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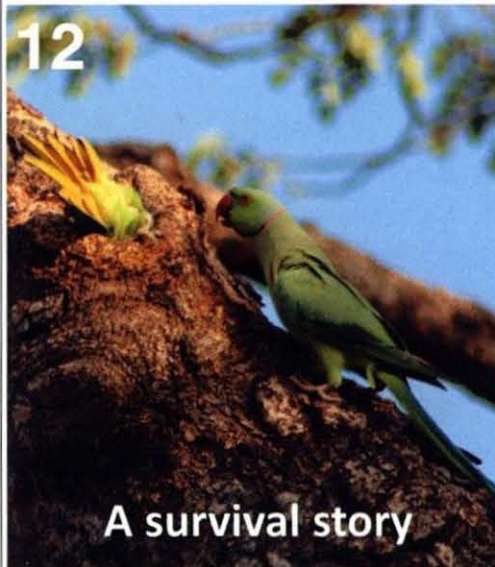
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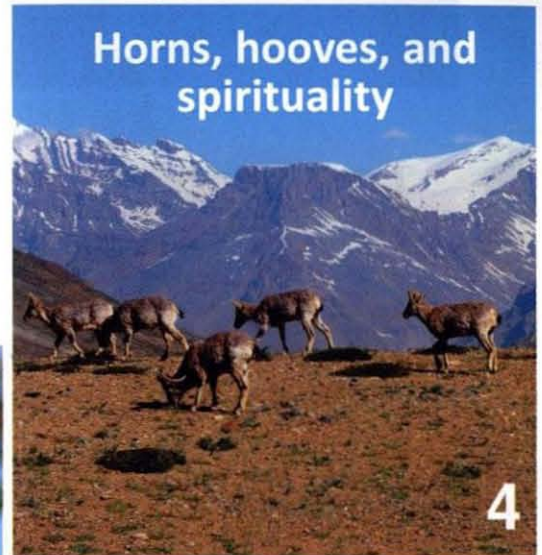
# C O N T E N T S

**Pranav Trivedi** has discussed his mesmerising encounter with the Bharal, with a hint of spiritual stirring he experienced at Kibber village in Spiti valley. Read about this delightful confrontation ...



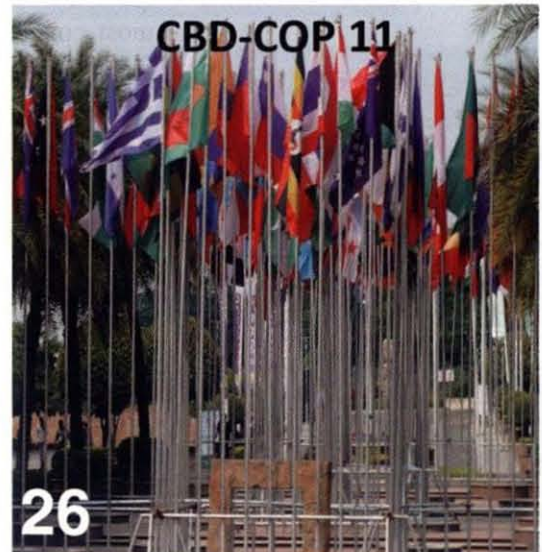
## A survival story

The Eleventh Conference of the Parties (COP 11) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was held at Hyderabad during October 8-19, 2012. An overview of some of the important "developments" at this international gathering is worth reading.



The story is about the struggle of the prey that had to fight hard to survive the attack of its predator.

**Asif Khan**, who witnessed the struggle, shares this episode with its rightful intensity. Read on ...



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## CBD, COP, and Biodiversity Conservation

In the previous issue of *Hornbill*, we have described in detail the importance of Conference of the Parties (COP) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), held every two years in different parts of the world. COP 11 held at Hyderabad in October 2012 gave BNHS staff an opportunity to participate in full strength (see this issue) and also to understand the complexity of conservation issues. In a land where conservation has narrowed down to the tiger and forest protection, the complexities and intricacies of conservation, with other extremely pressing needs for majority of the populace, has not been fully understood by major NGOs, so-called experts, and even by the government.

Participation in such large international events gives us a new perspective from which to view the real problems facing our Earth. The coming together of 168 countries on a common platform gave us an opportunity to learn by sharing experiences. While most conservation problems are common – human population explosion, over-exploitation of natural resources, destruction of habitat, excessive hunting, disconnect of local people from nature, pollution – some are country- or region-specific such as sand mining, uncontrolled wildlife trade, weak legislation, and lack of local capacity. The topics that were discussed during COP gave an idea of the ambit of the CBD. I will mention only some topics of COP 11: threats to biodiversity due to energy infrastructure, impacts of dams on biodiversity: socio-ecological dimensions in the context of climate change, indigenous economies, biodiversity, and food sovereignty, implementation of the pilot phase of the Access and Benefit Sharing clearing-house, animal genetic resources of Tamil Nadu, conservation and adaptive management of globally important agricultural heritage systems and financing Aichi targets.

In all, 293 topics in as many side events were discussed, besides many topics in the Rio Pavilion and the main inter-governmental agenda. Along with these issues, people got the opportunity to organise smaller group meetings, study the literature provided and visit stalls that acted like mini-theatres of the work that a country or a state or an NGO is doing for biodiversity conservation.

India, which is obsessed with tiger conservation, and is neglecting all other species and habitats, must learn from international meetings where all aspects of conservation form the topic of discussion.

As I have written earlier, we urgently need a think tank on wildlife policy research. India has about 300 think tanks, but none on conservation issues. We need research-driven policy changes in our wildlife and environmental laws that reflect the fast-changing scenario, and which should come up with new solutions to new challenges.







For many species, we urgently need “landscape approach” conservation involving local communities and all stakeholders, and appropriate changes in the rigid Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 that was enacted 40 years ago (though amended many times) in a different context period. Things have changed since then and wildlife conservation has become much more complex. Making WPA more stringent, creating a few more sanctuaries (now becoming increasingly difficult due to the huge resentment by local people and state governments), preventing research in wildlife areas, and catching a few poor local poachers, is not going to solve the problems. At present, we have opinion-based and not science-based conservation actions. Science- or research-based actions will come only when research on wildlife including invasive research, if necessary, habitat management, which includes experimental research in PAs, and policy research is allowed. We have to promote younger Indians to come forward with solutions. At present, wildlife research is so stifled by denial of permits and lack of further career opportunities that there are very few bright youngsters willing to take up wildlife and environment as a career.

Perhaps India’s leadership of the CBD for the next two years will generate a ray of hope for the future.

Asad R. Rahmani



# Horns, hooves, and spirituality

Text and Photographs: **Pranav Trivedi**

The biting cold wind scowls at me, I have no reply for it, nor can I deny it. So I walk, seemingly nonchalant, secretly nurturing a hope that it will die down soon. I descend a gradual slope that takes me to a plateau looming over the crop fields of Kibber village in the Himalaya. I am only at about half the altitude of Mount Everest, but it is high and cold enough. I am *just* walking, there is a silence that settles in you and also *settles you* from within. Such silence can even unsettle you at times.

I continue ... and in my 'zero' state, I stumble upon a herd of Blue Sheep, all around me in a horseshoe formation, the closest barely six metres from me. Most heads go up in surprise at my sudden intrusion. I remember my lessons in wildlife watching, and freeze ... I gently settle down and a smile brightens my face. The smile seems to communicate to the herd that I mean no harm; I sit motionless, and after a while they resume foraging.







An all-male herd of 35 Blue Sheep (*Pseudois nayaur*). Blue sheep is actually a misnomer, as the animal is neither blue nor is it really a sheep!

There were 24 of them, a mixed herd consisting of 16 adults – ten males and six females, five yearlings, two subadult females and a young male. In general, males of mountain sheep and goat species are grouped into classes I to IV (and sometimes V) based on their age – largely determined by the size and shape of the horns and other morphological features, such as colour and size. Most of the animals, except the young ones, were nonchalant about my presence and were actually inching towards me! An impressive adult class IV male with a mighty sweep of its beautifully arched horns pushed another younger male away from his chosen food – a clump of grass. The latter backed off and without looking up moved away, head held low and self-esteem seemingly taking a plunge in front of several ewes. For a few moments, I lost self-awareness and felt the oneness and continuum of life. An old class IV male broke my trance with his intense gaze, but only for a short while, as if making sure that the distance separating us in spatial and evolutionary terms was trustworthy!

We were on a seemingly barren slope, but a closer look revealed that it was overgrown with several high altitude plant species, the chief among them *Caragana*, *Allium*, *Eurotium*, *Stipa* (a grass) and *Carex* (a species of sedge). Surviving at this altitude in extreme weather conditions is no mean feat and these species possess unique characters that aid their survival: most of them have thorns, spines, and strongly scented leaves. These adaptations protect them against grazing herbivores, which trouble them more than the weather! Several of these high altitude wonders, despite their natural armour, have been denuded by the hungry livestock of Kibber village located about 200 m below this pasture.

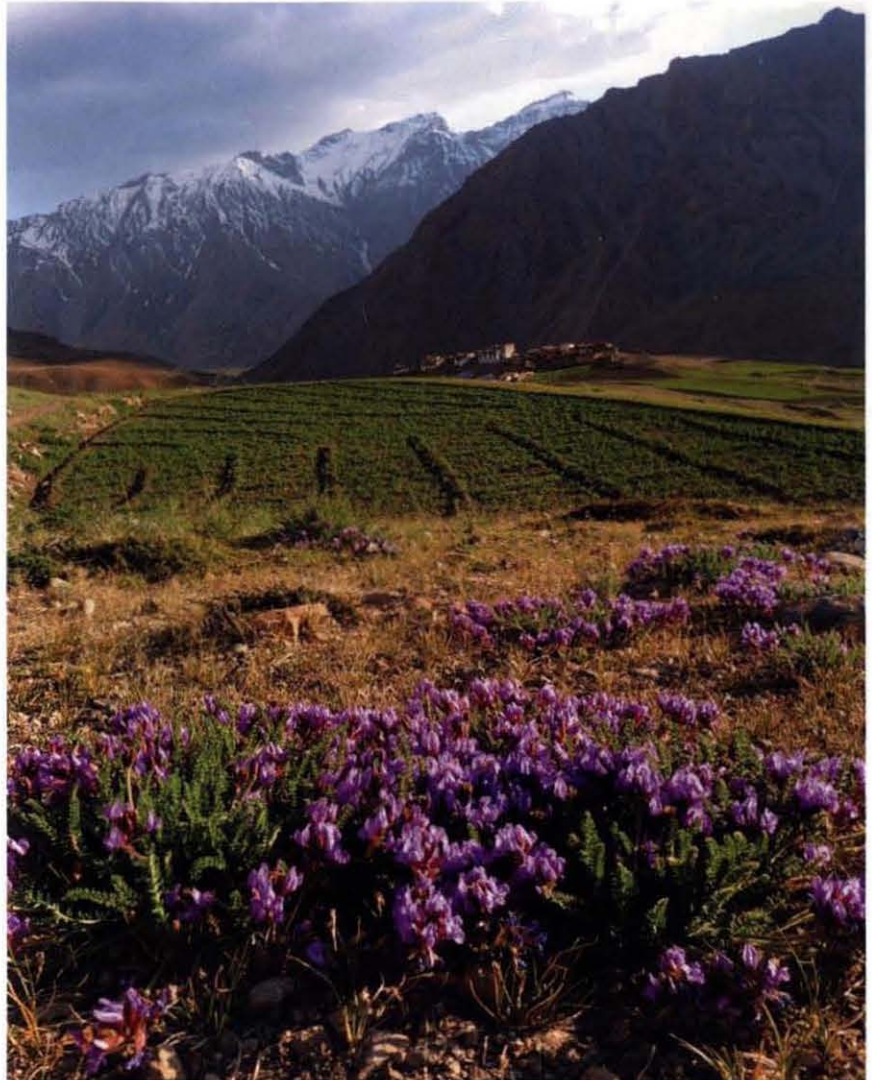
There are many features which are special about Blue Sheep, one can begin with the name. Blue Sheep is actually a misnomer, as the animal is neither blue nor is it really a sheep! The scientific name *Pseudois nayaur* (*Pseudois* = false sheep) is surely more apt. Its common names include *Bharal* in northern India and *Nayaur* in Nepal. For scientists, this mammal

remained a puzzle for long, until George Schaller carried out a beautiful study of its behaviour and summarised the finding as “Blue Sheep is an aberrant goat with sheep-like affinities.” A closer look at its DNA has revealed that Blue Sheep has diverged far from the original goat-sheep lineage and reached a sort of dead-end, emerging as a unique species. Among the Trans-Himalayan wild goats and sheep, Blue Sheep is the most widely distributed. Its high altitude home ranges from 3,000 to 5,500 m above msl. Adult females of this species have small and slightly diverging horns, while the males grow highly impressive, heavy, curving horns that go up sideways, descend in an arch and then backwards as they pass through various classes from I to IV. Growth rings on the horns reveal their age and the largest recorded males (above 12 years of age) carry about 8 to 10 kg on their skulls in the form of horns! Blue Sheep inhabit areas with moderate to steep slopes, interspersed with cliffs, the latter being used as escape routes from predators like the Snow Leopard and Tibetan Wolf.

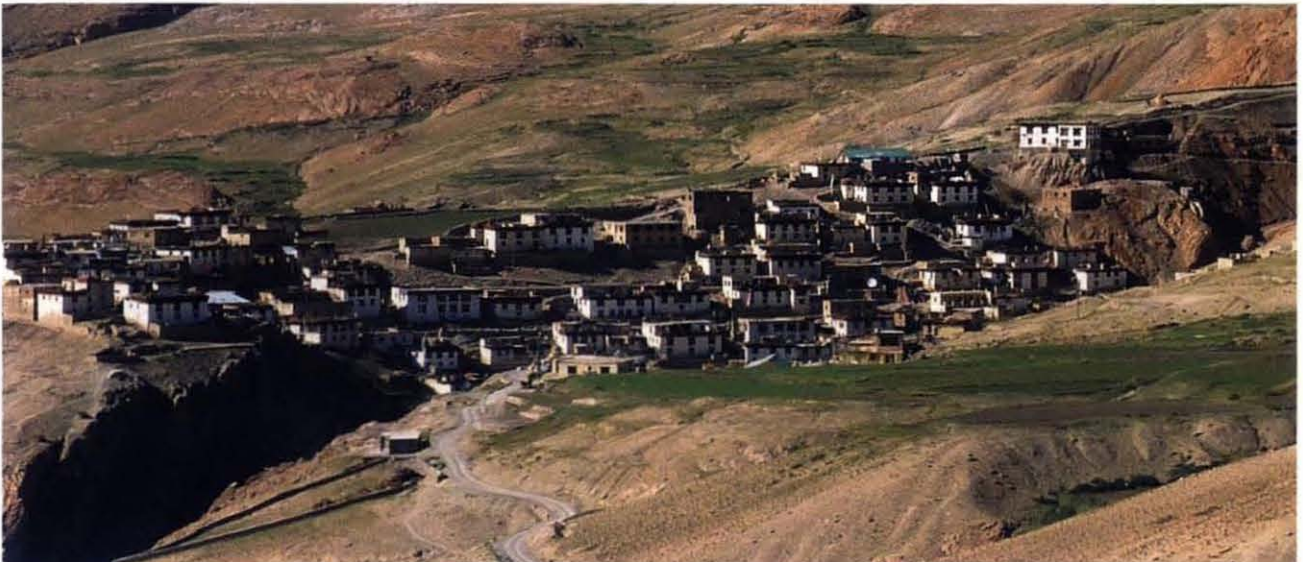


Like my thoughts, the herd too drifted further towards the crest of the slope. We were at about 4,400 m on Chomoling plateau, nestled among high mountains reaching up to 6,000 m. Depending on the season, the surrounding mountains present a veritable delight of colours. The ambience provides ample food for the hungry soul. The mind is taken to higher realms, transcending from thought to consciousness and awareness, making it possible for us to view the impermanence of the 'world' we create for ourselves. And in that heightened state, the Blue Sheep doesn't appear to be a mere animal – it feels like an extension of existence, of life. But this fleeting impression comes and goes. It is the state of *satori* referred to in the *zen* tradition, similar to the fourth or *chaturtha* state called *turya* (conscious awareness) in the Indian yogic system.

Every encounter with the Blue Sheep, each of the many interesting and long episodes of watching them in Spiti and Ladakh in the Himalaya, where I work, have always inspired and left an impact on me. Blue Sheep are easy to approach, and surprisingly more trusting here than anywhere else. During early November, 2009, while surveying a Blue Sheep



Vegetation near Kibber village



Kibber, the highest motorable village in the world



population around Kibber, I bumped into a herd of 35 adult males. Their rutting season had just begun and they appeared to be in fantastic shape. Equipped with strong, curving horns, they were all set to impress the females who were seemingly non-receptive to their approach. The herd descending from a lush slope resembled a marching army displaying their weapons on their heads. Of course, their purpose was primal and observing them for some time soon revealed these subtle processes. The males were least interested in feeding at that moment; instead, sparring, butting, and lateral displays prevailed throughout. Power is beautiful until its primal side surfaces to dominate. I was



Bharal herd encountered around Kibber village

fascinated by this battalion of 35 soldiers competing to propagate their genes. It was a sight to behold when they suddenly took flight – 35 flashing white rumps, 70 majestic horns! Often while meditating when I think of instances that were joyful, I remember such events in the non-human domain.

The mixed herd had now crossed beyond the small ridge-line, the last image being that of an adult male in silhouette against the snow-clad mountains. I did not feel like following them any longer, they were at peace and it was good to leave them alone. My peace was restored too. Lost in my thoughts, I had inadvertently moved far and stood overlooking a deep canyon. The sound of a gurgling stream deep in the canyon engulfed every other sound. There was a steep fall of about 150 m from the edge of the canyon to the stream, and the slopes on both sides had innumerable caves and nooks for snow leopards to shelter in during the day. The Blue Sheep too forage on these slopes. Where the canyon wall was steeper, on a buff rising

almost perpendicular to the stream, there was a Golden Eagle incubating two eggs. I sat lazily on a granite boulder and gazed at the rich plant growth all around me. The breeze was stronger here and the mind more receptive. Soon my creativity was rekindled and a *haiku* flashed in my mind; I caught it before it could disappear with the breeze.

*Perched on a rock  
Watching the silence,  
I dissolve in it.*

Blue Sheep are gregarious. Their herds generally consist of mixed groups – adult females, young of varying ages, subadults of both sexes and young/adult males; only adult females and young; and ‘bachelor’ herds – only males – mostly mature class III and IV. These bachelor herds are mainly formed during the rutting season, but can be seen sporadically round-the-year. Females give birth during summer (May to June) and the kids are fit to accompany their mothers soon after birth. The number of Blue Sheep in this region (around 100 sq. km) was less than

100 during the late 1990s. Now, 20 years later, it is above 400. This phenomenal increase can largely be attributed to a well thought-out and long-term community-based conservation programme involving a combination of livestock insurance against depredation by large carnivores, rewarding better herding, and creation of village level grazing-free reserves. These benign sheep, which had been reduced to a relict population, are now providing a large prey base for the globally endangered Snow Leopard. It is now the turn of the predators to oblige by hunting more Blue Sheep than livestock, to spare the locals of

the economic burden of wildlife-livestock conflict. This, however, is yet to happen on a visible scale, owing either to an increase in Snow Leopard occupancy/population in the area or changes in livestock holding pattern, e.g., horses being brought in to fill the need for dung, or a combination of both.

The great numbers of Blue Sheep are now leading to another form of conflict – crop damage. Green pea, a cash crop that has brought visible changes in the local economy and socio-cultural fabric since the 1980s, is turning out to be an easy target for Blue Sheep. The local people, in spite of their Buddhist religious background and the strong influence of the monasteries, believe that the Blue Sheep are ‘outsiders’. They often refer to these animals as *your* Blue Sheep in conversation with us. According to old local belief, if a Snow Leopard attacked livestock in a village, it was due to the ‘bad’ or unsettled *karma* of someone or of the entire village. The villagers would invite lamas (Buddhist monks) to conduct special ceremonies and rituals

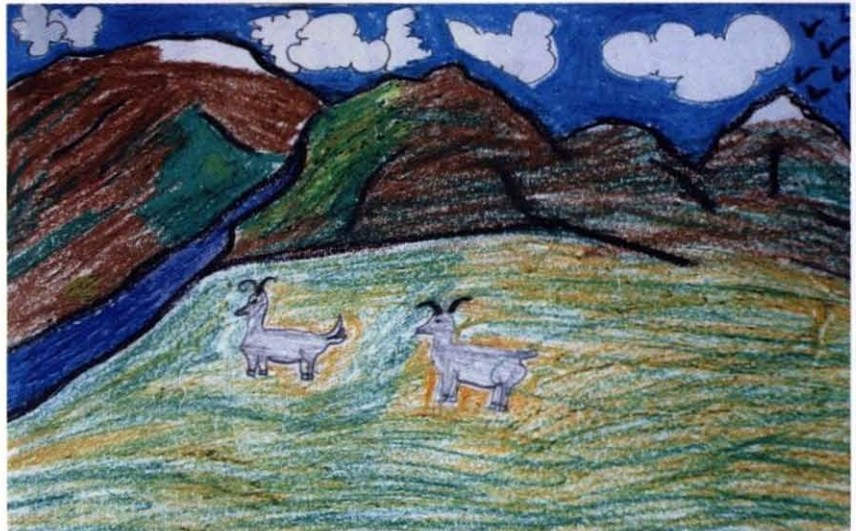
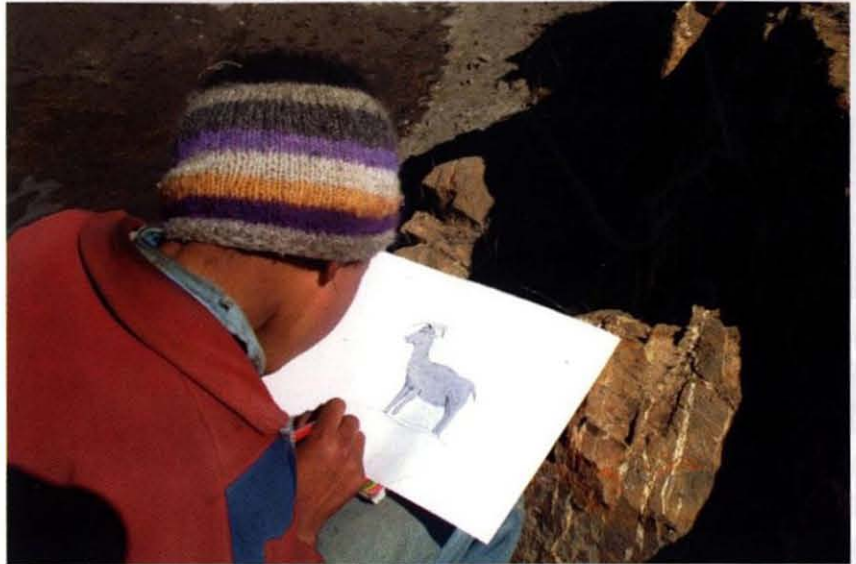


to protect the village. However, a recent survey we conducted showed that despite receiving compensation for any loss of their livestock, some of these people have a negative attitude towards the Snow Leopard and Blue Sheep. On the other hand, there are people who have not been compensated for their losses, and yet have a positive and sympathetic attitude towards the animals.

Taking full advantage of the grazing-free reserve, where villagers voluntarily keep the livestock out, Blue Sheep have multiplied almost four-fold. This is an interesting example where relevant conservation action has led to conflict of a different kind.

As I write this, a group of 30 young children (grades V to VIII) from a local school are being led by two of our field staff – local youth – to show them Blue Sheep and other wildlife. This is to help young minds to appreciate the importance of different species of plants and animals occurring here. Now, this is in contrast to what these children know – Blue Sheep damage *their* crops and Snow Leopards kill *their* livestock. Many children have a negative attitude towards both these species. We link our conservation message with Buddha's message of compassion and right to life for all beings. This perhaps helps strengthen our message, as we often receive unexpected emotional feedback from the children saying how they feel about the harsh struggle for survival faced by these species. There are larger lessons in life for the children to learn here.

The Blue Sheep seem neutral and oblivious of these sentiments, and show unusual trust and fearlessness, compared to those in most other areas in the Himalaya. Their confiding nature and almost ubiquitous presence gives me immense satisfaction, and the unique feeling of divine oneness within me. It is a real challenge to work on changing the



A child sketching Blue Sheep at a nature education camp in Kibber village

perceptions on Blue Sheep and other wildlife held by people who live close to them. Our conservation and education programme is a small step forward to establish this link with wildlife, to create positive attitudes and a feeling of ownership regarding these species, as well as the awesome landscape that supports them.

In the meantime, I watch Blue

Sheep with unsurpassable joy and calm. It is a unique species and shows amazing survival skills, for it has lived in difficult and challenging habitats for millennia, far longer than our species! ■

**Acknowledgement:** The author thanks Dr. Charudutt Mishra for editing an earlier version of this article.



Pranav Trivedi is Senior Scientist with the Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF), Mysore, and Director of Conservation, Snow Leopard Trust (SLT), India Program.



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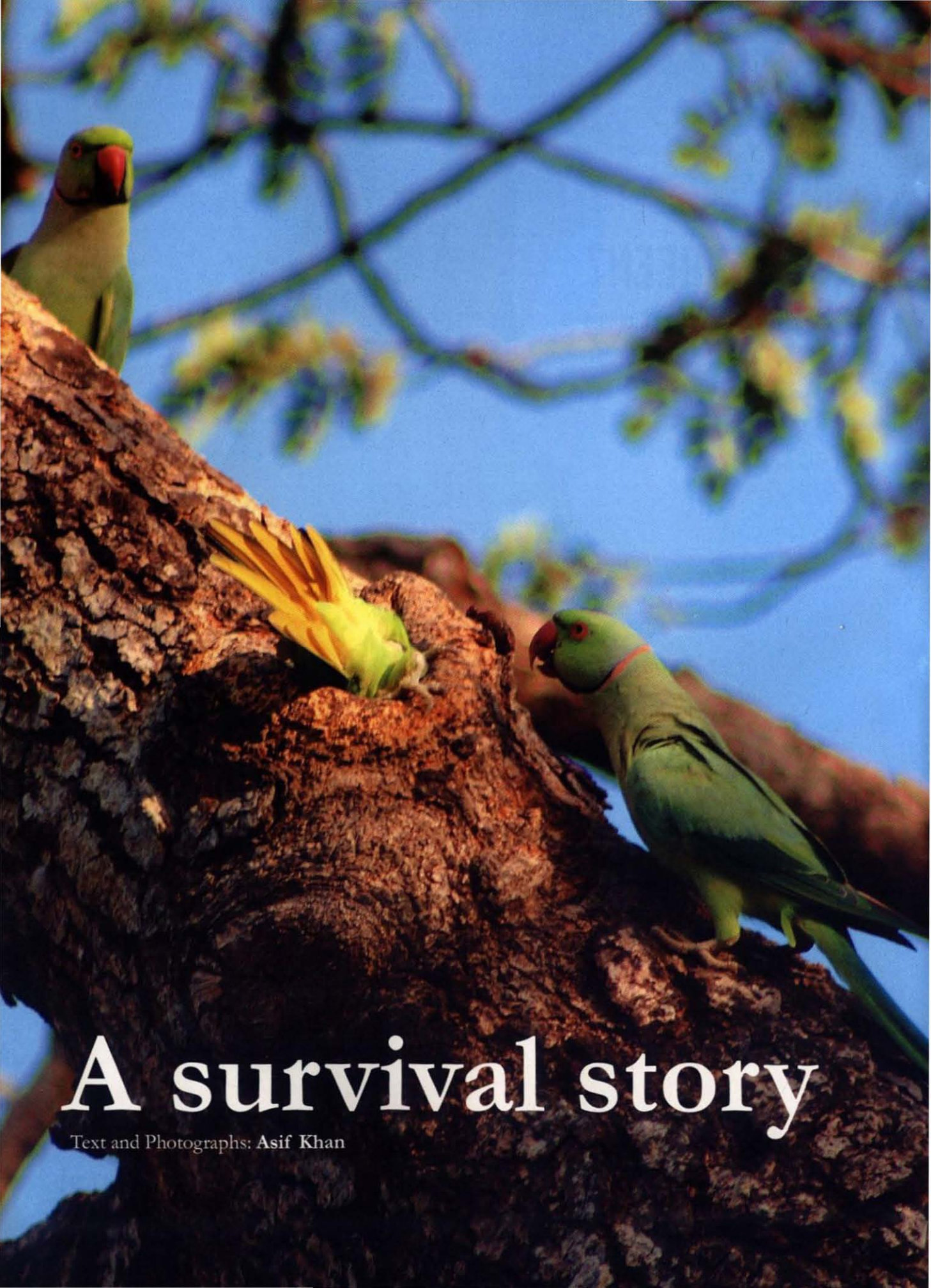
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# A survival story

Text and Photographs: Asif Khan



**G**ir National Park is the last refuge for the Asiatic Lion (*Panthera leo persica*), with only around 400 of them left in the entire world. In the late 1890s, the Nawab of Junagadh and the then Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon, decided to 'spare' the last few of India's lions, which have now come back from the brink of extinction. Likewise, this too is a survival story, but not of the Asiatic Lion.

It was my first safari in Gir, and I was just getting used to the scorching heat of Gujarat, which can reach as high as the mid-40s on a hot summer day. We were cruising through the dry deciduous forest trying to catch a glimpse of the famed Asiatic Lion, when I heard the all too familiar call of the Rose-ringed Parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*); there was a flock of agitated individuals sitting on a leafless

teak tree, all focussed in one direction and calling at the top of their voices, like schoolboys cheering a fight during a recess. I looked around at the trees close by to locate the cause of the commotion. I saw a tree, with a tilted branch turned towards us, with a few parakeets sitting around what seemed at that time an individual half ducked in a hollow of the branch. At first this did not seem noteworthy, since Rose-ringed Parakeets nest in tree hollows. However, within a few seconds it was clear that this incident was unusual, as the parakeet seemed to be struggling to come out of the hollow. It was apparent that there was something inside that had caught the parakeet while it had put its head in the hollow.

A look at my watch suggested that we had an hour and a half before we had to exit the check-post at the end



Friends indeed: The other parakeets took turns to tug at the feet and tail feathers to help the struggling Parakeet





Partial freedom: The tug-of-war continued for a while



Close, but not close enough: The Bengal Monitor had lost this battle for survival





The Monitor startled by the presence of an audience retreated into the hollow



Shaken and hurt, the Parakeet finally freed itself from the deadly grip of the Monitor

of our route, and there was a unanimous, unspoken decision to wait in the jeep and watch. Several minutes passed, and during this time the other parakeets did not abandon their mate. The group on the other tree never stopped calling, and the ones surrounding the unfortunate parakeet took turns to tug at its feet and tail feathers, trying to help it out. All this while the parakeet was trying its best to free itself from the deadly grip of its attacker.

After a 15–20 minute struggle, the parakeet managed to pull out his head, which now was bloody red. This herculean effort by the parakeet was followed by an outburst of calls from the others. It seemed like a cheer that waved across the forest, but it soon died out: the ordeal of the parakeet was not over. Struggling to free itself from its attacker, which still was hidden, the parakeet was frantically beating its wings. At this point it seemed that it would never get free. Now the struggle continued in silence, the other birds had stopped calling and were just spectators to the tug of war for survival. Finally the parakeet broke free and it did not wait a second to give its attacker another chance and darted away, closely followed by the others, when out of the hollow emerged the head of a Bengal Monitor (*Varanus bengalensis*), with a tuft of green feathers still in its mouth. It looked around, sniffed

the air with its tongue, and cleared its mouth of the feathers. Then, startled by the witnesses to the scene, it retreated into the hollow. By the size of its head I could guess it was a 2 to 2.5 feet long animal, which is a mid-size individual for the species. Bengal Monitors are known to grow as long as 6 ft in length. Their diet can vary from beetles and small insects to carrion, bird eggs, birds, and bats, which are easily preyed upon while roosting. Their claws and amazing grip allow them to scale trees and even rock faces to look for food.

Meanwhile, our driver who was quite overwhelmed with emotion when the parakeet broke free never took his eyes off the victim, while we were still mesmerised by the Monitor. He reversed the jeep and pointed to the victim which was perched on the top branches of an *Acacia*, its face showing the evidence of the gruesome ordeal it had just survived. Spooked by our presence, the parakeet flew away deeper into the forest. ■



Asif Khan, a nature enthusiast, presently works in the Programmes Department of the Bombay Natural History Society.



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## Exotic fishes in Indian markets

My article in the April-June 2010 issue of the *Hornbill* dealt with the issue of invasive fish species in India. One of my statements said “I do not think the day will be too far off for one to order fried piranhas in Indian restaurants,” referring to the exotic, flesh-eating Red-bellied Piranha *Pygocentrus nattereri* (a species common in the aquarium trade in Chennai). Was the hypothesis a bit too far-fetched? Well, I ate piranhas recently, not in a restaurant but at home, and it made good eating! The fishmonger said it was a new entrant into the markets and was being passed off as pomfret to help initial sales. She did not know where it was sourced from, adding that it was brought to the market by the dealers of edible freshwater fish. So either the fish has run wild, is being reared in Chennai waters, or aquarists are disposing of overgrown unsold fish to the edible fish dealers.

So my ‘prophecy’ of the new wave of invasions of exotic fish species in Indian wetlands – after the earlier introduction of Mozambique Tilapia *Oreochromis mossambicus* in the 1950s – has started coming true. Another recent surprise was of seeing the young of what I thought to be young Pirarucu or Arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*) being sold in an aquarium in Mumbai. However, later I learnt that it was the African Arowana (*Heterotis niloticus*). Though called an arowana, the African Arowana is more closely related to the Arapaima than to the arowanas (*Scleropages* and *Osteoglossum*). Now that the African Arowana has arrived, it is just a matter of time before we find the predatory Pirarucu or Arapaima – one of the largest (>2 m) of the freshwater fishes of the world and a native to tropical South America – in Indian waters. The species has already been introduced in Thailand and Malaysia.

I wonder where all this will end? I think with the craze of aquarists to have bizarre exotics in their aquariums (and invariably dumping them into wetlands after some time), the attractive monetary benefits for fish dealers, and with the general lack of awareness and penchant of Indians to not follow rules, the sole option for conservationists would be to sit back and witness the unfolding of the turbulent drama of the fish fauna of the Indian wetlands till the climax. I do not think it will be a pleasant ending for our native fish species. After sending this article, I saw the piranha being sold in the markets of Bangalore and Chennai again, and one of the fishmongers knew its English name!

Editors: For more information of the invasion of the Amazonian Piranha and the similar-looking Pacu (*Piaractus brachypomus*), see the last issue of *Hornbill* (April-June, 2012).

Ranjit Manakadan, BNHS

“The one process now going on that will take millions of years to correct is the loss of genetic and species diversity by the destruction of natural habitats.

This is the folly our descendants are least likely to forgive us.”

— Edward O. Wilson

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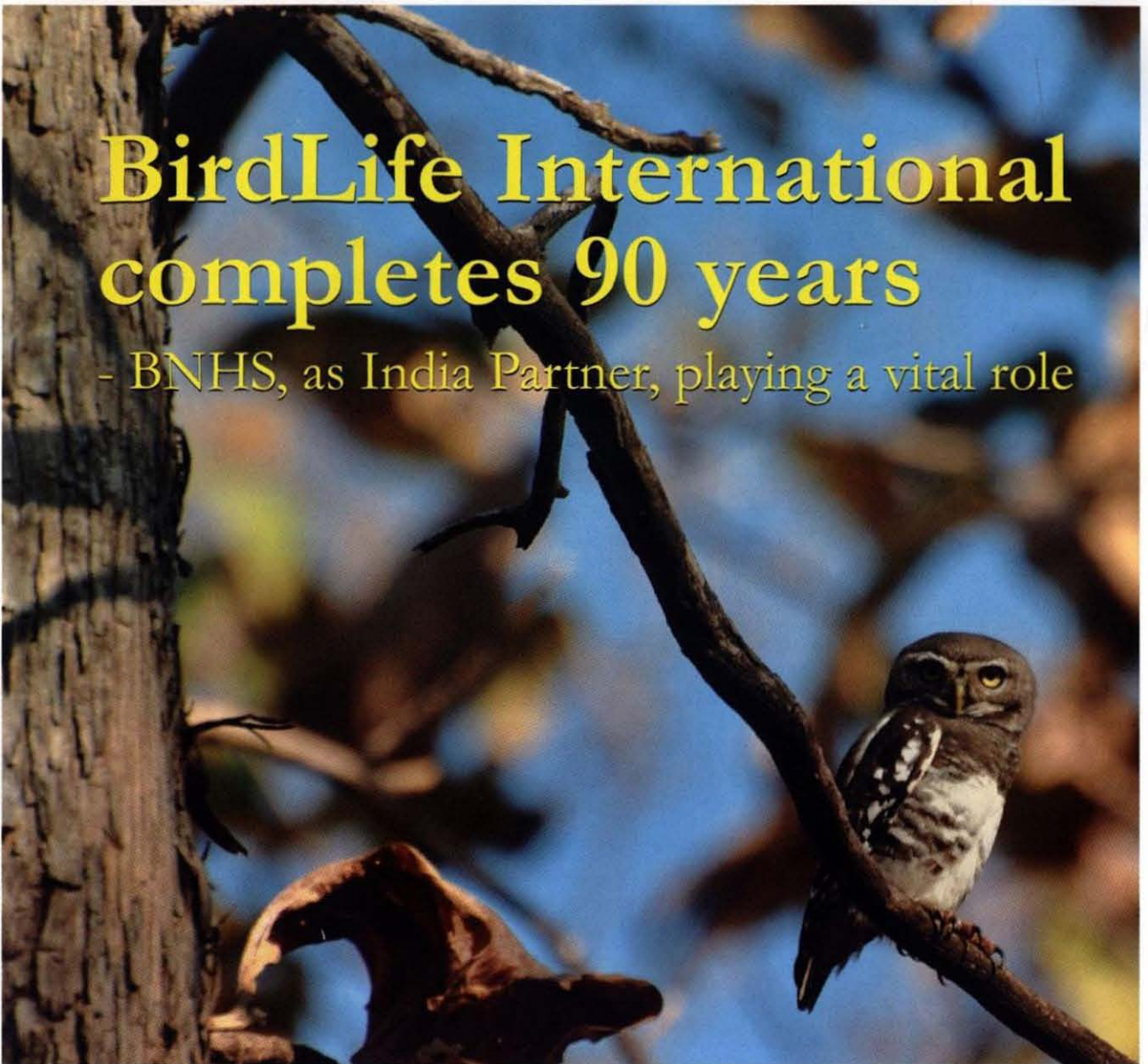
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ALKESH THAKARE

## Compiled by Atul Sathe

**UK-based BirdLife International**, one of the pioneering bird conservation organisations in the world, has completed 90 years of research and conservation efforts. BirdLife was founded as the International Council for Bird Preservation (ICBP) on June 20, 1922. BNHS, which was established in 1883 is even older, and has been the BirdLife Partner in India since 1998. On this occasion BNHS feels proud of the fact that its continuing association with BirdLife has played a vital role in conserving the birds and bird habitats across India. BNHS congratulates BirdLife and joins other partners worldwide in celebrating this special anniversary, which also marks 20 years of the unique BirdLife Partnership of dedicated national membership-based organisations.

## BirdLife worldwide

BirdLife International, with its 116 partners worldwide, is a global network of dedicated international membership-based organisations. Together, they are the world's oldest international conservation organisation and largest grass-roots partnership for nature. The unique partnership model of BirdLife became increasingly popular over the years. By 1994 when BirdLife World Conference was held in Rosenheim in Germany, 53 partners had already joined the new BirdLife Partnership. The partnership's role is especially crucial at a time when globally one in eight birds is threatened with extinction. Birds can serve as indicators of the unsustainable way in which humans are managing the planet's resources.

It is becoming increasingly evident that to save nature, efforts need to be made on an international scale. The 2.7 million members and 10 million supporters of BirdLife



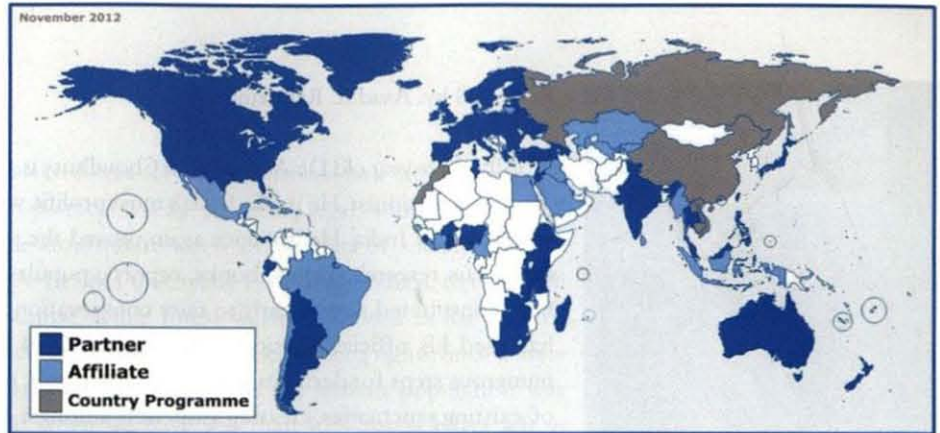
a vital resource in conserving nature. One indicator of BirdLife partnership's success story is that worldwide it has identified 12,000 Important Bird Areas (IBAs) and are working towards their conservation. For the conservation of habitats and the wider landscape, BirdLife Partners also influence land and sea use policies in the sectors of agriculture, forestry, fisheries, water and energy.

Commenting on the occasion of completion of 90 years, Marco Lambertini, BirdLife CEO said, "Ninety years ago a group of people from different countries, united by their passion for birds, concluded that the only effective answer to the growing trade of wild bird feathers or the threats to migratory birds across the continents had to be through coordinated international action. Much has changed in 90 years, but the fundamentals have not. The rationale for international collaboration has grown only stronger and with it the crucial need to empower local conservation capacity around the world. It all seems so logical today but it was truly visionary back in 1922".

**Role in India with BNHS**

Early in 1998, BNHS and BirdLife had a joint meeting and discussions, and thereafter these led to the BNHS becoming a Partner Designate of BirdLife in India. Subsequently, BNHS was appointed as the BirdLife Partner in India. Since then, the avian research capabilities of BNHS with support from BirdLife have been playing an even bigger role in bird conservation across various habitats including wetlands, grasslands, forests, coasts, islands, and mountains. The BNHS is also a member of the BirdLife Asia Partnership. BNHS partnership with BirdLife also led to the establishment of the pioneering Vulture Conservation Breeding Programme in South Asia. This is being supported by Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), which is the UK Partner of BirdLife.

Perhaps the most important work of the BNHS BirdLife partnership in India has been the IBA Programme. BNHS and BirdLife have identified 466 IBAs across India. BNHS has also established Indian Bird Conservation Network (IBCN), which is a network of individuals, organisations, and government to promote interest and action in bird conservation at the local, state, and national levels. Till now, IBCN has conducted research and conservation for several



BirdLife International has 116 partners worldwide

species such as Forest Owlet (*Heteroglaux blewitti*), Himalayan Quail (*Ophrysia superciliosa*), Manipur Bush-Quail (*Perdichula manipurensis*), Great Indian Bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*), Lesser Florican (*Sypheotides indicus*), Jerdon's Courser (*Rhinoptilus bitorquatus*), and Sarus Crane (*Grus antigone*). In all states of India co-ordinators have been identified, who help in monitoring and safeguarding the IBAs. It is envisaged to have a nodal person for each IBA and till now, such nodal persons have been identified for over 250 IBAs. IBCN has 1000 partners across India at present, which includes 100 NGOs. Identification of Marine IBAs is another focus area of the IBA Programme. Till now five Marine IBAs have been identified, namely Pitti Island and Beleapani Reef of Lakshadweep; Gulf of Mannar, Palk Bay, and Point Calimere of Tamil Nadu, and Vengurla Rocks of Maharashtra.

In 2004, BNHS published the book IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS OF INDIA, compiled by its Director Dr. Asad R. Rahmani and Mr. Zafar-ul-Islam, the then Manager of IBA Programme, with financial support from RSPB. Other books published with RSPB support include POTENTIAL AND EXISTING RAMSAR SITES IN INDIA, DUCKS, GEESE AND SWANS OF INDIA and THREATENED BIRDS OF INDIA.

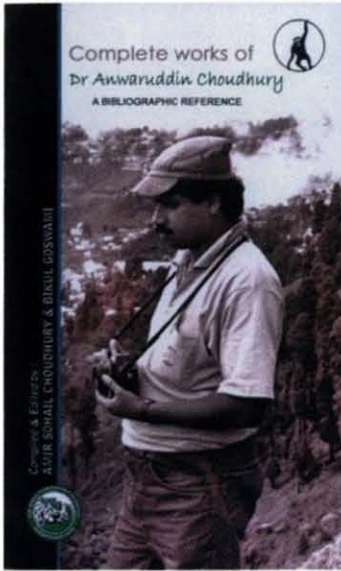
Expressing his views on the coordinated efforts, Dr. Rahmani said, "Our partnership with BirdLife International has been very fruitful all these years and I am looking forward to further strengthen this collaboration to protect our wildlife and IBAs." ■

For more information on BirdLife International, visit the website <http://www.birdlife.org>



Atul Sathe is a nature lover, trekker, poet, and writer. He currently works as Manager-Communications at the BNHS.





**Complete Works of  
Dr. Anwaruddin Choudhury:  
A Bibliographic Reference**

by Amir Sohail Choudhury and  
Bikul Goswami

Published by: Gibbon Books  
and The Rhino Foundation  
for Nature in NE India,  
Guwahati (2012)

Size: 22.5 x 18 cm,

Pages: 264

Price: Rs. 125/-

Paperback

Reviewed by: Asad R. Rahmani

**F**ifty-three year old Dr. Anwaruddin Choudhury is a complete naturalist and a dedicated conservationist. He is also India's most prolific writer on natural history, particularly of north-east India. He has once again proved the power of the pen (computer these days). His research papers, books, reports, popular articles and government memos have contributed significantly to raise conservation awareness in north-east India. He has used his official position in the Assam Civil Government, since 1983, to take numerous steps for declaration of new sanctuaries, extension and increased protection of existing sanctuaries, creating awareness amongst government officials, industrialists, tea estate managers, teachers, students and the public in general. No one remains unaffected after meeting him. His genteel behaviour and persuasive arguments can convince anyone that nature conservation is one of the best services to God and to the nation. He is the author of 19 books and more than 600 research papers, reports and scientific articles.

Anwar received a Ph.D. in Geography from Gauhati University on 'Primates of Assam: their distribution, habitat and status' in 1989, and D.Sc. in 2008 from the same University on 'Mammals of North East India: a systematic review', supported by a collection of his papers on mammals of the region. Anwar also has artistic talent and has published his illustrations in his books, papers, reports, and also on the cover of Oriental Bird Club Bulletin.

This book is a labour of love of two compilers Amir Sohail Choudhury, a graduate student, and Bikul Goswami, a conservationist of repute and fish-breeder by profession. They have done a thorough job of compiling Anwar's writings from 1977 when Anwar, still a student, wrote in his college magazine on the birds of Assam, till 2011 when he wrote 13 articles in one year!

Instead of a long list of articles, papers, books and reports in chronological order, the authors have divided Anwar's writings under Books and Monographs (21), Unpublished Reports and Theses (43), research papers outside India (129, of which 94 are scientific papers), research papers within India (295, of which 138 are scientific papers), newspaper articles (>140), book reviews (40) and edited books (12).

I am reviewing this book mainly to tell young naturalists and conservationists the power of documentation. I know many 'wildlife biologists' who have hardly written anything from their thesis or project reports. Theses and reports are fine to get a degree or to submit to funding agencies, but they are generally inaccessible and not a substitute for peer-reviewed scientific papers, published in easily accessible journals. If we take public monies for completing a Ph.D. or a project, it is our moral duty to make the results accessible to the public. Is there any better way to repay society other than telling them what we have done with their money? Let this book be an example to the increasing fraternity of young field biologists and conservationists of India. I wish there were Anwars in each state of India. 🐘

We are grateful to

**RISHAD NAOROJI**

for a generous donation to the  
*Kekoo Naoroji Memorial Fund*  
to support the publication of *Hornbill*



Reviewed by: Asad R. Rahmani

Administration of a wildlife protected area (PA) is an onerous task these days. A PA manager has to deal with geo-political, social, financial, legal, administrative and ecological issues in a basically hostile atmosphere where every strata of society wants to exploit the biological wealth of a PA. Besides this, many PA managers have to deal with local political pressures to 'compromise' while forest wealth is looted in the garb of removal of non-timber forest products and traditional livestock grazing rights. Such people forget that NTFP or traditional grazing was fine when the human population was low and forests were extensive, but when we have less than 15% forest cover left in India and there are millions of people living in and around shrinking forests, many traditional rights have to be curtailed, maybe not in all forest lands, but certainly in PAs and catchment forests. Despite so much pressure, it is a credit to our forest officers that we still have many forests, grasslands, wetlands and mangroves surviving in our country. A fine example is Rajaji National Park about which this book is written.

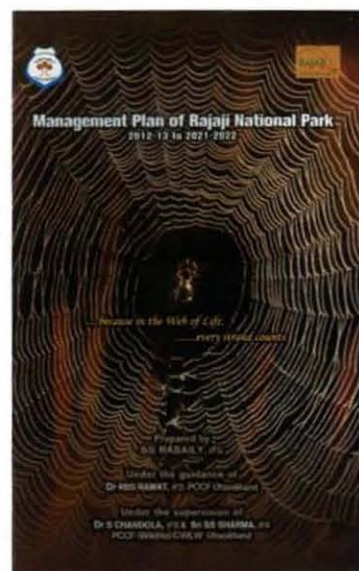
Rajaji is a difficult Park to manage due to its proximity to the fast developing Dehradun, the capital of Uttarakhand, and Haridwar and Rishikesh, two famous religious towns, attracting millions of pilgrims and visitors every year. Two major highways and numerous village roads also pass through the Park. It is a credit to Mr. S.S. Rasaily, IFS, Director of the Park that he was able to produce an extremely comprehensive management plan. I have read some management plans, never as detailed as this one, and also in a book form. His book is an example for other forest officers to follow.

Most of our PAs do not have a Vision and Mission. They do not even give reasons as to why a certain activity is taken up. This book starts with a crisp Vision, and clear cut Objectives of the Management Plan, and most importantly, expected outcomes if the management plan is implemented properly. Even if all PAs follow this example, they will see improvement in their management.

The book consists of two parts: Part I gives an account of what the plan seeks to manage, and Part II consists of annexures of important government notifications, standard orders, and data relating to the management of the Park. Part I consists of 15 chapters giving details (too much detail in some parts for a book like this) on every aspect of the Park such as species-specific habitat management, threats faced by the Park, water management, wilderness tourism, re-organisation of the sub-divisions, re-organisation of beat staff, restoration of fish breeding grounds, control of illegal firewood collection, etc. After every chapter, four blank pages are left for writing notes of Mid-term Review. The book is peppered with relevant pictures, not all are of good quality but they add value to the subject dealt with. For example, on p. 390, there is an extremely poignant roadside poster showing a baby monkey sitting besides its dead mother, crushed by a speeding vehicle. The section deals with Menace of Monkeys. Transliteration of the Hindi message is "By feeding monkeys on the road, you are not getting salvation, but sin".

The book has numerous spelling mistakes, which could have been avoided by good editing. The font size of text in the tables, maps and illustrations are too small for easy reading!

This book is for a niche audience, but if you want to know details of Rajaji National Park, buy this book. At a cost of Rs. 3,150/-, it is expensive, but I hope forest officers will purchase it for department libraries. 📖



### Management Plan of Rajaji National Park

by S.S. Rasaily

Published by: Rajaji National  
Park, Dehradun, Uttarakhand  
(2012)

Size: 24 x 15.5 cm,

Pages: 626

Price: Rs. 3,150/-

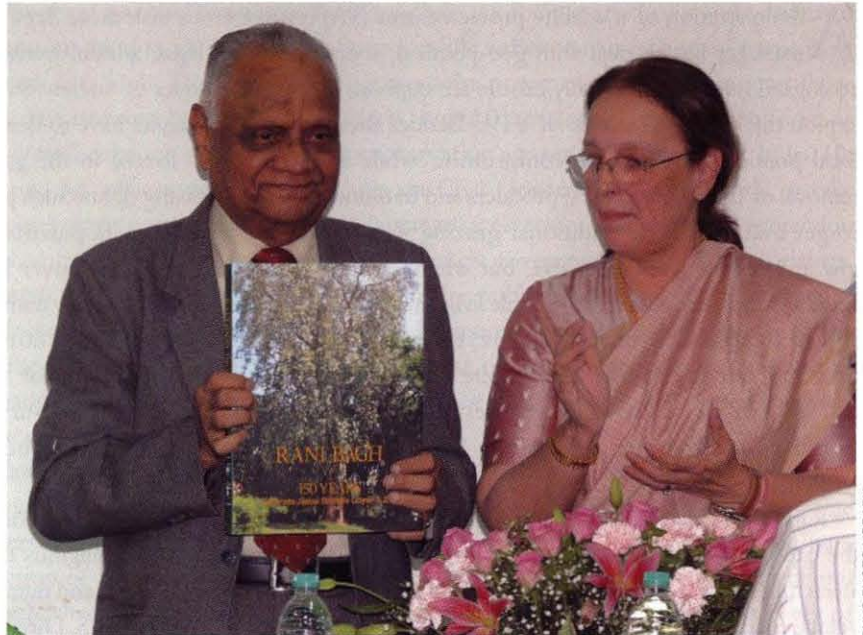
Hardback



## Mumbai Rani Bagh celebrates 150 years

Jijamata Udyan, or Rani Bagh as it is popularly known, has been an integral part of the life of Mumbaikars, as a botanical garden and later as a zoo. Located in central Mumbai, it is a vital green lung and an important place for the general public to connect with nature. It is also a storehouse of knowledge for botany researchers. The Save Rani Bagh Botanical Garden Foundation has been in the forefront of a campaign, with support from organisations such as BNHS, to ensure that the integrity and natural heritage of the garden is preserved against all odds. To mark the completion of 150 years of Rani Bagh, a book *RANI BAGH – 150 YEARS* co-published by the BNHS, Save Rani Bagh Foundation and National Society of the Friends of the Trees was released at Hornbill House on December 05, 2012, by Shri D.M. Sukthankar, former Commissioner, Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM).

The book presents various facets of the garden through the eyes of writers

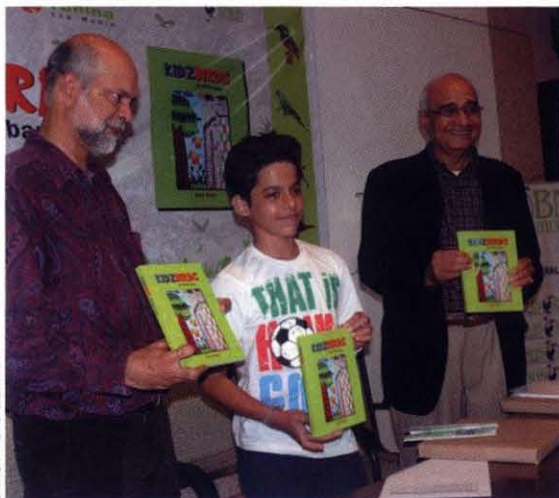


Shri D.M. Sukthankar, former Commissioner, Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai with Mrs. Pheroza Godrej, President, National Society of the Friends of the Trees at the launch of the book

who cherish it for all the joys it has given and continues to shower on Mumbai's citizens, of all ages and from every walk of life. The garden's early history, planning and design, which are of

continuing relevance, are related here in interesting detail. The book is a tribute to Rani Bagh's enduring legacy that has enriched the lives of people in the city over a century and a half. ■

## Children's book on urban birds launched in BNHS



(L-R): Sunjoy Monga, Darsheel Safary and Mr. L.C. Singh, President and CEO, Nihilent Technologies at the book release

Birds are one of the most attractive components of nature and a number of species are easily seen near human habitations. Birds fascinate children and adults alike, and early exposure to the avian world can lead to a career or hobby.

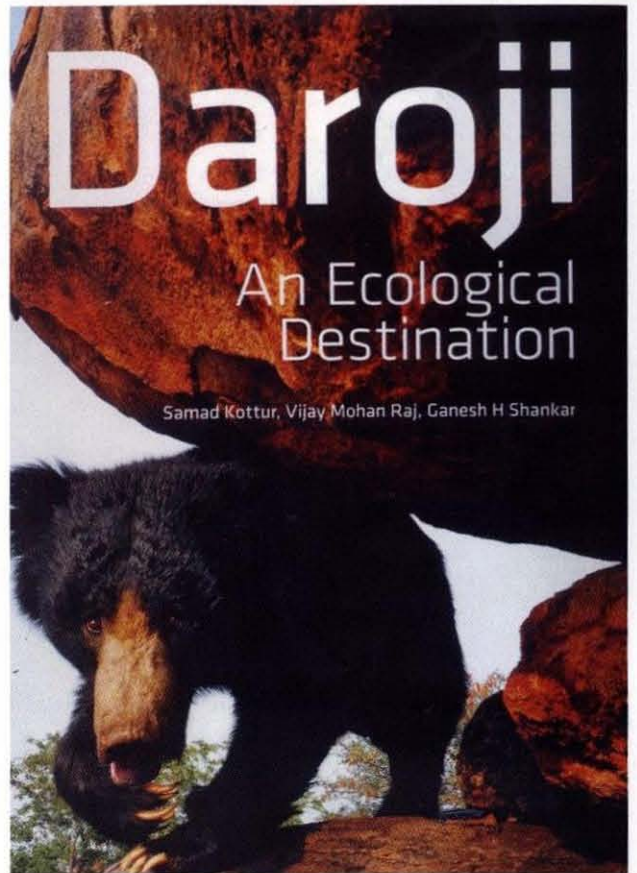
*KIDZBIRDS – IN URBAN INDIA*, a bird book for children by Sunjoy Monga, was launched at Hornbill House on December 07, 2012, by the popular young actor Darsheel Safary, star of the movie *Taare Zameen Par*. Though aimed at children aged seven years and above, the book is enjoyable and useful for grown-ups too. The book revolves around Indian towns and cities, introducing some of the secrets of birds as a constructive and enjoyable activity. Published after consultation with scores of children and birding enthusiasts across India, the book helps one learn from the feathered denizens of our planet. *KIDZBIRDS* looks at birds, and through birds, at nature in an intelligent manner. The event was well-attended by students, teachers, and BNHS members, and widely covered in the media. ■



## Book on Daroji Wildlife Sanctuary Launched

India is known for its biodiversity and wilderness areas even in this age of rapid economic development and urbanisation. Apart from well-known destinations, such as Kanha, Ranthambore, Kaziranga, and Gir, hundreds of lesser known parks, sanctuaries and wilderness areas are scattered across the country. Daroji Wildlife Sanctuary in northern Karnataka, known for its Sloth Bear, is one such outstanding example.

A beautiful premium quality book DAROJI: AN ECOLOGICAL DESTINATION depicting the flora and fauna of this Sanctuary was released at Hornbill House on November 21, 2012, by Mrs. Pheroza Godrej. The book, authored by Samad Kottur, Vijay Mohan Raj, and Ganesh Shankar, has been sponsored by JSW Foundation. Interestingly, Daroji is believed to be the Kishkindha region from the Ramayana, home to the monkey-kings Baali and Sugreeva and the bear-king Jambuvant, who helped Lord Rama. The populations of Sloth Bear and Hanuman Langur in the region are certainly remarkable enough to support this belief. ■



## ABOUT THE POSTER ▶

A forest-dwelling nocturnal mammal of South Asia, the Slow Loris has prominently large round eyes, sensitive nocturnal vision and a well-developed sense of smell. This roundish headed lemur is distinguishable in having its second toe clawed and the other toes with flat nails. Stout in body and limb, the Slow Loris has dense fur that varies in coloration. The head and shoulders may be silvery white, creamy, or grey. A dark dorsal stripe and brown circles around its lustrous owl-like eyes are characteristic of the northeast Indian subspecies.

The Slow Loris hunts for food at dusk, it seeks fruits and leaves, hunting and eating insects of many kinds. Its movement is slow and deliberate. For the size of the animal, the grip of a loris is unequalled by any primate.



Slow Loris *Nycticebus bengalensis*

Its solitary nature, preference for dense cover, and nocturnal habits allow the Slow Loris to avoid predators, diurnal resource competitors, and the heat of the day.



Slow Loris *Nycticebus bengalensis*





# On “Development” at the CBD and beyond







Conference of the Parties (COP) of Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is the largest gathering of governments, conservation organisations, and civil society NGOs in the world

When BNHS was selected as the host and coordinator of the international NGO Alliance in Nagoya, Japan, we knew we were up for a stimulating task.

There was a multitude of voices at CBD-COP 11. There were groups that wanted ‘indigenous communities’ to be recognised as ‘indigenous peoples’; there were others calling for a ban on interventionist climate related geo-engineering (human technologies, like sea walls, that attempt to counter climate change impacts); others who argued that the communities in conservation debate had left out marine conservation, and focussed only on terrestrial protected areas.

But within India, it became clear that there were serious challenges to be faced. Just before COP 11 in October, an announcement was made regarding the National Investment Board (NIB), a body specifically created to give clearances to ‘large projects’ over Rs. 1,000 crores. More specifically, this Board is meant to award clearances over and above the ones issued through the regular channels of law – through environment impact assessments and

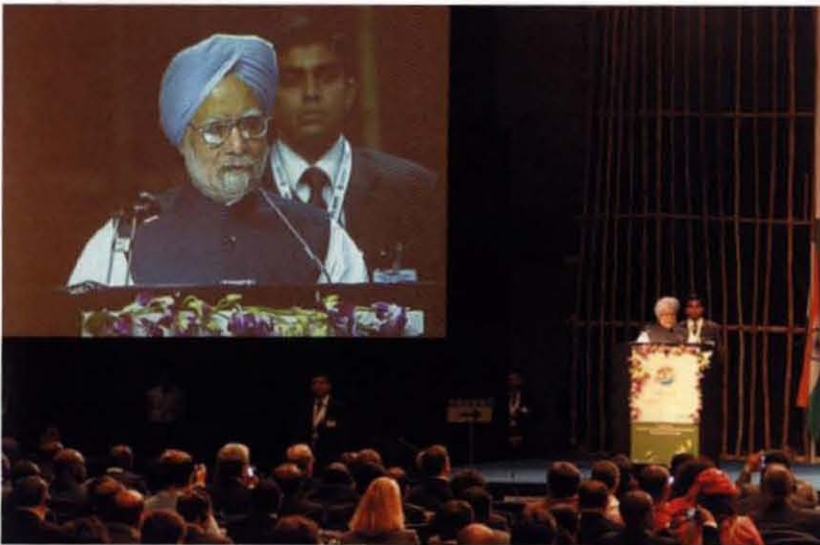
environment advisory committee appraisals. The underlying philosophy appears to be that such projects will be environmentally benign, and also that it is acceptable to over-step questions of ecological security and environmental sustainability for the sake of large projects. Political ecologists have pinned this move, fronted by several articulate members of the Government, as one that creates an illusion of a pro-active, industry-friendly government, even at a time when nearly every economy in the world is in a slump.

But how do these policy moves sit with the commitments that India has made at the CBD? Apart from creating a healthy investment atmosphere, India (along with the rest of the UN parties) also has to meet its health, environmental sustainability, and social goals under the Millennium Development Goals framework, which have to be achieved by 2015. India is the president of the CBD for the next two years, where it also announced the ‘Hyderabad Roadmap’, pledging USD 50 million for human and technical capacity for biodiversity conservation.





(L-R): Ryu Matsumoto, former Minister of Environment, Japan and Hoshino Kazuaki, Representative of the Minister of Environment, Japan, hand over the gavel and COP Presidency to Jayanthi Natarajan, Minister of Environment and Forests, India. The host country India is now President of the CBD-COP for the next two years



Dr. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India, pledged USD 50 million for human and technical capacity building development for biodiversity conservation during the CBD-COP 11

Environment and development are two sides of the same coin: can development take place without resources that the environment gives us? We would argue that the ecosystem services granted by the environment – water security, clear ground water, clean air, biodiverse food crops, and rainfall – need to be sustained and nurtured by development.

As a civil society organisation, and as the host of the NGO Alliance, it was important for us to make the voice of citizens, scientists, and conservationists heard.

BNHS was part of a joint statement and press conference at the CBD which argued that the development trajectory the country is currently endorsing is averse to biodiversity conservation, and consequently, the futures of those who depend on well-functioning ecosystems. Along with a host of other Indian organisations, BNHS held a joint press conference, urging for a new development paradigm which centrally includes a comprehensive and participatory review of economic policies and planning processes, to put biodiversity conservation, and peoples' livelihoods based on biodiversity, as core values. This means a central focus on sustainable livelihoods based on *responsible* use of forests, rivers, marine and coastal areas, grasslands, farms, and other ecosystems. This should also involve communities which depend on ecosystems for their livelihoods, as well as





those which are likely to be displaced by development projects.

Even within the government, informed opinions have been raised against the NIB proposal. Minister for Environment and Forests, Mrs. Jayanthi Natarajan, in a letter on NIB addressed to the Prime Minister, has termed the “urgency” with which the proposal is being mooted as “both surprising and disturbing.” “I submit that no entity in the world has the right to set up a project or industry anywhere he wants just because of the possibility of large investments. Project location the world over is finalised after and not before looking at key considerations like environmental and forest aspects and even national security,” she says in her letter.

Following the CBD, BNHS took the lead in submitting a memorandum to the Environment Minister, on behalf of several national organisations (including Kalpavriksh, WWF, Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha, Deccan Development Society, Greenpeace India, International Collective in Support of Fish Workers Trust, National Coastal Protection Campaign, PandyCAN, South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People), which makes succinct demands for biodiversity conservation. Some of these are in the box alongside. In the end, we would like to see development – the development of socially and environmentally conscious goals which guide our nation’s growth.

### *Think about it*

- Are we ready for a new coastline? Several hundred projects, including nearly 100 thermal and nuclear power plants, over 200 ports, and dozens of petrochemical and petroleum investment regions (PCPIRs), mines, tourism facilities, and sand mining are being carried out or are proposed along India’s coast.
- Are we ready for a new, un-green land? Since 1980, over 1.5 lakh hectares of forest land have been diverted for mining; 50% of this has been in the last 10 years. About 15% of India’s total land mass is under mining reconnaissance. Several mining projects are in categories of ‘large projects’ and may include components of the sort of projects the NIB will want to clear.

### *What we have asked for: is this Utopia, or plain common sense?*

\*Critical Ecosystems: We have asked the Minister for streamlined, focused plans on critical ecosystems, which form the basis of several ecosystem services as well as resources. These are coral reefs, intertidal areas, sea grass, grasslands, high altitude wetlands and sand dunes.

\*How many is too many?: Use of the precautionary principle and cumulative impact assessments for projects like thermal plants, ports and dams. Environmental Impact Assessments focus on a specific project and a specific site. Cumulative Impact Assessments (CIA) are required for dynamic natural resources such as water. These cumulative assessments, for instance in the case of rivers, can help in maintaining minimum ecological flow of water, or minimum sediment flow. Can dams or other projects requiring water work if the water stops flowing before it reaches a project site? CIAs guard against such technical and ecological disasters.

Nearly 14,500 delegates attended the CBD-COP 11. Government delegates were the main participants in the main sessions, but important NGOs and international agencies were allowed observer status. Large screens were placed in the main hall for participants to see the proceedings. Excellent arrangements were made available by the Indian Government to make this event a success







**Above:** Sometimes sessions went on till late into the night to negotiate contentious issues such as access and benefit sharing. Mrs. Jayanthi Natarajan chairing the session along with Dr. Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, CBD Executive Secretary

**Below:** BNHS was given observer status at high level meetings. (R-L): Prof. B.C. Choudhury and Mr. Deepak Apte, Dy. Director (Conservation) attended many such meetings on behalf of the BNHS with Dr. Asad R. Rahmani, Director, BNHS







Along with the main sessions and side events, many important meetings were held in the Rio Pavilion

## CEPA Fair

Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) aims to assist Parties, educators, and civil society to provide answers to questions like: What is biodiversity? Why should we be concerned? How do the programmes of the Convention contribute to the objectives of conservation and sustainable use

of biodiversity and equitable sharing of the benefits from the use of genetic resources? The CEPA Fair provided a unique opportunity for Parties and organisations to highlight their work and their contribution to the implementation of the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity.



The BNHS Conservation Education Centre presented two posters: 'Impact of online courses in Natural History' and 'Volunteer Force Development for Nature Conservation' and two presentations: 'Role of Natural History E-groups in bridging the gap between Scientist and Citizens and their contribution to conservation of Indian Wildlife' that focussed on communication, education, and public awareness and 'Be a Scientist for a Day: A Citizen Science Project for Biodiversity Surveys at BNHS Nature Reserve' at the CEPA Fair at CBD-COP 11.





**Above:** On the last day of CBD-COP 11, the South Korean Government organised a reception for all the delegates and invited the participants to attend CBD-COP 12 in 2014. Mrs. Jayanthi Natarajan, Minister of Environment and Forests, Government of India, wished the Government of South Korea success for CBD-COP 12

**Below:** The NGO Alliance baton was handed over by the Director, BNHS, to delegates from South Korea for CBD-COP 12, in a brief ceremony







**Above:** A number of thought-provoking and beautiful artworks were seen across the venue at Hyderabad during CBD-COP 11

**Below:** Vibrant Indian culture was showcased all through CBD-COP 11







The Indian Government, particularly the Ministry of Environment and Forests and National Biodiversity Board, are to be complimented for the excellent arrangements during CBD-COP 11. Indian hospitality was at its best all through from the airport to hotels and to the venue

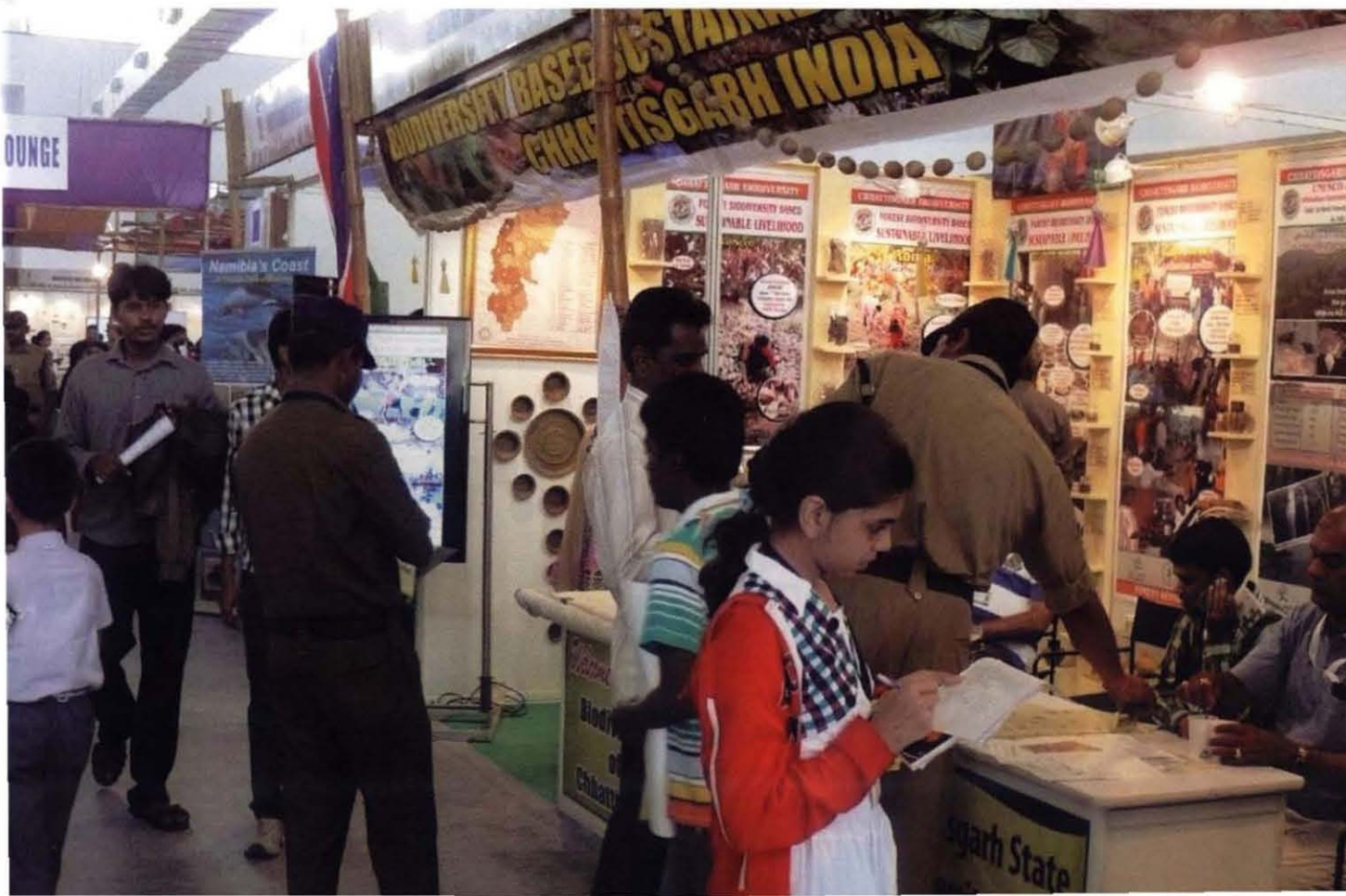






**Above:** The venue, Hitech City, had all the facilities to host this mega international event

**Below:** Almost every state of India had put up stalls to highlight their biodiversity and conservation work. These stalls were popular and visited by many. The Andhra Pradesh Government had made special arrangements for local people to visit the stalls





COP 11 Convention on Biological Diversity  
Hyderabad, Oct 1 – 19, 2012



## The Challenged Coast of India



**NCPC**  
NATIONAL COASTAL  
PROTECTION CORPORATION

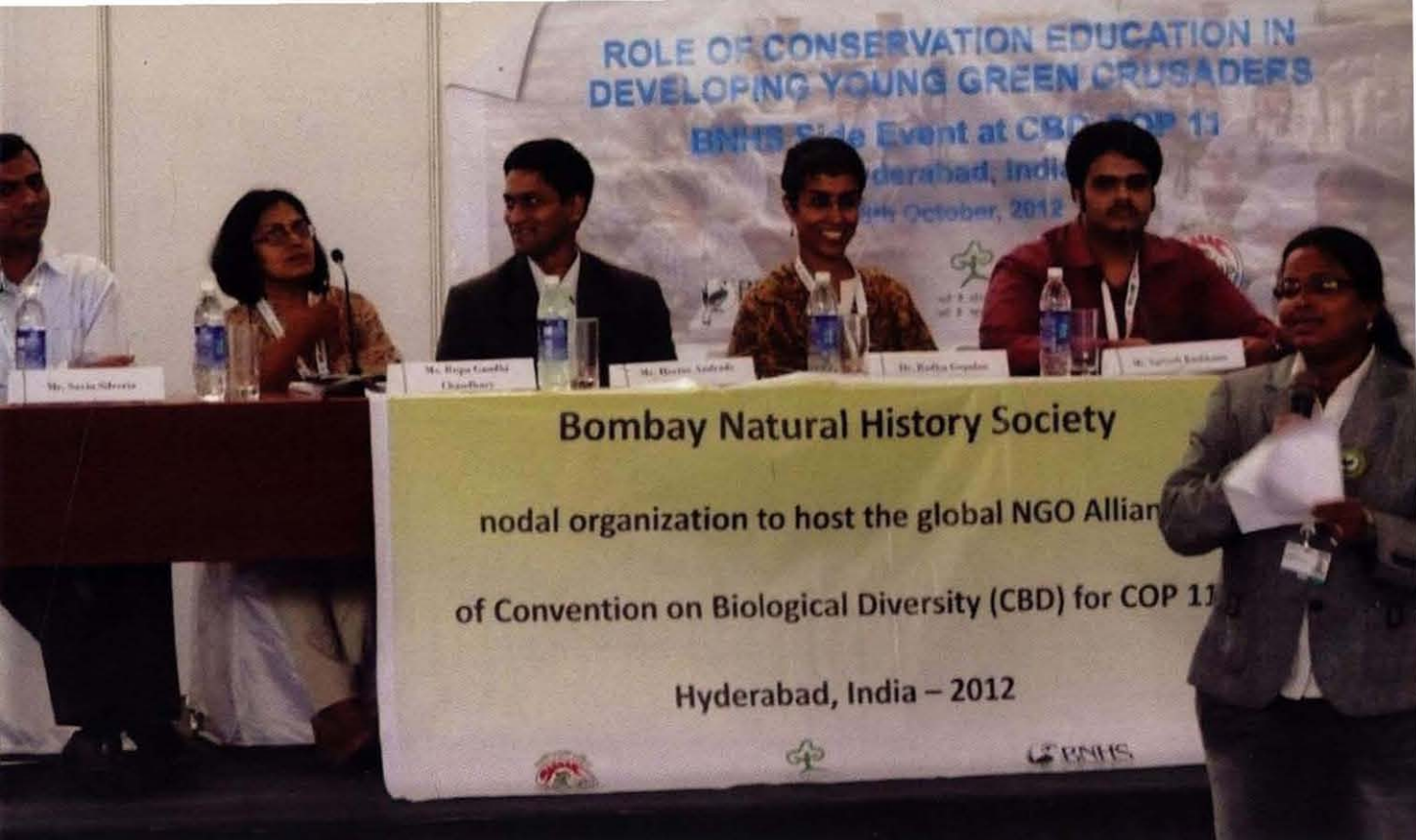
**PondyCAN!**  
Pondy Coastal Action Network



BNHS organised five side events. One of the major side events, supported by many other NGOs was 'The Challenged Coast of India'. Two major reports on the Indian coastline were released during CBD-COP 11. Mr. Deepak Apte, Dy. Director (Conservation), BNHS, made an excellent presentation







Dr. V. Shubhalaxmi, Dy. Director (Education), BNHS, organised a major side event 'Role of Conservation Education in developing Young Green Crusaders in South Asia' which was a great success. The aim of the Symposium was to create opportunities for in-depth discussions on conservation education in South Asia. The symposium addressed the status of environmental studies, role of nature interpretation centres, and development of leadership skills for nature conservation among students through the seminar.

Five panellists (L-R) – Mr. Savio Silveria, GreenLine, Don Bosco Provincial House, Mumbai, Ms. Rupa Gandhi Chaudhary, Wildlife Trust of India, Gujarat, Prof. Hector Andrade, Associate Professor, Flame School of Liberal Education, Pune, Dr. Radha Gopalan, Rishi Valley Education Centre, Andhra Pradesh, and Mr. Sarvesh Karkhanis, Student, Mumbai – shared their work during the symposium, attended by 42 participants from four countries



The panellists shared their view and experience about current status, challenges, and need to motivate students in environmental studies to create the next generation of Green Crusaders



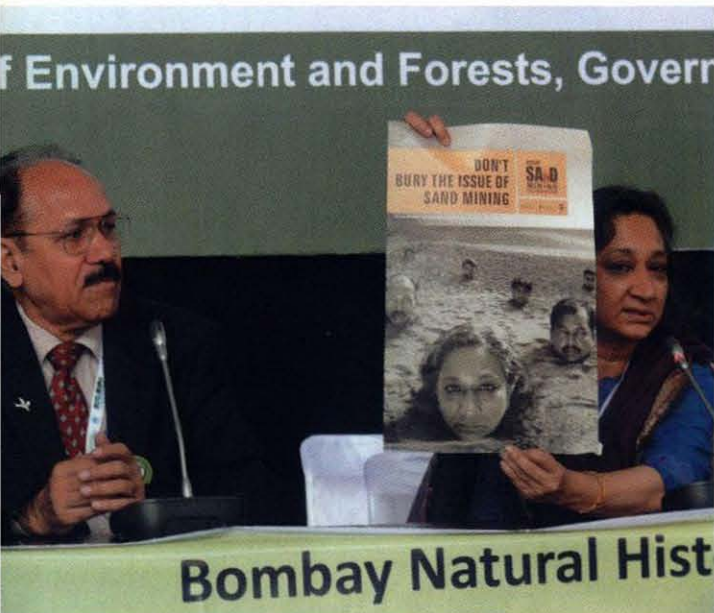
The discussion was open to the audience after the presentations. The participants agreed that environmental studies should be made interesting and engaging to attract youth





**Above (L-R):** Prof. B.C. Choudhury, Wildlife Institute of India (Retd.), Dr. Asad R. Rahmani, Director, BNHS, Mrs. Sumaira Abdulali, Hon. Secretary, BNHS, and President Awaaz Foundation, Deepak Apte, Dy. Director (Conservation), BNHS, and Mr. Probir Banerjee, President, PandyCAN, addressing the press after a major side event on the issue of sand mining, which was well-received and extensively covered in the media due to its novel approach and eye-catching posters

**Below:** This side event was jointly organised by Awaaz Foundation and BNHS. The discussion highlighted the indiscriminate mechanical sand mining practices along India's coast that threaten livelihoods of the fishing community, as well as marine flora and fauna



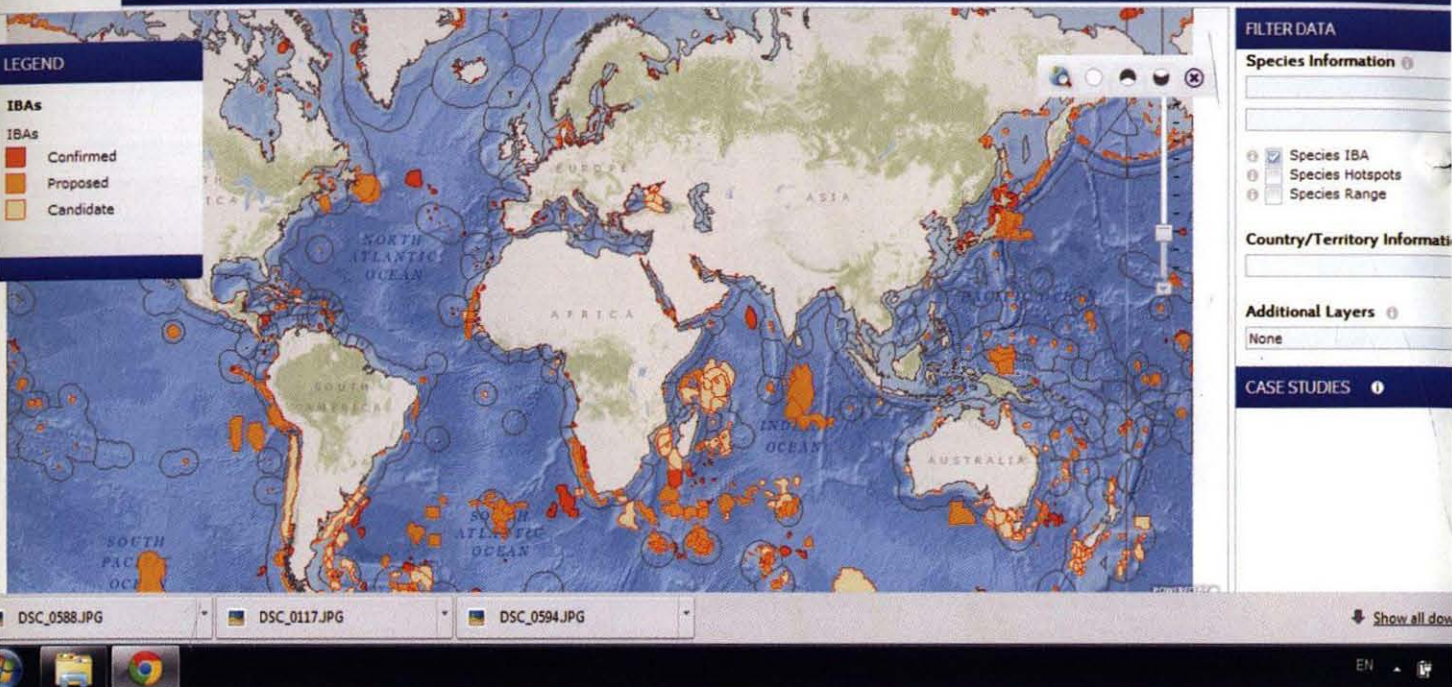




BNHS, along with RSPB and BirdLife International organised a side event on the important issue of vulture conservation, which was well-attended and covered extensively by the media.

The two side events organised by the BNHS and the SAVE consortium on the issue of conserving the critically endangered Gyps vultures in South Asia, focussed on both regional efforts, as well as international cooperation in captive breeding and advocacy





An e-Atlas on the Marine Important Bird Areas of the world, a major side event, which was jointly organised by BirdLife International, Wild Bird Society of Japan, Bombay Natural History Society, Nairobi Convention Secretariat, Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat, and The Forum for the Conservation of the Patagonian Sea and Areas of Influence was launched at CBD-COP 11. Mr. Ben Lascelles, BirdLife's Global Marine IBA Officer launched the e-Atlas. The e-Atlas covers more than 3,000 Important Bird Areas (IBAs) worldwide. It is the result of six years of effort that has involved around 40 BirdLife Partners, with the world's leading seabird scientists from inside and outside the BirdLife Partnership, in collaboration with government departments of conservation, environment, and fisheries, and the secretariats of several international conventions (CBD, EU Bird's Directive, Nairobi Convention). The e-Atlas of Marine IBAs will be a key resource for management of the oceans for years to come, and show the wider marine community the benefits that can be achieved when data are shared for conservation



(L-R): Ben Lascelles, Yutaka Yamamoto, Mayumi Sato, Dr. Raju Kasambe, Phil Taylor, Ademola Ajagbe, and Dr. Asad Rahmani, members of the Global Marine IBA team. The team was instrumental in collecting, compiling, and analysing the vast data on seabirds of the world to finalise marine IBAs



Dr. Raju Kasambe, Manager, IBA-IBCN Programmes, informed that five potential marine IBAs have been identified in India namely, Vengurla Rocks in Maharashtra, Gulf of Mannar in Tamil Nadu, Point Calimere-Palk Strait in Tamil Nadu, Pitti Island (Lakshadweep) and Belyapani Island (Lakshadweep)





**Above (L-R):** Mr. Cheang Dany, Project Coordinator, Cambodia, Mr. Masaaki Yoneda, Senior Adviser, Japan International Cooperative Agency (JICA), Ms Melanie Heath, BirdLife International, Mr. Emmanuel Ze Meka, Executive Director, International Tropical Timber Organization, Dr. Asad R. Rahmani, Director, BNHS, and Mr. Shinya Ejima, Chief Representative, JICA, India Office. The panellists spoke on the collaborative approach to achieving forest related Aichi targets. These approaches include management and purchase of small forests, co-management and landscape level governance

**Below (L-R):** Dr. Asad R. Rahmani, Mr. Makoto Haraguchi, Manager, Senior Consultant, Inter-Risk Research Institute and Consulting Inc. and Advisor to Japanese Business Initiative for Biodiversity (JBIB), Japan, at a side event 'Corporates and the CBD'. This side event brought together Indian, Japanese and other corporations to share their experiences on effective biodiversity conservation amongst the private sector in their respective countries. The panellists presented their views on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services







CBD-COP 11 gave an excellent opportunity to the BNHS staff to contribute to discussions in side events organised by other NGOs and the Government. The side event – ‘Seven Wonders of Conservation by the Alliance for Zero Extinction’ – was organised by the American Bird Conservancy and Zoo Outreach, India. The Alliance has identified 15 sites in India, the last remaining sites that are critical for the conservation for a host of threatened species



India's grasslands are amongst the most neglected landscapes although they are important both for wild floral and faunal biodiversity as well as for livestock and pastoral groups. A side event, 'India's Forgotten Grasslands' was organised by Dr. Nitya Ghotge, Co-Director, ANTHRA – an organisation of women veterinary scientists working primarily on issues of livestock development in the wider context of sustainable natural resource use. This event had a mix of wildlife biologists, pastoralists, and the Forest Department who debated on the future of India's grasslands.

The session concluded that grassland ecosystems need recognition for their critical contribution to the environment and that they should not be categorised as wastelands and diverted to other use such as industry, SEZs, mining, or urbanisation. Dr. Ranjit Manakadan, Assistant Director, BNHS, one of the panellists, gave a presentation on the 'Conservation of Grasslands – A Case Study: Semi-Arid Grasslands' based on his studies in Rollapadu Wildlife Sanctuary in the 1980s and 1990s



# Sálim Ali Awards

BNHS has been giving the Sálim Ali Award for Nature Conservation to honour exemplary work by naturalists and conservationists since 1996, in three categories: National, International and Community. The 5<sup>th</sup> Sálim Ali Awards were given away at a glittering function at Taj Krishna, Hyderabad, on October 14, 2012, in association with Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS), during the CBD-COP 11. The RBS Earth Heroes Awards were also given

away at the same function.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Sálim Ali International Award for Nature Conservation was given to Mr. Pavan Sukhdev, the Sálim Ali National Award for Nature Conservation was given posthumously to Dr. Ravi Sankaran, while the Sálim Ali Community Conservation Award was given to Khonoma Nature Conservation and Tragopan Sanctuary, Nagaland.



**Above:** Mr. Pavan Sukhdev of The Economics of Ecosystem and Biodiversity (TEEB) fame addressed the gathering after receiving the Sálim Ali International Award for Nature Conservation

**Below:** Mr. Vallingaman Rajagopal Sankaran and Dr. Saraswathi Sankaran receiving the Sálim Ali National Award from Mr. Homi Khusrokhhan, President, BNHS, for the late Dr. Ravi Sankaran







**Above** (L-R): Dr. Asad R. Rahmani, Director, BNHS, Mr. Homi Khusrookhan, President, BNHS, and Mr. Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, CBD Executive Secretary, during the award function at Taj Krishna

**Below:** Recipients of Earth Award of Royal Scotland Bank, and Sálím Ali Award of the BNHS with Ms Meera Sanyal, CEO, RBS India, President of BNHS, and others







The RBS Earth Award and BNHS Sálim Ali Award functions were attended by a number of important national and international delegates of CBD-COP 11







**Above:** Mrs. Tara Gandhi (left), BNHS Governing Council Member and Mrs. Usha Lachungpa (right) participated in sessions on behalf of the BNHS

**Below:** A press conference organised by Kalpavriksh, International Collective in Support of Fish workers, BNHS and others, supported by Awaaz Foundation highlighted that India's current paradigm of economic development is detrimental to biodiversity conservation. It emphasised that the National Investment Board, which aims to give clearances to "large projects" over and above normal environmental clearance mechanisms, is unacceptable if India has to honour its commitments to the CBD and the Aichi Targets, particularly Targets 1 and 2. As the coordinator of the NGO Alliance, BNHS strongly supported this stand







**Above:** Every morning, BirdLife delegates met for an hour to discuss the day's agenda on how to make effective contributions and negotiate with the official government delegates for better measures for biodiversity conservation

**Below:** During CBD-COP 11, there were many impromptu meetings of experts of BNHS, BirdLife International, RSPB, WII, and other organisations on various emerging conservation issues







Among Indian NGOs, BNHS had the largest delegation, with nearly 35 delegates participating at various stages.

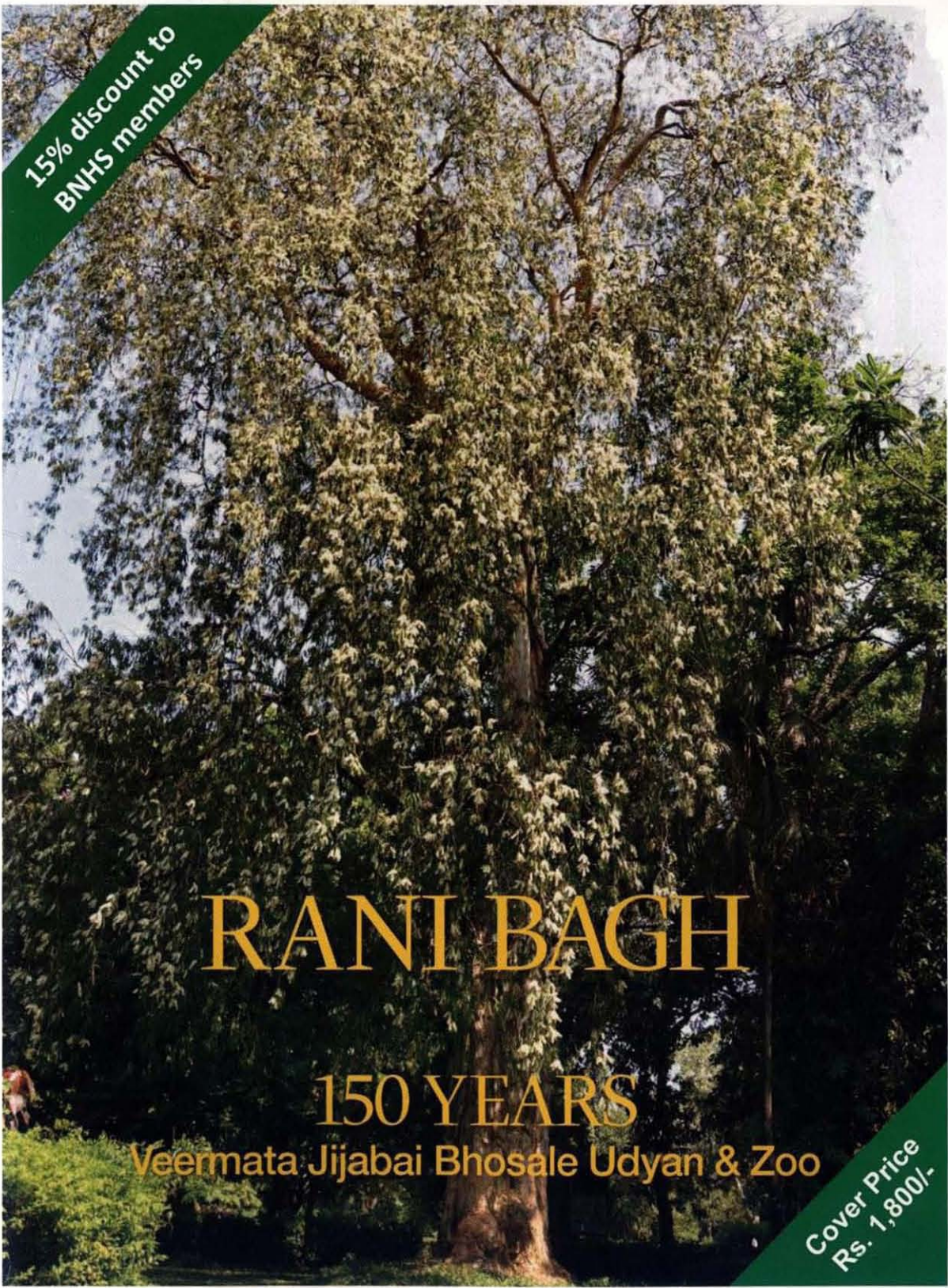
The BNHS stall was one of the most visited stalls, totally managed by the young staff of the Society.

CBD-COP 11 greatly helped in capacity building of the young staff of BNHS

**Photographs for CBD-COP 11:** CBD-COP 11 Official website, ANTHRA, Asad R. Rahmani, Deepak Apte, Atul Sathe, Raju Kasambe, Noor Khan, V. Shubhalaxmi, Sujit Narvade, Rahul Khot, Neha Sinha

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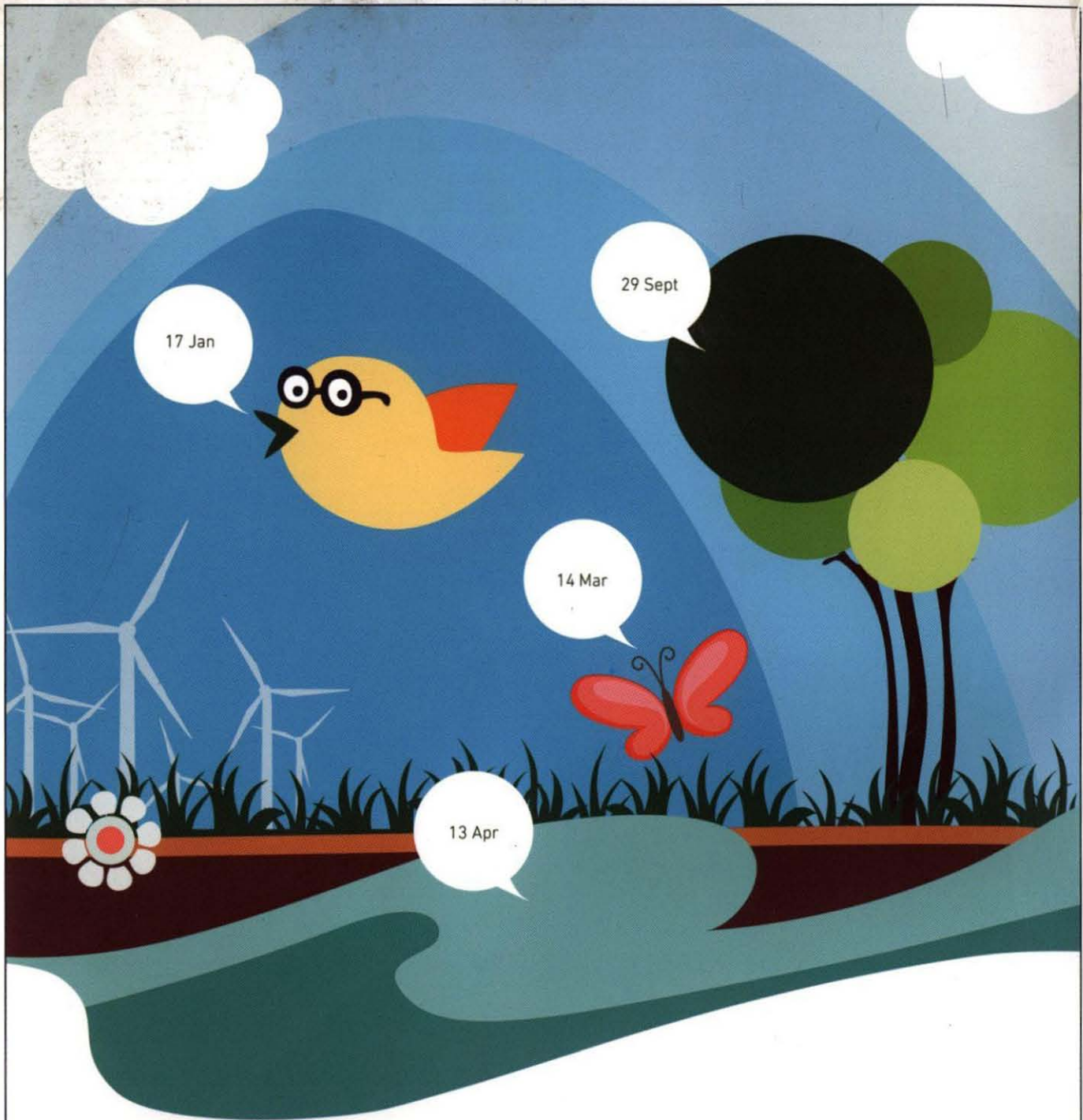
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## If you were nature, which would be the happiest day of your life?

Four happy days, when four of our wind projects were registered with the UNFCCC under Clean Development Mechanism for issuance of Certified Emission Reduction Units.

125 MW project at Harpanhalli & Chitradurga, Karnataka	Registered on 29 September, 2006
30 MW project at Surajbari, Gujarat	Registered on 17 January, 2011
20 MW project at Dhule, Maharashtra	Registered on 14 March, 2011
6.6 MW project at Harihar, Karnataka	Registered on 13 April, 2011

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