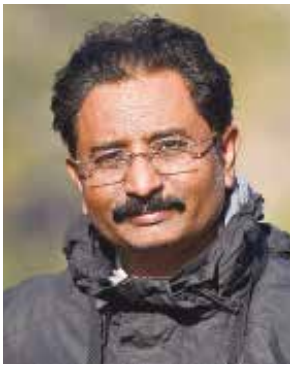
BOMBAY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
BNHS INDIA CONSERVING NATURE SINCE 1883
NEWSLETTER

From the DIRECTOR DESK



Dear Members,

Diwali greetings ! Diwali is the festival of lights, and I am sure our Newsletter will continue to shine a light of hope for conservation. However, while writing about lights, I received a complaint that an organisation based in Pune has been illuminating forts in the Western Ghats! Maharashtra has hundreds of historic forts, many surrounded by forests, rocky cliffs, grasslands and ancient ruins. These habitats support a variety of nocturnal birds, particularly owls, nightjars and other species that are active after sunset. Artificial illumination of these sites is disturbing news for the nocturnal birds that inhabit the forts and their surroundings.

Three years ago, the Department of Cultural Affairs, Government of Maharashtra, consulted BNHS to develop guidelines on the impact of artificial lighting on archaeological monuments, including forts.

A 2025 study by Ghosh and Kumar examined trends in night-time illumination in the ecologically sensitive zones surrounding 631 protected areas across India. It reported significant increases in night-time light levels in 84% of the zones studied, with a mean increase of 234% in areas experiencing high growth. These findings highlight the growing concern over light pollution and its penetration into forest habitats.

Every year, October brings with it the celebrations of Wildlife Week! This year, BNHS staff demonstrated several innovative ways of celebrating the occasion. I am sure you will appreciate their efforts as you read through this Newsletter.

As part of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change's (MoEF&CC) Green Skill Development Programme (GSDP), BNHS organised a certificate course in 'Nature Conservator-cum-Ecotourism Guide', specially designed for young people working at Nandur Madhameshwar Wildlife Sanctuary in Nashik, Maharashtra.

This two-month-long course aims not only to build the capacity of local youth in the field but also to equip them with the skills to develop a tourism plan for the sanctuary. The training covers the preparation of multilingual signboards and field guides, planning essential tourist facilities and services, developing botanical and butterfly gardens, and planting native species to attract arboreal birds to the tourist complex. I hope such initiatives will help create a strong network of local nature guides who can address the tourism-related challenges faced by our wildlife destinations.

Another important exercise conducted this month was the 'All-India Sarus Crane Survey', which received an overwhelming response. Several birdwatchers participated in the survey and contributed valuable data and observations.

On October 12, 2026, 62 officer trainees from the Central Academy for State Forest Service (CASFOS), Coimbatore, accompanied by a faculty member, visited the BNHS's Natural History Collections Museum at Hornbill House in Mumbai. We also had the pleasure of hosting Professor Anjali Goswami from the Natural History Museum, London, during her visit to Mumbai.

The BNHS-CEC, Goregaon and BNHS Point Calimere teams have planned several nature camps and programmes for BNHS members over the next three months, including visits to Sattal–Pangot in Himachal Pradesh and Chambal–Bharatpur in Rajasthan. I hope you will make the most of these opportunities to explore and experience nature.

The BNHS fisheries project at Ujani Reservoir is gaining popularity among the local fishing community. On Saturday, October 17, BNHS launched a conservation initiative at Bhigwan in Pune district to release 4.5 million fingerlings of native fish species that have become rare or are on the verge of extinction in the reservoir. The team

also planted 21,000 aquatic plants that have disappeared from the ecosystem. Around 35 native fish species in the reservoir have become locally extinct, while another 40 are on the verge of disappearing. This initiative is an important step towards restoring the reservoir's aquatic biodiversity.

The BNHS Nature Clubs in four districts of Maharashtra organised several events during Wildlife Week. Following the celebrations, the BNHS team conducted a ten-day environmental education campaign across the Patan and Karad talukas of Satara district. The campaign reached 21 schools and educational institutions, encouraging students to connect with nature through interactive learning, biodiversity awareness and nature-based activities.

BNHS has also begun working with State Forest Departments to assess ecosystem services. A series of workshops was conducted in Gujarat this month at Jamnagar, Velavadar National Park, Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary and Kaj lake. I would like to thank Dr Anand Chaudhary, Central Asian Flyway Coordinator, BirdLife International, for guiding these workshops.

Thank you for sharing your encouraging feedback on our new children's magazine, *Aranya*. I hope our members will continue to contribute to this publication and help us make it even more engaging and informative for young readers. If you are not already following BNHS on social media, I encourage you to do so and stay updated on our activities and conservation initiatives.

Let me also share an example of how timely information from citizens can help save wildlife. I received an email from T.R. Pattinam in Karaikal district, Puducherry, reporting alleged organised bird hunting, trapping and illegal commercial wildlife trade. The complainant specifically requested intervention by an independent central agency. We immediately shared the information with Dr Ramesh Kumar Pandey, Additional Director General (Wildlife), MoEF&CC, who promptly initiated action.

A team comprising a Head Constable and other police personnel proceeded to the reported location in Karaikal. Upon reaching the site and conducting a ground verification, they found evidence of bird trapping and hunting. The officers immediately contacted the Conservator of Forests (CF) and the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Puducherry, to conduct a joint inspection.

During the joint operation, the team seized five bird traps, trapping wires and other associated materials. They also rescued 13 live birds: nine egrets, one pond heron and three common sandpipers. A wildlife offence was registered under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. One person, Shri Laxmanan (60), a resident of Mariamman Temple Street, T.R. Pattinam, was detained. Following further enquiry, another alleged poacher, residing on Eda Street, was arrested.

I sincerely congratulate the citizen who came forward and shared this valuable information with us. I would also like to appreciate the prompt response and action initiated by Dr Ramesh Kumar Pandey, ADG (Wildlife), MoEF&CC.

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; Membership: membership@bnhs.org; Programmes: programmes@bnhs.org

Conservation Education Centre: cec-mumbai@bnhs.org

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

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

Kishor Rithe
Director, Bombay Natural History Society

Visits @BNHS Natural History Collections

The BNHS welcomed visitors from the international scientific community, forest services and academia to its Natural History Collections Museum during October. The visits highlighted the value of biological collections in documenting biodiversity, supporting scientific research and strengthening conservation knowledge.



Engineering academic learns about specimen preservation: Dr Gajendra R. Bamnote, Professor and Principal of Vidarbha Youth Welfare Society's Prof Ram Meghe Institute of Technology and Research, Badnera, Amravati, also visited the Collections Department. During the visit, he learned about the department's maintenance practices and workflows, viewed biological specimens preserved over extended periods and explored the methods used to maintain their condition.



Evolutionary biologist Prof. Anjali Goswami visits the Collections: Prof. Anjali Goswami, a distinguished evolutionary biologist and palaeontologist associated with the Natural History Museum, London, visited the BNHS Collections Department. Her research focuses on vertebrate evolution, and she leads the Goswami Lab at the museum. She was appointed Chief Scientific Adviser to the United Kingdom's

(***Continued on next page***)

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Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) in July 2025 and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 2024. The visit provided an opportunity to explore BNHS's natural history collections, which preserve specimens of scientific value and serve as an important resource for biodiversity research and documentation.

Future forest officers explore BNHS's Collections: On October 12, 2026, 62 officer trainees from the Central Academy for State Forest Service (CASFOS), Coimbatore, accompanied by a faculty member, visited the BNHS Natural History Collections Museum. The programme opened with an overview of BNHS's 143-year history and its work across diverse landscapes. Guided sessions introduced the trainees to collections of birds, mammals, reptiles and insects, explaining how preserved specimens support research, biodiversity documentation and conservation.



A highlight was an engaging session on snakes led by renowned herpetologist Mr Ashok Captain. Several trainees expressed interest in joining BNHS, and the team explained membership opportunities and ways future forest officers could support or collaborate with the Society's conservation initiatives after completing their training. The visit concluded with a vote of thanks and a token of appreciation presented by the trainees. ■



BNHS Completes Nationwide Sarus Crane Survey to Strengthen Conservation Planning

The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) conducted the All-India Sarus Crane Survey on October 10 and 11, 2026, bringing together conservation stakeholders to assess populations of India's tallest flying bird, identify important habitats and document threats to its survival. The initiative aimed to establish a reliable national population baseline and strengthen the foundation for coordinated, science-based conservation.

The survey involved collaboration among State Forest Departments, research institutions, conservation organisations, farmers, local communities, educational institutions, and citizen scientists. By encouraging coordinated observations across regions, the initiative sought to improve understanding of Sarus Crane distribution and support future conservation planning.

Led by BNHS Director Kishor Rithe, and supported by Dr P. Sathiyaselvam, Deputy Director of BNHS and head of its Central Asian Flyway Programme, the initiative focused on developing a more consistent approach to population monitoring. The survey aimed to identify important breeding, feeding and roosting sites, map areas where cranes congregate and document potential threats, including power-line collisions and electrocution. The resulting information could help guide wetland restoration, habitat management, wildlife-friendly farming and community-led conservation.

A key objective was to establish a baseline against which future population changes could be assessed. Previous surveys have differed in methodology, geographical coverage, timing and counting effort, making their results difficult to compare directly.

A bird of wetlands and agricultural landscapes: The Sarus Crane *Antigone antigone* stands approximately 1.5 metres tall and is the world's tallest flying bird. India supports resident breeding populations of this species, which is globally classified as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List. The crane also holds cultural significance in India and receives protection under Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. Sarus Cranes depend on a mosaic of wetlands, marshes, shallow water bodies, grasslands and agricultural fields.



Their survival is increasingly challenged by habitat degradation, changing agricultural practices, pesticide use, power-line collisions, electrocution, human disturbance, poaching and the collection of eggs and chicks. Important populations occur in Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Haryana, with smaller, isolated populations elsewhere, including Maharashtra. Protecting the landscapes used by these birds can also benefit other wildlife and help maintain healthy wetland and agricultural ecosystems.

Why standardised monitoring matters: Earlier international assessments estimated India's Sarus Crane population at approximately 8,000–10,000 birds, while Uttar Pradesh reported nearly 20,000 cranes in its 2024 state-wide count. These figures are not directly comparable because the surveys differed in coverage and methods. The contrast underscores the need for a coordinated national assessment rather than providing evidence of a population increase. The State of India's Birds report has also highlighted a substantial long-term decline in the species, reinforcing the importance of consistent monitoring.

The initiative marked an important step towards improving the evidence available for Sarus Crane conservation while supporting the wetlands and agricultural environments on which both wildlife and people depend. ■

WILD LIFE WEEK CELEBRATIONS

Observed across India from 2 to 8 October, Wildlife Week promotes awareness and collective action for wildlife conservation and habitat protection. This year, BNHS teams engaged their audience through nature walks, seminars and educational activities, inspiring greater appreciation of biodiversity and encouraging active participation in conservation efforts.

Celebrating Wildlife Week in Bhagalpur, Bihar

From October 2–8, 2026, the BNHS, in collaboration with the Bhagalpur Forest Division, Bihar, celebrated Wildlife Week through a series of educational activities. The programmes engaged 97 students from four colleges and four schools in an inter-college quiz and a wildlife-themed drawing competition. Other activities included a dolphin photography competition, a bird walk and technical presentations on the Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary, highlighting biodiversity, wildlife research and conservation.■



Wildlife Quiz at Van Vihar National Park, Madhya Pradesh

On October 6, 2026, from 3:00 to 5:20 p.m., Van Vihar National Park (VVNP) and BNHS–VCBC, Bhopal, jointly organised an interactive wildlife quiz at the park's Snake Park, Bhopal, as part of Wildlife Week celebrations. The on-the-spot quiz attracted 152 participants, including tourists, local visitors and school students. Covering wildlife, habitats, biodiversity and conservation, the activity encouraged learning through engagement, with prizes awarded to the winners. ■



Wildlife Week Celebrated in Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve's Buffer Zone

From October 1–10, 2026, BNHS, through its Nature Education Programme, celebrated Wildlife Week across 108 schools in the buffer villages of Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra. A total of 7,986 students participated in wildlife pledges, essay and slogan-writing competitions, elocution and expressive reading activities. Led by BNHS Education Officer Atharva Sathe and Field Assistant Charandas Shende, with support from TATR Education Officer Rajeshwari Dayalwar, the programme promoted biodiversity awareness and encouraged young people to actively engage in wildlife conservation. ■



Zoology Students Explore Nandur Madhyameshwar Wildlife Sanctuary

On October 4, 2026, the BNHS-EIACP Resource Partner on Avian Ecology organised an educational visit to Nandur Madhyameshwar Wildlife Sanctuary, Maharashtra, for 30 B.Sc. Zoology students from KTHM College, Nashik, as part of Wildlife Week celebrations. The programme included birdwatching and an interactive session at the Nature Interpretation Centre. BNHS Information Officer Natasha Girkar and Forester Rajendra Dound introduced students to conservation initiatives, field practices and career opportunities in wildlife research and biodiversity conservation.■



Outreach with Communities and Forest Staff in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh

The BNHS Prayagraj team engaged 83 community members, including fishermen and boatmen, at Baswar, Kanjasa and Jagdishpur, Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh. Organised under the Ganga Basin Riverine Bird Project with the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) and the Uttar Pradesh Forest Department, the outreach promoted protection of Indian Skimmer nesting sites and riverine bird habitats. The session also included how communities and the Forest Department can play together in protecting nests during the upcoming breeding season. ■



Capacity Building Session for Prayagraj Forest Division Staff

The BNHS Riverine Bird Conservation Team conducted a capacity-building programme for 31 Prayagraj Forest Division personnel in Uttar Pradesh. Supported by NMCG and the Uttar Pradesh Forest Department, the training focused on Indian Skimmer conservation, protecting vulnerable nesting sites and strengthening preparations for the 2027 breeding season. ■



Engaging College Students Along the Mahanadi, Odisha

The BNHS Mahanadi team conducted an awareness programme at Banki Autonomous College, Odisha, engaging around 80 undergraduate and postgraduate students in riverine bird conservation. The session highlighted the Indian Skimmer, the Mahanadi's importance as a conservation landscape, and the role of students in spreading awareness among river-dependent communities. ■



Raising Awareness for Riverine Wildlife Conservation Along the Ganga

During Wildlife Week 2026, the BNHS Bijnor team organised conservation awareness programmes at Nawalpur village, Ganga Barrage and Haiderpur Wetland in Uttar Pradesh, in collaboration with NMCG and the Uttar Pradesh Forest Department. The outreach engaged local farmers and communities in protecting the Indian Skimmer, riverine birds and their habitats, while a separate programme reached 45 students at Jeevanpuri Primary School, Muzaffarnagar. Activities highlighted nesting-site protection, prevention of hunting, river cleanliness and the importance of healthy riverine and wetland ecosystems. ■



Safeguarding Indian Skimmer Nesting Sites Through Collaborative Action

The BNHS Mahanadi team joined a 19-member interdepartmental meeting organised by Athagada Forest Division on October 7 in Odisha. Led by the Divisional Forest Officer, Athagada, the meeting included representatives from the Forest, Irrigation and Fisheries departments, the district administration, the Honorary Wildlife Warden and BNHS. The meeting focused on protecting Indian Skimmer nesting sandbars through coordinated water management, habitat monitoring, community participation and interdepartmental action across the Mahanadi basin and the need for sustained coordination among government departments, conservation organisations and local communities. ■



Celebrating Wildlife Week with Students in Ajmer

The BNHS marked Wildlife Week 2026 with a nature awareness programme at Government Varistha Upadhyaya Sanskrit School in Shokaliya village, Ajmer, encouraging young learners to discover the importance of biodiversity and wildlife conservation. The programme featured presentations on grassland birds, wildlife quizzes and a drawing competition on the theme 'Nature'. Through these activities, students explored the natural world around them and had opportunities to express their understanding of nature through art and interactive learning. On October 8, 2026, the BNHS team distributed prizes to students in recognition of their outstanding drawings. The team also appreciated the students' enthusiastic participation throughout the programme. ■





Building Skills for Wildlife Conservation and Sustainable Ecotourism

The BNHS-EIACP Centre on Avian Ecology is conducting the GSDP Certificate Course on Nature Conservator cum Ecotourism Guide from September 28 to November 21, 2026. Spanning 54 days, the programme brings together classroom learning, practical exercises, field visits and hands-on training to prepare participants for roles in wildlife conservation and sustainable ecotourism.

By October 31, the 16 trainees had covered a range of subjects, including biodiversity conservation, bird identification and monitoring, wetland ecology, People's Biodiversity Registers (PBRs), the Biological Diversity Act, waste management, workplace safety and responsible tourism practices. Field visits to Nandur Madhyameshwar Wildlife Sanctuary, Maharashtra's first Ramsar site, and the surrounding Madhameshwar Temple area offered opportunities to observe birds, understand wetland ecosystems and explore the potential of nature-based tourism.

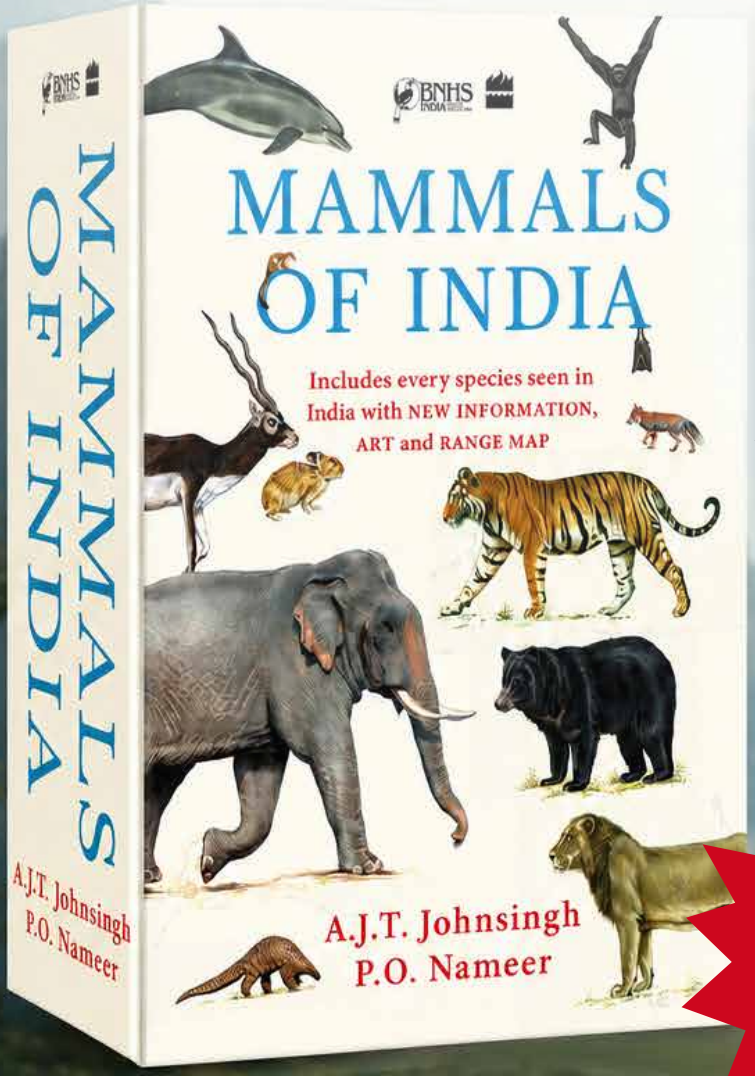
Practical sessions focused on hospitality and visitor management, including guest relations, restaurant service, table setting, homestay management and local livelihood opportunities. Adventure training introduced participants to trekking equipment, rope techniques, safety gear and emergency preparedness. During on-the-job training at Nandur Madhyameshwar Wildlife Sanctuary, they gained experience in welcoming visitors, understanding entry procedures and conducting guided nature trails.

The course also encouraged trainees to develop proposals to improve visitor experiences, nature interpretation and sustainable ecotourism facilities. By combining ecological knowledge with practical skills in hospitality, safety and guiding, the programme aims to prepare participants to become responsible nature guides and conservation ambassadors, while supporting biodiversity conservation and sustainable local livelihoods.

The course will continue until November 21, 2026, with further practical learning opportunities to strengthen the trainees' knowledge and skills in nature conservation and ecotourism. ■

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BNHS Engages Fishing Communities in Seahorse Conservation and JALCHAR App Awareness in Ratnagiri

The BNHS organised three community awareness programmes in Ratnagiri district, Maharashtra, on October 27, 29 and 30, 2026, to promote seahorse conservation and introduce the JALCHAR mobile application to local fishing communities. The initiative aimed to build awareness about the ecological importance of seahorses, the threats they face and the role fishers can play in their conservation.

The first programme was held on October 27 at Purnagad Vividh Karyakari Sahakari Seva Society Limited, Purnagad. It brought together 23 members representing three fishing societies: Purnagad Vividh Karyakari Sahakari Seva Society Limited; Sarvoday Macchimar Sahakari Saunstha Seva Maryadit, Gavde Ambhere; and Purnagad Kharvi Samaj Macchimar Sahakari Saunstha Maryadit.

The second session took place on October 29 at Karla Macchi Vyavsaik Sarv Seva Sahakari Saunstha Maryadit, Karla, with 15 participants. The third was conducted on October 30 at Jaigad Matsyavyavasay Sahakari Sanstha, Jaigad, and was attended by 13 participants. Together, the programmes reached 51 members of the local fishing communities.

During the sessions, the BNHS team discussed the ecological role of seahorses in marine and coastal ecosystems, the major threats affecting their populations and their legal protection under Indian wildlife conservation laws. Participants were also introduced to BNHS's ongoing seahorse conservation initiatives, with emphasis on the importance of community participation. Fishers were encouraged to report seahorse sightings and accidental captures so that appropriate rescue and release efforts could be undertaken.

The team also introduced the JALCHAR mobile application, developed by BNHS, and demonstrated its features. Participants learnt how the application can be used to report marine megafauna sightings, wildlife strandings and other relevant marine biodiversity observations. By making reporting more accessible, the initiative seeks to encourage fishers and other coastal stakeholders to contribute to conservation monitoring.

The programmes were conducted by Dr Tejal Vijapure, Suyash Patil, Prathamesh Nachankar, and Sairaj More of BNHS. Active participation and discussions across all three locations highlighted the value of engaging fishing communities as partners in marine conservation. Their regular presence at sea and familiarity with local waters can make an important contribution to reporting wildlife observations and supporting conservation efforts. ■



Contact us: cec-mumbai@bnhs.org / 9594929107 / 9594953425

BNHS Conducts Stakeholder Consultations at Three Central Asian Flyway Priority Sites in Gujarat

The BNHS conducted three stakeholder consultation workshops at priority conservation sites along the Central Asian Flyway (CAF) in Gujarat: Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary in Jamnagar district, Kaj Lake in Gir Somnath district, and Velavadar National Park in Bhavnagar district. The consultations aimed to understand the ecosystem services provided by these sites and assess how local communities and livelihoods depend on them.

The first workshop, held in Jamnagar for stakeholders associated with Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary, was inaugurated by Chief Guest Shri S. Maniswara Raja, IFS, Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF), Marine National Park. Shri Ronen Singh, IFS, Assistant Conservator of Forests (ACF), presented an overview of the sanctuary and the conservation activities undertaken by the Forest Department. The workshop brought together 50 participants, including naturalists, birders, forest officials, hoteliers, tour operators, villagers and farmers.

The second consultation was organised at Kaj village and inaugurated by Ms Shardaben M. Bambhaniya, Vice President of the Gir Somnath District Panchayat. Discussions focused on participatory wetland management, the importance of water retention for surrounding agricultural lands and the protection of traditional fishing livelihoods. A total of 45 participants, including community members, young people involved in tourism, fishermen, farmers, birders and Forest Department staff, took part.

The third workshop was held at Velavadar National Park and inaugurated by Shri Nilesh Joshi, ACF, Velavadar National Park, who outlined the park's habitat management initiatives, grassland regeneration efforts and protection measures. The consultation was attended by 48 participants, including nature guides, safari gypsy drivers, homestay owners, farmers and naturalists. Discussions highlighted the economic benefits that wildlife tourism brings to villages surrounding the park, as well as challenges such as crop raiding and conflicts involving livestock grazing.

Across all three workshops, Dr Anand Chaudhary, Central Asian Flyway Coordinator, BirdLife Asia, introduced the concept of ecosystem services. Dr P. Sathiyaselvam, Deputy Director, BNHS, provided an overview of the ongoing ecosystem services project. Shri Uday Vora, retired Chief Conservator of Forests, shared his field experience in habitat management, community-based conservation models and adaptive wetland governance.

BNHS researchers Bhautik B. Sondarava and Akshay Shrivastava coordinated stakeholder mobilisation and on-ground arrangements. The workshops provided an opportunity to better understand the ecological, social and economic value of these important Central Asian Flyway sites and the role of local communities in their long-term conservation. ■





BNHS-Jatayu Conservation Breeding Centre Welcomes Forest Trainees and College Students

The BNHS-Jatayu Conservation Breeding Centre (JCBC), Pinjore, welcomed forest department trainees and college students in October for educational visits focused on India's vulture conservation efforts. The visits provided participants with insights into conservation breeding, vulture biology, population monitoring and the challenges facing these threatened birds.

On October 16, 2026, 40 forester trainees from the Haryana Forest Department visited JCBC Pinjore to learn about the centre's role in the conservation breeding of threatened vulture species in India. The trainees were introduced to key processes involved in conservation breeding, including artificial incubation, chick rearing, and captive population management. The programme also covered population survey methods, field identification of different vulture species and the major threats affecting their survival. The visit highlighted how scientific monitoring and conservation breeding complement field-based efforts to protect threatened species and their habitats. It also emphasised the role forest personnel can play in supporting vulture conservation through field observations, monitoring and habitat protection.



On October 25, 2026, 36 B.Sc. students from Arya PG College, Panipat, visited the centre as part of their environmental education course. The students learned about India's vulture conservation programme and the work undertaken at JCBC. Sessions covered artificial incubation, chick rearing, population surveys and the identification of different vulture species. Discussions also explored the major threats vultures face and their ecological importance as scavengers. The visit offered students practical exposure to wildlife management and conservation practices, helping connect classroom learning with the scientific work involved in protecting threatened birds. ■



From Monsoon Green to Winter Visitors: Exploring Tadoba's Grassland Birds

BNHS studies seasonal changes in grassland habitats to understand how they support resident and migratory birds in Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR). With the arrival of the monsoon, the grasslands of TATR undergo a striking transformation. Rainfall brings fresh growth, turning open landscapes green and creating favourable conditions for insects and other small animals. As grasses grow taller and begin to flower, the changing vegetation influences food availability and provides feeding opportunities for a variety of grassland birds.

As the monsoon gives way to winter, these habitats also welcome seasonal bird visitors. The Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola maurus*, a winter migrant in many parts of India, is often associated with open grasslands, scrub and field edges. Perching on grass stems or low vegetation, it scans its surroundings for insects. Other birds, including the European Roller *Coracias garrulus* and Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*, also use open landscapes as feeding grounds.

Winter can bring additional visitors, including harriers and short-toed larks. Harriers patrol open ground in search of prey, while larks forage on or near the ground. The height and density of grasses, the presence of bare patches and the availability of insects and small prey all influence how these birds use the landscape.

Tadoba is widely recognised for its forests and iconic large mammals, but its grasslands are equally important to the reserve's ecological diversity. These open habitats support distinctive communities of birds and other wildlife, shaped by seasonal changes in vegetation, food availability and ground conditions. Conserving Tadoba's biodiversity therefore requires attention to grasslands alongside forest habitats. To better understand these ecosystems, the BNHS is studying bird diversity and habitat use across grasslands in the core and buffer zones of TATR. Field surveys examine the species present and their relative abundance, alongside habitat characteristics such as grass species, vegetation height, ground cover and insect availability. By examining bird communities alongside these environmental factors, the study aims to identify the habitat conditions that support different grassland species. The findings can help inform habitat management and conservation measures that better address the needs of grassland-associated birds.

As Tadoba's green monsoon landscape transitions into winter, its grasslands offer a valuable opportunity to observe seasonal changes in birdlife. Understanding how resident and migratory species use these habitats can strengthen conservation planning and highlight the importance of protecting grasslands throughout the year. ■



Every Sighting Counts: Join BNHS in Tracking Migratory Birds

A bird's journey does not end when it leaves the ringing station. Every subsequent sighting can reveal more about where it travels, where it rests and how it connects habitats across vast distances. The BNHS is making these discoveries more accessible through bands.bnhs.org, a platform that brings bird-ringing records and public observations together to advance our understanding of bird movements.

For decades, BNHS has used bird ringing – the practice of fitting birds with uniquely numbered identification rings or other markers – to study migration and movement patterns. When a ringed bird is observed again, researchers gain valuable information about its journey. These records can help reveal connections between wetlands across regions and even continents.

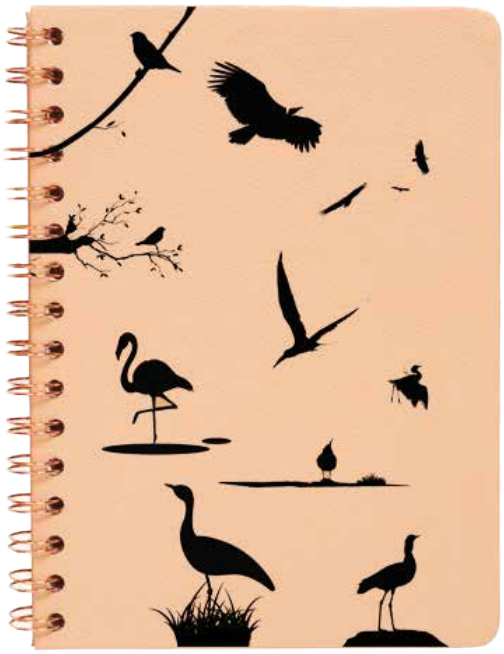
The new platform maps ringing and resighting records, allowing users to explore individual birds' journeys from their original ringing locations to subsequent sightings. It also invites birdwatchers, wildlife photographers, students and communities living near wetlands to report encounters with ringed or flagged birds. Each verified observation can add an important piece to the picture. Together, these records help researchers understand which wetlands birds use for feeding and roosting, how far they travel and how different sites contribute to their survival.

Field teams can cover only a limited number of locations, but birdwatchers and local communities observe birds across a much wider landscape. By combining systematic ringing efforts with citizen-science contributions, BNHS can gather information that would otherwise be difficult to obtain.

Spotted a ringed or flagged bird? Note the colour and identification code of its ring or flag, record the location and take a photograph if possible. Submit your observation through bands.bnhs.org to help BNHS researchers piece together the journeys of migratory birds. Every sighting can make a difference. ■

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BNHS Devises Bird Friendly Fishery Nets at Ujani, Maharashtra

Protective nets are commonly installed over aquaculture ponds to prevent fish-eating birds from feeding on farmed fish. However, poorly designed or inadequately maintained nets can pose a serious threat to birds, which may become entangled and die. Such incidents are a recognised concern at fish farms located near wetlands, estuaries and coastal bird habitats.

At Madanwadi Hatchery in Bhigwan, Maharashtra, the BNHS project team has taken steps to safeguard native fish stocks while reducing the potential risks to local birdlife. On 4 October 2026, the team modified the traditional method of installing protective nets over the hatchery ponds, including using a mesh size of approximately 80 mm. The nets are intended to minimise fish losses caused by predation from fish-eating birds, while the modified approach seeks to reduce the risk of bird entanglement.

The hatchery's six ponds hold fingerlings of native fish species, including Pig-mouth Carp, Deccan Labeo, Catla Carp, Mrigal and Rohu. These fish are being raised for eventual release into Ujani Reservoir as part of wider efforts to support native fisheries.

By adapting safe netting practices, the intervention seeks to balance hatchery management and native fish conservation with the need to protect birds that depend on the surrounding wetland ecosystem. ■

BNHS Introduced One Crore Native Aquatic Plants to Restore Ujani Wetland

The BNHS plans to introduce one crore native aquatic plants into Ujani Reservoir, Maharashtra, as part of its Wetland Eco-Restoration and Climate-Resilient Fisheries Development Programme. The initiative will build on the establishment of an aquatic plant nursery at Bhigwan, where 21,000 native aquatic plants



(***Continued on next page***)

(***Continued from previous page***)

were initially propagated for wetland restoration. The first batch of native aquatic plants was introduced at Kumbhargaon on October 7, 2026. It included Hydrilla, Vallisneria and lotus *Nelumbo nucifera*, marking an important first step towards restoring native aquatic vegetation in the reservoir. The nursery will serve as a foundation for multiplying these plants and supporting their phased introduction across the wetland.

Native aquatic vegetation plays an important role in maintaining wetland ecosystems. It provides shelter and breeding habitats for aquatic organisms, supports biodiversity and contributes to the ecological health of water bodies. By expanding the availability of native plants in Ujani Reservoir, BNHS aims to strengthen these ecological functions while supporting the programme's broader goal of developing sustainable, climate-resilient fisheries. ■

Tata Power Supports Deccan Mahseer Conservation Through Long-Term Commitment



The BNHS is strengthening efforts to conserve the Deccan Mahseer *Tor khudree*, a native freshwater fish that has reportedly been absent from the Bhima River and Ujani Reservoir for around four decades. A long-term partnership with Tata Power is supporting efforts to reintroduce the species as part of the BNHS Ujani Wetland Eco-Restoration and Climate-Resilient Fisheries Development Programme.

Under this partnership, Tata Power has committed to supplying 10 lakh Deccan Mahseer fingerlings over a period of 10 years. On 9 October 2026, Dr Unmesh Katwate, Head of the BNHS Wetland Eco-Restoration Project, visited Tata Power's facility at Valvan, Lonavala, to observe the available fingerling stock and review preparations for the planned supply.

The first batch of 8,000 fingerlings was released into Ujani Reservoir near Palasnath Temple on October 22, 2026. The release was led by Principal Investigator Dr Unmesh Katwate, with the participation of Bharat Mallav, Balasaheb Kale, Devi Waingankar, Mayank Sharma, Mahesh Mane and Balaji Survase.

The release site, near the submerged Palasnath and Ram temples, was selected based on its depth, water quality and habitat conditions, which were considered suitable for the species. The Deccan Mahseer, once reported to be abundant in the Bhima River basin, has experienced a significant decline, highlighting the need for targeted conservation measures.

The reintroduction marks an important step towards supporting the recovery of the species in Ujani Reservoir. However, successful establishment will depend on continued post-release monitoring, habitat protection and favourable environmental conditions. These efforts will help assess the survival of released fish and determine whether a sustainable population can become established.

The long-term commitment from Tata Power provides an important foundation for continued Deccan Mahseer conservation and freshwater biodiversity restoration at Ujani. ■

India Today Covers BNHS's Ujani Wetland Restoration Initiative

On October 12, 2026, *India Today* covered BNHS's wetland restoration initiative at Ujani Reservoir, Maharashtra, under its Wetland Eco-Restoration and Climate-Resilient Fisheries Development Programme. Reporter Dhaval Kulkarni and photographer Mandar Deodhar visited the site to document conservation interventions, including the removal of invasive fish species and reintroduction of native fish, highlighting efforts to restore aquatic biodiversity and improve wetland health. ■


ENVIRONMENT | UJANI DAM

BATTLE OF THE FISHES

FOREIGN INVADERS

SUCKERMOUTH CATFISH

AFRICAN CATFISH OR THAI MAGUR

TILAPIA

BNHS Releases 4.5 Million Native Fish Fingerlings to Restore Ujani Wetland, Maharashtra



The BNHS marked a major milestone in freshwater conservation on October 17, 2026 with the release of 4.5 million native fish fingerlings and more than 21,000 native aquatic plants into Ujani Reservoir at Bhigwan, Maharashtra. The initiative is part of the BNHS Ujani Wetland Eco-Restoration, Fisheries and Climate Resilience Programme, which aims to restore aquatic biodiversity, strengthen ecosystem health and support local fishing communities.

The programme was inaugurated by Maharashtra Agriculture Minister Shri Dattatray Bharne in the presence of local fishers, conservationists and government representatives. The Minister congratulated BNHS on its conservation breeding efforts and the return of the Deccan Mahseer to the reservoir. He also called for the programme to continue over the next decade to help secure fisheries and rural livelihoods.

Ujani Reservoir has faced mounting ecological pressures, including invasive alien fish species, pollution and destructive fishing practices. These pressures have contributed to declines in native fish populations, disrupted aquatic food webs and affected the livelihoods of fishing communities.

To address these challenges, BNHS has developed a conservation breeding programme covering 12 native, endemic and threatened fish species. Wild broodstock sourced from rivers of the Western Ghats, including the Hiranyakeshi, Koyna and Panchganga, has supported breeding efforts for the 2026–2027 season.

The release included more than 2.2 million fingerlings of endemic species such as *Labeo kawrus* (Kavdas), *Bangana nukta* (Nukta) and *Labeo kontius* (Bobari).

The large-scale release represents an important step in BNHS's efforts to restore native fish populations and strengthen the ecological resilience of the reservoir.■

Monitoring Reveals Encouraging Signs of Native Fish Survival and Breeding in Farmhouse Pond



The BNHS Ujani Project Team recorded encouraging signs of native fish survival and possible breeding during a monitoring visit to two ponds at the farmhouse of BNHS President Mr Pravinsingh Pardeshi in Solapur on October 20, 2026.

A total of 4,000 native fish had been released into the two ponds on August 1 and September 7, 2026 as part of the BNHS Ujani Wetland Eco-Restoration and Climate-Resilient Fisheries Development Programme. During the October visit, the field team sampled fish from both ponds using a dragnet. The team comprised a Project Scientist, Junior Project Fellow, Project Assistant and two local fishermen. Mr Pardeshi was also present during the exercise. ■

More than 200 fish and other aquatic specimens were temporarily collected for identification and observation. The sampling recorded several native fish species, including Labeo kawrus, Mola Carplet, Greenstriped Barb, Elongate Glassy Perchlet, Tank Goby and Slender Rasbora. Shrimp were also observed.

One particularly promising observation was the presence of Highfin Glassy Perchlet fry. Their occurrence suggests that the species may be reproducing in the ponds, indicating potentially suitable habitat conditions.

The observations provide encouraging indications of fish survival and possible breeding following release. Continued monitoring will help establish how well the ponds are supporting native fish populations over time. ■

BNHS Removes 369 kg of Invasive Suckermouth Catfish from Ujani Catchment



The BNHS removed 369 kg of invasive suckermouth catfish from the Ujani catchment during October 2026 as part of its ongoing invasive species management programme. Of this quantity, 322 kg was collected on October 1 and a further 47 kg on October 21.

During the month, the collection incentive offered by BNHS was reduced from `30 to `20 per kg. The lower quantity collected and the reduced collection rate may reflect changes in the availability of suckermouth catfish in the catchment. However, further monitoring will be needed to determine whether these changes indicate a sustained decline in the population.

Since the programme began, a cumulative 39.306 tonnes of suckermouth catfish has been removed from the Ujani catchment. The initiative also provides financial incentives to local fishers who participate in collecting the invasive fish. BNHS has disbursed `78,612 in incentives to date, while the collection and associated utilisation of the fish have generated an estimated economic value of `10,05,568.

Continued removal and monitoring will help assess the programme's impact on invasive fish populations and whether these efforts are reducing pressure on native aquatic biodiversity. ■



A Failed Monsoon Leaves Jaisalmer's Wildlife Facing a Water Crisis

In the arid landscapes of Jaisalmer district, Rajasthan, every spell of rain matters. Unlike regions that receive sustained monsoon showers, this desert district depends on a small number of rainfall events during a short and unpredictable wet season. Annual rainfall is generally low, falling below 200 mm across much of the district and below 100 mm in some of its westernmost areas.

The 2026 monsoon has brought little relief. Jaisalmer received just 89.1 mm of rainfall against a seasonal normal of 176.9 mm, approximately half its usual amount. The deficit has raised serious concerns about water availability, vegetation growth and the survival of wildlife in an already water-stressed landscape.

In a landscape where water is scarce even in a normal year, a poor monsoon can have consequences well beyond agriculture. Water sources are reported to be receding, while grasses and other vegetation have failed to grow adequately. These seasonal plants are vital to wild herbivores and domestic livestock alike. Canal systems, including the Gang Canal and the Indira Gandhi Nahar Pariyojana, provide an important source of water for human settlements and agriculture in parts of the region. Wildlife, however, cannot always access these supplies. Wild animals depend on natural water sources and the vegetation sustained by seasonal rainfall. As water and forage become scarce, livestock and wild herbivores may increasingly compete for the remaining resources. Animals may also congregate around the few water sources that retain water, increasing pressure on these sites.

In Jaisalmer, there is concern that free-ranging dogs could pose a greater risk to native wildlife, especially chinkara, when animals are forced into smaller areas. For now, the immediate priority is to understand how the drought is affecting wildlife on the ground. Monitoring natural water sources, grass growth, herbivore movements and encounters between wildlife and free-ranging dogs can help identify vulnerable areas and guide timely conservation responses. ■



BNHS Partners with Jalgaon Institution to Strengthen Conservation Education in North Maharashtra

The BNHS has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the School of Environment & Nature Conservation, Jalgaon, to advance education and training in wildlife, biodiversity, forest management and environmental conservation. The academic programmes have also received approval from Kavayitri Bahinabai Chaudhari North Maharashtra University, Jalgaon, creating new opportunities for students and aspiring conservation professionals to gain structured knowledge and practical experience in conservation-related fields. The MoU was signed by Shri Kishor Rithe, Director, BNHS, in the presence of Mr Pravinsingh Pardeshi, President, BNHS.

Through this collaboration, BNHS and the School of Environment & Nature Conservation aim to strengthen expert-led teaching, field-based learning, research and practical training. The partnership seeks to bridge academic learning with the real-world challenges of biodiversity conservation and natural resource management. Particular attention will be given to the rich biodiversity, forests and ecosystems of the Satpuda ranges and Khandesh region of North Maharashtra. Exposure to these landscapes can help students understand local ecological processes, conservation priorities and the challenges involved in managing natural habitats. ■



Parveen Shaikh Honoured at the Times Now Amazing Indians Awards 2026

Parveen Shaikh has been named a winner in the Animal Welfare and Wildlife Conservation category at the Times Now Amazing Indians Awards 2026, organised by the Times Network. The award was presented on September 30, 2026, in recognition of the Guardians of the Skimmer programme.

The programme is part of the Indian Skimmer conservation work carried out on the Chambal River over the past ten years. The Chambal is an important breeding river for the species, so safeguarding its nesting sites and the birds that depend on them contributes to the survival of the Indian Skimmer globally.

The award recognises this conservation work and the collective efforts of the teams, partners and communities who support it. ■

Female Great Indian Bustards Form Winter Group Near Pokhran, Rajasthan

The BNHS Researchers have observed a group of female Great Indian Bustards *Ardeotis nigriceps* in the grasslands surrounding Khetolai village near Pokhran, offering an encouraging glimpse of one of India's most threatened bird species in its natural habitat. Female Great Indian Bustards may form small groups during winter, moving through productive grasslands and agricultural areas in search of food. The season can provide opportunities to forage on seeds, insects and other naturally available food resources.

The sighting highlights the conservation importance of the Pokhran landscape, part of Rajasthan's Thar Desert region and one of the last remaining strongholds of the Great Indian Bustard. Continued habitat protection, reduction of threats and sustained engagement with local communities will be essential to securing a future for the Great Indian Bustard. ■



More Than 250 Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters Recorded at Jorbeer Conservation Reserve, Rajasthan

More than 250 Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters *Merops persicus*, including adults and juveniles, were recorded at Jorbeer Conservation Reserve during the first week of October 2026. The gathering offers a glimpse of the reserve's importance to birds during the post-breeding season. Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters are migratory birds that breed across parts of northwestern India before moving to wintering grounds in Africa. The presence of both adult birds and recently fledged juveniles at Jorbeer highlights the role of the Thar landscape as a seasonal habitat during this period of their annual cycle. Continued monitoring at Jorbeer Conservation Reserve can help better understand seasonal movements, habitat use and changes in the numbers of these migratory visitors. ■

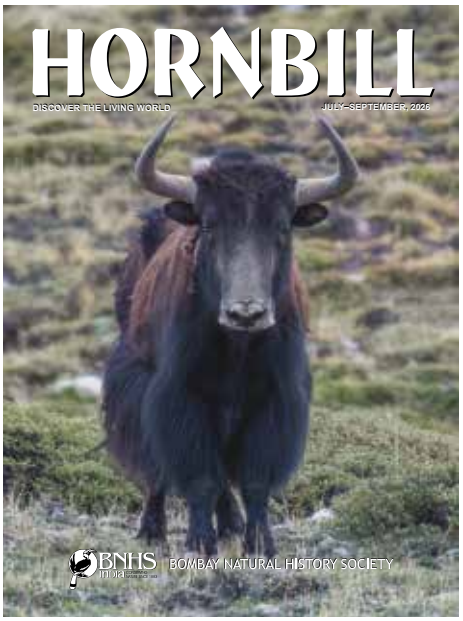


BNHS Introduces Naturalists to Bird Ringing at Daroji Sloth Bear Sanctuary, Karnataka

The BNHS team conducted an interactive bird-ringing session for naturalists at Daroji Sloth Bear Sanctuary, introducing participants to a scientific technique used to study birds and support conservation research. Eight naturalists took part in the programme, alongside Range Forest Officer Nagaraj and other Forest Department staff. The session provided an opportunity to learn about bird ringing and its role in understanding avian ecology, movement patterns and migration. It also encouraged the exchange of knowledge between naturalists, researchers and forest personnel. The BNHS team recorded an Indian Scops Owl within the sanctuary campus – the first documented record of the species at Daroji. The programme highlighted how collaboration between research institutions, naturalists and the Forest Department can strengthen field-based monitoring and build local capacity for wildlife conservation. ■



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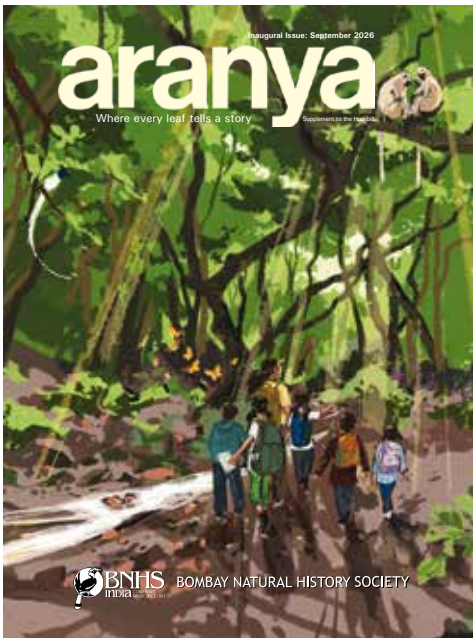


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- Arrange educational visits in nearby natural areas
- Bring behavioural change through environmental games and activities



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European Rollers Recorded Repeatedly Across Vijayanagara District, Karnataka

BNHS researchers, working alongside the GreenHBH team, recorded more than 20 European Rollers *Coracias garrulus* during field surveys in Hagaribommanahalli and the Ankasamudra landscape in October 2026. The birds were repeatedly observed along a 15-kilometre stretch between Hagaribommanahalli and Sakralli during the team's October visits. These recurring observations, together with reports from other birdwatchers across North Karnataka, point to the importance of the region for understanding the seasonal movements of this striking migratory species. The European Roller breeds across parts of Europe and western and central Asia, migrating to Africa for the non-breeding season. Its movements through the Indian subcontinent offer opportunities to study how migratory birds use the region's varied landscapes during their journeys. Further surveys and systematic monitoring will be important to determine whether the birds are passing through, remaining for extended periods or using particular sites as seasonal feeding grounds. ■



BNHS Bird-Ringing Programme Records 100 Species in 97 Days

The BNHS's ongoing bird-ringing programme at Ankasamudra Bird Conservation Reserve and the Tungabhadra backwaters in Karnataka has reached a significant milestone, documenting 100 bird species and ringing 550 individual birds in just 97 days. Supported by the Karnataka Forest Department and Team Green HBH, the programme is building a valuable body of field data to improve understanding of bird ecology across these important wetland landscapes. ■





VCBC Rani Strengthens Vulture Conservation Outreach Across Assam

The Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre (VCBC), Rani, Assam, continued its efforts to promote vulture conservation and wildlife protection in October 2026 through educational programmes, community outreach, stakeholder engagement and training activities for forest personnel. Across the month, the team worked with students, local communities, conservation stakeholders and forest staff to highlight the ecological importance of vultures and the need to protect wildlife and their habitats.

Educational Awareness Programmes: VCBC Rani conducted nine educational awareness programmes, reaching 1,008 participants across schools and colleges in Kamrup, Dibrugarh, Nagaon and Biswanath districts. The sessions introduced students to the importance of vultures in ecosystems and encouraged greater awareness of their conservation needs.



Engaging children through art: On October 19, VCBC Rani organised a drawing competition for children in Belguri village, Kamrup, during Durga Puja. Centred on the theme 'Vultures and Nature', the activity offered children a creative way to explore wildlife conservation. Members of the Belguri Puja Samiti attended, and prizes were presented to the winners in recognition of their creativity and efforts.



Advocacy Activities: Two advocacy engagements were recorded during October. On October 7, a meeting was held with Dr Nur Islam, SDVO, at the District Veterinary Office in Goalpara. On October 23, the team interacted with Ashima Das, President of the Palashbari Circle Gaon Pradhan Group. These engagements supported communication and coordination with local stakeholders on conservation-related matters.



Strengthening forest personnel's conservation knowledge: VCBC Rani also conducted two wildlife awareness programmes for forest personnel, reaching 280 participants. On October 6, Dr Sachin Ranade participated in the State Wildlife Week programme in Kamrup, organised by the Forest Department and attended by more than 200 people. The event promoted awareness of wildlife conservation and biodiversity protection.



On 8 October, 80 trainees from the Assam Forest School visited VCBC Rani as part of their training. They attended a session on vulture conservation, Vulture Safe Zones and the vulture reintroduction programme in Assam, gaining an introduction to ongoing efforts to support the recovery of vulture populations. ■

BNHS Nature Club Reaches 21 Educational Institutions in Satara, Maharashtra

The BNHS Nature Club conducted a ten-day environmental education campaign across Patan and Karad talukas from October 5–16, 2026, reaching 21 schools and educational institutions. Through interactive sessions and practical activities, the initiative encouraged students, particularly those from rural and remote areas, to explore local biodiversity and understand the importance of conservation. The campaign was organised in collaboration with Creative Nature Friends for Conservation of Nature, Karad, and the Koyna Environmental Awareness Mission, Patan. It was conducted under the guidance of BNHS Director Kishor Rithe and Honorary Wildlife Warden Rohan Bhate. BNHS Project Associate Rohan Chavan led the sessions, visiting 14 institutions in Patan taluka and seven in Karad taluka.

Patan: From October 5–10, the campaign covered 14 educational institutions in Patan taluka, with support from Sunilrao Panaskar, Coordinator of the Koyna Environmental Awareness Mission; Prof. Satish Gaikwad; and Assistant Professor Bhavana Jadhav. Participating institutions included Late Dadasaheb Patankar Vidyalaya, Mhawashi; Morana Vidyalaya, Morgiri; the Institute of Hotel Management, Patan; Sulochanabai Patankar Girls' School, Patan; Netaji Subhashchandra High School and Junior College, Koynanagar; Guruvarya Lalasahib Patankar High School, Bhopoli; Shri Kshetrapal Vidyalaya, Adul; New English School, Vihe; Shri Chhatrapati Pratapsinhraje Bhosale Vidyalaya and Junior College, Dhoroshi; P.P. Gagangiri Maharaj Vidyalaya, Kalambe; Mane-Deshmukh Vidyalaya; and Balasaheb Desai College, Patan, among others.



Sessions focused on bird identification, biodiversity documentation through School Biodiversity Registers (SBRs) and the potential of nature-based tourism. Discussions, question-and-answer sessions, educational games and practical demonstrations encouraged students to observe their surroundings, identify local species and recognise the value of healthy natural habitats. The Patan phase concluded on 10 October at Balasaheb Desai College, operated by the Koyna Education Society. Prof. Satish Gaikwad felicitated Rohan Chavan in recognition of his contribution to the initiative.

Karad: The programme continued in Karad taluka from October 10–16, reaching seven more educational institutions with support from Creative Nature Friends for Conservation of Nature and Honorary Wildlife Warden Rohan Bhate. The participating institutions included Tilak High School, Karad; S.M.S. English School; PM SHRI Nagar Parishad School No. 3; Podar International School; Dr Cyrus Poonawalla International School; Shri Shivaji Vidyalaya, Karad; and HKD Urdu High School, Karad.



Students explored local birds and biodiversity while learning how systematic observation and documentation can contribute to conservation. The activity-based approach helped connect environmental concepts with the natural world students encounter in their daily lives.

By introducing young people to biodiversity monitoring and nature-based learning, the BNHS Nature Club aims to build environmental awareness and encourage a lasting interest in wildlife conservation. School Biodiversity Registers, in particular, can help students document the plants and animals around their institutions and develop a stronger connection with local ecosystems. ■

BNHS Staff Participate in Hospitality Training Programme

The BNHS conducted a Hospitality Training Programme for its staff at Hornbill House on October 5, 2026, reinforcing its commitment to maintaining a welcoming, courteous and professional environment for visitors and colleagues. The session was led by Mr Osden Ferreira, Associate Professor at ITM Skills University. Through interactive discussions and practical learning, participants explored key aspects of workplace hospitality, including professional etiquette, effective communication, courteous behaviour and teamwork. ■



BNHS Conservation Education Centre (CEC) Brings Nature and Science to Life in October

The BNHS-CEC welcomed students, families, corporate participants and aspiring young naturalists throughout October for a range of nature-based learning experiences. Through guided trails, interactive workshops and practical demonstrations, the programmes encouraged participants to explore biodiversity.

Wildlife Week Trail: On October 4, students joined a Wildlife Week nature trail along the Sálim Ali Trail at BNHS-CEC. Participants observed butterflies such as the Common Crow, Danaid Eggfly, Blue Oakleaf, Jezebel, Common Sailer and Commander. They also encountered leaf-rolling beetles, grasshoppers, katydids and several spiders, including the Signature Spider, Wolf Spider, Giant Wood Spider and Adanson's House Jumper. A particularly memorable moment came with the sighting of an Indian Red Scorpion while ascending towards Sálim Ali Point, offering an exciting glimpse into the lesser-seen wildlife of the forest.







Corporate engagement: On October 9, BNHS-CEC hosted 100 participants from BlackRock for a corporate engagement programme featuring creative, hands-on activities. Participants made wall hangings using ice cream sticks and personalised keychains through painting. The activities encouraged creative expression, teamwork and reflection on how everyday materials can be reused rather than discarded.



Families and students discover the urban forest: On October 10, more than 70 children and parents joined a birthday celebration centred on a guided nature walk led by BNHS naturalists. Another birthday programme on October 11 welcomed over 50 participants for a nature trail followed by an interactive tattoo-painting workshop. On October 13, approximately 40–50 students from Maharashtra Vidyalaya explored the CEC's natural surroundings with BNHS naturalists. The visit introduced them to local flora and fauna and highlighted the ecological importance of species and their habitats.



On October 19, BNHS-CEC conducted a bird-awareness session for around 70 students at Veer Bhagat Singh School under the BNHS Nature Club initiative. The interactive session explored bird diversity, behaviour and ecological importance, encouraging students to take an interest in local birdlife and birdwatching. The school's engagement continued with a guided nature trail at BNHS-CEC for more than 70 students. Led by BNHS naturalists, the walk introduced participants to the biodiversity of the urban forest. A wildlife conservation documentary screening followed, complemented by discussions between students, teachers and BNHS staff. On October 24, children participated in another nature-based programme that combined a guided trail with seed-ball making and a tattoo-making activity. The seed-ball session introduced a practical approach to seed dispersal and the role of plants in supporting healthy ecosystems.

Be a Scientist for a Day: On October 25, BNHS-CEC organised Be a Scientist for a Day, led by Education Officer Kartheek Thevar, with Mr Prashant and Mr Dilip. Participants learned field methods used by wildlife biologists to assess biodiversity, including vegetation sampling, measuring tree girth, estimating canopy cover and recording plant species using data sheets and GPS devices.

The programme also introduced faunal assessment techniques, including line transects, documenting invertebrates and recording signs of mammal presence. A sighting of a Wandering Violin Mantis provided a memorable highlight to the day. The October programmes demonstrated the many ways nature education can bring people closer to the environment. ■







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

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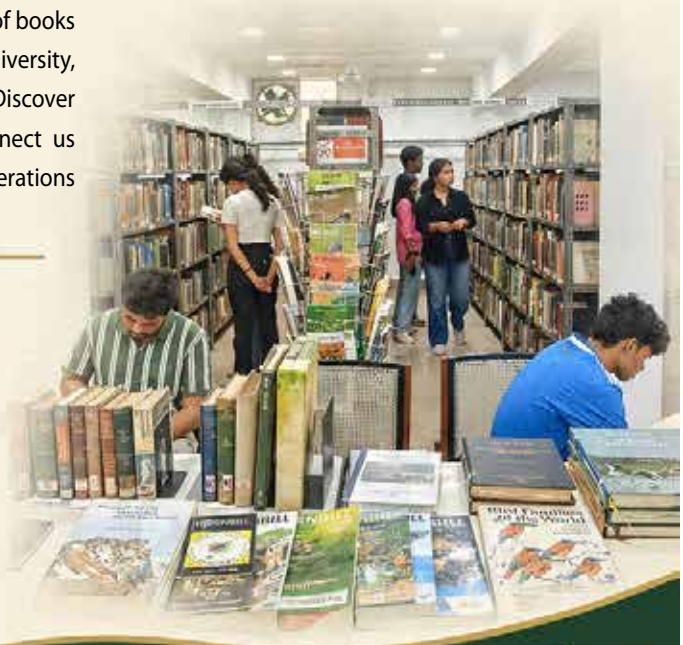


An Online Talk by

Dr. Asad R. Rahmani

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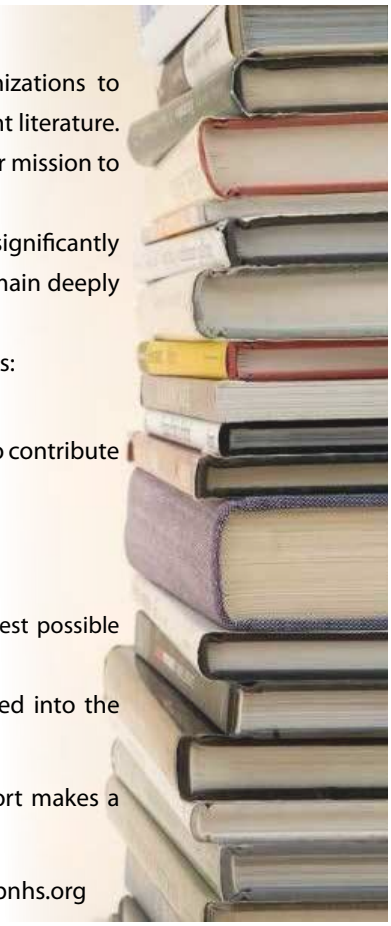
Date:
Friday, 6 November 2026
Time: 3 pm

Venue:
Online via Google Meet

Organised by BNHS Library
Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS)

Google Meet Link: https://meet.google.com/ghs-kmrs-kct

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CONTACT US

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