

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024



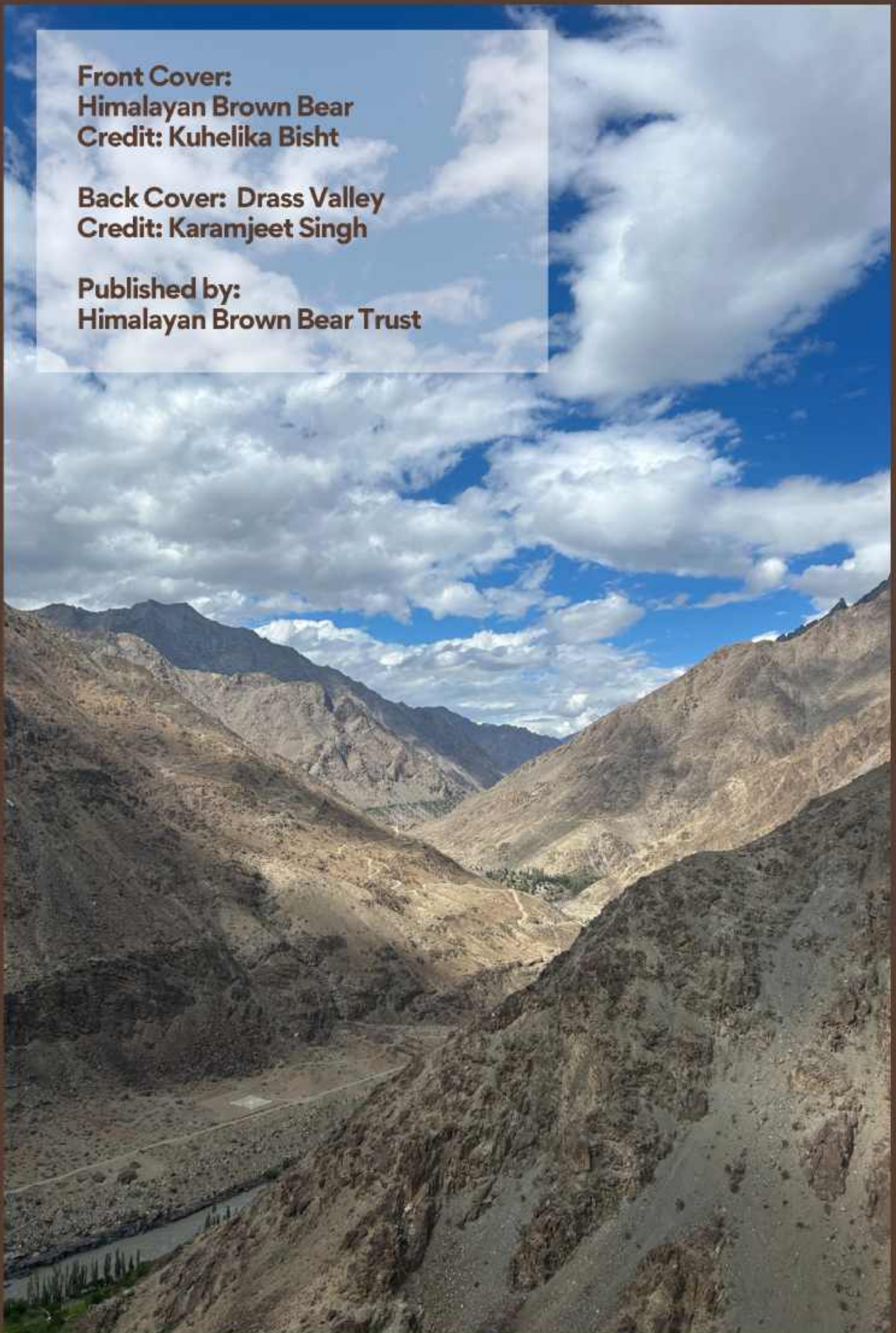
HIMALAYAN  
BROWN BEAR  
TRUST



**Front Cover:**  
**Himalayan Brown Bear**  
**Credit: Kuhelika Bisht**

**Back Cover: Drass Valley**  
**Credit: Karamjeet Singh**

**Published by:**  
**Himalayan Brown Bear Trust**



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	1
OUR AREA OF WORK	2
FOCUS AREAS FOR IMPACT	3
2024 - THE MOUNTAIN OF IMPACT WE SCALED	4 - 10
LOOKING AHEAD	11
OUR TEAM	12
OUR ADVISORS	13
OUR DONORS	14



# FOREWORD

Dear Supporters, Friends, and Partners,

It is my privilege to share with you the Himalayan Brown Bear Trust's Annual Impact Report. I am deeply grateful for your unwavering support and belief in our mission to conserve the Himalayan brown bear and its fragile habitat.

Though only our second year in existence, the past year has been one of immense progress and meaningful partnerships. From pioneering initiatives like publishing HUMAS – the first ever field guide on the flora and fauna of Drass to community-driven conservation programs like the first nature guide training program and formulation of the Village Women's Self Help Group, we have taken significant strides to ensure the protection of this iconic species. Our team has worked tirelessly to mitigate human-wildlife conflict, and promote coexistence. Thanks to your contributions, we were able to expand our outreach and engage local communities as stewards of their landscape.

Our proudest achievements have been fostering collaborative efforts by partnering with researchers, conservationists, and policymakers, and creating a holistic model for wildlife conservation in the Himalaya. Your generous support fuels this work, empowering us to face challenges with resilience and optimism.

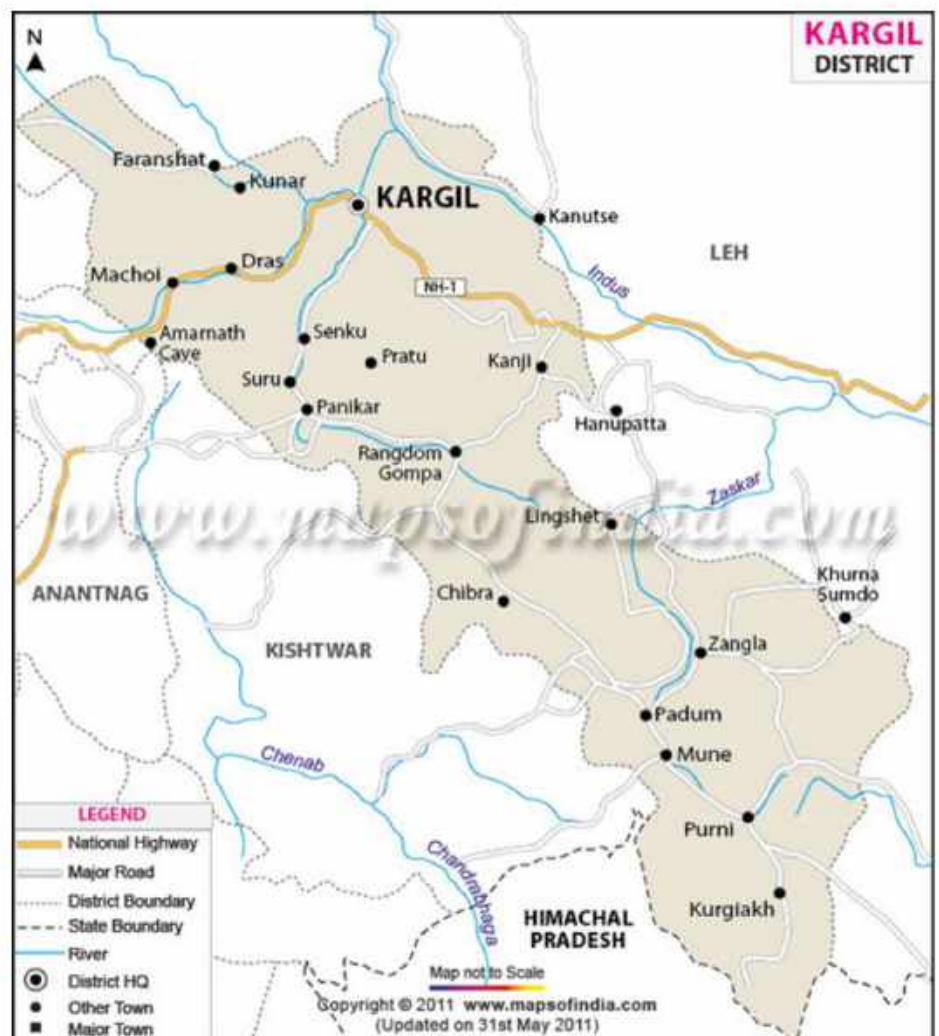
Yet, the journey is far from over. The Himalayan brown bear remains critically vulnerable, and its survival is intertwined with the health of the ecosystems it inhabits. As you turn these pages, I hope you will find inspiration in the stories, data, and milestones we share—all made possible because of you.

Together, we are making a difference. Thank you for standing with us and for believing in a future where the Himalayan brown bear and the local community thrive together.

With gratitude,

Muzammil Hussain

Founder Trustee & Principal Director  
Himalayan Brown Bear Trust



# OUR AREA OF WORK

Our area of work is Kargil district in the Union Territory of Ladakh. Currently, we are focussing in the region of Drass in Kargil district. Drass is a sub-division of Kargil, situated at a height of 3230 m, is the second coldest inhabited place in the world. Due to its unique geographical location at the intersection of lower Himalayas, greater Himalayas and the Karakoram range, the alpine meadows of Drass make it an ideal sweet spot for the Himalayan brown bears to thrive. Drass is one of the only regions in the entire Indian Himalaya with the largest concentration of bears.

However, in the past 10 years, due to various human induced factors such as climate change, waste mismanagement, overgrazing and so on, there has been a constant rise in the cases of conflict between bears and the local inhabitants which manifest in the form of livestock depredation, damage to property & in some cases retaliatory killing of the species. Though, currently critically endangered, Himalayan brown bears are a keystone species and play a vital role in maintaining the ecological balance of the ecosystem within which a number of other flora, fauna and also thrive including humans.





# FOCUS AREAS FOR IMPACT

**WITH OUR VISION TO CREATE A CONDUCIVE ECOSYSTEM FOR BEARS AND HUMANS TO COEXIST, THESE ARE OUR FOCUS AREAS FOR IMPACT**

**Human-Wildlife Conflict** - Implementing innovative, sustainable strategies to effectively resolve human-wildlife conflict involving the Himalayan Brown Bear in Drass.

**Outreach & Communication** - Engaging communities and stakeholders through targeted outreach and effective communication, raising awareness about the Himalayan Brown Bear, and fostering conservation efforts for a shared future.

**Policy and Advocacy** - Advocating for policies that protect the Himalayan Brown Bear and promote sustainable development, while amplifying the voices of local communities to influence conservation and environmental decision-making.

**Sustainable Livelihoods** - Building alternative, sustainable livelihoods to empower the youth and women of the region, spearheading lasting change in the region.



# 2024 - THE MOUNTAIN OF IMPACT WE SCALED

**30  
INFORMATIVE &  
CAUTIONARY  
BOARDS INSTALLED  
ACROSS DRASS**

**18 YOUTH  
EQUIPPED WITH  
LIVELIHOOD SKILLS  
THROUGH TRAINING**

**4 VILLAGES  
REACHED OUT TO**

**500+ HOUSEHOLDS  
IMPACTED**

**70+ WOMEN  
UPSKILLED  
THROUGH FELTING  
TRAINING**

# FELTING WORKSHOPS

As part of our sustainable livelihoods program, we conducted three dry needle workshops in the span of one year.

- April 16th - 17th: refresher training for Holiyal with The Snow Leopard Conservancy Trust India
- July 23rd - 24th: refresher training for Holiyal with Trainer Tsering Chorol
- October 11th - 13th: first felting workshop for Mushkow, given by Tsering Chorol and the Women of Holiyal.

Up to 70 women have participated from Holiyal and Mushkow village.

Currently operating as a Self Help Group under the name of "PUNARE" (a Shina word for girls and also, clovers), there are approximately 15 girls who are actively making felt toys and have cumulatively generated approximately ₹83000 which goes directly to them.

The Trust is proactively assisting them in creating market linkages for their products. Products have been displayed at:

- Drenmo Lodge, Drass
- Black Sheep B&B, Kargil
- Kargil War Memorial, Drass

Women used to incur a heavy cost in purchasing the more expensive Changthang wool but have started experimenting with local wool to create a bigger profit margin.







# LAUNCH OF - HUMAS: A FIELD GUIDE TO THE FLORA AND FAUNA OF DRASS VALLEY

In June 2024, we, in collaboration with Roots Ladakh, launched *Humas: A Field Guide to the Flora and Fauna of Drass Valley* at a special event in Drass. The guide is the first effort to document the region's rich biodiversity, including its unique plants, mammals, and birds. Aimed at researchers, conservationists, and nature enthusiasts, *Humas* serves as an essential resource for understanding and preserving the Drass ecosystem. The launch was attended by key figures, including Mr. Punchok Tashi, Executive Councillor for Forest and Wildlife, Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Kargil. With the aim to create awareness and outreach amongst the local youth, we distributed copies of the Field Guide to over 60 Govt. High Schools and Higher Secondary Schools, and various public libraries across Kargil District.



# NATURE GUIDE TRAINING PROGRAM

The Himalayan Brown Bear Trust's Nature Guide Training Program empowered 18 participants from Drass to become ambassadors of their region's biodiversity.

Through a holistic curriculum covering: the role of a naturalist, nature photography, first aid, and techniques to identify and observe local flora and fauna, the program promoted both knowledge and skills.

Core communication training equipped participants to confidently engage visitors, bridging people and nature. Daily group discussions encouraged reflection, collaboration, and critical thinking, strengthening learning outcomes.

By placing local communities at the heart of conservation, this program builds leaders who safeguard landscapes while driving sustainable eco-tourism.

To set participants up for success, we distributed comprehensive professional guide kits, including binoculars, field guides, notebooks, and uniforms. These tools empower guides to deliver top-quality, immersive experiences to visitors, driving eco-tourism while securing sustainable livelihoods for their families.





# SUCCESS STORIES FROM FIELD

Among the most inspiring stories is that of Anjum Ara, the first female nature guide from the Kargil region, a milestone achievement for gender empowerment and conservation.

Hailing from the remote village of Holiyal, Anjum embarked on her journey through the trust's training program. Today, she stands as a role model—employed as a wildlife spotter at Drenmo Lodge, leading nature trails, and introducing visitors to her very own backyard's flora and fauna. Her journey reflects the power of opportunity: a single program can uplift individuals, inspire communities, and protect fragile ecosystems.





# SOLAR LIGHTS INITIATIVE

In a region where the nights are dark and wildlife roams freely, the Himalayan Brown Bear Trust's Solar Street Lights intervention has provided much-needed safety and security to vulnerable communities. Surveys in villages like Mushkow, Bearas, Holiyal, and Muradbagh revealed that livestock predation at night was a major challenge, often resulting in economic loss and escalating human-wildlife conflict.

In response, we installed 100 solar-powered street lights in key locations identified through community consultations and our researcher's field assessments. These lights have significantly reduced predator incidents, enhanced safety for families, and protected livestock. As a Mushkow resident shared, *"The lights have saved our livelihoods and brought peace."* This initiative exemplifies how sustainable solutions can mitigate conservation challenges and improve the lives of local communities.



# INFORMATION BOARDS FOR AWARENESS AND SAFETY

Raising awareness is at the core of our mission.

This year, 30 informational boards were installed at strategic locations across the NH1 and in 4 villages frequented by bears. These boards serve as vital tools for education, offering practical guidance on:

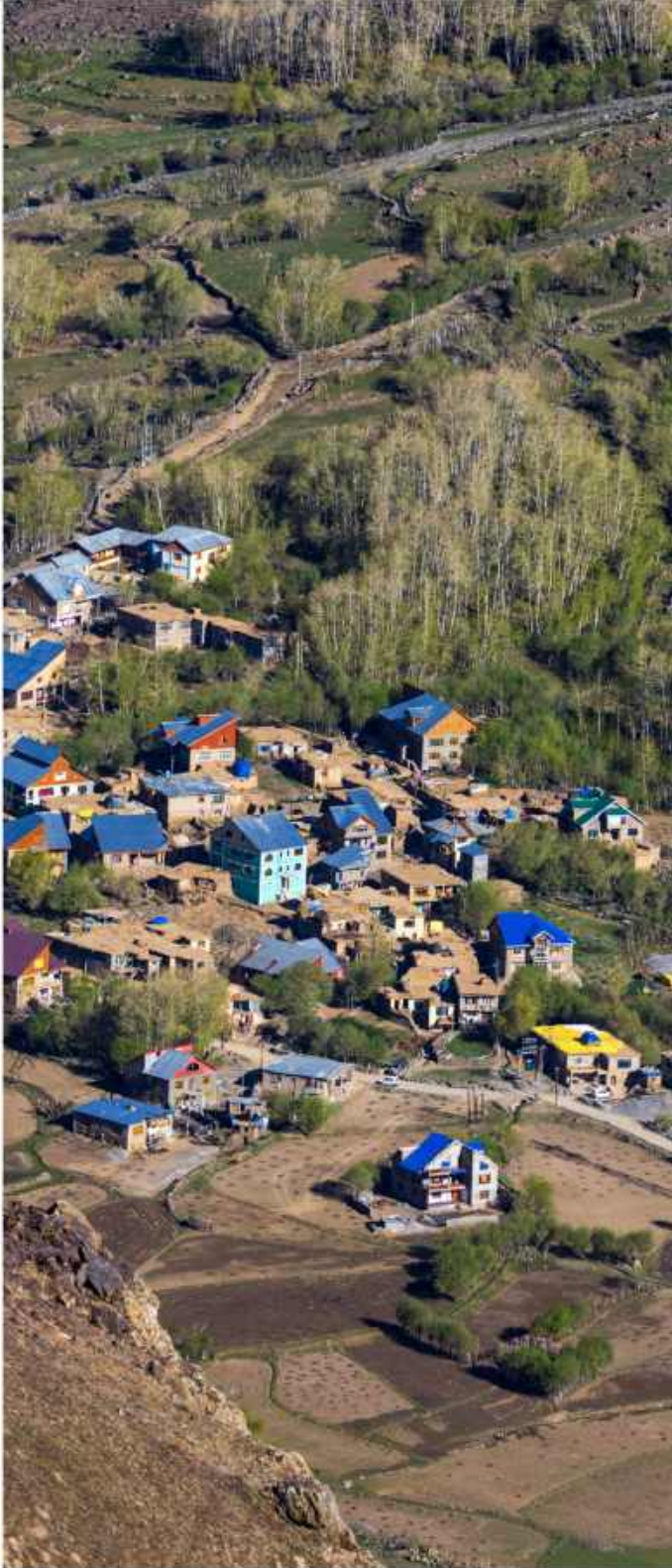
- Understanding Bear behavior
- Tips for tourist to be responsible
- Scanable data on the fauna of Drass region
- Proven methods to minimize human-wildlife conflict
- Caution for drivers to look out for wildlife crossing across key zones

Placed along key wildlife crossing areas, village entry points, and homestay hubs, these boards have engaged both locals and visitors, creating a shared sense of responsibility to protect the region's fragile ecosystems and its wildlife.





# LOOKING AHEAD



The Himalayan Brown Bear Trust remains committed to a vision of Conserving species while simultaneously promoting the economic empowerment of local communities. By empowering people, delivering impactful solutions, and raising awareness, we are building a future where the Himalayan brown bear thrives alongside the people who call these landscapes home. Together, we are transforming challenges into opportunities, ensuring a legacy of conservation for generations to come.

Below are the project activities we have planned for the coming year:

- Scale conflict mitigation interventions to four new villages in Drass such as solar street lights
- Conduct an advanced and indepth naturalist training for the local youth
- Conduct dry needle felting workshops in two new villages in Drass to benefit more women.
- Conduct outreach and awareness workshops in 10 schools across Drass
- Pilot testing bear-proof corrals in two villages.
- Document Kargil's biodiversity for a comprehensive field guide.

We urge you to continue your patronage and support our upcoming projects



# OUR TEAM



**MUZAMMIL  
HUSSAIN**

Founding Trustee &  
Principal Director



**TAFAZZUL  
HUSSAIN**

Founding Trustee &  
Director of Finance



**KARAMJEET  
SINGH**

Joint Trustee



**HABEEBA  
FATHIMA**

Project Manager



**KUHELIKA  
BISHT**

Project Coordinator



**FAYAZ  
FIRDOUS**

Field Resource Manager



**ABIDA  
BANOO**

Field Assistant

# OUR BOARD OF ADVISORS

- Gulzar Hussain, Conservationist & Wildlife Tourism Expert
- Karan Modi, Wildlife Tourism Expert
- Mohammad Imran, Wildlife Filmmaker & Conservationist
- Kriti Chavan, Conservation Biologist
- Ruchi Mathur, Senior Consultant, Ernst & Young



# OUR DONORS & PARTNERS

## INSTITUTIONAL DONORS

- Drenmo Lodge - Drass
- Chanchabala Amin Trust
- Royal Enfield (Eicher Group Foundation)
- Wildlife Trust of India

## INDIVIDUAL DONORS

- Mr. Zac Mills (The Wildlife Collective)
- Mr. & Mrs. Aditya & Helen Srivastava
- Ms. Shruthi Sharma
- Ms. Yew Chang
- Ms. Lee Yung

## STRATEGIC PARTNERS



# CONTACT US

## ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION:


THE HIMALAYAN BROWN BEAR TRUST WAS  
REGISTERED IN 2022 UNDER THE INDIAN  
TRUST ACT 1882.

### MAILING ADDRESS:

Himalayan Brown Bear Trust, Lchangra Bazaar  
Main Market  
Kargil, UT of Ladakh - 194103

[himalayanbrownbeartrust@gmail.com](mailto:himalayanbrownbeartrust@gmail.com)

[himalayanbrownbear.org](http://himalayanbrownbear.org)

 [@himalayanbrownbeartrust](https://www.instagram.com/himalayanbrownbeartrust)



*Kamraj Singh*  
PHOTOGRAPHY