

HORNBILL

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The Secretary,
Ministry of Science & Technology,
Dept of Science & Technology,
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Technology Bhavan,
New Mehrauli Road,
New Delhi 110 016.

Editors

Vibhuti Dedhia

Consultant Editors

Gayatri W. Ugra
Isaac Kehimkar

Editorial Assistant

Sonali V. Vadhavkar

Design & Layout

V. Gopi Naidu
Sanchita S. Kadge

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For more information on the Society
and its activities,
write to the Honorary Secretary,
Bombay Natural History Society,
Dr Sálím Ali Chowk, S.B. Singh Road,
Mumbai 400 001, Maharashtra, India.
Tel.: (91-22) 2282 1811
Fax: (91-22) 2283 7615
E-mail: info@bnhs.org
Website: www.bnhs.org

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CONTENTS

FEATURES

Birding boom in Doon

4



The Doon Valley in Uttarakhand is a captivating blend of lush greenery, undulating terrain and towering mountains. This varied landscape, coupled with a diverse climate, provides an ideal haven for the exceptionally rich birdlife, comprising both resident and migratory species.

Anil Kumar and **Iqbal Ali Khan** insist that none should miss the birding boom in Doon.

The Forest (Conservation) Act amendments will fail the nation

8



Since 1980, the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 has been instrumental in stemming the indiscriminate denotification and/or diversion of forest for non-forestry purposes.

Praveen Bhargav shares his views on the implications, if some of the amended provisions of the Act come into force.

PHOTO FEATURE

Riverside Ballet A pictorial tale of the Indian skimmer

20



Parveen Shaikh, who has been working on the Endangered Indian skimmer along the National Chambal Sanctuary since 2016, weaves a pictorial tale of this charismatic bird. The Indian skimmer is a skilled flier and an agile fisher and plays an important role in the ecosystem. Read on.

Others

Book Reviews.....	14
Diary of a Scientist.....	16
Nature Watch.....	25
Conservation Notes.....	32

Editorial...

I hope you enjoy reading the *Hornbill* as we try to bring to you a collection of excellent stories contributed by both young enthusiasts, experienced scientists, and conservationists, in every issue. I am sure you will notice a shift in the content we present, and some more when we travel together into 2024.

In this issue after you have immersed yourself in the bird diversity in Doon valley, Uttarakhand, do explore the thought-provoking insights into the amendment of the much-debated Forest (Conservation) Act 1980.

While reading about the lush greenery, undulating terrain, and towering mountains of the Doon valley, you too will yearn to go birding there. I am aware that the stories related to environmental law may not be everyone's cup of tea, but whether we like it or not our lives are governed by laws! A piece on laws related to our forests becomes more thought-provoking especially when penned by a stalwart like Praveen Bhargav. Your feedback on such articles are much appreciated.

Parveen Shaikh, a dedicated young researcher at BNHS, is passionate about saving birds, particularly the Indian skimmer and black-bellied tern, and the river ecosystem as a whole. She has been working on the Endangered Indian skimmer along the National Chambal Sanctuary since 2016, and has gathered a wealth of knowledge on the bird. Her pictorial tale of this charismatic bird is a visual treat.

Hornbill endeavours to draw your attention to newly released nature-related publications through the Book Reviews section. If you are eager to add these books to your collection after reading the reviews, do let us know.

The new generation scientists at BNHS are making their mark through hard work and dedication. One among them is Dr Neelkanth Bora, who provides a glimpse into his challenging daily routine in the Thar desert of Rajasthan. Starting with this issue, you can look forward to reading a page from the diary of a BNHS scientist.

Manas National Park in Assam is a mesmerizing forest and a home for a diverse range of wildlife from rhinos and elephants to langurs and great pied hornbill, to the rare Bengal florican. Mr Ram Gopalakrishnan, a physician practising in Chennai and Life Member of BNHS, shares his experience in the article 'Mesmerizing Manas'.

Did you know that Buxa Tiger Reserve, renowned for tigers and vultures, where BNHS has started a vulture conservation breeding centre, also has a diverse butterfly population? If not, then turn the pages and read the lepidopterist Divakar Thombre's article on Buxa's butterflies to learn more about the winged beauties in this tiger reserve.





Karnala

For the past four issues, I have shared my conservation notes focusing on conservation concerns of the highest priority. I hope to see more among you actively contributing to address the challenges facing our wetlands.

As we approach another New Year, I wish you all a year filled with enriching stories and shared conservation efforts.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts and experiences throughout 2024 and your feedback on this issue at director@bnhs.org

Kishor Rithe