



# BOMBAY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

## *From the* DIRECTOR DESK



Dear Members,

World Environment Day was celebrated across the country on June 5<sup>th</sup> through several events and activities. In this issue, you will read about a number of innovative programmes organised by BNHS staff on this occasion in different parts of the country.

I was fortunate to share the dais with Dr S.K. Verghese, Deputy Inspector General, Indian Coast Guard; Dr Mahesh Kumar Farejiya, Deputy Director General (Engineering), Fishery Survey of India (FSI); Dr Manas Kumar Sinha, FSI; and Dr Soniya Sukumaran, CSIR–National Institute of Oceanography, to discuss the critical issue of “Navigating the Marine Debris Crisis: Science, Impact, and Strategies” at the World Trade Centre Complex, Mumbai. I thank the Fishery Survey of India (FSI) for bringing together all the important stakeholders to deliberate on this vital issue. I hope to see a common strategy, based on our collective marine research, being developed through existing legal and statutory mechanisms to address this growing challenge.

Last year, I informed you about the progress of the renovation of Hornbill House. The work on the second floor, including the RCC slab, was completed, and the library resumed its operations. Renovation of the first floor began in March 2026, and I am happy to share that we expect this floor to be ready by the end of this month.

The work of establishing the BNHS Education and Training Centre at Bhis, Tehsil Chimur, Chandrapur district, Maharashtra, began in March 2025. Within a year, we successfully completed the construction of two large buildings covering a total built-up area of 14,000 sq. ft. Both buildings now have RCC slabs, and tiling work is currently in progress. This project has been funded by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). We have also begun establishing a genome sequencing laboratory at the research centre and have already recruited two scientists. My sincere thanks to Teva Pharmaceuticals for their generous financial support.

Our vulture conservation programme continues to set new milestones in India. An Indian Vulture *Gyps indicus*, also known as the Long-billed Vulture (X67), released in Maharashtra’s Melghat Tiger Reserve in January 2026, flew an extraordinary distance of 3,334 km before reaching Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan. During its journey, it also visited Satpura Tiger Reserve near Pachmarhi and Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh, now well known as the home of India’s reintroduced cheetahs. As I write this, the bird has returned to Kuno National Park.

Forest staff working across different states are our true foot soldiers, serving tirelessly day and night. They need continuous capacity enhancement to keep pace with advancing fields such as avian research. This month, BNHS organised a series of capacity-building training programmes in Bhagalpur and Munger, Bihar, where participants received both classroom and field-based training on the breeding ecology of sandbar-nesting birds.

BNHS collaborates with several NGOs on important national and international conservation issues. During the Mumbai Climate Week meeting organised by Project Mumbai at Andheri, around 10–12 NGOs working on coastal issues came together to discuss a common strategy for addressing climate-related threats. I shared BNHS’s vision for climate action along the west coast seascape. All participating organisations resolved to work collectively on the identified issues and threats.

The plantation programme on Tata Power land near Mulshi, Pune, Maharashtra, has been highly successful. We have already achieved the target of planting 90,000 saplings across 14.7 acres. The native species are now benefiting from the monsoon rains, which will significantly improve their survival.

We must recognise the immense potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI). BNHS has begun leveraging artificial intelligence and computer vision to translate research into effective conservation action. We have established a dedicated IT Cell that is helping us adopt the latest digital technologies to improve response time and support informed conservation decisions.

Using these technologies, we have initiated the digitisation of BNHS’s historic bird migration records. Many of these records date back to the 1940s and 1950s and contain valuable handwritten information on both sides of the

data sheets, often recorded in faint ink. These documents required highly accurate digitisation to improve accessibility, searchability, and analysis. BNHS has successfully used AI and machine learning to convert these handwritten records into searchable digital formats with remarkable accuracy.

An efficient workflow has been established, comprising high-resolution scanning to capture even faint handwritten details; systematic organisation of extracted information into individual spreadsheets with matching names and numbers; and AI/ML-assisted data extraction using Optical Character Recognition (OCR), followed by rigorous manual quality checks.

This initiative has enabled us to build a future-ready database for querying and advanced analytics. We are also visualising bird-ringing and resighting data on interactive maps. I am confident that you will enjoy these pictorial representations very soon.

The BNHS Central Marketing Department (CMD) and the EIACP Division are quietly reaching out to institutions across Mumbai to promote BNHS and its mission. During the month, CMD successfully organised 18 exhibitions across the city, engaging nearly 10,000 people in conversations on biodiversity and conservation. These initiatives have strengthened public awareness of environmental issues while showcasing the Society's work in research, conservation, and education.

We expect to receive copies of the much-awaited book *Mammals of India* by Dr A.J.T. Johnsingh and Dr P.O. Nameer by 20 July. Around 300 copies have already been sold under the pre-publication offer. The book continues to be available at a special discounted pre-publication price. You can book your copy using this link [https://shop.bnhs.org/product\\_details/341](https://shop.bnhs.org/product_details/341).

This month, the BNHS team also achieved several important milestones at Ujani by establishing hatcheries for indigenous fish species and cultivating important aquatic plant species required for future eco-restoration initiatives.

As you may recall, in the previous issue we appealed for support to digitise E.P. Gee's invaluable wildlife films, a project that requires dedicated funding. I sincerely thank all those who responded positively, including Dr K. Ullas Karanth.

While finalising this newsletter, I learnt that on June 26, the Wildlife Department of Ladakh imposed a penalty of ₹50,000 each on four vehicles found violating the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. These tourists had engaged in illegal off-roading by driving through ecologically sensitive lakes and river streams in Ladakh. Acting under the directions of Lieutenant Governor Shri V.K. Saxena, the Ladakh Administration has, for the first time, initiated prosecution and imposed penalties on offenders for such violations. This is a welcome step towards protecting these fragile ecosystems.

In another deeply disturbing incident, on June 28, 2026, nearly 200 encroachers ambushed 40 Forest Department personnel in the Amakhujri area of the Gudi Range, Khandwa district, Madhya Pradesh. The attackers pelted the officials with stones using slingshots, severely injuring several personnel. One forest guard had his ear sliced off, others suffered serious head injuries, and more than ten staff members were grievously wounded. Investigators found that the attackers had pre-planted nail-studded wooden and pipe traps along forest tracks to puncture vehicle tyres and prevent the patrol team from escaping. With no mobile network in the area, the trapped personnel were unable to call for help. We must strongly condemn this brutal attack. I urge BNHS members to write to the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, requesting stringent action against the culprits and stronger protection for our forest staff.

If you are not already following BNHS on social media, I encourage you to do so and stay updated with our latest activities and conservation initiatives on a daily basis.

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.

If you have not yet completed the Yearbook form for Life Members, you can do so here: <https://forms.gle/12gPTSyTs9P2khue7>

For assistance, feel free to reach out: Central Marketing: [cmd@bnhs.org](mailto:cmd@bnhs.org); Membership: [membership@bnhs.org](mailto:membership@bnhs.org)

Programmes: [programmes@bnhs.org](mailto:programmes@bnhs.org); Conservation Education Centre: [cec-mumbai@bnhs.org](mailto: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](mailto:g.naidu@bnhs.org).

Thank you for staying connected with us. For any suggestions or queries, I am always available at [director@bnhs.org](mailto:director@bnhs.org).

Kishor Rithe

Director, Bombay Natural History Society

# Captive-bred Vulture Travels 3,334 km from Melghat to Ranthambore (Rajasthan)

A captive-bred Indian (Long-billed) Vulture released in Maharashtra's Melghat Tiger Reserve has completed an extraordinary 3,334-kilometre journey across central India, offering encouraging evidence that conservation efforts are helping this critically endangered species adapt and thrive in the wild. The remarkable movement of the five-year-old female vulture, known as X67, marks an important milestone for India's ongoing vulture recovery programme.

Released on January 2, 2026, from the Somthana Range of the Akot Wildlife Division in Melghat Tiger Reserve, X67 was one of 15 captive-bred vultures reintroduced into the wild. For nearly four months after its release, the bird remained close to the release site, gradually adapting to natural conditions and learning to forage independently before beginning its long-distance dispersal.

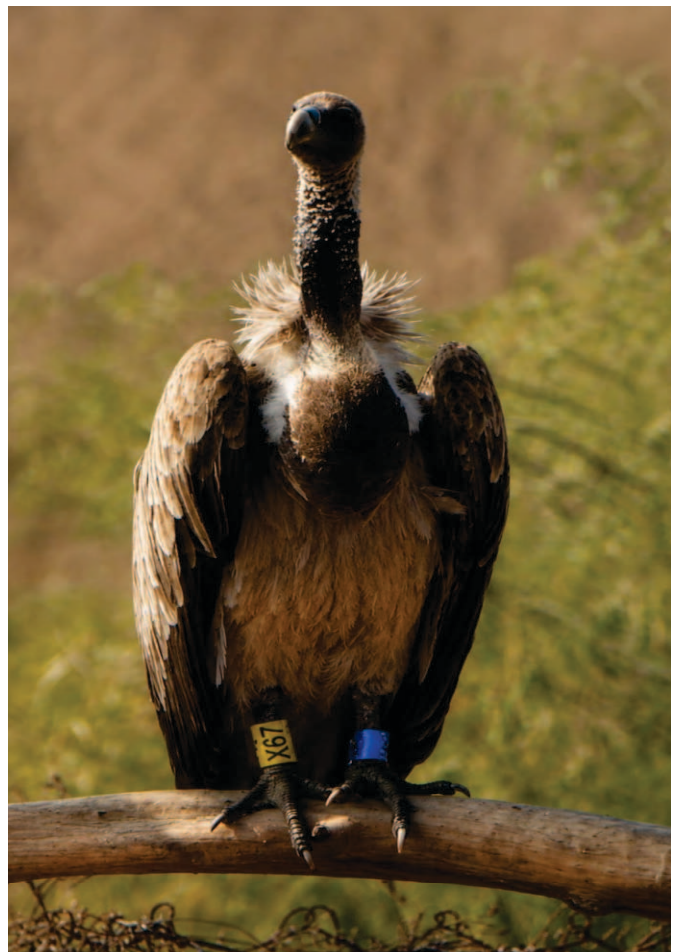
According to Bhaskar Das, Senior Field Biologist at the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), X67 left Melghat on May 28 and travelled through Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan over 27 days before reaching Ranthambore Tiger Reserve. Along the way, it made temporary stops at Satpura Tiger Reserve, the Bhopal region, and Kuno National Park.

The journey provides valuable insights into the behaviour of captive-bred vultures after their release. Most significantly, X67 survived entirely in the wild without supplementary feeding, demonstrating its ability to locate food, navigate unfamiliar landscapes, and undertake extensive movements independently.

X67's movement suggests vultures are using India's network of tiger reserves and protected areas, where healthy populations of large carnivores provide naturally available carrion – an essential food source for these scavenging birds. This underscores the important role that well-managed protected areas play in supporting not only flagship species but also vital scavengers that help maintain healthy ecosystems.

To monitor their movements, all 15 released vultures were fitted with blue leg rings carrying unique identification numbers, indicating they were ringed in India, with the letter "M" denoting Maharashtra as the release site. Each bird is also equipped with a solar-powered tracking tag that enables scientists to monitor its movements, survival, and habitat use. The monitoring programme is being led by BNHS field biologists Bhaskar Das and Sooryajith under the guidance of Deputy Conservator of Forests Rahul Tolia (IFS).

The successful journey of X67 represents a significant step forward for India's vulture conservation programme. It demonstrates that captive-bred vultures can successfully adapt to life in the wild and highlights the value of long-term scientific monitoring, strong institutional partnerships, and protected landscapes in securing the future of one of the country's most threatened bird species. ■

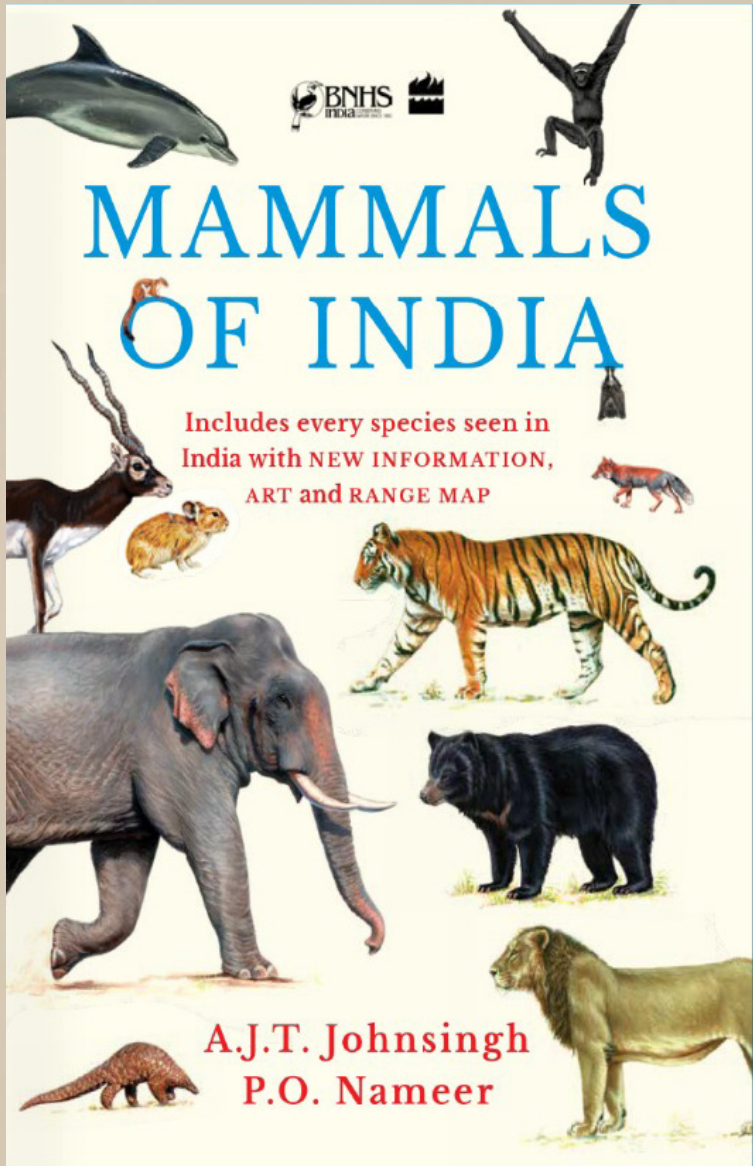




# MAMMALS OF INDIA

(Co-published by BNHS & HarperCollins)

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



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## Strengthening Local Capacity to Protect Sandbar-Nesting Birds Along the Ganga in Bihar

The BNHS conducted a series of capacity-building training programmes in Bhagalpur (June 11 and 13, 2026) and Munger (June 15, 2026), Bihar, to strengthen local efforts for the conservation of the endangered Indian Skimmer and other sandbar-nesting birds along the lower Ganga. The initiative focused on equipping frontline conservation stakeholders with the knowledge and practical skills needed to protect these vulnerable riverine species and their nesting habitats.

The training programmes brought together 69 participants, including Ganga Praharis, Dolphin Mitras, and frontline staff from the Forest Department, all of whom play an important role in safeguarding the biodiversity of the Ganga river ecosystem.

Participants received training on the breeding ecology of sandbar-nesting birds, the conservation challenges they face, and practical approaches to protecting their nesting sites. The sessions also covered habitat management, nest protection techniques, and standardised methods for monitoring nests and collecting field data. Hands-on field exercises provided participants with practical experience in survey protocols and monitoring techniques along the river. The programme focussed on improving the long-term protection of nesting habitats between Munger and Kahalgaon by strengthening the capacity of local communities and frontline conservation personnel. ■



## Strengthening Wetland Bird Conservation in the Ankasamudra–Tungabhadra (Karnataka) Landscape Through Collaborative Bird Ringing

A major milestone for wetland conservation was achieved on June 18, 2026 with the launch of the first scientific wetland bird-ringing programme in the Ankasamudra–Tungabhadra landscape, Karnataka. Led by the BNHS, the initiative marks an important step towards building long-term scientific knowledge to support the conservation of the region's rich birdlife and wetland ecosystems.

The programme was inaugurated under the supervision of Dr Sujit Narwade, Deputy Director, BNHS and Project Lead, with technical oversight from Dr P. Sathiyaselvam, Deputy Director and Head of Wetland Birds and Bird Migration Studies at BNHS. The initiative was implemented in close collaboration with the Karnataka Forest Department and Team Green HBH, whose local coordination and field support were instrumental to its success.

As part of the programme, the BNHS field team received practical training in bird extraction, safe handling, ringing, and scientific data collection from their colleague Mr Paul Anthony, Senior Research Fellow and a bird-ringing expert from Point Calimere. Field operations were carried out across Vadaka Lake, the Tungabhadra Backwaters, Ankasamudra Lake, and the Malvi Dam Backwaters. During the programme, 85 birds were ringed, including 11 waterbirds, 73 ground-nesting birds, and one land bird. The team also recorded extensive breeding activity among ground-nesting birds in the Tungabhadra Backwaters, reinforcing the site's importance as a critical seasonal breeding habitat.

By establishing the first scientific bird-ringing programme in the landscape, this initiative lays a strong foundation for long-term research on bird migration, breeding ecology, survival, and population dynamics. Additionally, it strengthens partnerships between scientists, government agencies, and local conservation groups, creating a collaborative framework to safeguard the Ankasamudra–Tungabhadra wetlands and the diverse birdlife they support. ■





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# World Environment Day Celebrations

The BNHS celebrated World Environment Day 2026 through a series of educational and community-focused activities across India. Scientists and staff organized interactive sessions, nature trails, and creative competitions, engaging participants of all ages and inspiring environmental stewardship. Observed annually on June 5, World Environment Day, established by the United Nations, highlights the importance of protecting the environment for human well-being and sustainable development. The 2026 celebrations reinforced the message that conserving nature requires collective action, encouraging individuals, institutions, and communities to adopt sustainable practices.

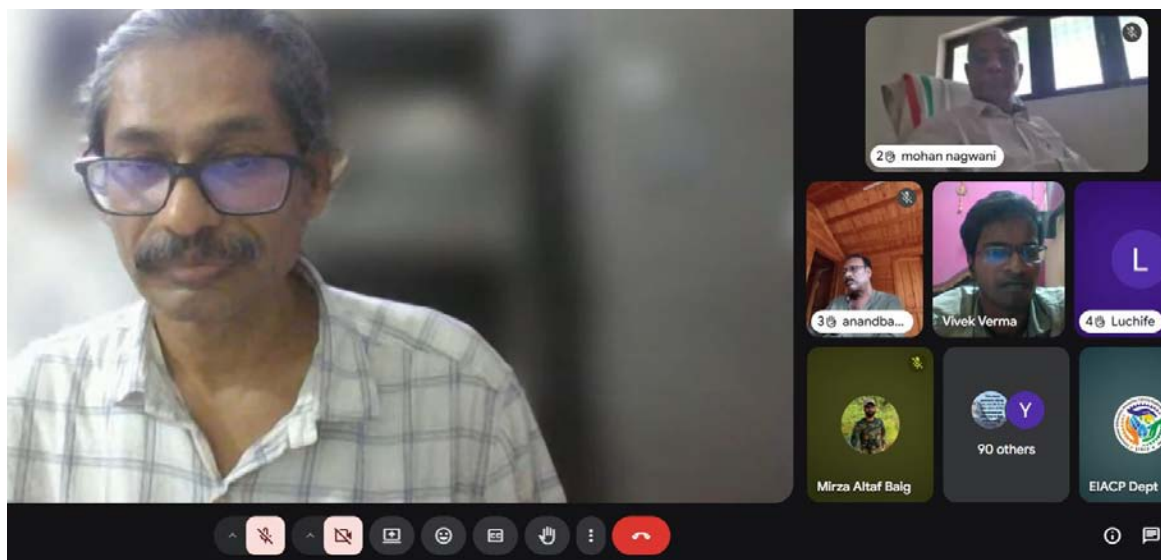
## World Environment Day Celebrated in Hagaribommanahalli, Karnataka

The BNHS, in collaboration with Team Green HBH, organised an environmental awareness programme at Poorna Pragna School in Hagaribommanahalli, Karnataka. The event brought together around 50 primary school students, encouraging them to explore the importance of nature conservation and their role in protecting the environment.

Designed to engage young learners, the programme introduced students to key environmental issues through interactive discussions, storytelling, and wildlife-themed drama activities. These hands-on sessions helped simplify important concepts, including the need to conserve natural resources, adopt sustainable practices, and protect local biodiversity.

By encouraging curiosity and active participation, the programme fostered a deeper appreciation for the natural world while inspiring students to become responsible environmental stewards. Through initiatives such as these, BNHS and Team Green HBH continue to strengthen community engagement and nurture the next generation of conservation champions. ■





## BNHS-EIACP Marks World Environment Day with Knowledge Sharing and Public Engagement

The BNHS Environmental Information, Awareness, Capacity Building and Livelihood Programme (EIACP) organised a series of outreach and capacity-building initiatives that engaged diverse audiences across India. Through webinars, workshops, awareness campaigns, educational resources, and interactive exhibitions, the programme promoted biodiversity conservation, healthy lifestyles, and public participation in environmental stewardship.

**Webinar Highlights India's Vultures and Conservation Efforts:** On June 3, 2026, Mr Sachin Ranade, Deputy Director, BNHS, delivered an online webinar titled 'Vultures of India and Their Current Status', attended by 122 participants. The session provided an overview of India's vulture diversity, their ecological importance as nature's scavengers, population trends, and the key threats responsible for their decline. Participants also learned about BNHS's long-standing efforts in vulture conservation, including captive breeding and release programmes, Vulture Conservation Breeding Centres (VCBCs), pharmacy surveys to reduce harmful veterinary drugs, and future conservation priorities.

**Online Quiz Encourages Healthy and Sustainable Living:** An online quiz competition on 'Adopt Healthy Lifestyles' attracted an enthusiastic response from across the country, with 222 participants, including 112 students. The nationwide participation reflected growing public interest in adopting healthier and more sustainable lifestyles while reinforcing the importance of individual action in supporting environmental well-being.

**Educational Poster Showcases the Northern Shoveler:** As part of its knowledge dissemination efforts, BNHS-EIACP released an informative poster on the Northern Shoveler, a migratory duck that visits Indian wetlands during the winter season. The poster introduced readers to the species' distinctive spoon-shaped bill, wetland habitats, feeding behaviour, breeding ecology, migration, threats, and conservation needs, helping raise awareness about the importance of protecting India's wetlands and migratory bird populations.

**Naturalist Training Workshop Builds Field Skills:** As part of its Capacity Building Programme, BNHS-EIACP organised a one-day Naturalist Training Workshop on June 7, 2026 at the BNHS-Conservation Education Centre (CEC), Goregaon. The workshop began with a guided field visit along the Karvi Trail, where participants recorded 17 bird species, including the Rock Eagle-Owl, while gaining practical experience in identifying local flora and fauna. Participants were also introduced to the biodiversity and educational facilities of the CEC campus by Mr Kartheek Thevar, Education Officer, BNHS.





Technical sessions conducted by Mr Nandkishor Dudhe, Programme Officer, BNHS-EIACP, focused on bird identification techniques and the fundamentals of ornithology. This was followed by an introductory session on mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and insects by Ms Natasha Girkar, Information Officer, BNHS-EIACP. In the concluding session, Dr Parvish Pandya, Governing Council Member, BNHS, discussed outdoor ethics, responsible wildlife observation, field safety, and leadership skills for aspiring naturalists. The workshop strengthened participants' field identification skills while encouraging responsible nature observation and greater involvement in biodiversity conservation. ■

## BNHS-CEC nurtures future conservation champions on World Environment Day

The BNHS-Conservation Education Centre (CEC), Mumbai, organised a series of educational programmes designed to foster environmental awareness and strengthen connections with nature. Through guided nature trails, interactive learning sessions, storytelling, and capacity-building workshops, participants of all ages had the opportunity to explore the rich biodiversity of the BNHS Nature Reserve while gaining a deeper understanding of wildlife, ecosystems, and the importance of conservation.

**Inspiring Young Nature Enthusiasts:** A nature trail was organised for 30 students from A.B. Goregaokar School on June 5, 2026. The programme introduced students to the rich biodiversity of the BNHS Nature Reserve while encouraging them to develop a deeper appreciation for the natural world. During the trail, students explored a variety of native plant species and learned about the importance of conserving natural habitats. The outdoor experience was followed by an interactive presentation on the biodiversity of the BNHS-CEC, where participants discovered how natural forests function, the different layers that make up forest ecosystems, and the seasonal plants and wildlife they support. By combining field-based learning with interactive discussions, the programme helped students strengthen their understanding of biodiversity and the importance of environmental stewardship.





**Nature, Stories, and Conservation:** CEC-Mumbai, in collaboration with the Programmes Department, organised a special nature trail and book reading session on June 6, 2026, offering participants a unique blend of outdoor learning and nature-inspired storytelling. The programme began with a guided walk through the BNHS Nature Reserve, where participants observed local biodiversity and experienced the tranquillity of the reserve while learning about the value of conserving natural ecosystems. The trail was followed by an engaging book reading session led by renowned author Katie Bagli, whose captivating storytelling encouraged participants to explore the wonders of nature and develop a deeper appreciation for wildlife and conservation. ■

### **Workshop Explores Science and Strategies to combat marine debris**

BNHS encouraged Project team members of MTHL and NMIA to participate in the workshop, Navigating the Marine Debris Crisis: Science, Impact, and Strategies, organised by the Fishery Survey of India (FSI) on June 5, 2026 at the World Trade Centre Complex, Mumbai. The workshop brought together scientists, policymakers, academicians, and conservation practitioners to exchange knowledge and identify practical, science-based solutions to one of the most pressing environmental challenges facing our oceans. The event was inaugurated by Dr S.K. Verghese, Deputy Inspector General, Indian Coast Guard, and featured technical sessions by leading experts, including Dr Mahesh Kumar Farejiya and Dr Manas Kumar Sinha (FSI), Mr Kishor Rithe (BNHS), Dr Soniya Sukumaran (CSIR–National Institute of Oceanography), as well as scientists from ICAR–CIFT, ICAR–CMFRI, the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), and other premier institutions.

During the event, Mr Kishor Rithe, Director, BNHS, emphasised that the existing legal spaces and statutory bodies should be used to address the issue of marine debris. He further recommended that we need to keep the research findings on the impact of marine debris on marine species ready, and the mitigations need to be suggested urgently by using the available legal spaces and through the statutory bodies.





The discussions explored the causes and impacts of marine debris – waste that accumulates in oceans and along coastlines and threatens marine wildlife, fisheries, and coastal communities. Experts highlighted a range of solutions, including sustainable ocean engineering, improved harbour waste management, responsible disposal of abandoned fishing gear, circular economy approaches that reduce waste, and community-led initiatives to prevent marine litter.

For the MTHL and NMIA Project teams, participation in the workshop provided valuable exposure to emerging research, innovative management practices, and collaborative approaches to marine debris management. ■

## **BNHS–Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre Marks World Environment Day in Bhopal**

The BNHS–Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre (VCBC) in Bhopal marked World Environment Day with a tree plantation drive. Held under the global theme, “Inspired by Nature. For Climate. For Our Future.”, the initiative highlighted the vital role of healthy ecosystems in building climate resilience and securing a sustainable future.



The plantation programme brought together Centre staff, who planted native and ecologically valuable tree species across the VCBC campus. Saplings of Amla *Phyllanthus emblica*, Neem *Azadirachta indica*, and Jamun *Syzygium cumini* were selected for their ecological, medicinal, and biodiversity benefits. These species help strengthen local habitats and support wildlife.

Beyond increasing green cover, the initiative reflected the Centre’s broader conservation mission. Tree planting is a practical step towards ecosystem restoration, helping improve habitat quality while reinforcing the importance of nature-based solutions to address environmental and climate-related challenges. Activities such as these also foster environmental awareness and encourage collective action for conservation. ■

## **Celebrating Urban Nature on World Environment Day**

Two nature awareness trails were organised in Pune and Bengaluru, inviting participants to explore the rich biodiversity found within their own cities. The initiative highlighted the ecological value of urban green spaces and encouraged citizens to connect more closely with nature.

In Pune, BNHS member Ranjeet Rane led participants through Vetal Tekdi, one of the city’s most significant natural landscapes. At the same time, BNHS member Girish Gopal Rao guided a trail through Cubbon Park, Bengaluru’s iconic urban green space. Together, the trails showcased the remarkable diversity of wildlife that continues to thrive amidst expanding cities. Participants enjoyed rewarding wildlife sightings at both locations. In Cubbon Park, they observed Indian Flying Foxes (fruit bats), Indian Grey Hornbills, and Ashy Prinias. The Vetal Tekdi trail recorded an impressive 45 bird species, including the Indian Spot-billed



Duck, Spotted Owlet, White-cheeked Barbet, Jungle Myna, and Indian Silverbill, alongside several other resident and migratory birds. By bringing people closer to nature in familiar urban settings, the trails highlighted the importance of protecting city forests and green spaces. These habitats not only provide vital refuge for wildlife but also contribute significantly to the health, well-being, and quality of life of urban communities. ■

## Awareness Stalls Engage Nearly 10,000 People Across Mumbai

To extend the reach of its World Environment Day celebrations, BNHS-EIACP, in collaboration with the Central Marketing Department (CMD), organised and participated in a series of awareness stalls and exhibitions across Mumbai and Navi Mumbai between June 5 and 11, 2026.

The outreach activities were hosted at AllCargo Logistics Ltd., Axis Bank Foundation, Dainik Tarun Bharat, HDFC Ltd. (across four offices), Larsen & Toubro Ltd., RPG Foundation, Tata Consultancy Services (across eight offices), and Tata Power Ltd., , HDFC Bank, the RPG Foundation, the SFC Environmental Awards for Species & Habitats Warriors at Ravindra Natya Mandir, and Axis Bank. Collectively, the events engaged more than 10,000 employees, students, and visitors. Visitors explored BNHS publications and educational materials, including Buceros newsletters and bird conservation posters, while learning about biodiversity conservation, environmental sustainability, and citizen science initiatives such as the Birdle App and Vulture Data Collection App. A Mission LiFE selfie standee further encouraged participants to adopt environmentally responsible lifestyles through everyday actions.

These outreach programmes were coordinated by Mr Nandkishor Dudhe, Ms Natasha Girkar, Mr Niraj Patel, Mr Sandesh Kadam, Mr Amzad Hussain, Mr Chandrahas, Mr Yogesh Dhamnaskar, and the BNHS intern team, demonstrating BNHS's continued commitment to making conservation knowledge accessible to a wider audience. ■







## Strengthening Coastal Climate Action Through Collaboration in Mumbai

**A**s part of Mumbai Climate Week, conservation organisations came together to strengthen collaboration and develop a shared approach to addressing the growing impacts of climate change along Maharashtra's coast. Organised by Project Mumbai in Andheri, the meeting brought together 10–12 representatives from NGOs working on coastal conservation, creating an important platform for dialogue, knowledge sharing, and collective action.

During the meeting, BNHS Director Kishor Rithe presented BNHS's vision for advancing climate action across the West Coast seascape. The discussion highlighted the need for coordinated efforts to tackle shared conservation challenges, including the increasing threats posed by climate change to coastal ecosystems and the communities that depend on them.

Participants identified priority issues requiring joint action and agreed to work collaboratively to develop effective, long-term solutions. ■





# LEADERSHIP COURSE IN BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION JULY 2026 TO MAY 2027

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## Course Fees:

Rs. 14,465(BNHS Member)  
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## Restoring Native Forests in the Mulshi Landscape, Maharashtra

A significant milestone has been achieved in the Tata Power Miyawaki Plantation Initiative, with the successful plantation of 90,000 native plants across 15.9 acres in the Mulshi Lake catchment area, Pune, as of June 30 2026. Implemented through the collaborative efforts of BNHS, Tata Power, and EcoSikh, the initiative marks an important step towards restoring native ecosystems, strengthening biodiversity, and improving the ecological health of the Mulshi landscape.

The plantation features a diverse mix of locally occurring tree, shrub, and climber species selected to support long-term ecosystem restoration. Native trees such as Kuda *Holarrhena pubescens*, Khirni *Manilkara hexandra*, Pipri *Ficus amplissima*, Jamun *Syzygium cumini*, and Mahua *Madhuca longifolia* have been planted alongside mid-sized species including Khumbhi *Careya arborea*, Dhaman *Grewia tiliifolia*, Anjan *Hardwickia binata*, and Awala *Phyllanthus emblica*. The plantation also includes native shrubs such as Jungli Karonda *Carissa spinarum*, Adulsa *Justicia adhatoda*, Nirgundi *Vitex negundo*, and Dikemali *Gardenia resinifera*, as well as the climber Shatavari *Asparagus racemosus*.

By establishing a diverse native forest around Tata Power's hydro reservoirs, the initiative aims to enhance green cover, improve habitat quality for wildlife, and support the long-term resilience of the local ecosystem. Using indigenous plant species helps create healthier, self-sustaining forests that are better adapted to local environmental conditions.

BNHS is providing scientific oversight by monitoring plant survival, growth, and overall plantation performance. This ongoing assessment will help ensure the successful establishment of the native forest and guide adaptive management where needed. ■





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July 2026 to December 2026

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## Content

- Study material
- Field visits
- Field camps
- Webinars & Indoor session



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# DONATE TO HELP PRESERVE E. P. GEE'S

## RARE WILDLIFE FILMS

Be a part of preserving  
India's conservation history.



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.



Your contribution will play a vital role in safeguarding this invaluable conservation heritage, ensuring it remains accessible for future generations.



## DONATE TODAY

Every film we preserve today  
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Estimated cost for digitization  
and preservation of 31 films

## ₹500,000

These films are fragile,  
but their stories  
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Help us preserve them.





## 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 person 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.

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**Payment:** The payment details will be shared once the enquiry form is filled and confirmed the 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

### SCHEDULED BATCHES

| 2026                            | 2027                    |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Batch 1 09 – 11 October         | Batch 5 01 – 03 January |
| Batch 2 30 October – 1 November | Batch 6 08 – 10 January |
| Batch 3 27 – 29 November        |                         |
| Batch 4 18 – 20 December        |                         |





# VCBC-Assam Builds Conservation, Education, and Community Partnerships in Northeast India

The Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre (VCBC), Rani, continued to strengthen vulture conservation efforts across Assam and Meghalaya during June 2026 through education, community engagement, and cross-sector collaboration. The month also marked a significant achievement for Dr Sachin Ranade, Deputy Director and Centre Manager of VCBC Assam, who received the Green Sentinel Award 2026 from Gauhati University in recognition of his outstanding contributions to vulture conservation and the preservation of indigenous folklore in Assam.



Throughout the month, VCBC expanded its outreach by working closely with educational institutions, local communities, and the veterinary sector to promote awareness of the vital ecological role of vultures.

**Educational Institution Awareness Programmes:** During June, the VCBC team conducted 14 awareness programmes across schools, colleges, and universities in Assam and Meghalaya, reaching 2,045 students and educators. Interactive presentations, discussions, and question-and-answer sessions introduced participants to the importance of vultures, the reasons behind their dramatic population decline, the conservation and reintroduction programme at VCBC, the concept of Vulture Safe Zones (VSZs), and the role communities can play in protecting these threatened birds.



As part of World Environment Day celebrations on 5 June 2026, VCBC organised an awareness programme at Gauhati University. Dr Sachin Ranade delivered an engaging lecture on vulture conservation, while students participated in discussions on biodiversity conservation before joining a tree-planting activity with Holong saplings on the university campus. June also marked the expansion of VCBC's educational outreach into Meghalaya, with the first-ever vulture awareness programme conducted at Jirang Government Higher Secondary School, extending the programme's conservation message to a wider audience.

**Community Awareness Programmes:** Community participation remained central to VCBC's conservation approach. With funding support from BNHS, two handlooms fitted with Jacquard attachments were provided to Women's Self-Help Groups in Belguri and Birkampur villages in Kamrup Rural district. The initiative encourages women to develop sustainable livelihoods by creating woven products inspired by local biodiversity, including vultures, tigers, butterflies, and native floral designs. The handlooms were inaugurated by President Mr Sathya Rabha in the presence of Gram Panchayat officials, around 25 villagers, and the women who will be utilizing the facility. Speaking at the inauguration, Dr. Ranade emphasised that supporting environmentally responsible livelihood opportunities benefits both wildlife conservation and the well-being of communities living alongside important natural habitats.



VCBC also organised two community awareness programmes in Kamrup district during June, reaching 60 participants. A 'Save Vultures' drawing competition held during the Rabha Divas celebrations at Belguri Village encouraged children to explore wildlife conservation through art, while an awareness session and plantation drive at Chandubi Village highlighted the ecological importance of vultures, the threats they face, and the need for safe livestock management practices and community-led conservation action.

**Veterinary Department Meetings:** Recognising the critical role of veterinary professionals in vulture recovery, VCBC conducted three veterinary department meetings involving 29 veterinary personnel from Barpeta, Chirang, and Kokrajhar districts. The sessions focused on the dangers posed by toxic veterinary drugs such as diclofenac, which has caused catastrophic declines in vulture populations across South Asia, and promoted the use of safe alternatives such as meloxicam. The meetings also reinforced the importance of collaboration between veterinary departments and conservation organisations in strengthening Vulture Safe Zones and supporting the long-term recovery of vulture populations. ■



# School Nature Club Programme Launched in Maharashtra

The BNHS has launched a new School Nature Club Programme to strengthen environmental education and inspire the next generation of conservation champions across Maharashtra. The initiative will begin with schools in the districts of Amravati, Satara, and Jalgaon, creating opportunities for students and teachers to engage with nature through hands-on learning and conservation-focused activities.



## BNHS-NATURE CLUB

### Strengthening Environmental Education Among Maharashtra's Schools

**Learn, Observe, Act**  
**For cleaner, greener tomorrow**




### Objective

- Behavioural change through awareness about a clean environment, biodiversity conservation, sustainable development, and eco-friendly, positive habits.
- To organize lectures & activities based on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- To arrange educational field visits to nearby natural habitats in order to provide practical exposure to local flora and fauna.
- Bring behavioural change through nature games about environmental issues, pollution, and common misconceptions related to wildlife.

- The best-performing school from each taluka will be awarded an attractive cash prize of ₹10,000
- Every participating school will get "Environmental Education kit" from BNHS.

**SCAN ME**



Scan here to submit the Google Form

**How to apply-**  
To join us in this Mission please fill the google form

## Focus on sustainable development goals SDG's

- Area of Implementation**
- **Satara :** Karad, Phaltan, Patan, Mahabaleshwar
  - **Amaravati :** Chikhaldara, Amaravati, Dharni
  - **Jalgaon:** Jalgaon, Muktai Nagar, Yawal, Raver, Chopada, Jamner and Chalisgaon

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The programme is being implemented in collaboration with local partner organisations that have long-standing experience in environmental education and community engagement. These include the Nature Conservation Society, Amravati, the Creative Nature Friends Society for Conservation of Nature, Karad (Satara), and Samarpan Sanstha's School of Environment and Nature Conservation, Jalgaon. Through these partnerships, BNHS aims to build a strong network of schools committed to promoting environmental stewardship at the local level.

The School Nature Clubs will encourage students to develop environmentally responsible behaviours by increasing awareness of biodiversity conservation, sustainable development, and clean, healthy surroundings. Activities will include interactive sessions on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), nature-based games, wildlife awareness programmes, educational talks, and guided field visits to nearby natural habitats. These experiences will help students gain a better understanding of local flora and fauna while dispelling common misconceptions about wildlife.

As part of the initiative, BNHS will organise free Teacher Training Programmes to equip educators with the knowledge and resources needed to lead Nature Club activities in their schools. Participating schools will receive continuous guidance from BNHS and its partner organisations, along with action-based environmental education sessions designed to encourage student participation and practical conservation action.

To recognise outstanding efforts, the best-performing school from each tehsil will receive a cash award of ₹10,000. In addition, every participating school will be provided with a BNHS Environmental Education Kit to support ongoing learning and Nature Club activities.

Through this initiative, BNHS aims to foster a culture of environmental responsibility among young people while building a state-wide network of schools actively contributing to biodiversity conservation and sustainable living. Schools interested in establishing a BNHS Nature Club are encouraged to register and become part of this growing movement for nature.

#### **How to Apply:**

Schools can register by completing the Google Form:

<https://forms.gle/ma6zrY6a3RJneqkW8>

For further information, contact:

Email: [n.dudhe@bnhs.org](mailto:n.dudhe@bnhs.org) | [paerkt@bnhs.org](mailto:paerkt@bnhs.org)

Phone: +91 76201 93207 | +91 86525 37313





# Basic course in Ornithology

## August 2026- June 2027

**Content** - Study material, Field visits, Field camps, webinars, & Indoor session

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Rs. 15,565(Others)



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## New Turtle Treatment and Transit Centre Strengthens Coastal Wildlife Rescue in Alibag

A new Turtle Treatment and Transit Centre (TTC) was inaugurated at Khadtal, Alibag, on June 16, 2026, marking an important step towards strengthening wildlife rescue and rehabilitation efforts along Maharashtra's coast. Established by the Maharashtra Forest Department's Mangrove Cell, the facility will enhance the care and recovery of injured turtles while laying the foundation for broader conservation support for coastal and mangrove-dependent wildlife.

The centre was inaugurated by Mrs Kanchan Pawar (IFS), Deputy Conservator of Forests (DCF), Raigad Division, in the presence of Forest Department officials, wildlife experts, and conservation partners. Representing the BNHS, Project Associate Mr Rohan Chavan attended the event and reaffirmed BNHS's commitment to providing technical guidance and collaborating with the Forest Department to strengthen wildlife rescue and conservation initiatives in the region. In recognition of his contributions to local conservation efforts, Mr Chavan was felicitated by the DCF during the programme.

Among those present were Mr Kuldeep Patkar, Range Forest Officer (RFO), Raigad Mangrove Cell, Mangrove Cell field staff, renowned wildlife rescuer and veterinarian Dr Prasad Dabholkar, and members of his rescue team.

Officials informed participants that the newly established facility is equipped with essential rescue and treatment infrastructure, including medical equipment, water tanks, and other resources required for the care and rehabilitation of rescued wildlife. The Forest Department also announced plans to appoint a dedicated veterinarian to support the centre's operations, which will be managed under the supervision of RFO Mr Kuldeep Patkar.

Speaking at the event, Mrs Kanchan Pawar outlined the centre's long-term vision, noting that while it has been established primarily to treat and rehabilitate injured turtles, its infrastructure will gradually be expanded to support the rescue and care of waterbirds and other wildlife associated with mangrove ecosystems. She also proposed the formation of a Quick Action Team comprising government agencies, NGOs, naturalists, and local wildlife enthusiasts to ensure a rapid and coordinated response to wildlife emergencies along the coast. ■



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## Bombay Natural History Society

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Website: [www.bnhs.org](http://www.bnhs.org)

Email: [cmd@bnhs.org](mailto:cmd@bnhs.org) | Mobile: 99301 50531



## Saving Seahorses Along the Ratnagiri Coast Through Collaborative Conservation

**T**hree rescued seahorses have safely returned to the coastal waters of Ratnagiri, marking another important milestone in the BNHS's efforts to conserve marine species. Protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, seahorses continue to face significant threats from accidental capture in fishing nets, abandoned fishing gear, habitat degradation, and illegal trade. This successful rescue and release highlights the value of strong partnerships between conservation organisations, government agencies, and local fishing communities.

Through its Seahorse Conservation Programme, BNHS, with support from the Mangrove and Marine Biodiversity Conservation Foundation (MMBCF) and in collaboration with the Mangrove Cell, Maharashtra Forest Department, has established a rapid response network along the Maharashtra coast. By working closely with local fishermen, the programme enables the prompt reporting of accidental seahorse bycatch, allowing trained BNHS staff to respond quickly and maximise the animals' chances of survival.

In May 2026, the BNHS team rescued three seahorses that had become entangled in fishing nets off the Ratnagiri coast. The animals were transported to the BNHS Ratnagiri Field Station, where they received specialised care at a dedicated rehabilitation facility. Under carefully monitored conditions, the seahorses were rehabilitated until they regained normal health and behaviour.

Following their recovery, all three seahorses were released back into their natural habitats at Mirya Creek, Kalbadevi Creek, and Shirgaon Creek on 4 June 2026. The release was carried out by the BNHS team alongside officials from the Mangrove Cell, experts from the Marine Biological Research Station (MBRS), and the College of Fisheries, Ratnagiri, reflecting the collaborative approach that underpins the programme.

This successful rescue, rehabilitation, and release demonstrate how coordinated conservation action can make a tangible difference for vulnerable marine wildlife. By strengthening partnerships with local fishing communities and government institutions, BNHS continues to build a responsive conservation network that supports the long-term protection of Maharashtra's seahorse populations and the coastal habitats on which they depend. ■





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June 2026 to September 2026

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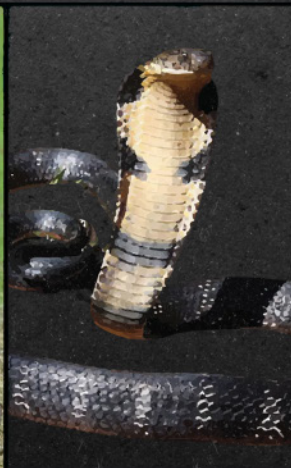
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## Seasonal Habitat Supports Birdlife in Karnataka

**E**ach summer, as the waters of the Tungabhadra Dam near Hospet, Karnataka, recede, an extraordinary transformation takes place. The exposed lakebed becomes a thriving seasonal grassland, creating a unique habitat where wetlands and grasslands meet. Although temporary, this landscape plays a vital role in supporting a remarkable diversity of birdlife.

The seasonal grasslands provide ideal breeding grounds for ground-nesting birds such as lapwings, coursers, larks, and the threatened florican. At the same time, shallow pools and waterlogged patches attract wetland birds including storks, herons, and ducks, offering abundant feeding opportunities.

This dynamic landscape is shaped by nutrient-rich soils left behind as the water recedes. The resulting mosaic of grasslands, shallow wetlands, and open areas creates a rich mix of nesting and foraging habitats, making it one of the region's most important seasonal ecosystems.

Protecting these habitats is essential for conserving both grassland and wetland bird species. By recognising the ecological value of these seasonal landscapes, conservation efforts can help safeguard critical breeding and feeding sites while supporting the long-term health of the wider ecosystem. ■





## Rainfall Revives Seasonal Grasslands in Tadoba, Supporting Ground-Nesting Birds

Recent rainfall has brought new life to the buffer grasslands of Tadoba–Andhari Tiger Reserve, transforming the landscape into a productive habitat for wildlife. Within a week of the rains, fresh grass growth created a varied mosaic of short and taller vegetation, providing ideal conditions for a wide range of grassland species.

This mix of vegetation offers valuable shelter and feeding opportunities for ground-dwelling wildlife. Ground-nesting birds benefit from suitable nesting cover, herbivores gain access to fresh forage, and increased insect activity further enriches the ecosystem, supporting a healthy and interconnected food web.

A notable highlight from recent field observations came from the Kolasa waterbody, where the team recorded 34 Oriental Pratincoles. Two active nests were also located in seasonal grasslands that had formed along the receding shoreline following prolonged dry conditions. These temporary habitats provide open visibility for nesting birds while reducing the risk of nests being flooded, making them particularly important breeding sites for ground-nesting birds and waders. ■

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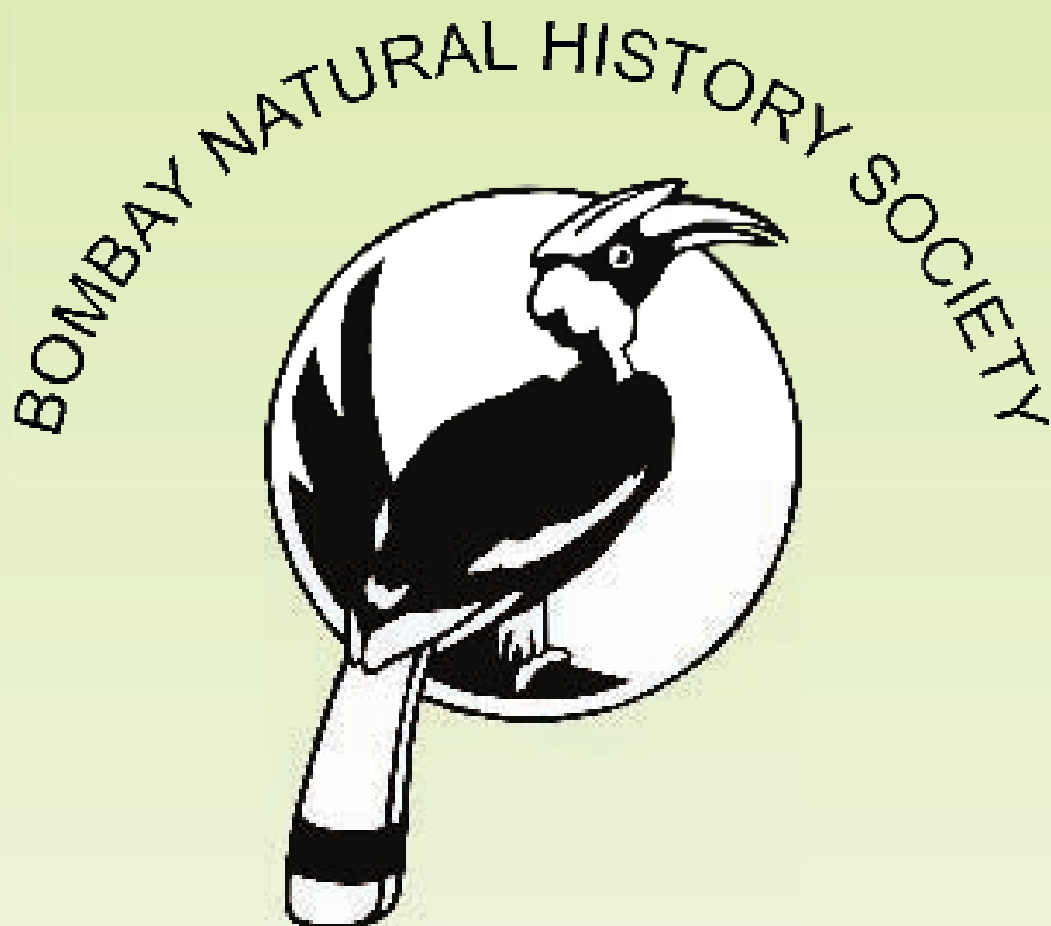
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## CONTACT US

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