



BOMBAY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



AUGUST, 2024

CONSERVATION NEWSLETTER



Dear Members,

As I mentioned in my previous communication, during the first week of July, BNHS teams of scientists and researchers were working tirelessly in the Pench and Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserves in Maharashtra to place GPS tags on 20 vultures. These tags will help track the vultures' movements after their release into the wild. After ensuring the vultures had acclimatized and acquired certain skills required in the field, the teams decided to release them by lifting the aviary gates.

We anticipated significant challenges for the 10 White-rumped Vultures (WRVs) released in Tadoba-Andhari, as the wild population had been completely wiped out from TATR. These vultures would need to learn to explore for food and overcome daily challenges on their own. In contrast, the 10 Long-billed Vultures (LBV) in the Pench aviary were already feeding alongside wild WRVs, so their challenges were comparatively less. Our President wanted to witness this occasion in Pench. The Field Director lifted the aviary gate, and after an hour of waiting, wild vultures finally arrived at the Chital carcass placed just outside the aviary. Upon seeing them, our LBVs immediately jumped on the carcass and started feeding together. Not only that, three LBVs flew far with the wild WRVs, and the remaining vultures also left the aviary premises.

Our teams know the next few months will be tough as they monitor the vultures' movements and occasionally provide food at their respective locations if needed. You should be pleased to see your society taking the vulture conservation programme to the next level. We are thrilled to receive videos and pictures daily of our tagged LBVs feeding with wild WRVs and solitary Red-headed Vultures in the Pench landscape. BNHS staff, in collaboration with local veterinarians, Forest officers, and Forest department field staff, are working hard on the ground and need your support. These tagged vultures are exploring tiger habitats to locate wild carcasses and may eventually establish their own breeding grounds.

At the Jatayu Conservation Breeding Centre (JCBC) in Pinjore, Haryana, our vulture team worked closely under the guidance of the Chief Wildlife Warden of Haryana, Mr Vineet Garg, IFS, to organise a capacity-building workshop in preparation for our next mission: the release of 25 vultures in Haryana. Around 30 officers from the Forest, Animal Husbandry, and Food and Drugs Administration departments from five neighbouring states attended this workshop and discussed the way forward. This workshop will undoubtedly support the Vulture Safe Zone (VSZ) programme we have launched in these states and further our conservation efforts.

Rajasthan is another state where people claim that vultures are safe due to traditional practices of disposing of cattle carcasses at specific dumps. However, BNHS members from Rajasthan feel that the population is decreasing due to the destruction of nesting cliffs for mining. BNHS organised a Jatayu workshop at the Rajasthan University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (RAJUVAS), one of the oldest veterinary universities, established in 1954. The students gave an overwhelming response and showed great interest in addressing the threats to vulture conservation. This two-day workshop was attended by around 125 students from veterinary and animal sciences. Pro-Vice Chancellor Dr Hemant Dadhich invited BNHS to establish a long-term collaboration with RAJUVAS.

Following the recent deaths of lesser flamingos in Navi Mumbai, the high-powered committee appears to be taking serious steps towards protecting the coastal wetlands around Navi Mumbai. We are pleased to see that BNHS data from long-term research projects has been useful in implementing site-specific measures. Passionate BNHS members like Major General Bhupesh Goyal from the Indian Army and veteran Cardiovascular Thoracic Surgeon Dr Ramakant Panda from Mumbai visited the BNHS project in Ajmer and extended support to our field team.

The President visited your Point Calimere Bird Migration Study Centre, where we have planned several training courses for the 2024–25 migratory season. He was happy with the training facilities and also spoke to the Forest Secretary and Chief Wildlife Warden of Tamil Nadu regarding some key projects.

I am pleased to share that the state Wildlife Board of Maharashtra has asked BNHS to prepare a proposal for the conservation breeding of wild water buffalo at Gorewada in Nagpur. BNHS has won the "Wild Incubator Tech" grant of Rs 40 lakh from the Centre for Wildlife Studies,

supported by the Ashraya Hastha Trust, for our two projects: “Digitization of Bird Ringing Data” and “Monitoring Wild Vultures with Satellite Tagging in Assam.”

Please continue writing to BNHS Central Marketing Department (cmd@bnhs.org), Membership Department (membership@bnhs.org), Programmes Department (programmes@bnhs.org), and Conservation Education Centre (cec-mumbai@bnhs.org) for any assistance or participating in the programme. Feel free to contact them by email to reserve your preferred dates for events.

After an incident involving the defalcation of cash, BNHS has decided to go cashless. This means that from now on, you can only make payments – such as camp or course fees, gifting membership to your friends, purchasing BNHS products / books, etc. – using UPI, QR codes, cheques, or bank transfers. Cash payments will no longer be accepted.

I hope you have filled out the online forms for the publication of the “Yearbook for Life Members”. I look forward to attending the BNHS members’ meeting in Bengaluru in the first week of September 2024. I encourage you to send event pictures and a brief paragraph to Mr Gopi Naidu (g.naidu@bnhs.org) for the newsletter. Thank you for reaching out to me at director@bnhs.org.

Kishor Rithe

Director

Bombay Natural History Society

Reintroduction of Indian Vultures in Pench Tiger Reserve

In a significant milestone for wildlife conservation, the Pench Tiger Reserve, in partnership with the BNHS, has reintroduced ten Indian vultures into their natural habitat on August 10, 2024.

This reintroduction effort began on January 21, 2024, when the Critically Endangered Indian vultures were transferred from the Jatayu Conservation & Breeding Centre in Pinjore, Haryana. These vultures were housed in a pre-release aviary at the Central Bodalzira Beat of East Pench Piparia Range, where they spent the past seven months

acclimating and interacting with local wild vultures.

After months of careful preparation and observation, a dead chital carcass was strategically placed outside the aviary to attract wild vultures. Following a brief delay due to rain, the aviary gates were opened at around 3:00 p.m. As wild vultures flocked to the carcass, the long-billed vultures ventured out, marking their first taste of freedom in the natural environment. The feeding frenzy was swift and successful. Within a short time, all vultures, both released and wild,

consumed the entire carcass, signalling the initiation of the reintroduction process.

The reintroduction project was supported by key figures including Sh. Praveensingh Pardeshi, President of BNHS, Dr Prabhu Nath Shukla, Field Director of Pench Tiger Reserve, and Mr Kishor Rithe, Director of BNHS. The event was orchestrated by Sh. Vivek Rajurkar, Range Forest Officer of East Pench Pipariya, Dr Nikhil Bangar, Veterinarian of Pench Tiger Reserve, Dr Kazveen Umrigar, Conservation Breeding Specialist of BNHS, and Mr Manan Singh Mahadev and Jonathan D’Costa, Biologists of BNHS, along with other dedicated staff members.

Each of the released vultures has been fitted with GPS transmitter tags, enabling regular monitoring of their movements and integration into the wild. The Indian vultures released in Pench are integrating with other species of resident vultures in the PTR.

As the vultures embark on their new journey, the Pench Tiger Reserve and BNHS will continue to track their movements through the GPS tags. This project aims to provide valuable insights into the habitat, distribution, and conservation status of these majestic birds, reinforcing our commitment to preserving biodiversity.



On a side note, early trends reveal that captive-bred vultures from Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR) and Pench Tiger Reserve (PTR) are exhibiting interesting behaviours in the wild. Two weeks after their tagging and release, a white-rumped vulture (WRV) identified as N11 from TATR flew over 200 km to reach Narayanpur in Chhattisgarh. N11 was spotted in the Kungghada area in Gadchiroli on

August 18. Kungghada was once a dominant vulture habitat, and the forest department had even established vulture restaurants, though vultures no longer reside there. N11 continued its journey and, on August 20, was found to have reached Narayanpur in Chhattisgarh. In the morning, it was recorded in Binagunda, 40 km from Bhamragarh in Gadchiroli. ■

Workshop on Creating Vulture Safe Zones held at Pinjore, Haryana



Officers from three departments across five states participated in a one-day workshop at Pinjore, Haryana, on creating Vulture Safe Zones, on August 6, 2024. The event, titled “Workshop on Vulture Conservation and Reintroduction Programme: A Joint Initiative by the Haryana Forest and Wildlife Department and BNHS to Make Vultures Fly Again,” aimed to enhance vulture conservation efforts.

The workshop was guided by Sh. Vineet Kumar Garg, IFS, PCCF-cum-Chief Wildlife Warden, Haryana, and Mr Kishor Rithe, Director, BNHS. Sessions were conducted by experts including Sh. Hemant Bajpai, Centre Manager, JCBC-BNHS, Dr Kazveen Umrigar, Conservation Breeding Specialist, BNHS, Mr Prakash Mehta, Conservation Officer, BNHS, and Mr Jeff Francis, Conservation Biologist. The event’s success was attributed to the contributions of Sh. Rajender Dangi, DWLO-Panchkula, Sh. Prashant Sharma, DFO-Wildlife-HQ, and Sh. Surjit Singh Yadav.

The workshop was attended by 24 representatives from the Forest and Wildlife Departments, Animal Husbandry Departments, and Food and Drug Administration of six states: Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and U.T. Chandigarh.

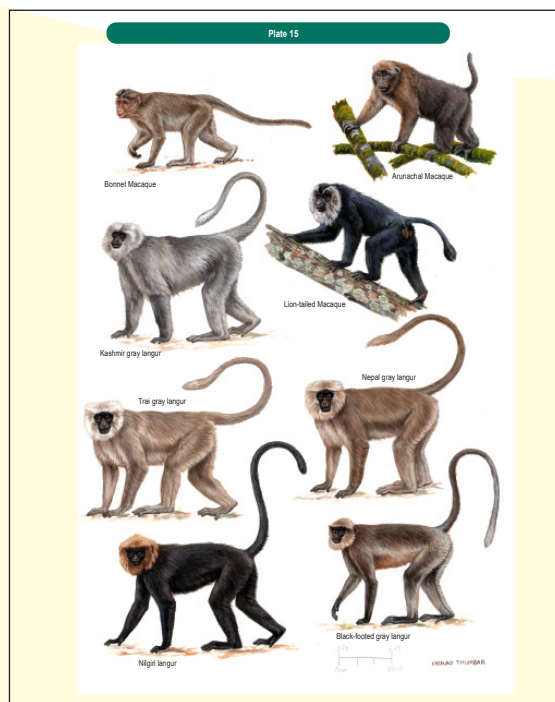


Future plans for large-scale vulture releases depend on creating safe zones within a 100 km radius of release sites, requires cooperation from neighbouring states such as Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, and Chandigarh, as well as support from various departments. ■

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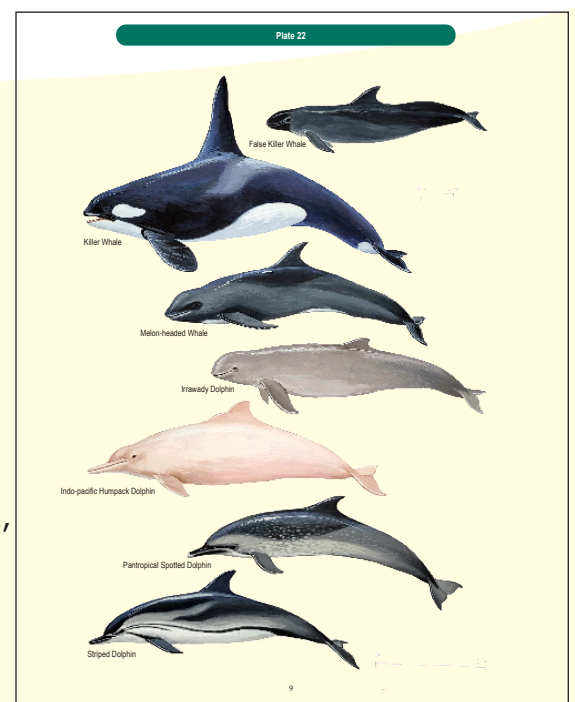
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Jatayu Workshop on Vulture and Wildlife Health Training



The vulture population in India suffered a catastrophic decline of over 99% in the 1990s due to habitat destruction, loss of nesting sites, land use changes, poisoning, and harmful veterinary drugs. In response, the BNHS initiated vulture conservation breeding centres and established safe release zones in collaboration with state forest departments. The Jorbeer Conservation Reserve in Bikaner, Rajasthan, a crucial site for vulture conservation, also supports a rich diversity of wildlife.

To promote vulture and wildlife conservation, BNHS, in partnership with the Centre of Studies on Wildlife Management and Health at Rajasthan University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (RAJUVAS), the Wildlife Division of the Forest Department, and the Animal Husbandry Department of Bikaner, organized a two-day Jatayu Workshop in Bikaner from August 23–24, 2024.

The workshop’s first day, themed “Sensitization and Conservation of Vultures and Other Wild Animals in the Desert”, featured key speakers including Mr Kishor Rithe, Director, BNHS, and officials from

the Wildlife and Animal Husbandry Departments. The event began with a welcome address by Prof. A.P. Singh, Dean of RAJUVAS, followed by discussions on public awareness and the need for coordinated conservation efforts.

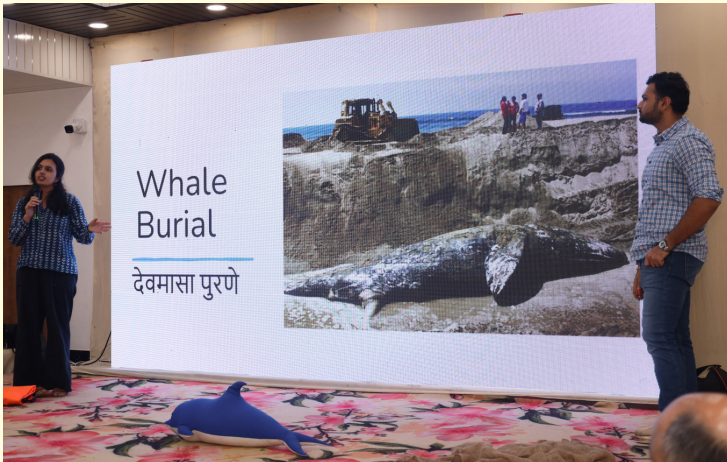
Participants attended a guided tour of the Bikaner rescue centre and the Jorbeer Conservation Reserve, where they observed vultures under treatment and learned about the importance of carcass dumps as a food source for vultures and other raptors.

On the second day, Mr Kishor Rithe discussed BNHS’s role in vulture conservation, followed by presentations on rescuing and rehabilitating vultures, veterinary support for wildlife health, and vulture husbandry. The day also included discussions on wildlife rescue, veterinary challenges, and the need for guidelines and SOPs for wildlife care.

The workshop, attended by 125 participants, concluded with discussions on wildlife conservation efforts and the critical role of veterinarians in protecting species like the chinkara. ■



Stranding of Marine Animals Reflects Impact on Coastal Communities



BNHS organized a workshop, in collaboration with the Mangrove and Marine Biodiversity Conservation Foundation of Maharashtra, on marine megafauna strandings held in Palghar on August 9, 2024. The workshop aimed to address the growing concern over marine animal strandings and their broader implications.

The stranding of marine animals signals not only environmental distress, but also negative impacts on the livelihoods of coastal communities; it is a strong indicator of deteriorating coastal ecosystem health, underscoring the urgent need for collective action.



The workshop featured key speakers, including Sh. S.V. Rama Rao, Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Mangrove Cell and Executive Director of the Mangrove Foundation; Smt. Pradeepa, Chief Conservator of Forest (T) Thane; and environmentalist Mr Debi Goenka from the Conservation Action Trust.

The workshop was designed to equip local stakeholders and relevant departments with the knowledge and skills needed to respond effectively to marine animal strandings. Sh. S.V. Rama Rao elaborated on compensation schemes available for fishermen affected by such incidents. Additionally, Mr Debi Goenka and Smt. Pradeepa provided guidance throughout the workshop. BNHS also introduced illustrative pamphlets to assist local communities in offering immediate help to stranded marine mammals until official assistance arrives.

The event saw active participation from various stakeholders, including Forest Department officials, veterinarians, wildlife reporters, and representatives from the Fishery Department, Coast Guard, and Navy. Members of local fishing communities contributed valuable insights and suggestions for enhancing the management of marine mammal stranding incidents. During interactive sessions, participants raised questions and shared suggestions for improving future response strategies.

Ms. Fatema Hirkani presented on the diversity of marine mammals along the West Coast of India, while Dr P. Sathiyaselvem introduced topics on seabirds, their strandings, and handling procedures. Marine biologist Ms. Mahi Mankeshwar conducted demonstrations on post-stranding rescue operations, and Mr Rahul Khot from BNHS provided guidance on future steps. Veterinarian Dr Dinesh Vinherkar demonstrated techniques for rescuing sea turtles. The programme was coordinated by Dr Reshma Pitale of BNHS, with support from Dr Manas Manjrekar and Mr Hrishikesh Rane of the Mangrove Foundation.

Maj Gen Bhupesh Goyal of the BNHS Armed Forces Cell visited the BNHS project site in Ajmeri, focusing on Florican habitats. He was highly impressed by our community work. ■

Finn's Weaver Survey Conducted in Uttarakhand

In mid-August 2024, a BNHS team comprising our ornithologist Dr Rajat Bhargava, Governing Council Member Dr Praveen Kumar Vashishta, Mr Anuj Malik, and local guides visited Uttarakhand. They found approximately 15 abandoned Finn's Weaver nests, but did not observe any birds. Over the years, our observations suggest unsuccessful nesting, likely due to nest predation by crows or human disturbance, as the Finn's Weaver population has not increased.

Since 2017, BNHS has been working to raise awareness about the threatened Finn's Weaver *Ploceus megarhynchus*. The research findings of the BNHS team were published in the report titled Status of Finn's Weaver in India: Past & Present. With support from eminent Indian ornithologists and research organizations across India and Nepal, BNHS advocated for BirdLife International to reclassify Finn's Weaver from Vulnerable to Critically Endangered. In December 2021, the species' status was elevated to Endangered on the IUCN Red List. BNHS estimates the current population in India to be fewer than 500 individuals, distributed across three states: fewer than 100 each in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, and up to 300 in Assam, with local extinction in West Bengal.

BNHS recommends conservation breeding to prevent further population declines. This year, BNHS also surveyed Manas National Park, Kaziranga National Park, and Orang National Park for Finn's Weaver, recording three nesting sites and counting a population of



nearly 40 birds in May. During field surveys, BNHS scientist Dr Rajat Bhargava discovered three new Finn's Weaver locations in northern India, including a small breeding population of 15–20 birds nesting at Haripura Dam in Uttarakhand. Unfortunately, this site, owned by the Irrigation Department, is auctioned annually to private contractors for fishing. BNHS has documented and highlighted the disturbances caused by fishing, particularly during the summer breeding season when the area is drained for fishing before the monsoon, sometimes forcing the birds to abandon their nests. ■

Dr Rajat Bhargava Speaks on Hornbill Trade in India

On August 28, 2024, BirdLife Asia's Singapore office, on behalf of the Bird Trade Communities of Practice core group, organized a webinar on the Hornbill Trade Crisis in Asia and Africa. Dr Rajat Bhargava was one of the speakers, discussing Hornbill Trade in India.

The hornbill trade is becoming increasingly prevalent, posing a significant threat to these iconic birds. Recent trends and trade drivers contributing to the serious decline of wild hornbill populations were discussed in three presentations by scientists from the Haribon Foundation (Philippines), BNHS (India), and the Mabula Ground-Hornbill Project (South Africa). The discussions highlighted the interconnection of trade between Asia and Africa. The programme, coordinated by Ms Shelby Wee, Asia Conservation Officer, concluded that the Hornbill Trade Crisis is a significant priority requiring coordinated efforts across Asia and Africa for effective action.

Over the past three years, BNHS has assisted in training state officers in the care and rehabilitation of seized hornbill chicks belonging to six exotic species. Additionally, there is a substantial trade in native hornbill species in India, driven by the purported medicinal value of oil extracted from these birds, as well as their demand in zoos and as pets. BNHS has been actively raising conservation awareness at Hornbill festivals in Karnataka and Manipur in recent months, highlighting the illegal trade and poaching of hornbills and training officers to combat such practices.

BNHS has also provided informal assistance to forest officers, bird keepers, dealers, and media personnel to navigate the process of PARIVESH 2.0 and declare their stock by understanding CITES and the included species. This included organizing informal consultation and species identification workshops for stakeholders across India. A similar initiative was undertaken by BNHS in 2021, when the Central Government issued an advisory for dealing with the import of exotic live species in India and voluntary declaration of CITES-listed species in PARIVESH 1.0. ■



Collaborative Digitization Project with St. Joseph's University



In a recent initiative, BNHS partnered with St. Joseph's University, Bengaluru, to digitize historical field notes from its extensive Bird Ringing data, a crucial part of the ongoing bird migration studies. The project involved 75 students from the university's Zoology department, under the guidance of Dr Jayashankar, Head of the Department

Over a span of 3–4 weeks, these students meticulously transcribed nearly 4,800 physical sheets containing data on approximately 200,000 individual birds tagged. Their efforts, supported by an AI tool, has been instrumental in preserving this invaluable data for future research and conservation work.

To acknowledge their contributions, 46 students were awarded certificates of appreciation. Additionally, Ankith Devaraj, Manav Sundar, and Deboshree Dutta received special mementos from BNHS for their outstanding contributions to the project.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Dr Jayashankar and the students of St. Joseph's University for their dedication to this important project, and to Farhan Imdad for coordinating much of the work. Their efforts ensure that our rich legacy of bird migration studies continues to inform and inspire future generations. ■

Conservation Education for the Local People of Nagaland

The BNHS Nagaland team is conducting conservation education for the local people of Nagaland with funding support from Zycus Infotech Pvt Ltd. As part of this initiative, they have been conducting youth employment surveys to identify potential areas where conservation activities can generate sustainable livelihoods. This effort has led to the hiring of two local field assistants, Lijon Ngullie from Pangti Village and Atounuo Kense from Jalukie Town. These individuals play a crucial role in conducting educational programmes for Eco-Club members and students, assisting the BNHS Education Officer in workshops and awareness campaigns, and collecting essential data for ongoing conservation efforts.

Additionally, the project has promoted local products and encouraged entrepreneurship within the community. A notable achievement is the establishment of a homestay by L.Thanichan Kikon in Old Aree Village, named "Friends of Falcon Homestay." This initiative not only boosts local tourism but also fosters a deeper appreciation for the region's natural heritage.

Through these efforts, BNHS has not only advanced conservation education but has also empowered local communities by providing them with the tools and opportunities to participate in and benefit from conservation initiatives. This project serves as a model for integrating environmental stewardship with socio-economic and sustainable development in Nagaland. ■



Awareness Programme for School Children in Kamrup District

The BNHS team conducted an awareness programme on vultures for students of Jharobari Anchalik High School on August 8th and Fulguri Anchalik High School on August 10th, 2024. The sessions, attended by 80 and 73 students respectively, aimed to raise awareness about vulture conservation through documentaries and slideshows. The programs concluded with a quiz session where winners were awarded T-shirts featuring a vulture logo. The events were organized by Ms Aneena and Mr Jayanta Kr Rabha, with support from Mr Dhiraj Rabha. ■



Senior Forest Officers visit BNHS-VCBC, Bhopal

On August 8, 2024, the BNHS-Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre in Bhopal hosted Dr Sameeta Rajora, IFS, Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, and Shri Ritesh Sarothiya, IFS, DCF State Tiger Strike Force from the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department.

The visit included a detailed tour of the facility, where the officers observed the vultures under our care and learned about the specific care protocols followed to ensure their health and well-being.

The visit concluded with an interactive discussion, where the Officers expressed their support and provided valuable insights based on their extensive experience in wildlife conservation. Their visit reinforced the importance of our work and opened avenues for potential collaboration with the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department. ■



Senior Defence Officers visit BNHS field station

Major General Bhupesh Kumar Goyal, VSM, Commandant of CHSC, Indian Army, visited the BNHS Lesser Florican site in Ajmer along with Dr Nitish Gupta of the Indian Defence Estates Service (IDES), who serves as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Nasirabad Cantonment Board. Major General Goyal is an avid birdwatcher and has photographed most bird species in India. He spent two days photographing the Lesser Florican at Ajmer. He expressed his appreciation for the BNHS's conservation research on the Lesser Florican and the Great Indian Bustard in Rajasthan and assured his continued support. The BNHS team presented framed photographs of the Lesser Florican to both visitors. ■



Renowned Cardiovascular Thoracic Surgeon visits BNHS field station

Dr Ramakanta Panda, MCh, a renowned Cardiovascular Thoracic Surgeon, CEO of Asian Heart Institute and a Padma Bhushan awardee, visited the BNHS field station in Ajmer. Dr Panda has founded a non-profit – Asian Wildlife Trust – as part of the Asian Heart Institute, aiming to unite and support individuals dedicated to wildlife conservation. He has a deep appreciation for nature and is a passionate wildlife photographer, with particular fondness for the Lesser Florican. He discussed the ongoing BNHS project in detail and expressed his willingness to support the conservation of the Lesser Florican. ■



Wild India 2024 Held in Pune



Nature Walk Charitable Trust, a registered organization that has been working in the field of wildlife education for the past two decades, with support from BNHS, organized the Wild India Festival in Pune from August 2–4, 2024. The event featured audio-visual talks, an interaction with renowned wildlifer Mr Kiran Purandare, and film screenings by Mr Naresh Bedi and Mr Kalyan Varma. The festival received

an overwhelming response, attracting people from all walks of life.

Distinguished guests included the Hon. Minister for Higher & Technical Education, Mr Chandrakantdada Patil, Dr Vinay Sahasrabuddhe, and Hon. Bombay High Court Justice Sh. Shiram Modak. The BNHS stall was particularly popular among attendees. Sakal Print Media was the event's media sponsor. ■

Inaugural session of BNHS Basic Course in Ornithology



The BNHS CEC-Mumbai successfully conducted the inaugural session of the Basic Course in Ornithology today, August 25, 2024, at the BNHS Reserve in Goregaon, Mumbai. The event began with an introduction to BNHS, followed by a nature trail led by Ms Priyadarshini and Mr Dilip Giri.

Mr Asif Khan gave a presentation on "Biogeographic Zones of India with Reference to Birds". This topic helped participants understand the reasons for bird diversity in different regions of the Indian subcontinent. After this expert talk, Ms Kiran Thumma conducted a brief session on the course deliverables and schedule. The session concluded with a vote of thanks to all the participants.

A total of 24 participants attended this inaugural session. ■

CEC-Mumbai and Association of Fungal Biologists Conduct Mushroom Identification Walk

On August 18, 2024, BNHS CEC Mumbai, in collaboration with the Association of Fungal Biologists, organized a walk focused on identifying mushrooms and bracket fungi in the wild. The event, held at the BNHS Nature Reserve, was attended by 18 participants, including M.Sc. Botany students and BNHS course participants. Mr Vyom Bhatt, a mushroom researcher, and Dr Sashirekha S., a mycology expert, led the walk, while Ms Kiran Thumma, Education Officer at BNHS CEC, coordinated the event. ■



BNHS records 65 bird species amid a rare Karvi Bloom during the bird count

On August 25, 2024, over 53 dedicated volunteers participated in a Bird Count at Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP) as part of the BNHS's SGNP Bird Monitoring Programme. By the end of the day, the team had recorded 65 bird species. The participants were also fortunate enough to witness the beginning of the mass bloom of Karvi *Strobilanthes callosa*, which has started in parts of SGNP and Tungreshwar Wildlife Sanctuary this year. The last time SGNP witnessed Karvi blooms in 2016.

The bird monitoring programme is supported by the staff of SGNP and Tungreshwar Wildlife Sanctuary Forest Department, led by the Director, Shri G. Mallikarjuna (IFS – Chief Conservator of Forests), and Shri Sudhir Sonawale (Assistant Conservator of Forests, SGNP). With the support of BNHS Director Shri Kishor Rithe, the count is coordinated by Mr Asif N. Khan from the BNHS Programmes Department and the CEC-Mumbai Team: Shardul Bajikar, Kiran Thumma, and Priyadarshini Supekar. ■

The bird count is conducted monthly by the BNHS in collaboration with SGNP, and nature enthusiasts are welcome to participate. For more details, please visit www.bnhs.org



BNHS-EIACP conducts programmes under the MissionLIFE initiative of MoEF&CC

As part of the MissionLIFE initiative, the EIACP Resource Partner on Avian Ecology at the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS-EIACP) organized sessions across various schools in the Mumbai and Thane districts. Sessions on “Monsoon Breeding Birds” were held at SIES High School, Matunga, and SIES (Dr APJ Abdul Kalam) Memorial High School, Ghatkopar. Students were encouraged to photograph local birds as a follow-up activity to foster an appreciation for our feathered friends.

As part of the “एक पेड़ माँ के नाम अभियान (Plant4 Mother)”, a tree plantation drive was conducted at DNC Multipurpose High School, Dombivli, and a session on “Plastic-Free School Campus” was also held. Students planted five saplings, including *Bauhinia racemosa* and *Cassia fistula*, on the school campus.

A total of 135 students from classes 6 to 10 participated across the three schools. Eco-Clubs will be established at each school to further students' involvement in sustainability and nature. All the



sessions included interactive activities, and students were rewarded with the Buceros newsletter and a Hindi book on wildlife in the thar desert. The sessions were led by Programme Officer Mr Nandkishor Dudhe, with the assistance of Information Officer Natasha Girkar, who helped organize the events. The principal, along with the school staff, supported all the activities. ■



BNHS CEC-Mumbai Hosts CSR Activities for Worley India Pvt. Ltd.

The BNHS CEC-Mumbai organised a CSR activity for the corporate group of Worley India Pvt. Ltd. on August 31 and September 1, 2024, featuring a clean-up drive, a kitchen gardening and Karvi trails.

On August 31, 2024, 52 volunteers from Worley India Pvt. Ltd. participated in the clean-up drive. The activity began with a nature trail, where participants witnessed the spectacular mass bloom of the Karvi flower. The trail concluded at designated for the clean-up site, where the volunteers enthusiastically engaged in the clean-up effort, accompanied by discussions on the importance of significance of such initiatives for forest conservation.

On September 1, 2024, 28 team leaders from Worley India Pvt. Ltd. Took part in a kitchen gardening workshop. The day started with an introduction to BNHS-CEC and a safety briefing for the trails and activities. Participants then embarked on a nature trail, where they observed Karvi bloom and encountered other fauna.

Following the trail, the participants attended a presentation on kitchen gardening by Ms Kiran Thumma, who also guided them through the process of planting saplings. The participants were able to take home the plants they potted.



The event concluded with a vote of thanks to all participants and their CSR head.

The events were coordinated by the CEC-Mumbai team, including other CEC staff, naturalists, and volunteers. ■

Ms Kiran Thumma (Education Officer),
Ms Priyadarshini Supekar (Education Officer),

Mr Dilip Giri (Field Assistant), along with

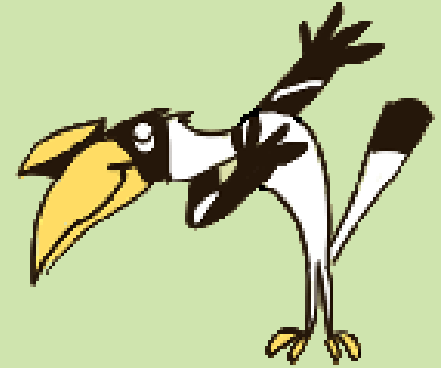


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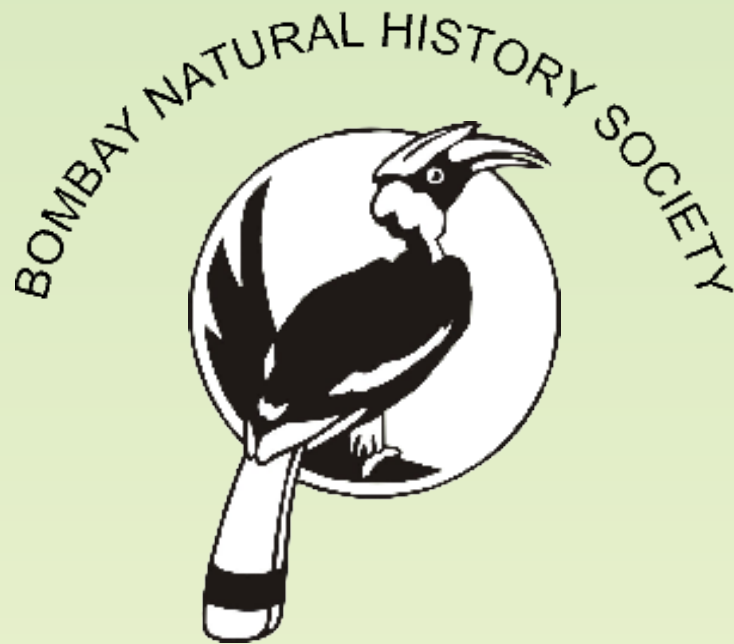
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