator of Forests, Ladakh. We also reviewed our free-ranging dog (FRD) sterilization programme near Hanle. The BNHS and The Habitat Trust (THT) teams are working together in Ladakh to address several critical threats facing endangered wildlife, including the Black-necked Crane. One of the major achievements of the project has been the sterilisation

of more than 2,900 free-ranging dogs around Army establishments. This initiative is expected to help regulate FRD populations, reduce aggressive behaviour, and largely restrict their movement to villages. In the long run, this should contribute to the recovery of native wildlife populations while also creating greater opportunities for local communities to benefit from wildlife tourism.

Forest officers from several states visit BNHS every month to explore opportunities for collaboration. This month, senior forest officers from Arunachal Pradesh visited us to discuss several important conservation initiatives.

Another significant milestone this month was the launch of the much-awaited book *MAMMALS OF INDIA* by Dr A.J.T. Johnsingh and Dr P.O. Nameer. The book was released by the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Mr Devendra Fadnavis, and the Minister for Forests, Mr Ganesh Naik, during the Global Tiger Day celebrations held in Nagpur. Many members have informed me that they have already received their pre-booked copies. If you have not yet received yours, please contact our CMD Department. The book continues to be available at a special discounted price for members, and you can still reserve your copy through the BNHS online store.

This month, the BNHS team also achieved important milestones at Ujjani by establishing hatcheries for indigenous fish species and cultivating native aquatic plants that will play a crucial role in future eco-restoration initiatives.

As you may recall, in the previous issue we appealed for support to digitise the invaluable wildlife films of E.P. Gee, a project that requires dedicated funding. I sincerely thank everyone who responded generously, especially our members Dr K. Ullas Karanth and Mr B.M. Arora, for their valuable support.

If you are not already following BNHS on social media, I encourage you to do so. Our social media platforms provide regular updates on our research, conservation initiatives.

Finally, I encourage you to read the BNHS Blog (<http://blog.bnhs.org>) for more inspiring stories from the field. Please feel free to contribute articles in any language. We also encourage academic institutions to subscribe to *JBNHS* (<https://bnhsjournal.in/index.php/bnhs/ga>), one of India's oldest scientific journals, which can also help institutions earn NAAC accreditation credits.

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

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

Kishor Rithe
Director
Bombay Natural History Society



BNHS Launches MAMMALS OF INDIA

The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) is proud to announce the formal launch of the book **MAMMALS OF INDIA** by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Shri Devendra Fadnavis, and the Hon'ble Minister for Forests of Maharashtra, Shri Ganesh Naik, on July 29, 2026, at an event organised to mark Global Tiger Day, held at IIM Nagpur.

Co-authored by the late Dr A.J.T. Johnsingh and Dr P.O. Nameer, **MAMMALS OF INDIA** brings together the latest information on the taxonomy, distribution, conservation status, populations, and habitats of India's rich mammalian diversity.

The occasion was graced by Mr Pravinsingh Pardeshi, President, BNHS; Mr Kishor Rithe, Director, BNHS; Shri Milind Mhaikar, Additional Chief Secretary, Forest Department, Government of Maharashtra; Shri Srinivas Rao, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Head of Forest Force, Maharashtra; and Shri M. Srinivas Reddy, Chief Wildlife Warden, Maharashtra, along with other distinguished dignitaries.

Published in collaboration with HarperCollins India, this landmark volume is the first comprehensive field guide to the more than 450 currently recognised species of Indian mammals, including key subspecies and hypothetical occurrences. Richly illustrated with over 400 distribution maps and more than 50 pages of artwork, it is expected to become an invaluable resource for scientists, conservation practitioners, educators, and wildlife enthusiasts.

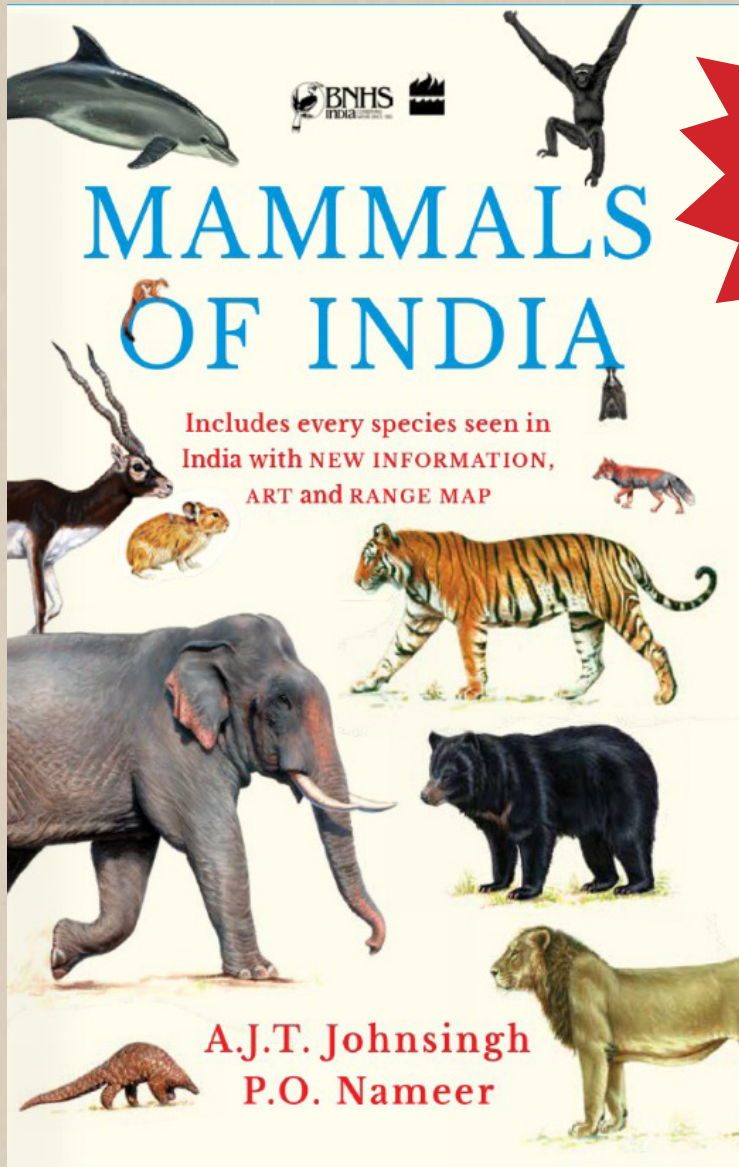
The publication also marks the beginning of a new publishing partnership between BNHS and HarperCollins India, aimed at making authoritative natural history literature accessible to a wider audience. ■

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(Co-published by BNHS & HarperCollins)

By A.J.T. Johnsingh and P.O. Nameer



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BNHS Scientist Parveen Shaikh Honoured as a CNBC-TV18 Future Female Forward Icon

The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) is proud to announce that Parveen Shaikh, Scientist D at BNHS, has been recognised as one of the CNBC-TV18 Future Female Forward Icons. The initiative celebrates women whose leadership, innovation, and commitment are driving positive social and environmental change across India.

For nearly a decade, Parveen has led pioneering conservation efforts to protect the Endangered Indian Skimmer and other threatened riverine birds across some of the country's most important river systems. Her work spans the Ganga, Chambal, and Mahanadi rivers, where she has combined rigorous scientific research with community participation and policy engagement to safeguard critical breeding habitats.

Working closely with local communities, government agencies, and conservation partners, her initiatives have demonstrated how collaborative conservation can deliver lasting benefits for both wildlife and people. By generating scientific evidence, strengthening local stewardship, and informing conservation action, these efforts have contributed to the protection of some of India's most vulnerable riverine ecosystems.

This recognition reflects the growing importance of riverine biodiversity conservation and highlights the dedication of conservation professionals working to secure India's natural heritage. It is also a proud moment for BNHS, acknowledges the collective commitment of its field teams, partners, and communities whose sustained efforts continue to make a meaningful difference for threatened species and the ecosystems they depend on. ■



BNHS Annual Research Seminar 2026

The BNHS successfully hosted its Annual Research Seminar (ARS) 2026 from July 11–13, at the Central University of Rajasthan (CURAJ), Ajmer. Bringing together researchers and conservation practitioners from across the organisation, the three-day seminar provided an important platform to share research, strengthen collaboration, and shape future conservation priorities.

The seminar opened with the release of two significant publications – Bustard Florican Programme Status Report 2026 and Biodiversity Management Plan for the CURAJ Campus. Over the three days, participants presented research and field experiences spanning a wide range of ecosystems and conservation programmes, including grasslands, wetlands, riverine habitats, marine ecosystems, and vulture conservation. In his keynote address, the Director of BNHS emphasised the importance of stronger collaboration across departments, highlighting how interdisciplinary approaches can enhance the impact of conservation science and practice.

The seminar also focused on strengthening organisational capacity. On the second day, facilitators from the Piramal Foundation led an interactive team-building programme designed to foster trust, communication, and collaboration. Reflective activities such as My River of Life encouraged participants to explore their personal and professional journeys, while experiential exercises reinforced the value of teamwork in achieving conservation goals. A dedicated finance and administration session further highlighted the importance of accountability, effective resource management, and sound institutional practices in supporting long-term conservation initiatives.

Beyond scientific discussions, the seminar provided opportunities for colleagues to connect through a cultural evening that celebrated the diverse talents of BNHS staff, strengthening relationships across teams and regions.

The final day offered participants a memorable field experience with the opportunity to witness the spectacular lekking display of the Lesser Florican during the breeding season. The seminar concluded with discussions on increasing member engagement and promoting research that delivers measurable conservation outcomes. ■



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Rehabilitated Indian Vulture Thrives in the Wild in Nashik

A rehabilitated Indian Vulture named J132 has achieved a major milestone in BNHS's ongoing efforts to restore India's critically endangered vulture populations. After two earlier release attempts, the captive-bred bird has now spent 56 consecutive days in the wild, travelling more than 1,618 km across Maharashtra and demonstrating the skills needed to survive independently. The achievement marks an encouraging step forward for BNHS's vulture conservation breeding and release programme.

J132 was first released at Pench Tiger Reserve, Nagpur, Maharashtra on December 11, 2025, as part of the programme's second batch of captive-bred vultures tagged by BNHS. During its initial release, the bird flew over 750 km to Nashik before being recaptured by the Maharashtra Forest Department at Darnasangvi on December 29, 2025, and transferred to the Transit Treatment Centre (TTC) Nashik. A second release attempt was made at Anjaneri, Nashik, on January 20, 2026, jointly by the Forest Department and TTC Nashik. However, the bird was recaptured on February 13, 2026, for further care. After making a full recovery, J132 was successfully re-released for the third time near Anjaneri on June 7, 2026, by the Maharashtra Forest Department and TTC Nashik.

Satellite telemetry and field observations have revealed that over the past eight weeks, J132 has maintained regular movements across the landscape, recording an average daily flight pattern and a maximum single-day journey of 168 km on June 17. The bird has explored important vulture habitats in northern Nashik and frequently ranged along the Maharashtra-Gujarat border, including parts of Valsad district.

Equally significant has been J132's ability to cope with natural challenges. During periods of intense monsoon rainfall in late July, telemetry data showed the bird adopting natural survival behaviour by remaining safely sheltered until conditions improved. Field teams closely monitoring the vulture in coordination with the Maharashtra Forest Department and TTC Nashik confirmed that J132 successfully integrated with wild Indian Vultures in the Dol Ohol and Deodongra areas of Nashik. Researchers observed the tagged bird independently locating and feeding on cattle carcasses alongside wild vultures in July – clear evidence that it has developed the instincts and behaviours essential for survival in its natural environment.

Manan Mahadev, the BNHS researcher monitoring J132's movements adds, "The bird's continued presence in northern Nashik highlights the region's ecological importance." Characterised by rugged cliffs and favourable climatic conditions, the landscape provides a vital refuge for Gyps vultures. The movement data collected from J132 will help researchers better understand habitat use, refine future release protocols and identify priority conservation areas. ■



A New Chapter for the Indian Skimmer on the Ganga

The 2026 breeding season has brought encouraging news for the conservation of the Endangered Indian Skimmer. Along the Ganga at Bijnor, more than 50 Indian Skimmer chicks successfully fledged, marking a significant milestone in the recovery of one of India's most threatened riverine birds.

This achievement is the result of the BNHS's conservation programme, implemented with the support of the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG). Combining scientific research with active community participation, the initiative focused on identifying and protecting nesting sandbars during the critical breeding season. Trained local nest guardians played a pivotal role in monitoring breeding sites, minimising disturbances, and ensuring the safety of nests until the chicks successfully fledged.

The successful fledging of more than 50 chicks demonstrates the effectiveness of science-based conservation supported by strong local stewardship. It highlights how collaborative efforts between conservation organisations, government agencies, and riverine communities can help reverse the decline of threatened species while safeguarding the ecological health of the Ganga. As BNHS and NMCG continue their partnership, the success at Bijnor offers renewed hope for the future of the Indian Skimmer. ■



BNHS Field Visit Reinforces Grassland Conservation in Madhya Pradesh

The BNHS's Madhya Pradesh Lesser Florican Project team undertook a field visit to key grassland landscapes in Neemuch, Sardarpur, and Sailana during the species' critical breeding season. The visit provided an opportunity to assess the condition of priority habitats and review ongoing conservation measures aimed at protecting the Critically Endangered Lesser Florican.

The team evaluated habitat quality across important breeding sites while engaging with local communities and Forest Department officials to discuss field observations and address site-specific conservation challenges. These interactions strengthened collaboration among stakeholders and reinforced the importance of integrating local knowledge with scientific conservation efforts.

The visit highlighted the vital role of community participation and institutional partnerships in safeguarding India's grassland ecosystems. By promoting coordinated habitat management and informed conservation action, the initiative contributes to securing breeding habitats for the Lesser Florican while supporting the rich biodiversity that depends on these threatened landscapes. ■



Field Visit Advances Lesser Florican Conservation in Western Madhya Pradesh

A joint field visit by Dr Sujit Narwade, Deputy Director of the BNHS, Mr Dinesh Kothari a member of the BNHS Governing Council, and the Madhya Pradesh project team provided an important opportunity to strengthen conservation efforts for the Critically Endangered Lesser Florican in western Madhya Pradesh. During the visit, the delegation met with Forest Department officials to assess the condition of key grassland habitats and discuss site-specific management priorities. The interactions enabled researchers and forest managers to review field observations, identify emerging conservation challenges, and align management interventions with on-ground realities.

The discussions highlighted the importance of close collaboration between scientists, government agencies, and local communities in implementing effective, landscape-scale conservation strategies. As the breeding season progresses, continued monitoring, habitat restoration, invasive species management, sustainable grazing practices, and community stewardship will remain central to improving habitat quality and securing breeding sites for the species. Through coordinated action and adaptive management, BNHS and its partners are working to safeguard the remaining grassland habitats of the Lesser Florican. ■



Monsoon Revitalises Tadoba's Grasslands, Boosting Bird Diversity

The arrival of the southwest monsoon has breathed new life into the grasslands of Tadoba–Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR), creating favourable conditions for wildlife and signalling the start of a promising breeding season for grassland birds. Fresh herbaceous growth across key sites, including Navegaon and Palashgaon, along with the recharge of seasonal wetlands, reflects the ecological recovery underway in these important habitats.

To assess the seasonal response of birdlife, the BNHS field team conducted avifaunal surveys at Palashgaon Grassland on 23 July 2026. The survey recorded 19 bird species and 56 individual birds, including grassland specialists such as the Zitting Cisticola and Rain Quail, as well as several cuckoo species, all of which indicate favourable breeding conditions. The resurgence of insect populations following the monsoon is expected to provide an abundant food source for many of these species. The surveys also recorded wetland birds, including the Painted Stork and Lesser Whistling Duck.

The observations highlight the positive ecological response of TATR's grasslands to seasonal rainfall and reinforce the importance of regular habitat and biodiversity monitoring. Continued field-based assessments will help guide conservation planning and ensure that these dynamic ecosystems continue to support thriving populations of grassland and wetland species. ■



BNHS Initiates Action Plan for Lesser Florican Conservation in Rajasthan

Senior officials from the BNHS recently visited key grassland habitats in Rajasthan to assess the status of the Critically Endangered Lesser Florican and lay the groundwork for a comprehensive conservation action plan. The field visit focused on evaluating habitat conditions across important breeding landscapes while engaging with local communities to better understand site-specific conservation challenges. Discussions centred on addressing unsustainable land-use practices, restoring degraded grasslands, and strengthening community participation in habitat protection.

The proposed action plan will adopt an adaptive management approach, with priorities including habitat restoration, invasive species management, sustainable grazing practices, and long-term monitoring during the breeding season. These measures aim to improve the quality of critical grassland habitats and enhance the long-term prospects for the Lesser Florican. This initiative reflects BNHS's continued commitment to science-based conservation and collaborative action to safeguard India's threatened grassland habitats for the Lesser Florican. ■

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BNHS Sterilised More Than 2900 FRDs For Black-necked Crane Conservation in Ladakh

During July 2026, BNHS advanced its conservation efforts in Ladakh through biodiversity monitoring, wildlife management, and collaborative engagement with government agencies, the Indian Army, and conservation partners. The month's activities focused on safeguarding the region's unique high-altitude ecosystems while strengthening long-term conservation initiatives across the Changthang and Karakorum Wildlife Sanctuaries. Supported by The Habitats Trust, the BNHS team carried out biodiversity monitoring and conservation surveys across both protected areas.

A key highlight of the month was a courtesy meeting between the BNHS President and Director, the Director and Lead – Terrestrial Conservation at The Habitats Trust, and Shri Madanraj Pande, General Officer Commanding (GoC), 14 Corps, Ladakh. Discussions focused on ongoing conservation initiatives, including the innovative sewage treatment plant installed at Tsog Tsalu, designed to operate in temperatures as low as -50°C , and the Animal Birth Control (ABC) programme for free-ranging dogs (FRDs). The programme is being implemented in collaboration with the Directorate of Animal Husbandry and with the support of the Indian Army.

To further improve the effectiveness of the ABC programme, BNHS proposed the establishment of a 200×200 metre enclosure within an Army camp to facilitate the safe feeding and capture of free-ranging dogs for sterilisation. The GoC assured continued support for controlling free-ranging dog populations and conserving the region's threatened wildlife, particularly the Black-necked Crane – an iconic high-altitude wetland bird whose breeding success can be affected by increasing dog populations.

The team also met with senior officials of the Forest Department, including the Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (APCCF), the Divisional Forest Officer (Headquarters), and the Wildlife Warden, Leh, to advance the preparation of management plans for the Changthang and Karakorum Wildlife Sanctuaries. A revised draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for this important initiative was submitted during the visit.

On the ground, BNHS worked with the Canine Control and Care, Pune (CCC) team to sterilise 25 free-ranging dogs in Hanle village, an internationally important habitat for the Black-necked Crane and the elusive Pallas's Cat. The programme covered three Army units in the village, while local residents were also engaged through awareness sessions highlighting the importance of responsible dog management for wildlife conservation. ■



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CZA Highlights JCBC Pinjore Achievement during CZA meeting

The Jatayu Conservation Breeding Centre (JCBC), Pinjore, Haryana showcased its conservation achievements at the Central Zoo Authority (CZA) meeting held in Coimbatore on July 9, 2026. The presentation highlighted the Centre's continued efforts to recover India's critically endangered vultures through science-based conservation and collaborative action.

Dr Sachin Ranade presented the JCBC's Annual Progress Report during the meeting, which was chaired by Hon'ble Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Bhupender Yadav, in the presence of Hon'ble Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Kirti Vardhan Singh.

The report outlined key milestones achieved in the conservation breeding programme, highlighting ongoing efforts to strengthen populations of India's threatened vulture species. It also emphasised the importance of long-term scientific research, effective management, and partnerships in securing the future of these vital scavengers, which play a crucial role in maintaining healthy ecosystems. ■



Arunachal Pradesh Forest Officials Visit BNHS to Strengthen Collaboration

Senior officers from the Department of Environment, Forests & Climate Change, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, visited the BNHS, Mumbai, on July 3, 2026, to explore opportunities for strengthening collaboration in biodiversity conservation, research, and knowledge sharing.

During the visit, Shri Millo Tasser, IFS, Chief Conservator of Forests, East Arunachal Circle (EAC), Tezu; Shri Prem Kumar, IFS, Deputy Conservator of Forests (Wildlife & Biodiversity); and Shri Mito Rumi, APFS, Divisional Forest Officer, Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary, Roing, toured the BNHS Collections Department to gain insights into its invaluable natural history collections and their role in supporting research and conservation. They also explored the BNHS Library, one of India's premier repositories of biodiversity literature, and also discussed opportunities for developing publications that could support the conservation and outreach initiatives of the Arunachal Pradesh Forest Department.

The visit concluded with an interaction with the BNHS Director, who presented an overview of the Society's history, mission, and ongoing conservation programmes across the country. The discussions highlighted the importance of collaborative partnerships, scientific knowledge, and effective communication in addressing conservation challenges and promoting the sustainable management of India's rich natural heritage. ■



Awareness Programme Introduces Trainees to Bird Conservation and Wetland Ecology in Karnataka

The BNHS conducted an awareness, orientation, and sensitisation programme for trainees at the Horticulture Training Centre, Malvi, highlighting the importance of bird conservation, wetland ecosystems, and the organisation's ongoing conservation initiatives in the Ankasamudra landscape.

The programme featured interactive sessions on bird ecology, the challenges facing avian conservation, and the scientific significance of bird ringing as a research and monitoring tool. Participants also witnessed a live demonstration of bird trapping and ringing, including the safe ringing of a Large Grey Babbler, offering valuable insights into the field techniques used by ornithologists to study bird populations and movements. The hands-on experience generated enthusiastic participation, with trainees actively engaging in discussions and learning about the role of scientific research in biodiversity conservation. ■



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Training Session at BNHS Bird Migration Centre, Point Calimere

The BNHS Bird Migration Study Centre at Point Calimere conducted a training programme on July 3, 2026 for 77 second-year B.Sc. (Hons.) Forestry students and faculty members from the Forest College and Research Institute, Mettupalayam. The session provided participants with valuable insights into bird migration research and the importance of long-term ecological monitoring.

The programme introduced students to BNHS's ongoing conservation initiatives, with a special focus on bird migration studies and scientific monitoring techniques. Participants observed demonstrations of bird marking equipment and learned about the methods used to study migratory birds, helping them understand how research contributes to informed conservation planning.

The training also explored the rich bird diversity of Tamil Nadu and highlighted the global significance of the Point Calimere Wetland Complex as a vital stopover and wintering site for migratory shorebirds. Discussions emphasised the ecological importance of wetlands and the need for sustained efforts to conserve these habitats and the species they support.

As part of the programme, participants visited the Pump House on a guided field excursion, where they observed the wetland ecosystem firsthand and gained practical insights into its biodiversity and ecological functions. The session was also attended by forest staff from the Vedaranyam Range, providing an opportunity for knowledge exchange between students, researchers, and frontline conservation personnel. ■



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Strengthening Vulture Conservation Through Community Partnerships and Capacity Building in Assam

The BNHS continued to expand its Vulture Safe Zone (VSZ) programme across Assam during July 2026 through a series of community outreach initiatives, stakeholder engagements, institutional collaborations, and capacity-building activities. In all, around nine community meetings and four meetings with forest staff were conducted in Assam in July.

Community Outreach Builds Local Support: Community awareness programmes were conducted in Kokilamari, Panidihing, and Disangmukh villages of Sivasagar district, reaching 115 community members. Led by Mr SthitaPragyan Mallik and Mr Hemanta Buragohain, the sessions highlighted the ecological role of vultures, the threats they face, and the importance of local participation in conservation.

In Biswanath district, Mr Gitartha Borah organised six additional awareness programmes, engaging 211 community members. These sessions encouraged local communities to actively support the protection of vulture habitats and contribute to conservation efforts within the Vulture Safe Zone.



Strengthening Partnerships with the Forest Department: BNHS also strengthened collaboration with government agencies through a series of advocacy meetings. Discussions with the Range Officer of Garajan Range in Laokhowa–Burhachapori Wildlife Sanctuary focused on enhancing coordination for implementing conservation activities within the Vulture Safe Zone.

In Sivasagar, meetings were held with officials from the Demow Beat Office and Panidihing Beat Office to strengthen Forest Department participation in vulture conservation programmes. An additional meeting with Ms Queen Gogoi, Circle Officer, Demow, explored opportunities for greater interdepartmental support for conservation initiatives.

To enhance public awareness during the monsoon, the BNHS team also supported the installation of flood awareness hoardings at strategic locations across Biswanath, promoting wildlife conservation and preparedness during the flood season.

VCBC Rani Hosts Conservation Partners: The Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre (VCBC), Rani, welcomed several visiting delegations during the month, providing a platform to showcase ongoing conservation and breeding initiatives.

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On July 1, officials from State CAMPA and the Auditing Division of the Assam Forest Department, accompanied by the Rani Forest Ranger and forest staff, visited the centre. Dr Sachin Ranade presented the captive vulture conservation breeding programme and the ongoing vulture reintroduction initiative in Assam.

A second scientific delegation visited on July 8, comprising Dr Reena Arora from the ICAR–National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources, Haryana, along with senior scientists from the ICAR–National Research Centre on Pig, Assam. The visitors were briefed on the centre’s breeding programme, conservation activities, and plans for vulture recovery in the state.

On July 15, representatives from the Balipara Foundation and Healing Wildlife toured the facility. Guided by Mr Aniket Pawar, Biologist at VCBC Rani, the delegation learned about the captive breeding programme, the Vulture Safe Zone initiative, and preparations for the release of captive-bred Slender-billed Vultures. Discussions also explored opportunities for future conservation collaboration.



Building the Next Generation of Conservationists: VCBC Rani continued to serve as an important centre for student training and research through its internship programme.

A group of 14 students from D.K. College, Mirza completed a three-week internship from July 6–25, receiving practical training in vulture identification, behavioural observations, field surveys, and scientific report writing before presenting their findings at the end of the programme.

Another batch of 15 students from Dudhnoi College, Goalpara, began field studies on butterflies, bird surveys, and monitoring the use of veterinary NSAIDs, following an orientation visit to VCBC on July 1. The centre also hosted individual interns and students. Mr Bhaskar Bhuiyan, an M.Sc. Botany student from Rajiv Gandhi University, contributed to behavioural data management until July 17, while Ms Garima Rai from St Clare School and Mr Rahul Rohan Paul, a journalism student from Tezpur University, visited the centre for academic projects and case-study work. ■



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July 26, 2026

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- Vivipary: Seeds sprout on the parent tree
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Why Mangroves are Important for Nature and Environment?

- Coastal Protection
- High Biodiversity
- Nursery Ground for Marine Life
- Water Purification
- Climate Change mitigation (Carbon Sink)

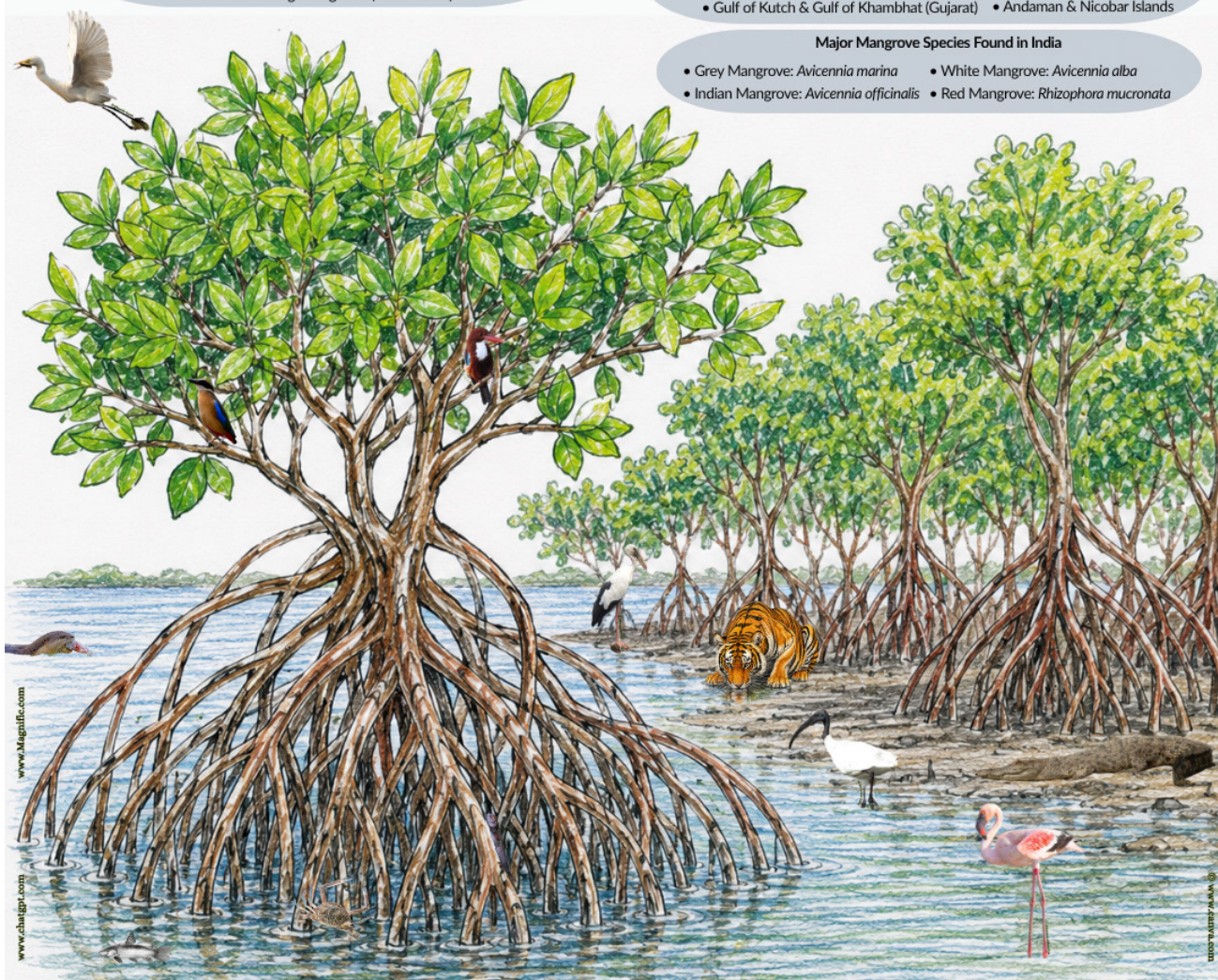
- Salt-tolerant trees and shrubs
- Found in tropical and subtropical coastal intertidal zones
- Thrive in brackish and saline waters
- Adapted to muddy, low-oxygen coastal soils

Major Mangrove Forest in India

- Sundarbans (West Bengal)
- Bhitarkanika (Odisha)
- Godavari & Krishna Delta (Andhra Pradesh)
- Pichavaram (Tamil Nadu)
- Maharashtra (e.g., Mumbai, Raigad, Thane)
- Muthupet (Tamil Nadu)
- Gulf of Kutch & Gulf of Khambhat (Gujarat)
- Andaman & Nicobar Islands

Major Mangrove Species Found in India

- Grey Mangrove: *Avicennia marina*
- White Mangrove: *Avicennia alba*
- Indian Mangrove: *Avicennia officinalis*
- Red Mangrove: *Rhizophora mucronata*



BNHS-EIACP Releases Mangrove Awareness Poster on International Mangrove Day

To mark the International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem on July 26, 2026, the BNHS-EIACP released a special awareness poster highlighting the ecological importance of mangrove ecosystems. The poster showcases the vital role mangroves play in maintaining healthy coastal environments. ■



International Mangrove Conservation Day (26 July)

To mark International Mangrove Conservation Day (26 July 2026), BNHS organised a Mangrove Conservation Awareness Seminar at LSPM's Shree S.M. Vadake High School, Kihim, Raigad District of Maharashtra, on 25 July 2026. The programme aimed to raise awareness among students about the ecological importance of mangroves and the need for biodiversity conservation.

Mr Nandkishor Dudhe, Senior Programme Officer, BNHS-EIACP, introduced BNHS and its conservation initiatives. Mr Rohan Chavan, Project Associate, conducted an informative session on the mangrove species of Maharashtra, their ecological significance, and the wildlife associated with these ecosystems.

The seminar was attended by 147 students along with the Principal, Vice Principal, faculty members, and teaching staff. Copies of the *Buceros* newsletter published by the BNHS-EIACP were distributed to encourage environmental learning. The programme concluded with an interactive discussion during which Principal Ms Suvegga Patil appreciated BNHS's conservation efforts and expressed the school's continued support for future environmental awareness initiatives. ■

CEC Goregaon Connecting People with Nature Through Conservation Education

Throughout July, the BNHS Conservation Education Centre (CEC) organised a diverse range of nature-based programmes that encouraged participants of all ages to explore biodiversity, develop practical conservation skills, and build a stronger connection with the natural world. From guided nature walks to teacher training and sustainability workshops, the month's activities reflected BNHS's commitment to making conservation learning engaging, accessible, and experiential.



- On July 5, participants joined *Beneath the Canopy – A Flora & Fungi Exploration*, a guided walk that revealed the remarkable diversity of seasonal plants and fungi that emerge during the monsoon. Led by BNHS naturalists, the programme introduced participants to the ecological importance of these often-overlooked organisms and highlighted the intricate relationships that sustain healthy forest ecosystems.



- A guided walk, *Sálim Ali Point Trail*, was held on July 11, offering students, nature enthusiasts, and photographers an opportunity to experience the rich biodiversity of the BNHS Nature Reserve. Participants observed a variety of trees, butterflies, insects, reptiles, and birds while gaining a deeper understanding of the ecological significance of the Reserve.

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- As part of the BlackRock CSR initiative, BNHS-CEC organised a Bird House Making and Cloth Bag Making workshop on July 18. The interactive programme introduced participants to simple yet meaningful conservation actions by constructing bird houses from cardboard to support urban wildlife and transforming old T-shirts into reusable cloth bags. The workshop promoted sustainable living while encouraging participants to reduce waste through creative upcycling.



- On July 16 and 17, the CEC welcomed 250 students of Class 10 from Aadarsh Vidyalaya, Chembur, for immersive school nature trails. Guided through the Reserve, students explored its rich flora and fauna while learning about biodiversity, habitat conservation, and the importance of protecting natural ecosystems. The field experience encouraged curiosity and meaningful discussions on environmental stewardship.

- The Basics of Monsoon Birding programme, held on July 19, introduced participants to the techniques and ethics of birdwatching during the rainy season. Guided by BNHS naturalists, attendees learned how to identify birds in monsoon habitats while gaining a greater appreciation of seasonal birdlife and responsible wildlife observation.



- A Teachers Training Workshop conducted on July 25 brought together educators to explore innovative approaches to environmental education aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The half-day programme featured interactive activities such as Nature Bingo, habitat and food-web exercises, nature art, and environmental games. Teachers were also introduced to citizen science platforms including iNaturalist, eBird, and SeasonWatch, along with practical, low-cost sustainability initiatives such as plastic and water audits. Participants received activity resources designed to help integrate local biodiversity into classroom learning. ■



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← Scan to register



International Tiger Day Celebrated in Bhagalpur, Bihar

To mark International Tiger Day, the Bhagalpur Forest Division, with technical and logistical support from the BNHS team at the Bird Ringing and Monitoring Station (BRMS), Bhagalpur, organised a wildlife awareness programme and quiz competition for Class IX and X students of D.A.V. Public School, Bhagalpur on July 29, 2026.

The event brought together 42 participants, including 30 students, two teachers, and 10 forest officials, to celebrate the importance of tiger conservation and inspire the next generation of environmental stewards. Centred on the theme “Tiger and its Conservation in India,” the quiz encouraged students to explore the biology, behaviour, habitat requirements, and geographical distribution of tigers. Participants also learned about India’s major tiger reserves, the threats facing tiger populations, and the country’s ongoing conservation efforts.

Beyond testing knowledge, the programme highlighted the tiger’s role as an apex predator – a species at the top of the food chain whose presence helps maintain healthy forest ecosystems. ■

DONATE TO HELP PRESERVE E. P. GEE'S

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The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) Library & Archives has initiated the urgent digitization and preservation of E. P. Gee's wildlife film legacy.



Edward Pritchard Gee was a pioneering naturalist, tea planter, and dedicated conservationist. He served on the Indian Board for Wildlife and was a key member of the BNHS Advisory Committee, where he actively championed the Society's mission.



Currently, 31 films have been identified as requiring immediate digitization to prevent further degradation. The estimated cost for this project is ₹500,000.



We have already secured an initial donation of ₹50,000 from a dedicated wildlife enthusiast, but we need your help to bridge the gap.



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Estimated cost for digitization
and preservation of 31 films

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BASIC COURSE IN FIELD ORNITHOLOGY AND BIRD MIGRATION STUDIES

This course aims to create a network of birders to support conservation along the Central Asian Flyway. The training would help us to create a network of voluntary forces to contribute to bird monitoring and bird ringing. This workshop focuses mainly on bird migration study techniques including bird banding, bird population monitoring, bird identification and habitat observations through classroom sessions and field visits.

VENUE:

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

TOPICS COVERED:

Bird Identification; Counting Techniques; Migration and Flyways; Global Significance of Bird Marking Studies; Case Studies – Indian Skimmer Conservation/Vulture Conservation /Grassland Conservation; Demonstration of Bird Ringing

FIELD TRIPS:

Great Vedaranyam Swamp; Point Calimere Wildlife Sanctuary; Beach, Siruthalaikadu mudflats

REGISTRATION FEE (PER PERSON):

Rs. 11,000/- (for non-members) ; Rs. 9,500/- (for existing BNHS Members)

Fee includes tent accommodation -Two persons per tent; Facilities: cots, fan, charging points, pillow and blankets, food, field visits, entry fee etc.

Eligibility: No age limit, anyone with an interest can participate.

Scan for Enquiry Form

Payment: The payment details will be shared once the enquiry form is submitted for registration.

Registration closes 7 days before start date of each batch!

CONTACT US:

Mr. S. Sivakumar; Email: s.swaminathan@bnhs.org; Mob: 94088 72745

Mr. Paul Antony B; Email: bmscpointcalimere@bnhs.org

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2026	2027
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Batch 2 30 October – 1 November	Batch 6 08 – 10 January
Batch 3 27 – 29 November	
Batch 4 18 – 20 December	



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CONTACT US

Bombay Natural History Society

Hornbill House, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Road, Mumbai 400 001.

Email: director@bnhs.org; Web: www.bnhs.org; Mob: +91 91372 73106

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