



# BOMBAY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



JANUARY, 2025

CONSERVATION NEWSLETTER

The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) has had an exciting start to the year with a series of events and initiatives that combined education, conservation, and public participation. These activities catered to diverse audiences, from schoolchildren and families to budding naturalists and wildlife enthusiasts.

Dear Members,



I am writing to you from the forests of Pench Tiger Reserve, where the Governing Council members are discussing crucial issues shaping the future of BNHS. Establishing infrastructure for any NGO requires serious deliberation. When utilized optimally, infrastructure can be a significant asset, driving positive change on the ground; otherwise, it risks becoming a liability. In 2018, BNHS acquired 19 acres of land near Bhisi, Tal-Chimur, District-Chandrapur in Maharashtra, with plans to develop a state-of-the-art Conservation Research and Education Centre. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic delayed this vision. However, under the leadership of our President, the Governing Council has now taken up the project once again. We extend our gratitude to the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) for funding Rs 2 crore towards this initiative.

The Jatayu Conservation Breeding Centre at Pinjore is in high demand among forest staff from various states for training purposes. However, the lack of residential facilities has been a challenge. BNHS had previously procured land and constructed a building at the site, but the project was abandoned for some reason. The Governing Council has now decided to complete the construction, ensuring it can accommodate trainees and BNHS staff.

Beyond infrastructure, the Governing Council also reviewed the progress of various projects, including the release of vultures – 25 in Pinjore, Haryana, and 10 each in Pench and Tadoba, Maharashtra – as well as the sarus study project in Gondia district, Maharashtra. However, a serious threat looms over the released vultures due to electrocution from electric transmission lines. Tragically, four vultures from Pinjore and two from Maharashtra have died due to this hazard. Despite these challenges, some released vultures are thriving in the wild, covering vast landscapes and even making national headlines. One white-rumped vulture released from Tadoba travelled nearly 4,000 km, passing through Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Karnataka before succumbing to electrocution in Tamil Nadu. Another vulture, N-10, has travelled through five states, covering 3,187 km in the past three months before reaching Gadchiroli, Maharashtra. You can read more about these reports on our website. The Governing Council also commended the ongoing digitisation of Bird Migration data. BNHS's Bird Migration Programme will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2027, marking a significant milestone.

I am pleased to share that the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has officially banned the manufacture, sale, and veterinary use of the drug Nimesulide and its formulations. The notification was issued on December 30, 2024, under Section 26-C of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940. BNHS has long advocated for this ban, submitting multiple representations to the Drugs and Technical Advisory Board (DTAB), which had recommended the prohibition to the Ministry. We now urge the Government of India to establish a mechanism for pre-market safety testing of veterinary drugs to prevent further harm to vultures, as we have identified other drugs posing similar risks.

Looking ahead, the Vulture Release Programme will soon expand to Kaziranga Tiger Reserve in Assam and Melghat Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra. The pre-release aviary construction is underway in Melghat, while the land for the project in Assam has been finalized.

This month, BNHS also convened a meeting with corporate partners in Mumbai, who were deeply impressed by our field projects and have pledged financial support. Additionally, BNHS has a longstanding collaboration with India Post, and this month, we jointly organized the MAHAPEX 2025 event at the World Trade Centre in Mumbai. During the event, we premiered a new awareness film on the menace of pigeons in urban areas, made possible with support from the JSW Foundation.

A heartfelt thank you for the overwhelming response to BNHS SEVA, our volunteering initiative for members. So far, 87 members have enrolled, with 40 actively contributing their knowledge, skills, and networks across various departments.

I am also delighted to share that Shri Ganesh Ram Singh Khuntia, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Forest, Environment & Climate Change, Labour, and Employees' State Insurance, Government of Odisha, has felicitated Dr P. Sathiyaselvam for his outstanding work with BNHS in Odisha. Under the BNHS-Chandrapur Forest Academy MoU, our "Behavioural Change Conservation Programme" at Chandrapur

has received an excellent response. Thirty-six teachers have been trained in conservation education, and we hope they will inspire young minds to engage in wildlife conservation. BNHS has also adopted Kihim village for holistic development. This is where Dr Sálim Ali first conducted his birding sessions, and during my recent visit, the villagers expressed their excitement about their village gaining global recognition on the tourism map thanks to his legacy.

Please check the *Systema Naturae* section in the latest *Hornbill* magazine and consider contributing your observations to the BNHS 150-Year Omnibus collection.

Lastly, if you have not yet completed the online form for the publication of the Yearbook for Life Members, please do so here: <https://forms.gle/12gPTSyTs9P2khue7>. For assistance, feel free to reach out to: BNHS Central Marketing ([cmd@bnhs.org](mailto:cmd@bnhs.org)), Membership ([membership@bnhs.org](mailto:membership@bnhs.org)), Programmes ([programmes@bnhs.org](mailto:programmes@bnhs.org)), or Conservation Education Centre ([cec-mumbai@bnhs.org](mailto:cec-mumbai@bnhs.org)). For event reservations or submissions, please contact us via email and share event photos and brief write-ups with Mr Gopi Naidu at [g.naidu@bnhs.org](mailto:g.naidu@bnhs.org). Thank you for staying connected with BNHS. I am always reachable at [director@bnhs.org](mailto:director@bnhs.org).

Kishor Rithe, Director

Bombay Natural History Society

## National Symposium Highlights Biodiversity and Wetland Conservation at Flamingo Festival 2025 in Andhra Pradesh



As part of the Flamingo Festival 2025, the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department organized a two-day National Symposium on Biodiversity and Wetland Conservation. Held on January 18 and 19, 2025, at the picturesque Krea University in Sri City, the symposium was conducted with technical expertise from the BNHS and support from Sri City Operations and Krea University.

The symposium focused on the conservation of Pulicat Lake and its surrounding ecosystems, highlighting their ecological and socio-economic significance. The event brought together an array of participants, including scientists, researchers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), government officials, and community stakeholders, to discuss innovative strategies for sustainable management of these critical natural resources.

A total of 52 experts – 49 attending in person and three participating online – along with 12 students from local academic institutions, took part in the event. The symposium also attracted a large audience via virtual platforms, with participants joining through Krea University's Zoom channel and the BNHS YouTube livestream.

The delegates represented diverse sectors, including 11 from government agencies such as the Wildlife Institute of India (WII),

Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), Central Institute of Brackishwater Aquaculture (CIBA), and National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT). Twenty-two delegates were from NGOs like Wetlands International South Asia (WISA), Wildlife Trust of India (WTI), BNHS, and WWF. Nine participants represented educational institutions, including Tamil Nadu Fisheries University, Madras Christian College, and Krea University, while five came from government projects, private companies, and freelance backgrounds.

The symposium featured two days of engaging sessions. On the first day, 23 presentations were delivered, followed by 13 presentations on the second day. Discussions covered a broad range of topics across five thematic sessions: biodiversity, ecological services, hydrology, threats to Pulicat Lake, community participation in conservation, and citizen science.

A dedicated discussion session focused on developing actionable plans to address conservation challenges related to Pulicat Lake and its ecosystems. The insights and recommendations from the symposium will be compiled and published as proceedings to guide future conservation efforts. ■



## BNHS as Knowledge Partner at National Conference on Lesser-Known Species in Bhopal



Conservators and Local Tourism Development India in collaboration with the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department and the Madhya Pradesh State Biodiversity Board.

The conference spotlighted the conservation of species often overlooked in mainstream efforts. BNHS Scientist D, Parveen Shaikh, participated as a panellist, in a discussion on “Conservation Issues for Wildlife Outside Protected Areas”, sharing insights on the Indian skimmer and community-based conservation strategies. She emphasized the importance of addressing habitat degradation and policy gaps in areas beyond protected landscapes.

BNHS’s scientific expertise and research contributions underscored its commitment to conserving India’s lesser-known and threatened biodiversity. ■

The BNHS served as a Knowledge Partner for the 3rd National Conference on Lesser-Known Species of Madhya Pradesh, held from January 17–19, 2025, organized by Society of Nature Healers,

## Survey Assesses Status of Threatened Bird Species in Maguri Bill, Assam

A survey conducted at Maguri Bill from late December 2024 to early January 2025 assessed the status of threatened bird species in the region. Grass heights ranging from 300 to 500 cm were recorded, with invasive plant species like *Chromolaena odorata* and *Lantana camara* identified as significant threats to the ecosystem. Bird species observed included the jungle babbler and black-hooded oriole. Experts emphasized the need for regular monitoring and mitigation strategies to combat invasive species and human disturbances.

Migratory bird monitoring at Maguri Bill continues, with notable sightings of gadwall, Eurasian wigeon, ferruginous duck, greylag goose, bar-headed goose, and northern pintail. Evidence of niche separation among these species has also been documented. A comprehensive report will be prepared after the migration season concludes. ■



## Five White-rumped Vultures Lost After Release in Haryana

The vulture reintroduction programme at Jatayu Conservation Breeding Centre (JCBC), Pinjore, has suffered a setback with the loss of five white-rumped vultures (WRV) within a month of their release on December 17, 2024. Of the 25 captive-bred vultures released, three died due to electrocution from power lines, one succumbed to weakness, and another is missing and presumed dead. Electrocution has emerged as the primary threat, with fatalities recorded in Raipur Rani, Chapper, and near JCBC in Jodhpur village.

Conservationists are urging immediate mitigation measures, including power line insulation, rerouting, and collaboration with electricity authorities, to prevent further casualties. Despite these challenges, 20 vultures have successfully integrated with wild populations and are regularly observed feeding. The incident highlights the urgent need for safer infrastructure to ensure the long-term success of vulture conservation efforts in India. ■





## Awareness Workshop on Indian Skimmer for Schoolchildren at Mahanadi River, Odisha

**B**NHS organized an interactive awareness workshop for schoolchildren at Chakapada Primary School, located near the Mahanadi River. The event aimed to educate young minds about the conservation of the Indian skimmer, an iconic and threatened bird species found in riverine ecosystems.

The workshop, attended by 20 eager students from the 4th and 5th grades, focused on fostering curiosity and responsibility toward the protection of biodiversity. Participants were introduced to the Indian skimmer, renowned for its distinctive skimming behaviour, and learned about its crucial role in maintaining healthy river ecosystems.

Through engaging storytelling, visuals, and games, the session explored the bird's habitat needs, threats such as habitat degradation and human interference, and the importance of conserving riverine environments. BNHS also shared insights into its ongoing conservation efforts along the Mahanadi River, which include community



participation, nest monitoring, and habitat protection initiatives.

A hands-on creative activity was the highlight of the day, as students painted wooden toys shaped like Indian skimmers. This activity allowed them to replicate the bird's striking black-and-white plumage and vivid orange beak, deepening their connection with the species while encouraging artistic expression.

The workshop aimed to inspire the next generation of conservation advocates by raising awareness about the importance of preserving wildlife and ecosystems. By engaging young minds, BNHS hopes to ensure a sustainable future for the Indian skimmer and other endangered species. ■

## Vulture Conservation Awareness Programme at Barpeta Road, Assam

**A**n awareness programme on vulture conservation was held at the District Veterinary Office, Barpeta Road, on January 22, 2025, to educate participants on the ecological significance of vultures, the threats they face, and the impact of certain non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs).

Dr Krishna Mohan Chutia (Veterinary Doctor, VCBC) led the session, assisted by Aneena Lakshmanan (Conservation Biologist, VCBC). The event featured a panel of veterinary experts, including Dr Tufan Basumatari, District Veterinary Officer (DVO), Dr H. Das, Veterinary Officer (VO), along with three other veterinary officers and two para-veterinary professionals, who engaged in discussions to enhance their understanding of conservation strategies.



Dr Krishna delivered a comprehensive presentation on vultures in India, the role of VCBC in vulture conservation, and the harmful effects of banned NSAIDs, including the recent ban on Nimesulide. Participants were provided with copies of the official gazette notification for reference. ■

## Engagement with Villagers and NGOs in Kihim, Maharashtra

**A**s part of its conservation initiatives, BNHS has adopted Dr Sálím Ali's village, Kihim, with the aim of developing it into a model birding village. This initiative seeks to promote ecological awareness and sustainable tourism while preserving the region's rich avian diversity. ■





## School Awareness Programmes in Kamrup District, Assam

Four school awareness programmes were conducted in Kamrup district during January. Led by Mr Ghanashyam Gogoi (Conservation Biologist, VCBC), Ms Aneena Lakshmanan (Conservation Biologist, VCBC), and Mr Jayanta Kumar Rabha (Office Assistant, VCBC), these sessions reached approximately 450 students and teachers of Gyanjyoti Jatiya Vidyalaya, Bagan Loharghat; Singra High School, Singra; Rangamati High School, Rangamati; Upperdani High School, Rajapanichanda. Each session concluded with a pledge to conserve Assam's vulture population, led by Mr Jayanta Kumar Rabha. ■



## Sarus Crane Awareness Programmes in Chandrapur and Gondia Districts, Maharashtra



**C**ommunities: On January 27, 2025, an awareness programme on Sarus Crane conservation was conducted for local farmers and residents in Junona and Manora villages, Chandrapur district. The initiative was supported by Mr Ghansham Naigamkar (RFO, Chandrapur) and Mr Bhoware (RFO, Manora), along with field staff from the Forest Department.

BNHS team member Mr Mukund Dhurve inaugurated the session with an overview of BNHS's conservation history, its role in research and monitoring, and ongoing efforts to protect Sarus Cranes in the Vidarbha region. He also discussed the threats facing Sarus Cranes, as well as the tagging and monitoring activities conducted in Gondia district.

**I**n schools: On January 27, 2025, the BNHS team, in collaboration with the Chandrapur Forest Department, conducted awareness programmes on Sarus Crane conservation at Savitribai Phule High School, Junona village, and Shanti Niketan Vidyalaya, Manora village. A total of 29 students from Junona and 27 from Manora participated in the workshops.

On January 30, 2025, a similar program was held at GES (Gondia Education Society) High School, Kamtha, Gondia district, with over 150 students in attendance. Educational books were distributed to the schools in Junona, Manora, and Kamtha as part of the awareness campaign. ■

## Government Bans Nimesulide for Veterinary Use to Protect Vultures

**T**he Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has issued a notification under Section 26-C of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, on December 30, 2024, banning the manufacture, sale, and veterinary use of the drug Nimesulide and its formulations.

This decision follows earlier bans on other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), including Diclofenac, Aceclofenac, and Ketoprofen, which were found to be harmful to vulture populations. BNHS has been a strong advocate for the ban, having repeatedly petitioned the Drugs and Technical Advisory Board (DTAB). The DTAB, in turn, recommended the prohibition to the Ministry. BNHS has now urged the Government of India to establish a safety testing mechanism for new veterinary drugs before approval, citing concerns over other drugs that may pose similar risks to vultures.

The ban on Nimesulide marks a significant step toward vulture conservation and highlights the need for stricter regulation of veterinary drugs to protect endangered species. ■





## Minister of Odisha Honours BNHS for Contributions to Bird Conservation



Shri Ganesh Ram Singh Khuntia, Minister of State for Forest, Environment, and Climate Change, honoured Dr Sujit Narwade of BNHS for the organization’s contributions to bird conservation in Chilika. The recognition took place during a training programme for the annual bird census organized by the Chilika Forest Division and the Chilika Development Authority (CDA) on January 17. ■

## Honourable CM of Bihar Visits BNHS Exhibition Stall

Shri Nitish Kumar, Hon’ble Chief Minister of Bihar, visited the exhibition stalls organized by the Department of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (DEFCC) on January 18, 2025 as part of the Pragati Yatra in Maniyappa and Manjhaul, Begusarai district. The BNHS’s Bird Ringing and Monitoring Station, Bihar (BRMS), provided technical support to DEFCC in showcasing the state’s initiatives in bird conservation and wetland management.

The exhibits emphasized the ecological significance of migratory birds, ringing recoveries, and wetlands, with a special focus on Kanwar Lake. Information materials, including posters, brochures, and banners, detailed projects by the Begusarai Forest Division, such as the eco-tourism park, weed removal efforts, and restoration of Kanwar Lake.

The Chief Minister appreciated the displays and the ongoing conservation efforts, which also



raised awareness among the local public. Over 100 visitors attended the stalls, gaining insights into Bihar’s rich biodiversity and wetland management initiatives. ■

## Conservation Pioneer Honoured for Innovative Initiatives

On January 9, 2025 the BNHS team met with Shri Giriraj Singh Kushwaha, a retired IAS officer celebrated for his innovative conservation efforts, such as creating enclosures in Desert National Park and wolf conservation in Sawai Madhopur. His community-centered initiatives, such as the relocation of villages leading to the naming of Girirajpura in his honour, have significantly advanced environmental sustainability in Rajasthan. ■





## IFS Trainees Visit BNHS Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre, Bhopal

The BNHS Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre (VCBC), Bhopal, welcomed 17 Indian Forest Service (IFS) trainees on January 4, 2025, for a detailed orientation on vulture conservation. Field Director Shri Avdhesh Meena introduced the center's mission, while BNHS representatives provided insights into population monitoring and breeding techniques. Trainees toured the aviaries and learned about habitat simulation and the center's release plans for captive-bred vultures in Madhya Pradesh. This visit emphasized the critical role of vulture conservation in maintaining ecological balance. ■



## BNHS Trains Frontline Staff of Bihar in Bird Conservation Techniques

BNHS conducted specialized training sessions for frontline staff of the Darbhanga and Purnea Forest Divisions in Bihar on January 20 and 24, 2025, respectively. Aimed at enhancing avian biodiversity conservation skills, the sessions covered bird identification, counting techniques, and the Asian Waterbird Census (AWC).

A total of 36 participants from Darbhanga and 28 from Purnea attended the training programmes. Interactive sessions introduced participants to common bird species, their ecological importance, and associated threats. Practical demonstrations included survey techniques, data collection methods, and bird migration studies, culminating in a hands-on bird-ringing exercise. Field sessions further enhanced participants' bird identification skills, equipping them for effective conservation efforts. ■

## Teacher Training Workshop at Chandrapur Forest Academy

A Teacher Training Workshop was held at Chandrapur Forest Academy (CFA) from January 27–31, brought together 40 teachers from across Vidarbha. Organized by BNHS and Nature Conservation Society, Amravati (NCSA), the workshop aimed to immerse educators in nature and conservation.

The event began with sessions by Green Teacher awardee Nishikant Kale and nature educator Amol Sawant. A guided nature trail led by BNHS Deputy Director Rahul Khot and naturalists fostered discussions on ecology.

The 5-day workshop featured interactive activities, including group projects on teaching pollination and brainstorming one-liners to engage students; a nature trail to Junona forest near Tadoba Tiger Reserve, where participants observed diverse bird species.



The participants interacted with CFA Director Srinivas Reddy, who discussed Maharashtra's tiger conservation.

This initiative equipped teachers with knowledge and strategies to inspire students in environmental conservation. ■



## BNHS Conducts Bird Migration Study Camps at Point Calimere, Tamil Nadu



**B**NHS successfully conducted three batches of the Basic Course in Field Ornithology and Bird Migration Studies at its Bird Migration Study Centre, Point Calimere, Tamil Nadu, in January 2025. The three-day courses attracted 46 participants, equally split between men and women, from across India and beyond, including Canada and the U.S.

Point Calimere, located along Tamil Nadu’s Coromandel Coast, is an internationally recognized shorebird habitat. The BNHS Bird Migration Study Centre, established in 2008, facilitates research on migration patterns, population dynamics, and habitat preservation.

The programme provided an in-depth understanding of bird migration, field ornithology techniques, and migratory species conservation. Participants explored diverse ecosystems such as wetlands, Tropical Dry Evergreen Forests (TDEF), grasslands, and tidal



mudflats – key stopover sites for migratory birds. Hands-on training included bird trapping and species identification.

The course was led by Dr P. Sathiyaselvam, Deputy Director of BNHS, with S. Sivakumar (Scientist-in-Charge & Course Coordinator) and senior research fellows Paul Antony B. and Rose Francis. A major highlight was spotting over 500 Greater Flamingos at Siruthalaikkadu and 40 Bar-headed Geese at the sanctuary. Participants observed 95–120 of the 294 bird species recorded at Point Calimere. Additionally, they encountered Blackbuck, Wild Boars, and feral horses, enhancing their appreciation of the region’s biodiversity. The camp successfully blended education with field experience, emphasizing the importance of conservation. BNHS thanks all participants and looks forward to future courses for nature enthusiasts. ■



## BNHS Participates in Udaipur Bird Festival 2025 in Rajasthan

The 11th Edition of the Udaipur Bird Festival held from January 16-19, 2025 was inaugurated by the Udaipur MP Dr Mannalal Rawat, MLA Tarachand Jain. BNHS participated in the festival, alongside prominent dignitaries including WWF-India CEO Mr Ravi Singh, former BNHS Director Dr Asad R. Rahmani, Mr Vikram Singh (Retd. IAS), and environmentalist Mr Anado Bannerji.

The event, organized under the leadership of Mr S.R.V. Murthy, Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), Udaipur, Mr Sunil Chidri, Udaipur, and Mr Ajay Chittora featured a diverse range of activities including a Bird Race, Nature Literature Festival, field visits, wildlife seminars, and more. The event was moderated by Mr D.K. Tiwari, Deputy Conservator of Forest (Wildlife), Udaipur with Shri Rahul Bhatnagar, Head-Green People Society, and Dr Satish Sharma, Retd. ACF.

Dr Rajat Bhargava, Assistant Director at BNHS, served as a jury member for the Bird Race and as a resource person during field



visits. He was honoured with a Certificate of Appreciation for his contributions to wildlife conservation and education.

With over 500 participants, including schoolchildren, forest staff, birdwatchers, and local enthusiasts, the festival celebrated Udaipur's rich avian diversity. BNHS's collaboration with the Udaipur Forest Department as a knowledge partner for the Gulab Bagh Bird Park highlighted its commitment to conservation in the region. ■

## BNHS Highlights Wetland Conservation Efforts in Rajasthan

A BNHS team, led by Dr Sujit Narwade, met with Mr Bijo Joy, Member Secretary of the Environment Department and Wetland Authority of Rajasthan in Jaipur on January 10, 2025. Discussions focused on wetland conservation in Rajasthan, particularly the critical issue of mass bird mortality at Sambhar Lake. Dr Narwade emphasized the need for collaborative strategies to mitigate the environmental crisis and safeguard biodiversity in the region. ■



## Planning Strategies for Biodiversity Heritage Site in Rajasthan



On January 10, 2025, Dr Sujit Narwade and Dr Neelkanth Bora of BNHS held a detailed meeting with Anurag Bhardwaj, Chairman of the Rajasthan State Biodiversity Board, to discuss plans for the proposed Biodiversity Heritage Site (BHS). Strategies for biodiversity conservation and project implementation were the focus of the discussions. ■

## Showcasing BNHS Conservation Achievements in Rajasthan



The BNHS team presented a detailed report summarizing years of conservation work in Rajasthan to Shri Pawan Kumar Upadhyay, Chief Wildlife Warden of Rajasthan. The meeting emphasized collaborative efforts and strategies for future biodiversity conservation in the state. ■





## BNHS Advances Demoiselle Crane Conservation in Rajasthan

The BNHS team met with Mr Hakam Khan, RAS, at the Jaipur Secretariat on January 10, 2025, to discuss conservation initiatives for the demoiselle crane in Khichan. Mr Khan is known for his impactful work in crane conservation, when he was posted as the ADM of Phalodi.

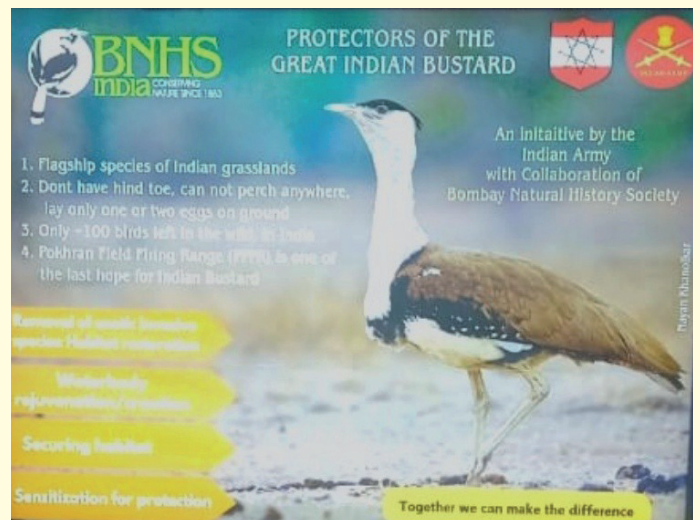
Additionally, the team met with Dr Samit Sharma, Secretary of the Animal Husbandry Department, to address the challenges posed by free-ranging dogs to crane populations, emphasizing the need for immediate action. ■

## Gathering support for Vulture Conservation in Assam

On January 24, 2025, Mr Sachin Ranade attended a meeting with the Commissioner of Rural & Panchayat Raj, Kamrup, to discuss governmental support for vulture conservation initiatives. On January 29, 2025, Mr SthitaPragyan Mallik met with the Deputy Commissioner of Jorhat to further this agenda.

## Innovative Display Board Promotes Great Indian Bustard Conservation

Pokhran, Rajasthan — A UV-based LED display board has been installed at the Pokhran Field Firing Range (PFFR) Headquarters in collaboration with the Indian Army's 12 Corps, Jodhpur. This cutting-edge display highlights joint efforts between the Indian Army and BNHS to conserve the great Indian bustard and its habitat. This initiative symbolizes the commitment to wildlife conservation and ensures the survival of this critically endangered species for future generations. ■



## Field Visit for Community Representatives from Uttar Pradesh

A field visit was organized on January 29, 2025, for community representatives from Uttar Pradesh to gain first-hand experience with wildlife conservation initiatives under the Vulture Safe Zone program of BNHS. The delegation, led by Dr Yasmita Ulman (Assistant

Professor, Acharya Narendra Deva University of Agriculture and Technology), included social workers Niraj Yadav, Pradhu Mohan Singh, and Nagesh Kumar.

During the visit, Mr Sachin Ranade (Centre Manager, VCBC) delivered an engaging presentation on India's vulture population, their ecological importance, and conservation challenges. This was followed by Ms Aneena Lakshmanan's presentation on community-based awareness strategies, effective communication techniques, and stakeholder engagement, including schools, NGOs, local communities, and government bodies.

The visitors were taken on a guided tour of a nearby village, where they interacted with local handloom weavers collaborating with VCBC to produce the unique "Vulture Gamosa". Mr Jayanta Kumar Rabha (Office Assistant, VCBC) explained the weaving process and its role in conservation education and outreach. ■





## Birdwatching Event Celebrates Bird Day in Ajmer

On January 5, 2025, Sansthan in Ajmer organized a birdwatching event at Anasagar Lake to celebrate Bird Day. Students from nine schools, along with local citizens, participated in the event, which aimed to raise awareness about bird conservation and foster an appreciation for nature. ■



## New Year Nature Trail Draws Over 100 Wildlife Enthusiasts



Over 120 participants joined a New Year nature trail organized by BNHS to Vihar Lake in SGNP on January 1, 2025. Divided into six groups, the trekkers covered more than six kilometres along four scenic routes. Wildlife sightings included crocodiles, monitor lizards,

sambar deer, peafowl, langurs, and a ruddy mongoose. Participants appreciated the expert guidance of BNHS naturalists, who provided fascinating insights into SGNP's biodiversity. The event marked a promising start to the year for nature enthusiasts. ■

## Nature Trail for CSR Group of Next Services

CEC-Mumbai conducted a special nature trail for the CSR group of Next Services on January, 4, 2025. The event began with an introduction by Ms Priyadarshini Supekar, Education Officer, who welcomed the group and provided an overview of BNHS and the CEC. Following a briefing on forest trail etiquette, participants explored

the 33-acre BNHS Nature Reserve, guided by naturalist Mr Dilip Giri.

During the 90-minute trail, the group experienced the serene beauty of Mumbai's dry deciduous forest, with the forest floor covered in dry leaves – a visual testament to the changing season. The event saw the enthusiastic participation of 21 members. ■

## Nature Walk at Juhu, Mumbai

CEC-Mumbai hosted a nature walk for a private group at Juhu on January 12. Led by the naturalist Ms Nandini Dube, the walk provided 20 participants an opportunity to discover urban biodiversity in the heart of Mumbai. Starting with the striking sight of a male golden oriole, the group also observed house sparrows, common mynas, among other species. Ms Dube explained the ecological importance of these birds and the significance of tree species like ficus and fig. The walk highlighted the beauty of nature often overlooked in urban environments, leaving participants with a deeper appreciation of Mumbai's green spaces.

Join us for exclusive nature walks designed for private groups to explore the urban biodiversity and lush forests of Mumbai! For more details, email us at [cec-mumbai@bnhs.org](mailto:cec-mumbai@bnhs.org). ■





## Adarsh Vidyalaya Students Explore Biodiversity at BNHS Centre



Forty students from Adarsh Vidyalaya, Goregaon (W), visited BNHS’s CEC-Mumbai on January 15 for a day-long educational tour on biodiversity. The initiative, sponsored by the NGO Swargandha Kalamanch, included a guided nature trail through the forest led by naturalists Shardul Bajikar and Dilip Giri. Students explored the flora and fauna of the SGNP forest, followed by an engaging session on Mumbai’s unique biodiversity. The interactive tour left students inspired and more aware of the need for conservation. ■

## Private Nature Trails at BNHS Reserve

CEC-Mumbai organized a private nature trail for a family group on January, 4. BNHS naturalist Mr Hrishikesh Ghogare led the group through the Karvi and Leopard trails in the BNHS Nature Reserve. The two-hour walk proved to be an exhilarating experience for both children and parents. Highlights included the sounds of birds such as the white-rumped shama, iora, and Indian paradise flycatcher, alongside sightings of leopard markings and droppings. The trail concluded at the CEC waterhole, where camera traps captivated the group’s curiosity about wildlife. A total of six participants enjoyed this intimate and educational outing.

On Sunday, January 19, Mr Aaditya Sawant led another group for the nature trail. The two-and-a-half-hour morning walk began in the butterfly garden and continued through the karvi and leopard trails in the BNHS Nature Reserve. Guided by Ms Priyadarshini Supekar, participants were thrilled to spot Hanuman langurs, spotted deer, and hear alarm calls of other animals.

Bird enthusiasts in the group enjoyed sightings of the Indian grey hornbill, brown-headed barbet, and Indian paradise-flycatcher. The cool breeze and winter landscape added to the experience, leaving participants enchanted by Mumbai’s natural beauty. ■



## BNHS Shore Walk Highlights Coastal Biodiversity



BNHS recently launched its seasonal shore walk, offering members a unique opportunity to explore the vibrant intertidal ecosystem. Participants observed diverse marine life, including sand crabs, sea anemones, hermit crabs, green mussels, and sea snail shells. They also spotted signs of a thriving marine environment, such as burrowing patterns and microalgae growth.

The event not only celebrated the coastal biodiversity but also emphasized the delicate balance of marine ecosystems, raising awareness about their conservation needs. BNHS continues to inspire environmental stewardship through such educational initiatives. ■



## Nature Trail for Children's Academy

CEC-Mumbai conducted a successful nature trail for Children's Academy on January 16. The programme began with an introduction to BNHS and trail rules by Education Officer Ms Priyadarshini Supekar. Students, divided into groups, explored the 33-acre BNHS Nature Reserve under the guidance of expert naturalists, including Mr Unmesh Paranjape, Mr Sandeep Kachhap, and others.

During the trail, participants learnt more about the flora and fauna of the Park, with naturalists explaining key details. Students eagerly asked questions about identifying snakes and other wildlife. The day concluded with an audio-visual presentation on the biodiversity seen in the BNHS Nature Reserve. The event witnessed the participation of 146 students, four teachers, and eight volunteers, making it a memorable educational experience. ■



## Overnight Camp Offers Rare Wildlife Encounters

An overnight camp organized by the BNHS on January 18–19, at its Conservation Education Center in Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP) attracted 30 participants from diverse age groups. The programme kicked off with a presentation by naturalist Shardul Bajikar on BNHS's conservation work and the ecological importance of SGNP. The night featured stargazing sessions led by expert Shailesh Sansare, who used high-powered telescopes to showcase celestial wonders, including Jupiter, Venus, and Mars.

The highlight was an early morning trek to Vihar Lake, to see butterfly congregation in the Pongam valley. The butterfly congregations were poor, but the group witnessed wildlife, such as the common sand boa, a common trinket snake, and a vine snake, including a rare sighting of a leopard.

Participants described the experience as enriching and praised BNHS's well-coordinated efforts, with many expressing interest in future events. ■



## BNHS Reserve Trail Showcases Avian Wonders and Conservation Legacy

Members of the BNHS recently explored the Leopard Trail within the BNHS Reserve, a 33-acre forest near Film City, Goregaon. This reserve, gifted to BNHS in 1983 to mark its centennial, is a treasure trove of biodiversity.

During the trail, participants were delighted by the sightings of various bird species, including the spot-breasted flycatcher, Indian paradise-flycatcher, three sunbird species, and the yellow-throated sparrow.

The walk also highlighted the critical role of the CEC-Mumbai, active since 1993. The CEC conducts nature walks, workshops, and courses, educating students, teachers, and professionals and attracting visitors annually. This initiative reinforced BNHS's commitment to environmental education and conservation, ensuring that future generations remain connected to and invested in protecting nature. ■





## Tree Walk Blends History and Ecology at Sion Fort, Mumbai

A tree walk at Sion Fort, led by Dr Rajdeo Singh of St. Xavier's College, combined lessons in botany and history. Participants explored the diversity of palm species, including toddy palm and fish tail palm, while learning about the historical significance of the fort. The walk highlighted the intersection of Mumbai's natural and cultural heritage. ■



## SGNP Bird Count

The annual bird count at SGNP and Tungreshwar Wildlife Sanctuary on January 19, recorded 86 species, including three new additions – little ringed plover, common snipe, and white wagtail. These sightings bring SGNP's official bird tally to 241 species, reinforcing its status as a vital biodiversity hotspot. ■



## Goa Camp for Ornithology and Biodiversity Leadership Courses

CEC-Mumbai organized a field camp in Goa from January 10–12 for participants of its Basic Course in Ornithology and Leadership Course in Biodiversity Conservation. Based at Nature's Nest near Bhagwan Mahavir and Bondla Wildlife Sanctuaries, the camp offered sessions led by Senior Naturalist Ramesh Zarmare and BNHS Education Officer Priyadarshini Supekar.

Over three days, participants explored avian biodiversity, spotting more than 95 bird species, including Malabar endemics like the Malabar pied hornbill and flame-throated bulbul. They gained valuable insights into the importance of avian conservation and community involvement. A rare daytime sighting of a brown civet was the highlight, emphasizing the region's rich biodiversity.

The participants praised the camp for its blend of education and immersive nature experiences. This initiative continues BNHS's tradition of combining hands-on learning with leadership development in conservation. ■





## Wildlife Camp at Melghat Tiger Reserve



The BNHS, in collaboration with the Nature Conservation Society, Amravati (NCSA), conducted a four-day wildlife camp at Melghat Tiger Reserve from January 22–25, 2025. The camp offered participants an opportunity to explore the region's rich biodiversity, with a special focus on the endangered Forest Owlet.


The journey began with a nature walk and safari at Chikhaldara, where participants observed Taiga flycatchers, small minivets, sambar deer, and a wild dog. A birding session along the Sipna River recorded over 50 bird species, including three kingfisher species and a juvenile crested serpent eagle. Safaris at Semadoh and Shahnoor provided thrilling encounters with gaur herds, racket-tailed drongo, and Bonelli's eagle.

The highlight of the camp was the sighting of the Forest Owlet on three occasions – a species once believed to be extinct. Participants also visited Narnala Fort, where they learned about ancient water conservation techniques. ■






# CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS CONSERVATION OF NATURE



**Big Cats**  
Calendar 2025

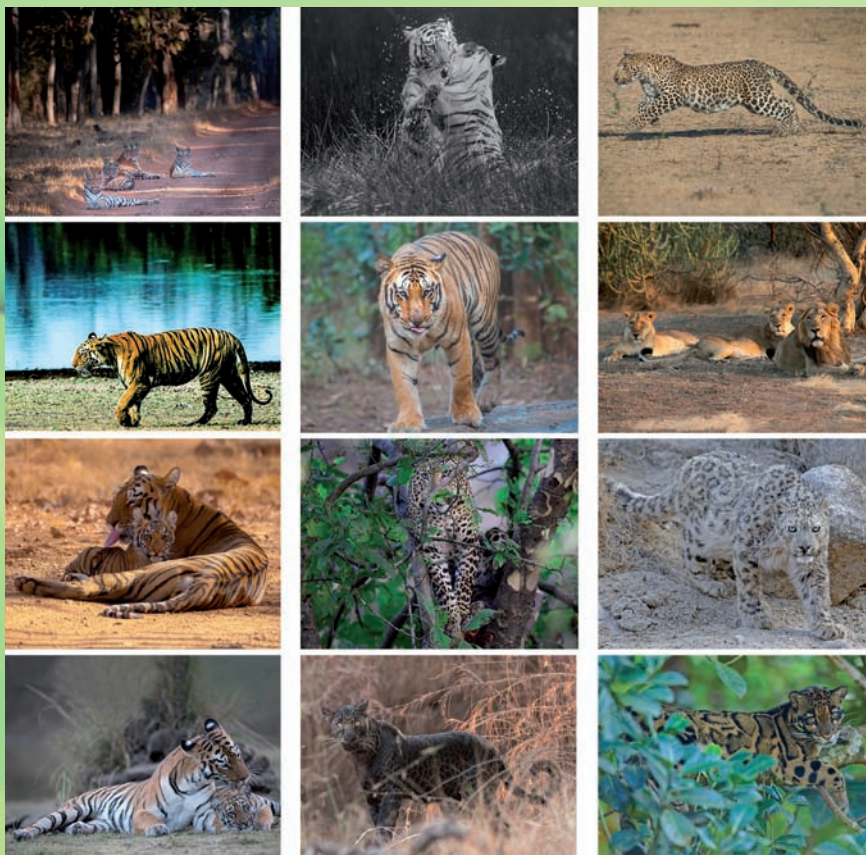



Praveensingh Pardesthi

**MAR 2025**

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
31					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

**Tiger**  
Maya raised more than 4 litters in her 12 years reign around Pandharpur (area with a meadow and a beautiful lake); this cub was her last litter, an competing male repeatedly tried to displace Maya's previous male, sometimes killing current cubs to mate with Maya.

## Wall Calendar 2025

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Help us Preserve a Literary Treasure: Adopt a Rare Book

#### Introduction and Background

The BNHS Library holds a remarkable collection of rare books—treasures that house the wisdom of great thinkers from the past. These rare books are not just relics; they are a priceless heritage for humankind, preserving facts, ideas, and evidence on Natural History. These valuable resources are indispensable for present and future generations. Unfortunately, these literary gems face threats of deterioration due to climatic, physical, chemical, and biological factors. The loss of such irreplaceable materials would be devastating.

These rare books also contain crucial information about endangered flora and fauna, making them an important resource for students conducting research. The beautifully illustrated plates can be used for exhibitions in schools and colleges, and the wild stories in these books are excellent teaching aids for educators. By digitising these rare resources, we can make them more accessible for educational purposes and conservation awareness.

#### Why Your Support Matters

**Preservation:** Rare books are delicate and require expert conservation to prevent deterioration. Your donation will fund state-of-the-art techniques to preserve these literary treasures.

**Accessibility:** By adopting a rare book, you help make it accessible to scholars, students, and the public, ensuring its knowledge continues to inspire and educate.

**Legacy:** Your support ensures that these irreplaceable works will be preserved for future generations, keeping their historical and cultural significance alive.

#### How You Can Help

**Adopt a Book:** By contributing 1 lakh (for five years), you can adopt one of our rare books and support its preservation. Your donation will directly fund conservation efforts and ensure these books remain accessible for years to come.

**Acknowledgement:** Donors will receive an 80G tax-saving certificate, acknowledgement in our annual report, and recognition on the inner page of the book's front cover.

#### Books Available for Adoption

1. **Nests and Eggs of Indian Birds (Vol. I, II, & III) by Allan O. Hume (1889–1908)**

This invaluable work, authored by Allan Hume, a pioneer in Indian ornithology, is a rare gem, especially significant because the BNHS houses a unique collection of bird eggs.

2. **Indian Ducks & Their Allies by E.C. Stuart Baker (1908)**

This first publication of the BNHS features beautiful illustrations and holds great historical significance. It's essential to preserve this foundational book of our institution.

Thank you for considering this opportunity to make a meaningful impact.  
For more information on how you can contribute to preserving these literary treasures,  
please feel free to contact us at [library@bnhs.org](mailto:library@bnhs.org)





AMOLLOKHANDE

**POINT CALIMERE**  
FEBRUARY 15-16, 2025



NAYAN KHANOLKAR

**KHICHAN**  
FEBRUARY 21-23, 2025



SRIRAM REDDY

**CHAMBAL**  
FEBRUARY 28-MARCH 2, 2025

# WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP

## LAST DATE FOR REGISTRATION

Point Calimere: February 6, 2025  
Khichan: February 13, 2025  
Chambal: February 20, 2025

## REGISTRATION FEES

₹ 20,000 per participant (Includes course fees, local travel and safari charges only)



Our Mentor  
**Mr Nayan Khanolkar**



For more details visit: [www.bnhs.org](http://www.bnhs.org)





## **Capture the Wild – A Transformative Photography Experience**

Wildlife photography is more than just capturing images – it is a powerful tool for conservation, education, and storytelling. Through photography, we can document nature’s beauty, raise awareness about endangered species, and inspire action to protect fragile ecosystems. This workshop offers a unique opportunity to refine your photography skills while learning to observe and interpret wildlife behaviour in their natural habitats.

This **two-day intensive workshop**, led by renowned wildlife photographer **Nayan Khanolkar**, provides a **comprehensive learning experience** in wildlife photography. The programme includes both **field sessions and expert-led classroom discussions**, ensuring a well-rounded understanding of photography techniques, lighting, composition, and ethical practices in wildlife documentation.

## **Meet the Expert – Mr Nayan Khanolkar**

Mr **Nayan Khanolkar** is an award-winning wildlife photographer with nearly three decades of experience documenting India’s wildlife. His accolades include **Wildlife Photographer of the Year, World Press Photo, and Big Picture Award**. With a background in biology, his expertise in animal behaviour adds a unique perspective to his photography. Over the years, he has focused on documenting **human-wildlife conflict and conservation efforts**, using photography as a tool to raise awareness and promote coexistence.

### **Workshop Highlights**

- ❖ Learn practical techniques for wildlife and nature photography
- ❖ Participate in field sessions in biodiversity-rich landscapes for hands-on learning
- ❖ Receive one-on-one mentorship and expert guidance
- ❖ Understand animal behavior and habitat for impactful storytelling
- ❖ Explore ethical considerations in wildlife photography

### **Workshop Details**

- ❖ **Date:** Registered participants will receive a detailed itinerary
- ❖ **Maximum Participants:** 15 (Limited slots available – first come, first served)

**Register Now**



This workshop is a unique opportunity to enhance your wildlife photography skills under the guidance of an internationally acclaimed expert in India’s most spectacular natural landscapes.

### **FOR ANY QUERIES, PLEASE CONTACT**

#### **Point Calimere**

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#### **Khichan**

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Sujit Narwade +91 94057 49140

#### **Chambal**

Omkar Joshi +91 9768171322;  
Parveen Shaikh +91 9326982165





## Join us as we root for nature and rediscover the joy it brings

Keep looking for this space! 4 simple, fun nature activities are on their way to help you rediscover and reconnect with nature.

**#RediscoverNature**

Nature is all around us—we just need to pause and notice. This February, as part of the **#RediscoverNature** collective campaign on Instagram, **23 organizations have come together** to inspire people to reconnect with the everyday wonders of nature. Every week of February 2025, we'll introduce a new theme, encouraging you to observe, reflect, and create—whether through photography, art, poetry, or storytelling.

To participate, **follow the instructions of the theme on our Instagram account that resonates with nature**, capture your moment of connection, and share it on **Instagram**. Tag **@bnhsindia** and use **#RediscoverNature**, and we'll feature some of your posts!

This is a unique opportunity to be part of a larger community of nature lovers while celebrating the beauty of our surroundings in creative ways. Whether it's a stunning photograph, a heartfelt poem, or a thoughtful sketch—every expression counts.

 **Join us now! Follow @bombaynaturalhistorysociety on instagram, tag us, and share your moments with #RediscoverNature.**



## Give the Gift of Membership!

Share your love for natural history with your family and friends. Explore the woods together! Your gift of a BNHS membership will help us continue our important work to conserve our natural environment through research and education.

### TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP

Annual Membership	₹ 1,416/-
Three-year Membership	₹ 3,748/-
Five-year Membership	₹ 6,080/-
Life Membership	₹ 17,700/-
Student Membership (below 25 years; College ID Proof compulsory)	₹ 450/-



## Get your JBNHS subscription today!

Published uninterrupted for over 135 years, the *Journal of Bombay Natural History Society*, the first issue of which was published in 1886, has reached its hundred and twenty-first volume. Possibly one of the oldest journals in the fields of conservation and biodiversity research, the *Journal* continues to be indispensable reading material for students of biology, Environmental Science, Statistics, and wildlife conservation, and a valued acquisition for scholars, academicians, researchers, and libraries.

We are sure that you would like to subscribe to this invaluable auxiliary to biological research in India, with a vast database on the Indian subcontinent, particularly in ornithology, which starts at ₹ 1,000/year.

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## BNHS MISSION

**Vision:** Premier independent scientific organization with a broad-based constituency, excelling in the conservation of threatened species and habitats.

**Mission:** Conservation of nature, primarily biological diversity, through action based on research, education and public awareness.

## CONTACT US

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