

Whispering Wilds

A Product of Exploring Nature Call of The Wild

Edition - 7 (July 2024)



Conservation

A Tribute: The Iconic Dr. John Singh
of the Starry Sky
Cattle Grazing: A Forest Hazard!
A Flight of Hope

Featured Stories

The bird that cheers birdwatchers by
Dr. Asad Rahmani
A Land of Wonder: The Javakheti
Plateau
Nordmann's Greenshank



Cover Story

Dolphin tourism in Asia's largest brackish water lagoon

Z 9



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Exploring Nature is a Community of like-minded people who loves to be in Nature amidst. Mother Nature has its own rhythm and we must tune up to it for a better tomorrow.

We envision a future where people have developed a deep connection with the natural world, understanding and appreciating its rhythms and cycles. Through our community, we strive to inspire a collective consciousness that values and safeguards the environment, ensuring a sustainable and harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature.

We envision a tomorrow where every action is guided by the principles of conservation, allowing future generations to inherit a thriving and pristine natural world.

Our Vision is to create a world where every individual cherishes the beauty of nature and recognizes the importance of protecting its novelty.

Our Mission is to inspire and educate individuals to cherish the beauty of nature and create mass awareness.

Our Aspiration is for a future where every decision and action is driven by conservation principles.

Join us on this journey of exploration, understanding, and commitment.

Together, we will harmonize with the rhythms of nature and ensure a better, more sustainable tomorrow for all...

Exploring Nature is a Wildlife Consulting initiative that provides the following types of Nature & Wildlife related services.

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<http://exploringnature.net>
exploringthenature1981@gmail.com
9934242555

About Whispering Wilds

Whispering Wilds (e-magazine) is an initiative to make us aware of our planet where we share the living space with millions of other species.

“Whispering Wilds” is a wildlife magazine that helps to create awareness about nature and educate people how to interact with the natural world in a responsible and sustainable way.

The Magazine showcases stories of individuals and organizations who make a positive impact on the environment and inspire the readers to act responsibly.

Whispering Wilds, features stunning photography and artwork that showcases the beauty and diversity of the natural world. In addition to this the magazine interviews the experts and scientists who can provide insights into the latest developments in wildlife research and conservation.

“Whispering Wilds” is available on our home page
<https://exploringnature.net>

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Our Magazine Team



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Whispering Wilds Team

Chief Editor & Chief Zoologist

Dr. Mithilesh Dutta Dwivedi

Hony. Advisor - Environmentalist

Arnab Basu

Editor - Rhea Khanna

Asst. Editor - Abhita Nandy Chatterjee

Co-ordinator - Upayan Chatterjee

Designer - Abhishek Kausik

Business Development and Planning

Satyendra Kumar Singh

Founder and Producer

Mukul Mukherjee

Share your Wildlife Stories, Nature Photos, or Conservation Insights for the magazine at whisperingwilds1981@gmail.com.

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Birds competing for food with humans

Birds, the biped feathered creatures evolved earlier than human beings and still surviving after many man-made and natural calamities due to their flying ability and diversity in food and feeding behaviour. These are obelising humans since the time immemorial by attractive plumage, melodious call or singing and beautiful dancing. Humans also provided them places in literature and mythology. For conservation point of view the birds has been described as vahana of many God and Goddesses in various religious books. But in this calidoscopic world birds are facing high pressure in getting suitable habitat, food availability and nesting places.

In the year 2010, I was doing bird survey around Topchachi Jheel located in Dhanbad district of Jharkhand state, India. I found few people collecting small molluscs from the decreasing water of the Jheel by hand picking. I asked few questions from a young man of the team. But a senior member stopped him to give any information to me. They talked in some local Tribal or Janjatiya dialect which was not known to me. But I came across with another team and they agreed to show their catch from the water. Presently I am residing at Jamshedpur. I found three ladies selling small molluscs at the rate of Rupees 30 per Kg in local market. It is a demanded animal food in the local or village market of Jharkhand state.



They call these small molluscs as Gogali.

Large group of wader birds and stork species feed on molluscs such as snails, unio present in fresh water ponds, rivers, dams and natural reservoirs. Some birds such as Asian Openbill stork, White necked stork, Black Storks are food specific (Snails).

Chief Zoologist
Dr. Mithilesh Dutta Dwivedi
Exploring Nature

A Message of Gratitude for Our
July Issue Readers:

Thank you for being an essential part of the Whispering Wilds family. Your readership, engagement, and unwavering commitment to our cause inspire us profoundly each day. Your support fuels our mission to protect and preserve the environment, and together, we can make a significant impact. Let's embark on this journey together, united in our dedication to safeguarding our planet.

The fight for food - Birds vs Humans

Recent report by States of Indian Birds reveals decrease in population of Wader birds foraging on mudflats and other water depending birds.

About 204 species are having declining tendency and 217 species of birds are either stable or increasing in number.

On 14.5.2024, I got an article in Hindi Hindustan (Newspaper), Jamshedpur by Mr. Anand Banerjee. According to him bird population depending on specific food are drastically decreasing.

I opine that among various causes of decline in Water dependant and wader bird number is scarcity of food due to collection of food by human beings at large scale. In present scenario these birds are competing with humans for food. The non-availability of specific food may compel birds having food choice to other areas where food is available. It may cause change in population of migratory birds in food scares areas. It leads to inter-specific food struggle among birds.



About 204 species are having declining tendency.

Many birds may remain starved and die in long run. Scarcity of food may affect feeding of nestlings and reproduction of birds.

This is an alarming situation by anthropogenic activities. It needs food security for both birds and humans. Otherwise, ecological balance will be disrupted and can affect sustainable development and survival of both human beings and birds.



People collecting small molluscs from the decreasing water of the Jheel by hand picking.



Birds vs Humans

In this calidoscopic world birds are facing high pressure in getting suitable habitat, food availability and nesting places.



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The Iconic Dr. John Singh of the Starry Sky

He was a legendary trekker of endless energy. Even at a younger age he climbed mountain peaks with ease and was close to the starry sky in the stupendous Himalayas and the Western Ghats.

He was none other than the legendary or iconic Dr. AJT John Singh, pre-eminent wildlife biologist of India, respected by many around the globe.

He served the prestigious wild life institute at Dehradun as a lecturer and then as joint Director for two decades and was mentor of IFS men and different forest officials. He was admired by many in forest departments across the length and breadth of India.



Revered as an expert on Indian Mammalogy and the ecology and behaviour of large mammals, as a result of his epic field experiences, this made him a formative authority on the ecology of deers, tigers and elephants. He followed them in all the sanctuaries and national parks in India.

Trek paths were familiar to him in the Himalayas and western ghats. Also he had the rocky presence of mind and a fearless disposition even to explore new paths braving even stormy and dreaded weather. He had such remarkable experiences in the Himalayas in search of Gorals, snow leopards and other antelopes.

He is rightly acknowledged as a great scientist of high altitude and mountain ecology'. Hundreds of admirers he had who served different forest departments in India who were always amazed by the depth of his knowledge.

He had everything at his fingertips. To any question put forward by forest men he was ready with his answers says Dr. Yeswee Bhatnager who trekked the Himalayas with him many times.

John Singh belongs to Thirunelveli in Tamil Nadu. As a school boy, he trekked the mountain slopes. It was mostly on the Western Ghats. When he grew up treks became a part of his life. He was fascinated by the mountains and teeming wildlife.

A turning point came in his life after he read the Tamil translation of the stories of Jim Corbett. He was thrilled by the legendary Jim shooting down the dreaded man eaters of the Kumaon hills. He read these stories again and again.

During college, he got immersed in wild life rearing. After passing BSc in Zoology he worked as a lecturer and later was blessed by a prestigious scholarship at the Smithsonian institution in Washington which is globally famed as a centre for wild life study and natural history.

It was a great opening for him when thrown to a kaleidoscope of natural studies of the world. After he completed his studies, he returned to India and joined the Bombay Natural History Society in Mumbai headed by Dr Salim Ali. This further widened his horizons. Later he joined the Wild life Institute, Dehradun.

Author:
G. Shaheed
Prominent environment
journalist in Kerala.
Formerly worked as Chief reporter
of Mathrubhumi in New Delhi
Later served as Chief of Bureau in
Cochin.
Contributed many Environment
wild life. Articles. Retired four
years back but still associated with
Mathrubhumi Kerala's Leading
newspaper.



A Tribute

Dehradun was a community centre where IFS trainees and others met and underwent training.

It was an epoch making event that stirred him.

It was a unity in diversity, exchanging ideas of different environment is what he used to say. While in Dehradun, he got ample opportunities to trek with many in ever green jungles as well as in arid zones and mountains.

Dr John Singh had a special affinity for the Western Ghats. He had practically covered most of the western ghats and wrote a remarkable book on walking the Western Ghats.



"My association with the western ghats over 60 years gave me varied and unforgettable experiences. It is a legacy for human kind and has to be protected."

He was familiar with every nook and corner and the bubbling wild life there. He says in the book: "My association with the western ghats over 60 years gave me varied and unforgettable experiences. It is a legacy for human kind and has to be protected."

VK Unniyal, former Kerala CCF remembers that in 2017 he had reached Parambikulam sanctuary with IFS trainees and climbed the most hazardous peak there called Karimalagopuram. The steep slopes were climbed by him without gasps while youngsters were exhausted and breathless. They were far behind them. At that time he was 73 but it was not difficult for him.

Even after retirement in 2005, he continued his wild life and environmental studies and associated with many state governments and the centre. The Union government sought his advice on many counts for Project Tiger, Project Elephant and other environmental issues.

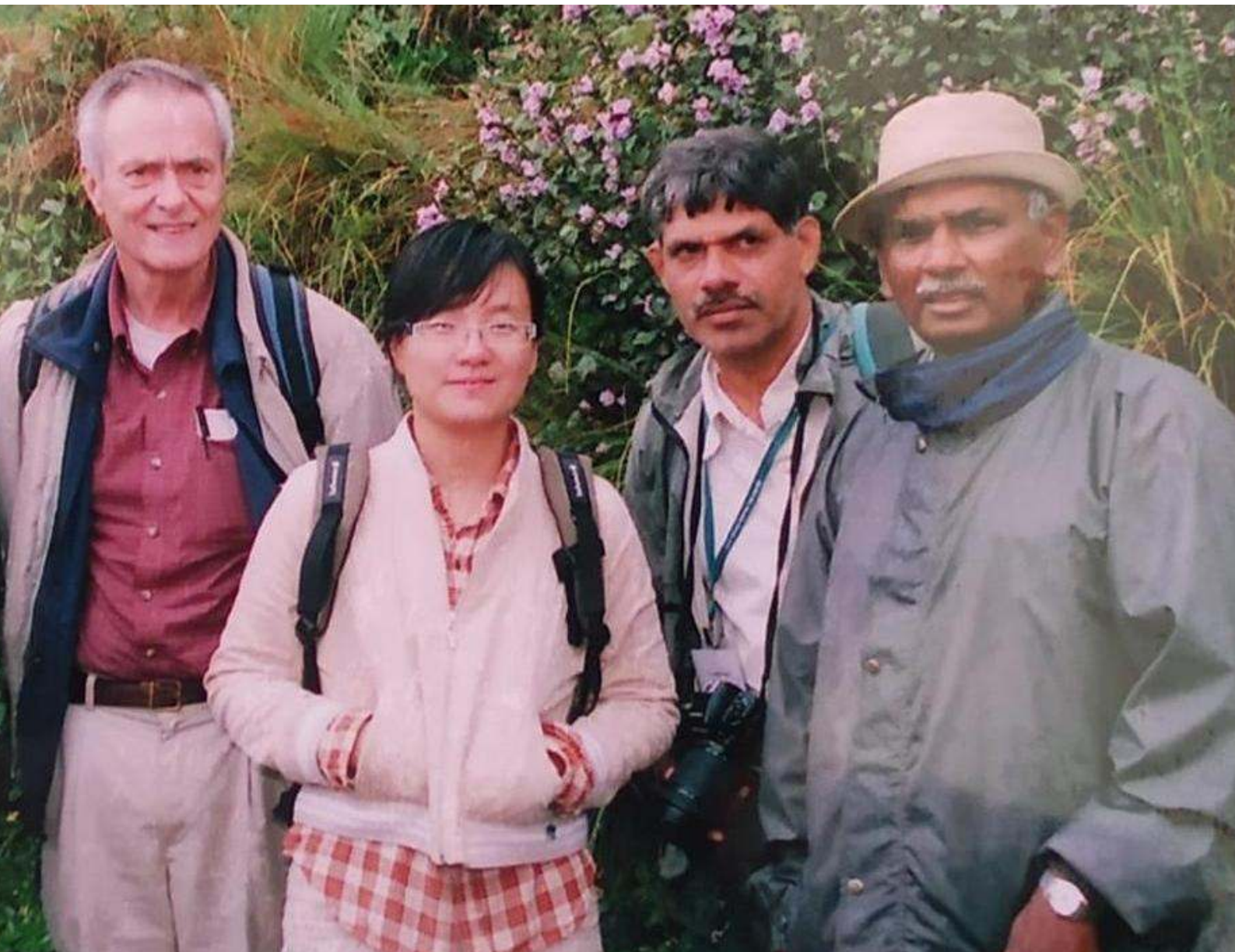
Dr MK Ranjit Singh, former secretary Forest and Environment of the Union Government says that he had sixty years of association with him. He was a reservoir of knowledge and field experience that inspired many generations. He says that Dr John Singh was the first Indian wild life researcher in independent India.

He conducted studies on wild dogs of Bandipur and got his PhD. My association with him started in 1985 when I met him in Trichur Kerala during a seminar. Later in 1989 I met him at Dehradun when my first article on Bandhavgarh tigers was published by Frontline. Later during his Kerala visits I met him. He was fond of the Nilgiri Tahrs of Munnar.

*John Singh
Munnar Shola*



*From left to right George Schaller,
Dr Suzuki Singapur,
Pro E.Kunjikrishnan,
John Singh
Munnar September, 2006*



2nd February each year is World Wetlands Day.

It marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on 2nd February 1971

Dolphin tourism in Asia's largest brackish water lagoon



The most successful form of ecosystem services ecotourism, as an alternative to tiger tourism, is wetland tourism.

The most successful form of ecosystem services ecotourism, as an alternative to tiger tourism, is wetland tourism. 2nd February each year is World Wetlands Day. It marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on 2nd February 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea. World Wetlands Day was first celebrated in 1997. Since then, government agencies, non-governmental organizations and groups of citizens at all levels of the community have taken advantage of the opportunity to undertake actions aimed at raising public awareness of wetland values and benefits in general and the Ramsar Convention in particular.

More than a decade ago in 2012, the World Wetlands Day theme was Wetlands and Tourism and was linked to the theme for the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties, COP11: Wetlands, Tourism and Recreation, which took place in June 2012, in Bucharest, Romania. In COP11, the benefits of wetland tourism both locally and nationally for people and wildlife were recognized – such as stronger economies, sustainable livelihoods, healthy people and thriving ecosystems.

As per the World Wetland Day Reports 2012 from the contracting parties, “at least 35% of Ramsar Sites around the world record some level of tourism activity and this percentage is consistent throughout all regions. Of course, it is important to consider tourism in all wetlands – not just those designated as Ramsar Sites – since the Contracting Parties to the Convention are committed to managing all wetlands. Tourism is only one of the services that wetlands deliver. Ensuring well-managed tourism practices in and around wetlands and educating tourists on the value of wetlands contributes to the health of the world's wetlands and the long-term benefits that wetlands provide to people, wildlife, economics, and biodiversity.”

Nature-based solutions are the sustainable management and use of natural features and processes to tackle socio-environmental issues. These issues include for example climate change, water security, food security, preservation of biodiversity, and disaster risk reduction.



Author:
Arnab Basu,
Sustainability
Consultant and
Environmental
Writer

Associate Partner
at Environmental
Resource
Management
(ERM)
Bangalore

Also,
Hony. Advisor -
Environmental
Exploring Nature

Various lakes, lagoons, river delta, coastal estuaries of India such as Mangalajodi, Pichavaram, Baharatpur, Sundarbans are examples of how conserved wetlands with protected flora and fauna can tackle various socio-economic issues such as protecting coastal inhabitants from the wrath of tsunamis and flood, being refuge for endangered residential and migratory flora and fauna as well as providing sources of livelihood for the inhabitants- either by means of pisciculture or ecotourism.

Ecotourism itself is not a nature-based solution, however it is the one way of implementing and promoting nature-based solutions and therefore, an ideal model of ecotourism should always incorporate the core principle of nature-based solution. That is not just promising to ecotourists about sightseeing and sighting of any special animals. But also communicating to them the importance of such animals' natural habitats - as their refuge as well as means of tackling climate change, disaster risks and socio-economic needs of the human inhabitants.

Flocks of birds flying towards the boat.



This crucial message can be conveyed to the ecotourists in the most effective manner by their first point of contact - the nature guides of various ecotourism destinations.

Thus, it is utmost important that nature guides are adequately equipped and empowered with this knowledge and freedom to conduct their ecotourism activities without any stress of ensuring the sighting of a particular animal.

On 12th of March 2024, it took me a ninety minutes' drive from the Orissa state capital Bhubaneswar to reach Satapada, and then another ninety minutes boat ride to the Rajhans nature camp located at a small island, known as Rajhans Island, surrounded by the serene Chilika lake on one side and the boundless sea on the other.

was accompanied by a Bengali couple and their teenage daughter, who are settled in Mumbai. They were general tourists, travelling to see various famous tourism destinations of Odisha, to enjoy the post-examination vacation of their daughter. Chilika was one such place in their bucket list of Odisha tourism.

Before boarding on the boat, I got a hint about the type of ecotourism practiced in this part of Chilika. Apart from the four of us there was our boatman, who insisted we buy a few packets of popcorn from the local shop. Idea was throwing popcorn on water to attract birds. Feeding any wild lives are not encouraged in any circumstances as that alters their natural feeding behaviour. For this very same reason, the human made bird hides used by photographers are also criticized by ecologists and conservationists.

We all got settled in the boat. It was 12-15 feet long, motorized boat with a propeller attached to one end. Around 3-4 feet of area at both ends of the boats were uncovered. The middle portion of the boat has a shade on top and sitting arrangement, where 10-12 people can seat comfortably.

There were few other tourist boats plying on water, and mostly packed with a large number of tourists. Within 15 minutes, we saw various flocks of birds flying towards all the boats. They were all gulls – common gulls and black headed gulls, as I could identify. Migrated to Chilika and trained in following boats and coming very close without getting caught in the propeller. They already learned these boats are sources of food. The food which is obviously not their natural food.

Adaptations to Ecotourism at Chilika Lake

The feeding behaviour of a large population of migratory gulls are already altered to thrive the ecotourism potential of Chilika lake. For boatmen of Chilika, it was a survival need to show something which will entertain a large number of tourists and keep them hooked in Odisha ecotourism.

Black headed gull



The feeding behaviour of a large population of migratory gulls are already altered to thrive the ecotourism potential of Chilika lake. For boatmen of Chilika, it was a survival need to show something which will entertain a large number of tourists and keep them hooked in Odisha ecotourism.

When we started from Satapada, it was already noon, the ebb tide started and water was flowing towards the sea. The burning bright sun of early summer day at India's eastern coast was at the top of our boat. Spotting dolphins, the flagship species of Chilika ecotourism, was near impossible at that time and temperature.

Therefore, we reached our camp without any luck with the dolphins. However, there were few other avian species of importance for me such as whiskered tern, common egret, lesser cormorant, grey heron, black drongo and of course two types of gulls.

Evening we didn't have much to do but explore the small island and its sea beach. One staff member of our camp accompanied me and showed us an area on the beach, approximately 6-8 square feet, protected from all four sides by a fishing net. He told me that it was an initiative of the Satapada range Forest Department, to protect eggs and hatching of vulnerable olive ridley sea turtles from feral dogs. A vulnerable species, as per IUCN conservation status, is the second-smallest and most abundant of all sea turtles found in the world.

Dolphin sighting 100% confirmed

On the previous day before starting from Satapada, our boatman assured us, "Dolphin sighting is 100% confirmed."

Olive ridley turtles exhibit two different nesting behaviours, the most prevalent solitary nesting, but also the behaviour they are best known for, the synchronized mass nesting, termed arribadas. Females return to the same beach from where they hatched, to lay their eggs. They lay their eggs in conical nests about 1.5 ft deep, which they laboriously dig with their hind flippers. The majority of olive ridleys nest in two or three large assemblies near Gahirmatha in Odisha. The coast of Odisha in India is one of the largest mass nesting sites for the olive ridley. Seabeach of Rajhans Island is also one such place. Coasts of Mexico and Costa Rica are known for arribadas as well.

Next day morning was the day dedicated to our dolphin tourism. On the previous day before starting from Satapada, our boatman assured us, "Dolphin sighting is 100% confirmed."

“Chilika is the "single largest habitat of Irrawaddy dolphins in the world", as per the last survey” based on an online magazine Travel News.

Next day at 6 o'clock we started our boat ride. It was high tide and the early morning temperature was much cooler than the previous noon. When we reached close to some fishing net laid by local fishermen, we started noticing Irrawaddy dolphins – few single dolphins and also few in pairs. At least 8-10 of them at various locations around those fishing nets. They came to catch fish from nets, the easy way of finding food.



In the article published on 17th January 2021 in online magazine, Travel News, it was mentioned, “A dolphin jumps out of the brackish waters of Odisha's famed Chilika lake and is the cynosure for all eyes on a boat on the lagoon.”

That was utterly wrong. The dolphins we saw were certainly not jumping out of the lake. Their heads, torso or fins were occasionally getting visible from silver waters. They were merely sticking the top of their heads out of water to breathe, and then were submerging in water.

That was the characteristic behaviour of Irrawaddy dolphins. They never leap out from water known as breaching or cresting like white backed or bottlenose dolphins, in which at least 40% of the animal's body clears the water.

Based on an article written by Neha Jain, on 12th February 2019 in online journal Mongabay, “The records show that tourist visitation to Chilika has been growing at a slower rate from 2007 onwards. The survey also found that the tourists were almost exclusively domestic, mostly coming from nearby eastern Indian states and were



Irrawaddy Dolphins Spitting Water: A Unique Attraction at Chilika Lake

largely first-time visitors to Chilika. Almost two-thirds of them had never previously interacted with dolphins. Most were dissatisfied with their dolphin-watching experience as many had high pre-trip expectations, hoping to spot a pod of dolphins or sights of them leaping out of the water, known as breaching.”

Spitting Behaviour

The Irrawaddy dolphins of Chilika Lake have become a unique attraction, captivating tourists with their fascinating behavior of spitting water. This interaction has become a highlight for visitors, further enhancing the ecotourism appeal of Odisha.

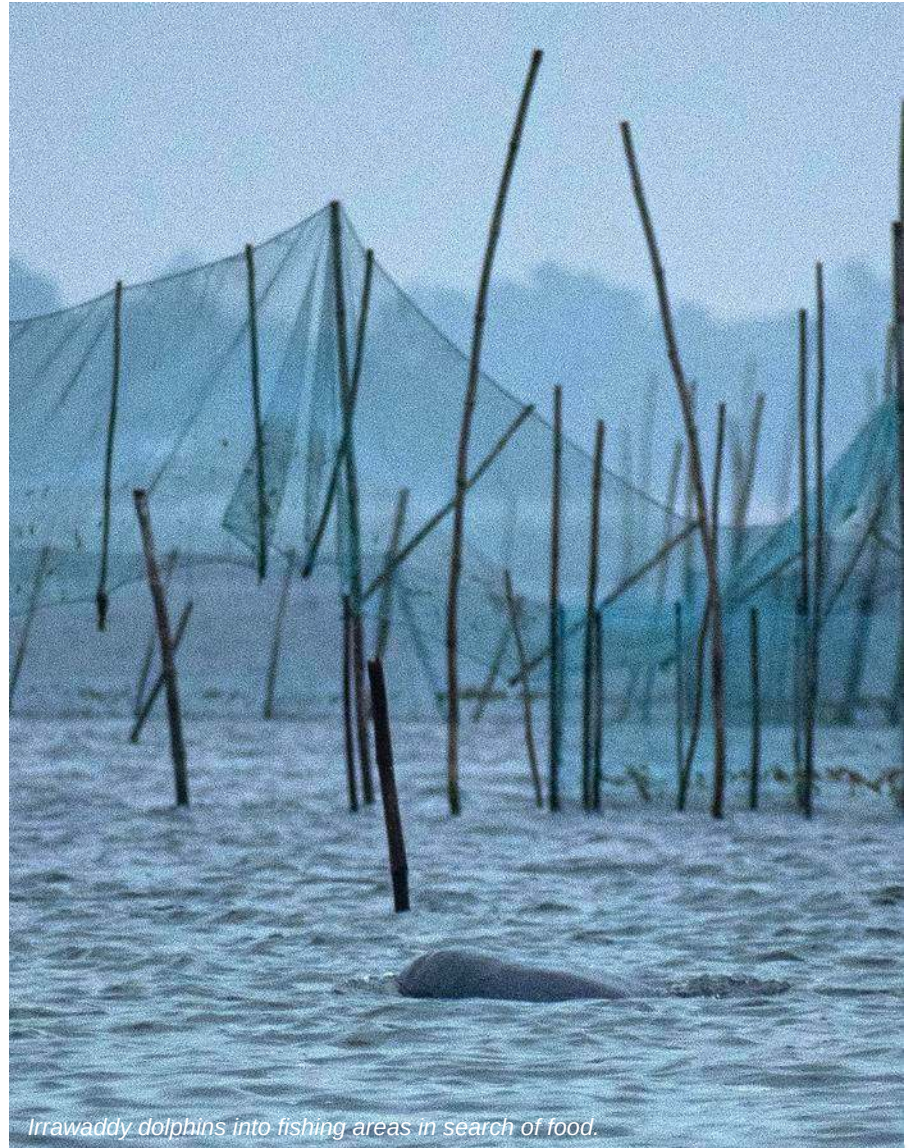
Neha also mentioned in her article, “Such expectations are likely due to misleading and aggressive marketing, according to the survey team. Most of the signboards showed breaching dolphins, but Irrawaddy dolphins hardly ever breach, said the researchers.”



Not just travel magazines, but the Forest Department’s subtle encouragement to spread such misleading information, with an intention to increase ecotourist footfall, could be quite detrimental for the species, their habitat and eventually for the livelihood of local people.

In Neha Jain’s article in Mongabay, senior programme coordinator at WWF-India, Coralie D’Lima was quoted to criticize this trend of setting unrealistic expectations among ignorant ecotourists, *“High expectations among tourists could lead to aggressive pursuing behaviour by boat operators, but they should not follow such demands, warned D’Lima, highlighting the need to educate them that such behaviour could, in fact, drive the animals away. Also, tourists should be briefed “that dolphin sightings are a unique experience and their behaviour or even sightings are not guaranteed,” she added.*

In Chilika the flagship species Irrawaddy dolphins do not jump out of water nor can they be seen all day to entertain ecotourists.



Irrawaddy dolphins into fishing areas in search of food.

Their sightings can happen during high tide when temperature is not so warm and they venture into fishing areas in search of food. Also, ecotourists eager to see a dolphin in its natural habitat have to be satisfied with mere glimpses of their round upper surface of head, part of torso or fins.

Quest for food

This behavior highlights their adaptability and the intricate relationship between local wildlife and human activity, further contributing to the unique ecotourism experience in Odisha.



FROM **MAXIMUM FIELD OF VIEW** TO MAXIMUM **MAGNIFICATION**. **VICTORY HARPIA**

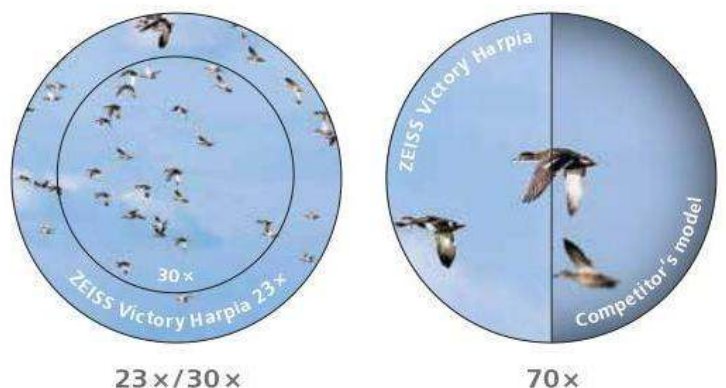
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Field of view comparison of a spotting scope at 30 × minimum magnification (small circle) with the field of view of the Harpia at 23 × minimum magnification (large circle).

*Magnificent
white-bellied sea
eagle*

The boatmen, who act as nature guides there, should be trained and encouraged to reveal this reality at the beginning. They should also be trained in showing the other avian wonders of Chilika lagoon.



During my three hours boat ride on that morning, I saw few greater egrets, pond herons, common sandpipers, pied starlings, river terns, brahmny kites, black kites, Eurasian curlew, barn swallows, glossy ibis, painted stork and couple of magnificent white-bellied sea eagles perching on stick popping out of water and flying atop our boat.

In fact, my best shots of white-bellied sea eagle, thus far, in my wildlife photography journey was captured on that day in Chilika lagoon. However, my boatman and fellow ecotourists had no clue what I was seeing and shooting, other than some emerged body parts of Irrawaddy dolphins.

By **“wise use of wetlands”** Global community emphasizes the conservation and sustainable utilization of wetland resources, taking into account ecological,

economic, cultural, and social aspects. This approach is based on the conservation and restoration of the natural state of the wetlands. This involves the participation of the government, communities, individuals and NGOs for mitigating negative impacts on the wetland ecosystems.

When all stakeholder’s participation is ensured – everybody – nature, local community, all living life forms, and ecotourists thrive.

MT055CXP04

The new 055 carbon fibre-3 section photo tripod offers outstanding rigidity and is incredibly lightweight. This engineering masterpiece from Italy has been manufactured to very high standards, and features a 90° column that can be extended vertically or horizontally so you can shoot with greater versatility.



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Author:
Anirudh Chaoji,
Wildlife Expert,
Chief Naturalist,
Tadoba Andhari Tiger
Reserve



Cattle Grazing: A Forest Hazard!

Some of the problems faced by the Indian forests are invisible – or at least, not evident to a first-time visitor. For instance, how many of us while on a safari, have peeped into the chowky, where the foot-soldiers of conservation, the forest guards, daily wagers and fire fighters stay? Have we ever wondered whether deep in the forest, do they have access to clean drinking water, mattresses, electricity, medicines and other basic amenities? Do they even have toilets or do they have to venture out at night too?

Fortunately, in almost all the forests of Maharashtra, the forest managers today are ensuring that the basic necessities of the foot-soldiers are well-taken care of. Their well-being and good health are very important for the security of the forest and its beautiful people. So, on your next safari; do spare time to talk to the unsung hero of the forest. Even a smile or a Namaste would show your respect for their work.

Among the many intruders into the forest, that they have to be on a look-out for, are the cattle from the neighbouring villages.

How many of us actually understand that letting cattle graze in a forest is dangerous for the forest? Around the year 1968, the infectious bovine disease of Rinderpest almost completely destroyed the population of Indian gaurs in Nagarhole National Park in Karnataka and later in Bhadra forest too. The cattle from neighbouring villages had shared the waterholes inside the forest and in the process, transmitted a disease that the wildlife was not immune to. These cattle in very large numbers roam the forests and in the process eat up or trample the plants that are trying to grow.



Grazing cattle also compete for fodder with the wild herbivores. This problem gets further magnified during summers, when there is a shortage of palatable grass outside the forest.

This affects the natural regeneration of the forest. Grazing cattle also compete for fodder with the wild herbivores. This problem gets further magnified during summers, when there is a shortage of palatable grass outside the forest.

Unfortunately, the owners of the cattle, despite being agriculturists, are unable to see the tremendous loss of cattle-dung lost out in the jungles, simply by not collecting it. Many of our communities do not milk their cows, or they would have understood that due to the long walks that their cattle take, the milk productivity drastically reduces.

The problem of these free-grazing cattle is one that the forest managers are still searching for solutions. Their sheer numbers make any solution difficult to come by. It took me time to realise that these cattle numbers are actually a status symbol to many families in the community. Some years ago, a local had confessed another reason for maintaining the cattle numbers. In many forests like Tadoba, the Department pays a significant compensation for the cattle killed by the predators.

So the supposed 'no value' cattle suddenly gained value!!!

Another related issue is the attacks on the cattle herders by tigers and leopards. It was observed that many attacks take place in the later part of the day when the grazers sit on the ground to rest. To a predator, a human sitting on the ground is no different from a prey animal like a langur!!! So next time you wish to have a better understanding of forest conservation we will suggest that you come and join one of our Naturalist Training programmes. We are sure, the forests will then have another friend, who can create a favourable public opinion towards our dwindling wild spaces.

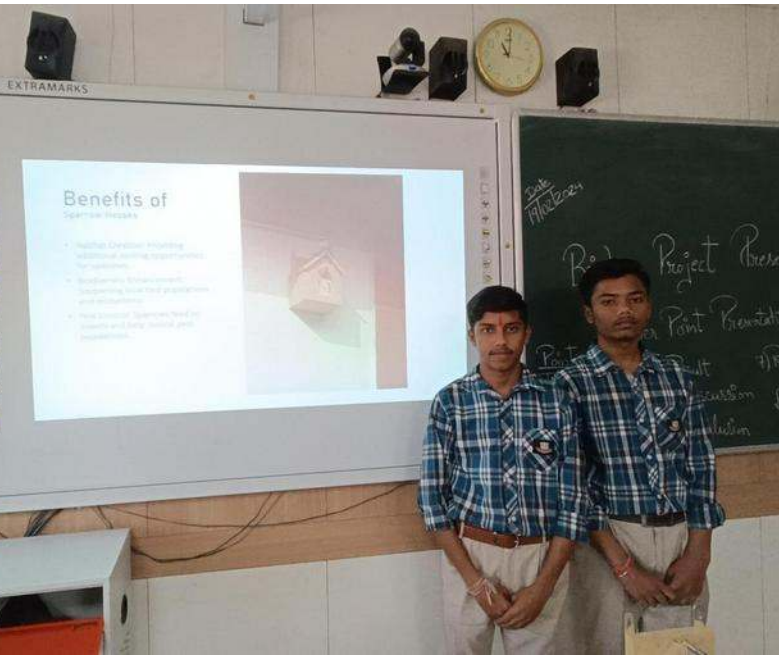




Author:
Dr. Archana
Shukla
Science
Teacher and
State
Resource
Person,
Govt. C.M
Rise Mahatma
Gandhi
Hr. Sec School
BHEL Bhopal
Madhya
Pradesh

A Flight of Hope: Students Are Bringing Sparrows Back to Our Communities

Connecting students with nature and teaching them conservation strategies is crucial in fostering a sense of responsibility and harmony with our environment. As a government Science teacher, I have dedicated myself to integrating such initiatives into the curriculum. Our projects have ranged from Seedbins, QR coding of trees, Plant Emotion Project, identifying local birds and butterflies, Sparrow House Project and movements like Hug a Tree. These activities aim to instil a deep understanding of ecological balance and the importance of conserving our natural world.



Project-Based Learning



Govt. Mahatma Gandhi Higher Secondary School

The journey of Project-Based Learning (PBL)

The journey of Project-Based Learning (PBL) in sparrow conservation began in 2019 in an 11th-grade biology class in Satna, Madhya Pradesh. Students were struck by the alarming decline in species numbers, particularly the Gauraiya or House Sparrow.

This species, known for its light brown plumage and yellow beak, has been a human companion since the dawn of agriculture. Despite its classification as Least Concern by the IUCN, the rapid population decline since the 1990s has placed it on the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) Red List in Britain. Through PBL, what started in the classroom has evolved into a community-driven endeavour to reverse this decline.

In traditional mud houses, Gauraiya thrived, but urbanization has disrupted their habitat. These birds once found ample nesting sites in thatched roofs and wooden structures, but the concrete landscape of modern cities poses significant challenges. Efforts to nest indoors have led to adaptations such as nesting in gaps and on-air conditioners, but the closure of traditional nesting spaces due to cleanliness concerns threatens their survival. Human intervention is crucial in providing suitable habitats to prevent their extinction.



To address this, here are ten ways to help save sparrows:

1. Provide sparrow houses to aid nesting.
2. Plant native plants in your locality.
3. Avoid using chemicals and pesticides in gardens.
4. Create dust and water baths for sparrows.
5. Ensure fresh water is available daily.
6. Allow dry grass in lawns for nest building.
7. Supply small grains like rice, pearl millet, and melon seeds.
8. Spread awareness about sparrow conservation.
9. Educate children about the benefits of sparrows.
10. Avoid disturbing their nesting sites.



Education on Sparrow Nest Boxes

Sparrow conservation is significant not only for maintaining ecological balance but also for the psychological well-being of humans. Sparrows play a vital role in natural pest control by feeding on larvae that are often pests, reducing the need for pesticides and preventing the spread of diseases in human localities. Their presence positively impacts children's growth and the mental health of elders.

Students embarked on an innovative project for four years to design sparrow houses using various materials, including cardboard, mud, and plastic boxes. Observations revealed a

preference for cardboard, which paved the way for the development of wooden nesting boxes. Initial challenges, such as larger holes attracting other bird species, were swiftly addressed through design modifications.

Enhancements included proper ventilation, drainage, and the use of eco-friendly colour like Multani mitti (Yellow Soil) and Geru (Red Soil). In 2024, the installation of Sparrow Nest Boxes including the colony nesting model in the BHEL area of Bhopal proved successful, with rapid adoption by sparrows.



Financial support from the Madhya Pradesh Tiger Foundation Society bolstered this initiative, emphasizing community involvement and the use of eco-friendly materials. Recently students from C.M Rise Govt. Mahatma Gandhi Higher Secondary School BHEL, Bhopal, have installed 200 sparrow boxes across 20 religious places, with 84% being adopted by sparrows. This team effort, led by nine dedicated students, underscores the importance of hands-on conservation efforts. The team was led by Vindhya Singh, Siddhi Sharma, Nikki Ratnakar, Manasavi Sisodia, Sneha Yadav, Aniruddh Kevat, Amar Navrang, Amrita Yadav, and Mansi Patel of 11 Biology Class.

In my 14 years as a science teacher, I have worked with various groups of students to install over 1,000 sparrow boxes, and my students have continued this work in their communities. We faced many challenges during the process, the biggest being people's lack of awareness about the importance of birds. Some believed sparrow houses would look unattractive or make their homes dirty due to the grass and droppings sparrows leave behind. Additionally, some thought they would need to provide nesting material and the owls can nest in it.

Despite these hurdles, the response eventually improved, and we successfully delivered our sparrow houses across different states in India.

Sparrow Boxes

In my 14 years as a science teacher, I have worked with various groups of students to install over 1,000 sparrow boxes, and my students have continued this work in their communities.

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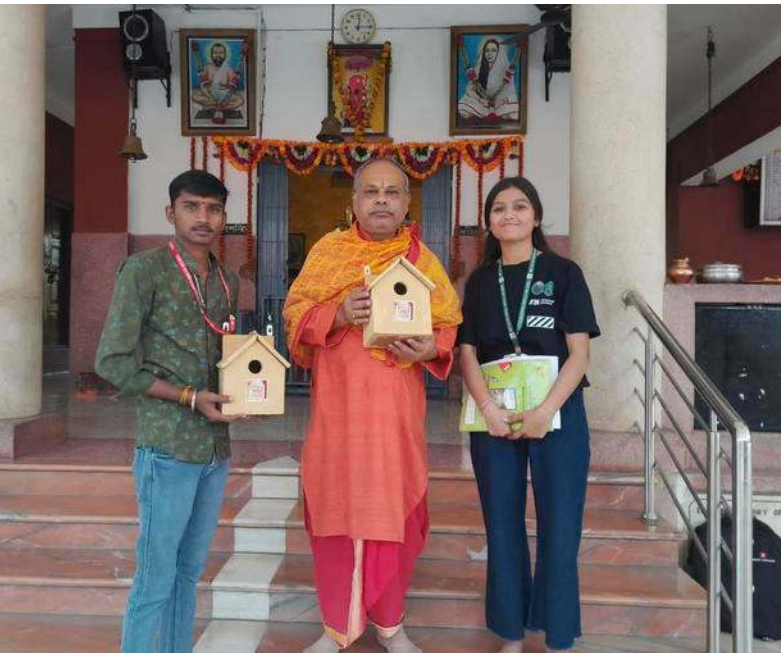
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Priest-Led Sparrow Nest Box Initiative



Sparrow nest boxes installed in temple

We even conducted an international workshop where teachers from 10 countries participated and we shared our projects. After years of hard work, we now have a good demand for our sparrow houses, and those we have reached are aware of their importance.

However, the journey is far from over, and there is still much work to be done.

World Sparrow Day on March 20th is an opportunity for all of us to pledge to provide shelter, food, and water for sparrows. By creating a sparrow-friendly habitat and promoting biodiversity, we can contribute to the conservation of these charming and beneficial creatures. Let's embrace harmonious coexistence with nature for a healthy world, as we Indians believe in "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam," which emphasizes that the whole world (including all creatures) is one family.



Sparrow Nest Boxes



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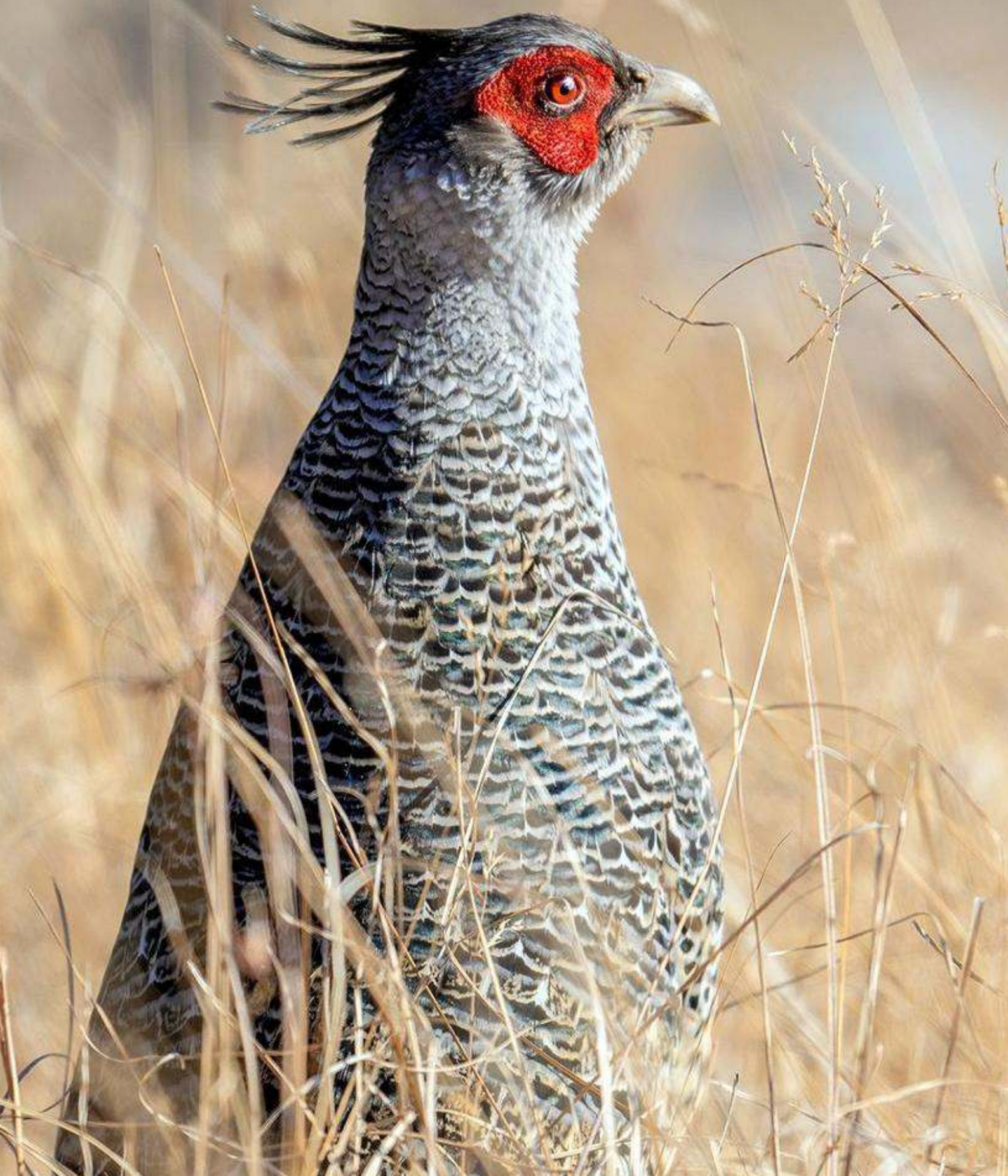
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Male Cheer Pheasant is handsome bird with a prominent crest,
Photography by Puskar Basu.



The bird that cheers birdwatchers

Meet the bird that lives up to its name: the Cheer Pheasant. Residing along the fringes of chir (*Pinus roxburghii*) forests, it brings cheer to birdwatchers with its charming cluck calls. Its distinctive vocalizations, a mixture of pleasant chirping and high, piercing notes, have earned it the moniker 'Cheer' or 'Chir' pheasant.

First described to science from a specimen collected in Almora, Uttarakhand, India, by Thomas Hardwicke in 1827, the Cheer Pheasant was initially named *Lophophorus (Phasianus) Wallichii*, after Danish botanist Nathaniel Wallich. Subsequently, it was reclassified into the genus *Catreus* in 1851, specifically for this species.

Although closely related to *Phasianus*, the genus *Catreus* distinguishes itself with a long, full crest and a lengthy tail comprising 18 feathers. It encompasses a single species restricted to the Himalayas. While the English term 'Cheer' or 'Chir' can be pronounced interchangeably, it is also known in some literature as Wallich's Pheasant.

The name Cheer pheasant could be due to its close association with the Chir pine forest *Pinus roxburghii*.

This bird is a denizen of the successional grasslands of the western Himalayas, with its population estimated to range from 2,500 to 10,000 mature individuals across Pakistan to western Nepal, according to BirdLife International, a UK-based bird conservation organization. However, this estimate is more of a 'guesstimate,' indicating the limited research conducted on this species.



*Author:
Dr Asad
Rahmani,
Ornithologist
Conservationist
Former Director
of Bombay
Natural History
Society (BNHS)*

*Perfect habitat
of Cheer
Pheasant in
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pic by Dr. Asad
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Product Page



Cheer Pheasant stamp of Pakistan, courtesy Rahul Rohitashwa



Cheer Pheasant stamp of Nepal, courtesy Rahul Rohitashwa

Currently, no subspecies are recognized, although genetic studies are needed to ascertain whether there are indeed distinct subspecies in its altitudinally fragmented landscape.

Cheer Pheasants primarily inhabit elevations between 1,400 to 3,500 m in the Western and Central Himalayas, ranging from northern Pakistan through Kashmir into Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, and extending eastward to central Nepal.

Although sightings have been recorded as low as 950 m in Birahi, Chamoli district, and as high as 4,545 m in Uttarkashi district. In its range from eastern Pakistan to western Nepal, there are many fragmented populations. Whether there is any mixing of these subpopulations, we do not know well.

In Pakistan, Cheer survives mainly in the Jhelum valley with very small populations, which are almost at the verge of extinction, and in the Neelam valley and Machiara National Park.

In Nepal it occurs at Dhorpatan Reserve, Banglung, Myagdi, Mustang, Rukum, Jumla, Mugu, Baitadi Districts and Rara National Park. Everywhere its population is declining or very small.

Unlike many pheasants, there is little plumage difference between male (90–118 cm) and female (61–76 cm), except for the female's smaller size, duller appearance, and heavier markings.



Female Cheer pheasants on the left

Sporting predominantly grey, brown, and buff tones, with a distinctive long, backward-pointing blackish-brown crest and crimson orbital patch or facial skin, these pheasants lack the vibrant hues typical of their counterparts.

The male exhibits clear dark barring on its upperparts, while the lower parts are chiefly buffy-white, prominently barred on the lower breast and flanks. Immature males resemble females, with less barring and no crest.

In my book, *Threatened Birds of India*, published in 2012, I have given the names of main areas where this Vulnerable species can be seen. Since then, some more areas have been discovered.

It seems that after the period of extensive poaching, the species is recovering due to better control on poaching and awareness. According to Mr. Kalyan Singh Sajwan, Chief Administrative Officer of the Nainital Forest Department and an expert on the bird of Kumaon, the Cheer pheasant is found in several places near Nainital such as Khurpatal, Mangoli, Adhora, Naina Peak, Cheel- chakker, but the most famous site for birders is the Cheer Points Binayak, in Kosi Range of Nainital Forest Division.

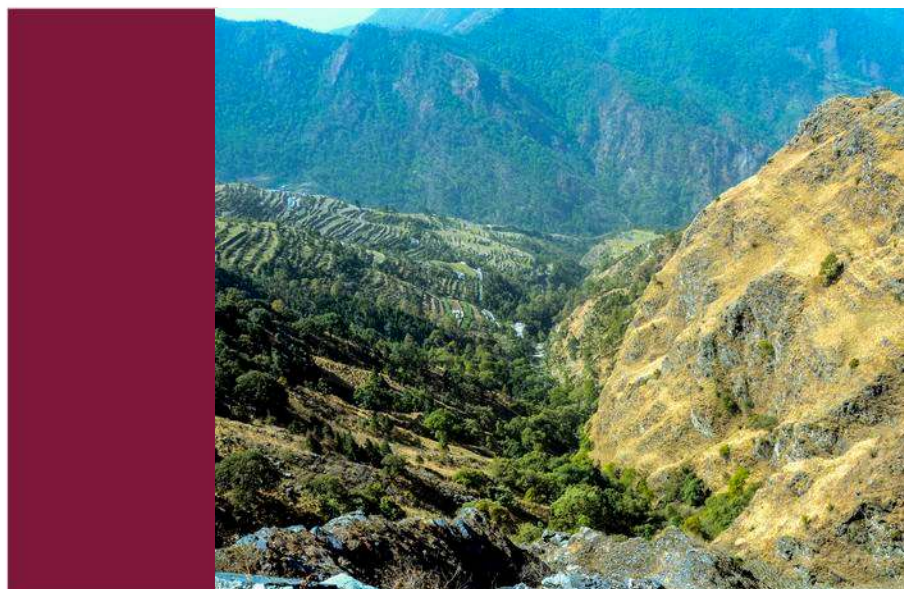
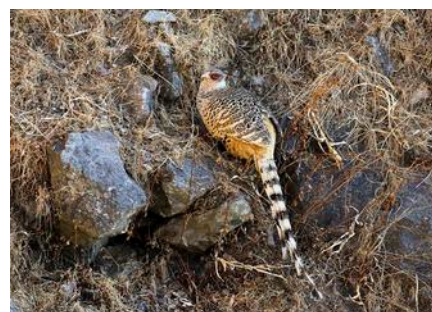
In 2015, the Government of Uttarakhand declared 111.9 sq. km in the Nainital district as Nainadevi Himalayan Bird Conservation Reserve (as a tribute to the local deity, Nainadevi).



Male Cheer Pheasant with a prominent crest and a long tail, pic by Mirza Altaf Baig in Ranikhet

Comprising the Kosi and Naina forest ranges, and covering the hamlets of Kilbury, Vinayak Kunjakharak, Pangot and Gangikharak, this landscape is renowned for Cheer Pheasant and rich birdlife.

Pics:
Cheer Pheasants on the right were photographed at Vinayak by K. S. Sajwan on 2nd January 2014.



Habitat

Cheer Pheasant habitat near Vinayak, Nainital, pic by Dr. Asad Rahmani



Special attention should be given to protect the Cheer Pheasant, pic by Mirza Altaf Baig

Dr. Riyaz Ahmad, earlier working in the Wildlife Trust of India, conducted a survey of Jammu and Kashmir, and found evidence of Cheer pheasant in two ranges: Kazinag and Pir Panjal. He saw or found confirmed evidence in Kazinag NP, Limbur-Lachipora WLS, Naganari Conservation Reserves, and Bagna-Salambad-Bhujthalan in Kazinag range, and Bela-Bala Loren, Tattakuti proposed WLS, Khara Galli CR and Sawajian in Pir Panjal range.

Male Cheer Pheasant calls early morning and evening from a prominent site to attract females, pic by Ansar Khan

In Jammu region, Trikuta hills near Katra and Kishtwar NP are two more areas of this rare pheasant.

Dr. K. Ramesh of the Wildlife Institute of India, who has conducted extensive research on pheasants of the Himalayas, heard in two places in Pilang valley, where extensive suitable habitat is available to the species.



Display calls

Display calls of Cheer Pheasants can be heard from April onwards. Photographed by Puskar Basu.

He writes, “According to local people, this species survives in good numbers in several localities, including some interior areas in Genwali (above Budha Kedar). an unknown localitv for this bird.

The slopes along the Yamuna river between Hanumanchatti and Jankichatti are also reported to contain this species. With the help of sporadic records and empirical data available, other areas of distribution could be identified based on species-habitat association analysis.”



Cheer Pheasant prefers the slopes that do not receive direct sunlight most of the day and having comparatively softer soil which enables it to dig out the dietary tubers and roots.

The problem is with its ecology and habitat selection. Unlike most large pheasants, cheer prefers slightly disturbed and overgrazed rocky hillsides, with stunted trees, and small scrub not the interior of thick forests. Such areas are generally found near human habitation so there is a delicate balance of how much disturbance to too much.

Such habitats are mostly created by traditional grass cutting and limited burning. As these sites are generally near human habitations, it used to suffer from heavy hunting pressures. Moreover, in some protected areas where grass cutting and lopping has been curtailed, the habitat soon becomes unsuitable for this species. Research has also found that the Cheer Pheasant prefers the slopes that do not receive direct sunlight most of the day and having comparatively softer soil, which enables it to dig out the dietary tubers and roots.

Breeding typically occurs from April to June, extending into September, with clutch sizes ranging from 6 to 12 eggs. Nests are typically ground scrapes concealed by overhanging grasses or branches in dense undergrowth or behind boulders

on steep hillsides on the edges of chir or oak forests. The incubation lasts about 26 days, the male often remains nearby to protect the nest while the female is incubating. The species is possibly monogamous, with males assisting in caring for the young.

The Cheer Pheasants face significant threats from hunting and habitat disturbance, both stemming from human activities.

Although not a preferred game bird, it is still hunted due to its proximity to human settlements. Many nests and chicks fall victim to fires set for various purposes, although adults often escape. Its reliance on chir pine and pine-mixed forests makes it vulnerable to local extinction as these grassy habitats are utilized by villagers for various purposes. Unfortunately, forest fires are a regular occurrence in summer months, often lit by careless people, or intentionally by graziers to promote new growth of grass. Fallen pine needles burn easily. One reason is its high resin content, which acts as a natural accelerant, facilitating rapid combustion.



*Forest Fire
Photographed
by Mukul
Mukherjee*

Moreover, the structure of pine needles and small branches creates ample surface area for ignition and flame propagation. These factors, combined with favourable environmental conditions such as dryness and wind, contribute to the rapid and intense burning of pine forests. While adult birds can escape, eggs and chicks are burnt along the forest fires. The ravages of climate change that may bring early summer and more dryness may result in more and intensive fires, as we saw in Uttarakhand in summer of 2024.

Persistence and devastating forest fires shows the unpreparedness of the authorities and uncertain future of this majestic bird.

Like most large pheasants, Cheer is present in many zoos, both nationally and internationally, and with proper care, it breeds fairly well.

Most of the zoo birds are based on captive breeding and exchanging among zoos. Protected by law in all range countries and listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and Appendix I of CITES, the Cheer Pheasant occupies several protected areas across its range, yet ongoing conservation efforts are vital to ensure its survival.



The gigantic plateau & the vast grasslands is a home to diversified bird species.

My journey to wildlife started a few years ago with a small area of wetlands.

I had never known or imagined that Georgia would have such a variety of birds, both nesting or migrating.

A Land of Wonder: The Javakheti Plateau

In fact, my country turned out to be quite popular among birdwatchers all over the world. It was a turning point for me and since that day I started exploring new places and species.



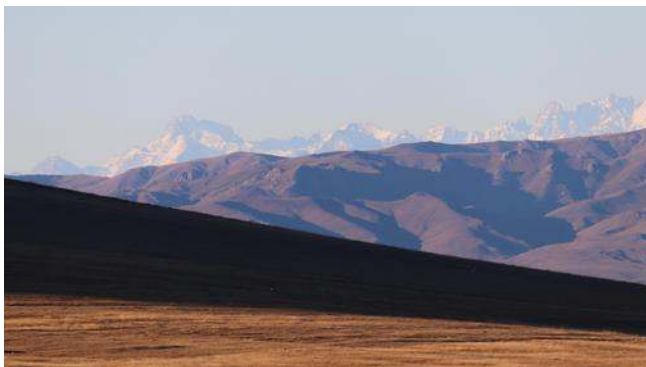
Author:

Maia Duishvili

Senior Executive Assistant to
Regional Director,
The World Bank Georgia Office,
Georgia Country.



Eurasian hoopoe on the grass ground.



The vast plateau



The vast plateau and the grasslands

The Javakheti Plateau

My favorite route typically spans from the capital city, Tbilisi, to the Javakheti region, where several National Parks are home to about 140 species of birds.

The Javakheti plateau, a vast grassland plain (alpine steppe), is interspersed with numerous wetlands and alpine lakes, including six of Georgia's largest lakes.

These lakes are crucial for breeding and staging waterbirds in the country, including the endangered Dalmatian pelican.



Eastern Imperial Eagle



Great white and Dalmatian Pelicans at Madatapa Lake island.



Godwits



Gulls and Godwits at Madatapa lake



Godwit

Notably, the Javakheti Wetlands are included in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance.

My favorite destination is Madatapa Lake, located at 2108 meters above sea level. With its low shores and a coastline covered in water loving plants, alongside a small rocky island, this

place stands out as the best spot for birdwatching and photography.

It is spectacular in any season, even in winter when the lake freezes and the surroundings turn white.

I particularly love observing how the color of the lake changes from deep blue to pale gray depending on the weather.

This variability provides ample opportunities to capture extraordinary shots with remarkable reflections.



Godwit at Madatapa lake



Madatapa Lake

Northern lapwings at Bugdasheni lake



Buzzard with prey



Harrier



Harrier scouting for food

The villages located by the lakes are favorite nesting places for white storks, making this part of the country truly stand out.



White storks flying all over

These storks are everywhere, often appearing in large numbers, gathering in the fields, along lake shores, or on electric distribution poles.

Tractors working in the fields are typically surrounded by flocks of white storks and buzzards, all hunting for earthworms, beetles, and mice.



White storks in the fields near the villages



Tawny Owl



Little Owl

In some remote villages, there are a few abandoned buildings and churches, mostly half-destroyed. I usually avoid walking into such places, but during my last visit, I was intrigued by the remaining frescoes, so I ventured inside.

What I found there was truly unexpected: a pair of dark round eyes fixated on me with a calm, steady gaze. Although little owls commonly inhabit such places, I was surprised to see a tawny owl for the first time, and it was beautiful!

This region is significant not only for waterbirds but also for rare birds of prey. It was early spring; the lowlands were already in blossom, while the Javakheti highlands were still covered in snow. It was the time for white storks to return to their nesting places, so I hoped to see them again.

As I took my usual trail, I spotted a sparrowhawk surrounded by feathers. Our eyes met, and I knew I had only a few seconds to capture a great shot.



Sparrowhawk



Steppe Eagle



Crane

"A Land of Wonder" – This is what I call Javakheti because each and every trip unveils something unique.

One day, I was traveling back from the lakes when I suddenly noticed a cloud of rosy starlings. Before I could grab my camera, they had vanished. A few minutes later, I was nearly swept away by the rosy cloud.

They appeared so quickly and unexpectedly that I missed the shot! It took numerous attempts and a few hours of off-road driving before I was finally rewarded with the breathtaking sight of thousands of beautiful rosy starlings flying against the backdrop of a sunset.



Rosy Starlings





*Author:
Salehin Md
Habib,
Software
Developer
Cognizant
Technology
Solutions
Kolkata*

Nordmann's Greenshank: An Icon of Avian Conservation

In the vast expanse of wetlands and coastal habitats across Asia, one bird stands out for its elegance and significance in the avian world: Nordmann's Greenshank (*Tringa guttifer*) (IUCN-EN).

This medium-sized wader, with its striking appearance and intriguing migratory habits, holds a unique place in the hearts of ornithologists and conservationists' alike. It probably has a population of 500–1,000 individuals.

What sets this species apart is its subtle beauty – a mottled brown plumage adorned with delicate white speckles, complemented by its slightly upturned bill.



One of the most remarkable aspects of Nordmann's Greenshank is its incredible migratory journey.

We were searching this bird since January 2023 when one of our birder friend from S.Korea informed us that one ringed Nordmann's greenshank was found at Hijli Sea Beach, Midnapore, of West Bengal via GPS tagging. After hearing that we explored that muddy sea beach around 5kms on a whole day and it was a so risky because the mud was up to our knees. We didn't see any traces of that bird. After more than one year when I heard that the bird was seen at one restricted island of Sunderban. In March 2024 we visited that island to explore that bird, the journey was not so easy due to high tide and finally we succeed to see that beauty.

Distinctive Features and Habitat

Nordmann's Greenshank is a member of the sandpiper family Scolopacidae, known for its long, slender legs and distinctive probing bill. What sets this species apart is its subtle beauty – a mottled brown plumage adorned with delicate white speckles, complemented by its slightly upturned bill. With a wingspan reaching up to 55 cm and length 29-32 cm, it gracefully navigates the coastal mudflats and shallow waters where it finds its sustenance.

Migration and Conservation Challenges

One of the most remarkable aspects of Nordmann's Greenshank is its incredible migratory journey. Breeding in the remote taiga forests of northeastern Russia and northeastern China, these birds undertake an arduous migration route, spanning thousands of kilometers. As winter approaches, they embark on their journey southward, traversing East Asia to reach their non-breeding grounds in Southeast Asia and Oceania.

However, this remarkable migration is fraught with challenges, particularly due to human activities and habitat loss along their flyway. The degradation and loss of vital wetland habitats, driven by urbanization, agriculture, and industrial development, pose a severe threat to Nordmann's Greenshank populations. Additionally, indiscriminate hunting and trapping further exacerbate the pressures on this endangered species.



Nordmann's Greenshank small flock in flight.



Nordmann's Greenshank searching for food.

Conservation Efforts and Hope for the Future

Recognizing the urgent need to protect Nordmann's Greenshank and its habitat, concerted conservation efforts have been underway across its range. International organizations, governmental agencies, and local communities are working together to establish protected areas, implement sustainable land management practices, and raise awareness about the importance of conserving wetland ecosystems. Crucially, initiatives such as the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) bring together countries along the flyway to coordinate conservation actions and address transboundary challenges. By promoting habitat conservation, conducting scientific research, and engaging stakeholders, these collaborative efforts aim to secure a brighter future for Nordmann's Greenshank and other migratory birds.





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Sourashis

From the mystic mountains of Kashmir...

The non-migratory and highly territorial...

The Brown Owl



Introduction

Scientific Name: *Strix aluco*

Other names: Brown Owl

Distribution: Woodlands across Europe to Western Siberia.

Found only in Kashmir in India.

Diet and feeding habits: insects, small mammals, small birds

IUCN status listing: Least

Concern (LC)

Ecosystem and Nesting Behaviour

Tawny Owls are non-migratory and are strictly arboreal living in natural tree holes mostly in Chinara Trees in Kashmir. This species is found in deciduous and mixed forests, and sometimes mature conifer plantations, preferring locations with access to water. They are highly territorial, as a result, when young birds grow up and leave the parental nest, if they cannot find a vacant territory to claim as their own, they will often starve. This species is fearless in defence of its nest and young, and, like other *Strix* owls, strikes for the intruder's head with its sharp talons. Because its flight is silent, it may not be detected until it is too late to avoid the danger.

Diet and feeding behavior

The tawny owl hunts almost entirely at night, watching from a perch before dropping or gliding silently down to its victim. but



very occasionally it will hunt in daylight when it has young ones to feed. This species takes a wide range of prey, mainly woodland rodents, but also other mammals up to the size of a young rabbit, and birds, earthworms and beetles. In urban areas, birds make up a larger proportion of the diet, species as unlikely as mallard and kittiwake have been killed

Author:

Sourashis Mukhopadhyay
Software Developer,
Tata Consultancy Services,
Kolkata

My Experience

In India the only place to find Tawny Owl is Kashmir. They nest in Chinar Trees (*Platanus orentalis*) and are inactive during the day. Now even though there's a feeling of thrill to see and photograph owls at night. Tawny Owls are advisable to be photographed or tracked during the day or maximum till dusk because of following reasons, one being the aggressiveness and territorial nature of the species the other two being tough weather and terrain.



My Co Birder for this incredible experience was Mr Souvik Roychowdhury and we were aided by the sincere guidance of Waseem Bhat of Budgam District. A steep climb led to a somewhat flat area where there were around twenty or even more Chinar Trees with medium to large holes in all of them making the process of owl tracking tough as it's difficult to accurately guess which hole of which tree they are nesting. To make things worse we realised that the colour of the bark of a chinar tree is exactly same as that of the feathers of the Tawny Owl which makes it a perfectly camouflaged owl (please refer to the pictures provided).

As it wasn't dark we knew that the owls wouldn't hoot or screech, so the only way for us to track the owls was to use a trial and error method for each and every hole in the tree.

Now, Tawny Owls pair off from the age of one year, and stay together in a usually monogamous relationship for life. This wasn't good news for us as we had to track two owls in more than twenty trees.



The Royal Tawny Owl sitting with its eyes closed.

But luck was on our side that day. Suddenly we heard a high pitched shrill of a Scaly Bellied Woodpecker (alert / distress call) flying away from a particular tree.

Following the direction we came across the moment we waited for. A Tawny Owl sitting like a royal with its eyes half closed.

The tawny owl is our largest common owl and, like the barn owl and other owls, can famously turn its head through 270 degrees!

समर्पण एवं
उत्साह से भरे

6

वर्ष

हिन्दी मासिक समाचार पत्र

स्टूडियो
न्यूज



फोटो देखिए ही नहीं पढ़िए भी



भारत का फोटोग्राफी से संबंधित प्रथम
हिन्दी मासिक समाचार पत्र



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Jungle Chimes

We felt there is a dire need to create awareness about "Nature". We believe that it's important for people to understand the importance of preserving our natural resources and protecting the wildlife that inhabits our planet.

So we introduced a knowledge based platform - "Jungle Chimes"; A regular Talk Show being delivered by domain experts. Be our Nature's Rhythm Amplifier

We hope to inspire our audience to take action and make a difference in their own communities. We also strive to educate people on the various threats facing our natural world, including habitat loss, pollution, climate change, and overexploitation of natural resources.

We invite you to join us on this journey of discovery and learning. Be our Nature's Rhythm Amplifier and tune in to Jungle Chimes and let's work together to create a brighter future for our planet

YouTube: [@exploringnature2021](https://www.youtube.com/@exploringnature2021)

Playlist - "Jungle Chimes"

If you want to share your experience with our audience you can reach us at junglechimes1981@gmail.com. Please specify about what you want to talk - "Your Topic" and also attach your updated profile for our understanding. If we find your topic and your journey is interesting we shall arrange a talk show for you on our channel.

A knowledge-based talk show on Nature

A knowledge-based talk show on nature could cover a variety of topics related to the natural world, including ecology, biology, conservation, climate change, environmentalism, and more. The show could feature interviews with scientists, environmentalists, conservationists, activists, and other experts in these fields.

A knowledge-based talk show on Nature through Photography

A knowledge-based talk show on nature through photography could be a fascinating and visually stunning program that focuses on exploring the natural world through the lens of a camera. The show could feature interviews with photographers, conservationists, and environmentalists who use photography as a tool for education, advocacy, and inspiration.

A knowledge-based talk show on Nature through Travel

A knowledge-based talk show on nature through travel could be an exciting and informative program that focuses on exploring the natural world through travel and adventure. The show could feature interviews with travel experts, naturalists, scientists, and conservationists who have dedicated their lives to exploring and understanding the natural world.

Feather Library: An Initiative for Science, Education, and Conservation by Esha Munshi

Under our Jungle Chimes series, we featured the Feather Library, a groundbreaking project that was the world's first website dedicated to the documentation, identification, and study of Indian birds' flight feathers. Esha Munshi, the visionary behind the Feather Library, was the esteemed speaker, hosted by Satyendra K Singh.

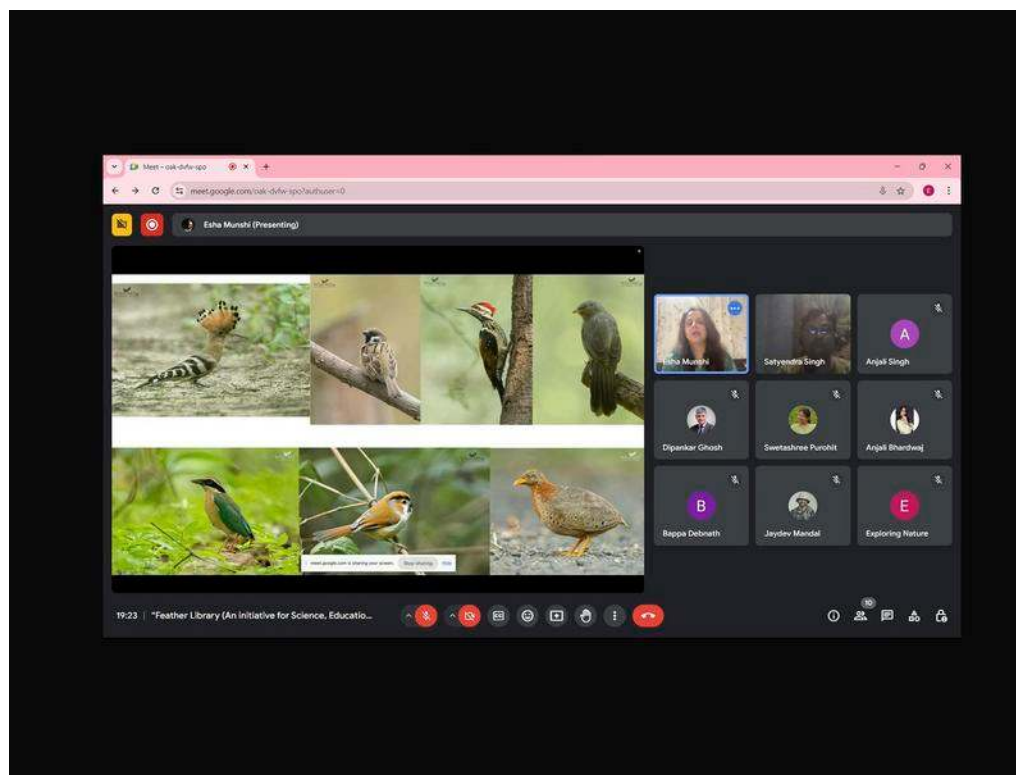
all regions of India, providing a comprehensive feather database for the entire subcontinent.

Esha Munshi, with an impressive record of observing 1086 bird species in the Indian subcontinent and over 1500 species worldwide, also documented the sounds of more than 700 bird species. She served as a sound annotator for the Merlin App and completed her ornithology course in 2021. Esha was the associate curator of birds at the National Centre for Biological Sciences in Bangalore. Her expertise and dedication made her a prominent figure in the field of ornithology and bird conservation.

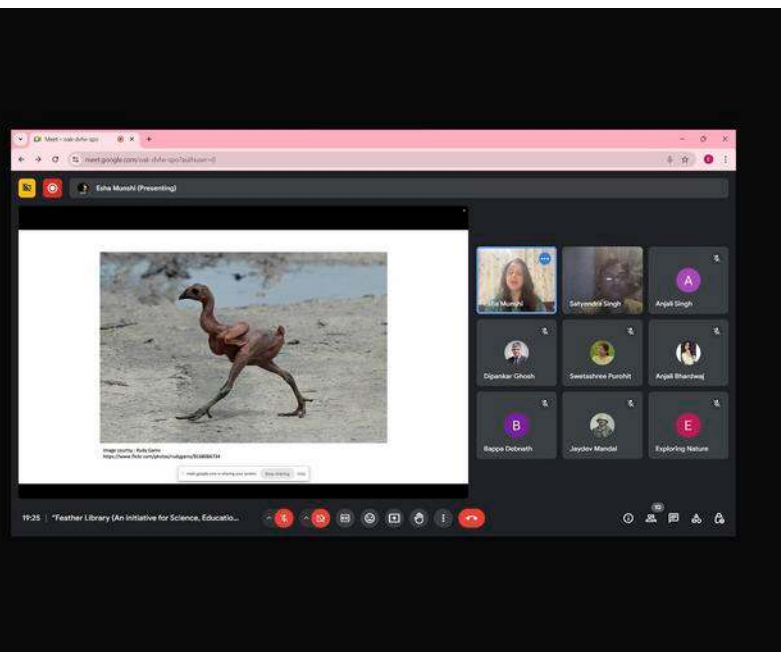
Feather Library, accessible at www.featherlibrary.com, served as a meticulous database for bird feathers. It was user-friendly and offered easy access to feather plates, species data, wingspan measurements, feather counts, and bird locations. This resource proved invaluable to ornithologists, forest department staff, researchers, seasoned bird watchers, and budding birders alike. By housing all this data in one place, Feather Library aimed to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of India's avian diversity. Its long-term goal was to expand this initiative to cover



*Speaker:
Esha Munshi,
Founder,
Feather Library,
Bangalore*



Jungle Chimes

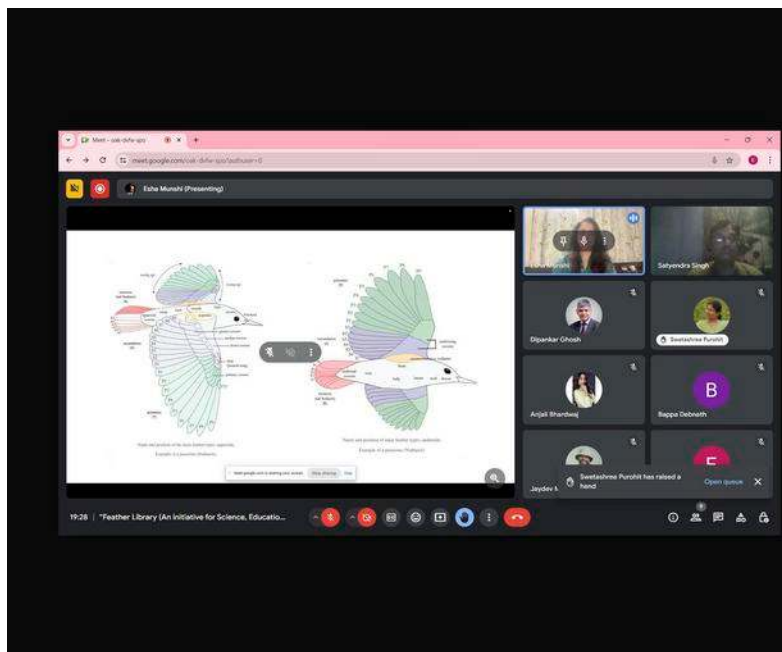


Discover the main feather types on a bird: On the upper side, you'll find the primaries, secondaries, and coverts.

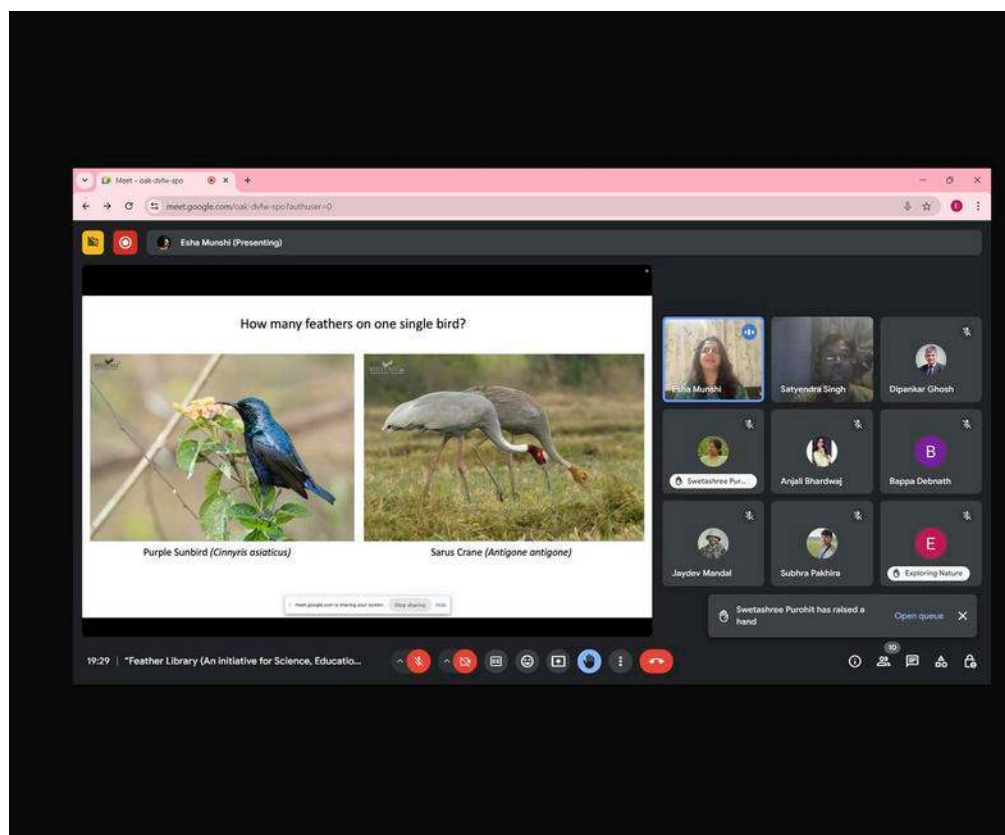
As the speaker for this talk show, Esha shared her journey from architecture to ornithology, her extensive fieldwork, and the challenges and triumphs of setting up the Feather Library.

Her passion for birds and conservation was evident as she discussed the meticulous process of feather documentation and the broader implications for scientific research, education, and conservation efforts in India.

Satyendra K Singh, with over 25 years of experience, is a multi-talented individual who has composed various poetry titles in Hindi and English and is also writing crime thrillers for movies. He is a regular expert panellist on media channels such as News India, India News, India Watch, Live Today, Zee UP, Zee Salaam, Bharat Samachar, Doordarshan, and Akashvani, to name a few.



Discover the main feather types on a bird: On the underside, look for the down feathers and afterfeathers.



Ever wondered how many feathers a single bird can have?



Cup mushroom, taken in with intentional camera movement.

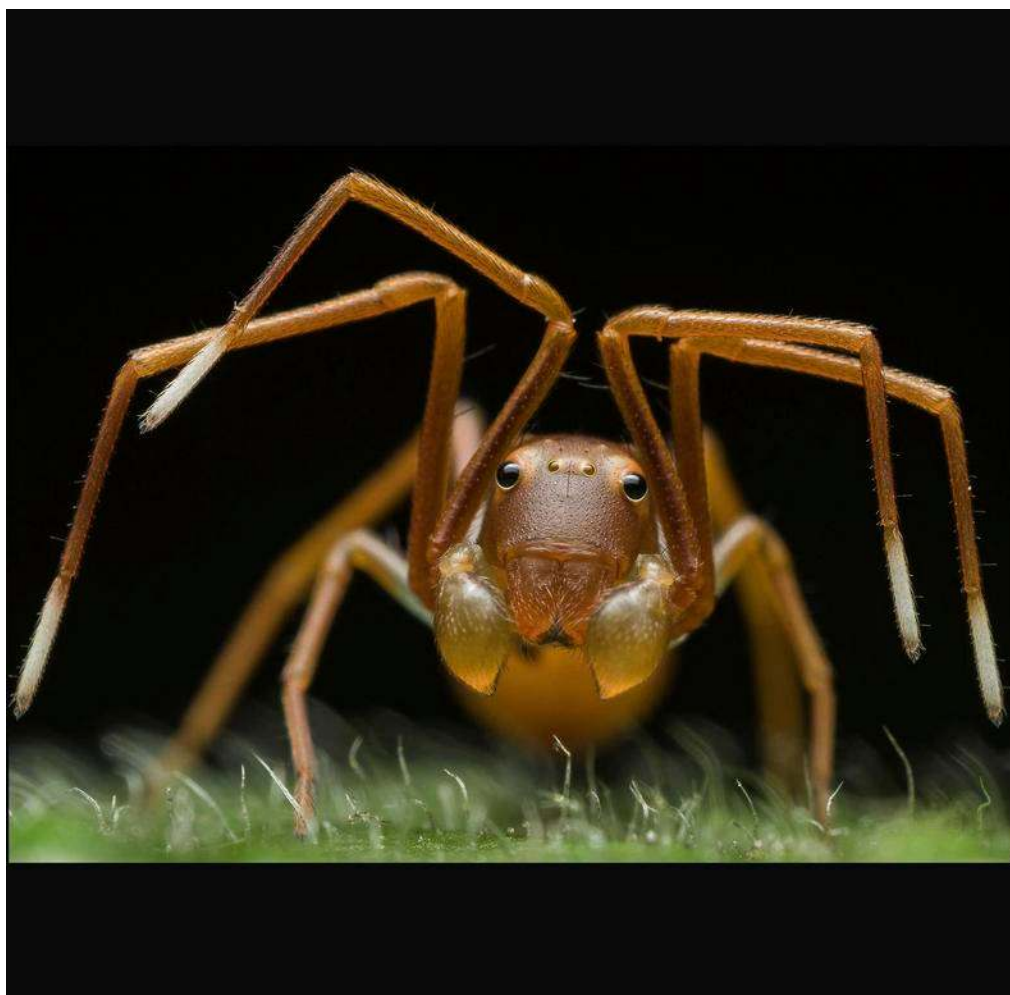


Cup mushroom taken with multiple light source.



Tadpoles in a pool.

“ART In Macro Photography” By Ripan Biswas Explore “The Journey of a Legendary Wildlife Photographer”.



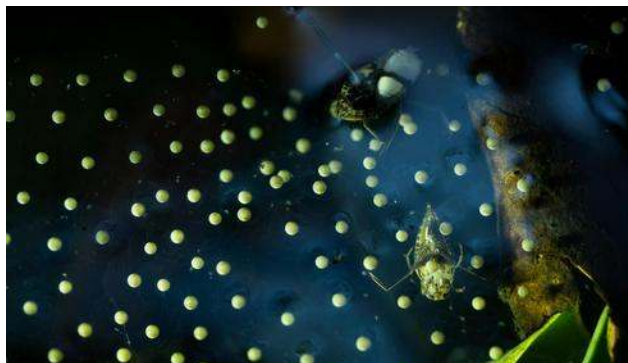
In the vast expanse of the natural world, it is often the smallest creatures that hold the greatest mysteries.

Macro photography, the art of capturing minute details, allows us to explore these tiny marvels in exquisite detail. Renowned wildlife photographer Ripan Biswas has mastered this craft, revealing the intricate beauty of the small world through his lens. In this edition of Jungle Chimes, we delve into the journey of Ripan Biswas, a three-time winner of the Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition, as he shares his passion for macro photography and its significance in wildlife conservation.

Above - Ant mimicking spider



Wrinkled frog embryo



Narrow mouth frog eggs floating on a pool.

The Art of Macro Photography Macro photography is more than just close-up shots of insects and flowers; it is an art form that requires patience, precision, and a deep understanding of the subject.

Ripan Biswas' work exemplifies this art, showcasing the delicate textures, vibrant colors, and unique behaviors of some of the tiniest inhabitants of our planet.

His images, featured in prestigious magazines such as Sanctuary Asia and BBC Wildlife Magazine, captivate viewers and bring attention to the often-overlooked wonders of the natural world.

The Journey of a Legendary Wildlife Photographer

Ripan Biswas' journey into the world of wildlife photography began in the lush landscapes of India, where he developed a fascination with the diverse fauna that thrived in the region. Armed with a camera and an insatiable curiosity, Biswas embarked on a mission to document the hidden lives of insects, spiders, and other small creatures. His dedication to his craft earned him international recognition, culminating in his unprecedented achievement of winning the Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition three times, an accolade organized by the Natural History Museum in London, United Kingdom.



The Importance of the Small World

The small world holds a significant place in the ecological tapestry, playing crucial roles in pollination, decomposition, and as a food source for larger animals. Through his macro photography, Ripan Biswas highlights the interconnectedness of all living beings and emphasizes the importance of conserving even the tiniest creatures. His stunning wildlife captures serve as a visual reminder of the intricate balance of nature and the need to protect these delicate ecosystems.



In our conversation with Ripan Biswas, he shares the challenges and triumphs of capturing the minute details of the natural world. From early mornings spent waiting for the perfect light to the meticulous process of setting up shots, Biswas' dedication to his art is evident. His work not only enriches our understanding of wildlife but also inspires a deeper appreciation for the small creatures that often go unnoticed.



Jungle Chimes!!!

On Google Meet @ 7 PM
Sunday
2nd June, 2024

"ART IN MACRO PHOTOGRAPHY" BY RIPAN BISWAS

EXPLORE "THE JOURNEY OF A LEGENDARY WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER".

THREE-TIME WINNER OF THE WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR



Host
Mr. Satyendra K Singh
Business Mentor
Exploring Nature

About Our Host:
Renowned Career Strategist
Govt of India empanelled MAARG Mentor
Published Author
Mentored 100+ startups
Motivational Speaker & Corporate Trainer



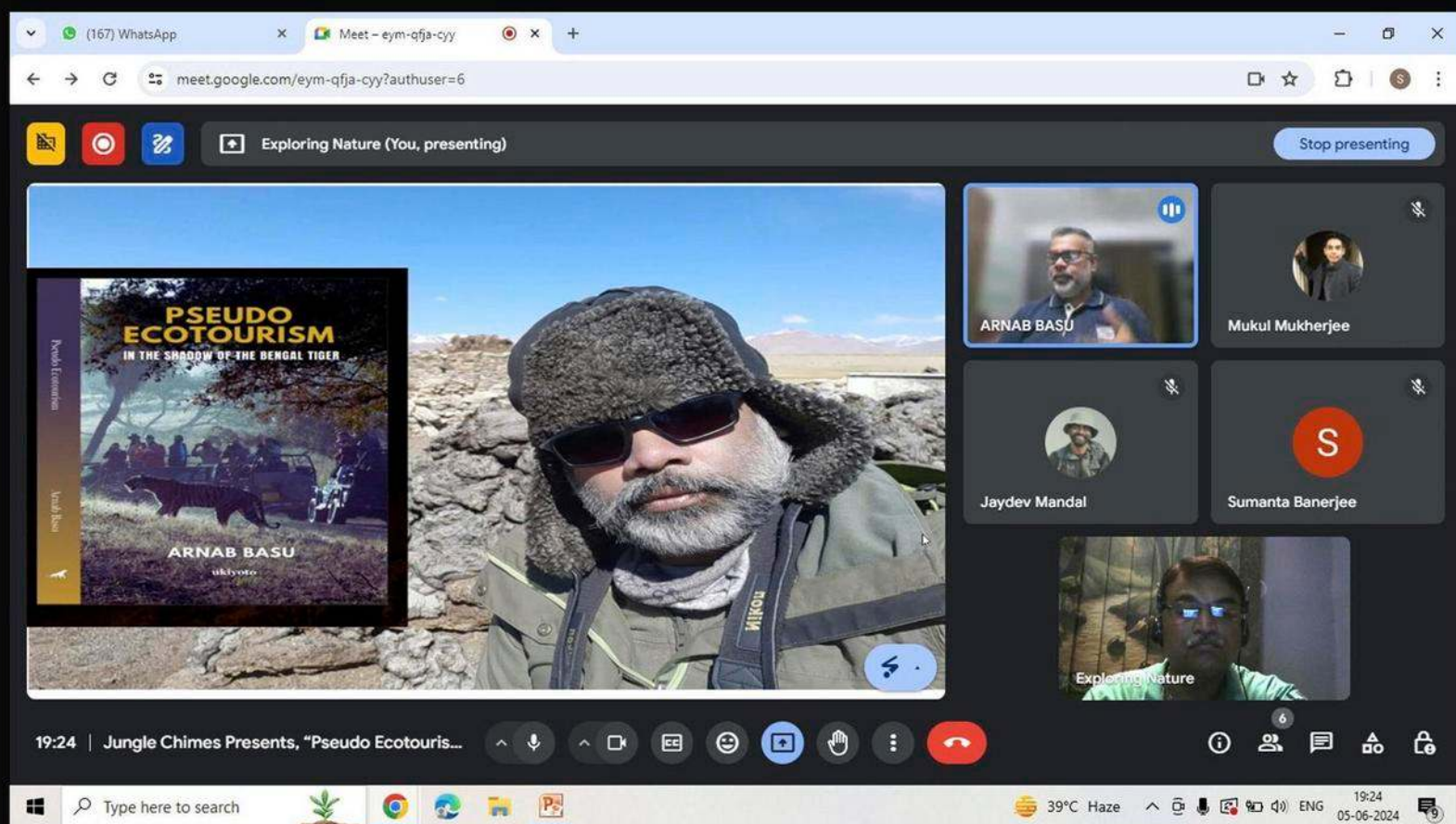
About Our "Guest of Honour" - Ripan Biswas
The only Indian Three-Time Winner of the Wildlife Photographer of the Year Competition, Organized by the Natural History Museum, London, United Kingdom.
His Stunning Wildlife Captures Enrich the Pages of Prestigious Magazines Such as Sanctuary Asia & BBC Wildlife Magazine. Recognized with Countless National and International Awards.



<https://exploringnature.net>, exploringthenature1981@gmail.com, 9934242555

About Our Host:

Hosting this insightful discussion is Satyendra K Singh, a renowned career strategist, business mentor, and motivational speaker with over 25 years of experience. As an empanelled mentor with the Government of India's MAARG program, Singh has mentored over 100 startups, helping them navigate the complexities of the business world. A published author and corporate trainer, he has composed poetry in Hindi and English and writes crime thrillers for movies. Singh's diverse expertise makes him a regular expert panellist on media channels such as News India, India News, and Doordarshan, among others.



Speaker:
 Arnab Basu,
 Sustainability
 Consultant and
 Environmental
 Writer.

*Associate
 Partner at
 Environmental
 Resource
 Management
 (ERM)
 Bangalore.*

*Also,
 Hony. Advisor -
 Environmentalist
 Exploring Nature*

Pseudo Ecotourism - Sustainability Narrated Through Stories of Relationships, Desire, and Adventurism by Arnab Basu

World Environment Day, celebrated annually on June 5th, is a global platform for raising awareness and taking action on pressing environmental issues. Initiated by the United Nations in 1974, it encourages governments, organizations, and individuals to engage in activities that promote environmental protection and sustainability. Each year, World Environment Day focuses on a specific theme, highlighting critical areas of concern such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. This day serves as a reminder of our collective responsibility to protect and preserve the natural world. It fosters a sense of global solidarity and emphasizes the importance of sustainable practices in our daily lives.

World Environment Day over Jungle Chimes

By choosing authentic ecotourism, we can narrate stories of sustainability, weaving tales of adventure that honor our planet and its people.



By participating in World Environment Day, we contribute to a broader movement that seeks to ensure a healthier, more sustainable future for generations to come. It is a call to action, urging everyone to be stewards of the Earth and to make conscious choices that benefit our environment.

As we reflect on World Environment Day, let us challenge the narratives of pseudo ecotourism. Let us seek experiences that enrich both our souls and the environment.

Under our Jungle Chimes series, we featured Arnab Basu as the speaker and Satyendra K Singh as the host.

World Environment Day serves as a reminder of our shared responsibility to protect the planet. Yet, as we celebrate nature, we must confront the rise of pseudo ecotourism - a practice that often prioritizes profit over genuine ecological stewardship.

Pseudo ecotourism cloaks itself in the allure of sustainability, offering promises of eco-friendly adventures. However, beneath this veneer lies a more complex reality. These experiences, marketed as green, frequently leave significant carbon footprints, disrupt local ecosystems, and exploit indigenous cultures. The relationship between tourists and nature becomes one of consumption rather than conservation, driven by a desire for novelty rather than a commitment to sustainability.

True ecotourism fosters deep connections between travelers and the environment. It tells stories of relationships—between people and nature, between communities and their heritage. This form of tourism is not merely an adventurous escapade but a journey towards understanding and respecting the delicate balance of our ecosystems. Genuine ecotourism empowers local communities, supports conservation efforts, and encourages responsible travel practices.

As we reflect on World Environment Day, let us challenge the narratives of pseudo ecotourism. Let us seek experiences that enrich both our souls and the environment. By choosing authentic ecotourism, we can narrate stories of sustainability, weaving tales of adventure that honor our planet and its people.

Host:

Satyendra K Singh, with over 25 years of experience, is a multi-talented individual who has composed various poetry titles in Hindi and English and is also writing crime thrillers for movies. He is a regular expert panellist on media channels such as News India, India News, India Watch, Live Today, Zee UP, Zee Salaam, Bharat Samachar, Doordarshan, and Akashvani, to name a few.

PSEUDO ECOTOURISM

IN THE SHADOW OF THE BENGAL TIGER

ARNAB BASU

ukiyoto



Author:
Arnab Basu,
Sustainability
Consultant and
Environmental
Writer

Associate Partner
at Environmental
Resource
Management
(ERM) Bangalore

Available On

Ukiyoto

I had left my marriage at thirty-five, and I was determined to become famous to cope with the rejection I was experiencing in my personal life.

Then I met my childhood friend Vedavyasa, who was seeking his own fame and glory as a way to deal with his perceived shortcomings in both his personal and professional lives.

As a result, we started pursuing wildlife photography and ecotourism as hobbies. Our sole goal was to capture images of the subcontinent's Bengal Tigers in their natural habitat.

However, via some terrible events, the immense landscapes of this great beast across the four nations that make up its habitat taught us some life-changing truths.

Eventually, I had a mentor who gifted me with a philosophy for lifetime, "to get a better perspective, you have to lie down!".

This isn't simply a wildlife enthusiast's ideology; it's the idea that led me to associate deep ecology and coin the phrase of "Pseudo Ecotourism."

Link:

Its now available in paperback, hardcover and ebook in:
<https://www.ukiyotoindia.com/product-page/pseudo-ecotourism>



Baaz Jungle Resort is an eco friendly boutique Resort which offers you a Perfect environment to recharge yourself. being enveloped by bountiful beauty of Birds, Beasts and Biological extravaganza offering a rare opportunity of shooting around with your lens from dawn to dusk-located in Pench National Park & Set amidst enviable lush Green Forest,
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Exploring Nature Awards



Judge

Mr. Santanu Majumder



Admin

Mr. Bappa Debnath



Designer

Mr. Abhishek Kausik

Embracing the Monsoon: A Joyous July Welcome to Nature Enthusiasts!

Happy July to all our nature enthusiasts! As we welcome the enchanting monsoon season, let's revel in the magic of our natural world and extend our heartfelt appreciation to everyone who has joined us on this incredible journey.

With the arrival of the monsoon, the earth comes alive in a spectacular display of renewal and abundance. The soothing rhythm of raindrops, the lush greenery that blankets the landscape, and the refreshing scent of the wet earth remind us of nature's incredible power to rejuvenate and inspire.

Together, we've explored and celebrated the rich tapestry of flora and fauna that thrive in this season. Our collective efforts have deepened our connection to the environment, reaffirming our commitment to its conservation and protection.

As we delight in the serene beauty of the monsoon, let's cherish every moment spent in nature's embrace. Let's revel in the vibrant hues, the symphony of rain-soaked melodies, and the invigorating freshness that fills the air. And let's remember that even as the rains give way to other seasons, the beauty and vitality of the monsoon leave an indelible mark on our hearts.

To all our fellow nature lovers and explorers, thank you for your unwavering passion and dedication. Here's to a season filled with joy, discovery, and profound connection with the wonders of nature.

In this current edition, we extend a special acknowledgment to the visionary artists whose remarkable creations enrich the pages of our cherished publication, "Whispering Wilds." With an expansive readership worldwide, your art not only earns the recognition it rightfully deserves but also serves as a beacon, illuminating the innate beauty and wonder of the natural world to a global audience.



Scan To Participate

Exploring Nature Awards

Top Contributors

June



R Pradeep Kumar



Samar Jana



Shera Kumar Gupta

May



Neeraj Monani



Navonil Dutta



Ridha Narain

April



Swastika Talukder Sarkar



Dr. Abhijit Bagui



Navonil Dutta

Exploring Nature Awards June



Winner

Rajarshi Banerji



Exploring Nature Awards June



1st Runner Up

Dakshesh Bharatkumar
Ashra



2nd Runner Up

Sumanta Banerjee



Exploring Nature Awards May



Winner

R Pradeep Kumar



Exploring Nature Awards May



1st Runner Up

Sumanta Banerjee



2nd Runner Up

Utsav Shaw



Exploring Nature Awards

April



Winner

Ron Conigliaro



Exploring Nature Awards

April



©Raj_Pise

1st Runner Up

Raj Pise



2nd Runner Up

Bishal Mahato



About Whispering Wilds

Whispering Wilds (e-magazine) is an initiative to make us aware of our planet where we coexist with millions of other species. This wildlife magazine helps to create awareness about nature and educate people to interact with the natural world in a responsible and sustainable way.

The Magazine showcases stories of individuals and organizations who have made a positive impact on the environment and inspire the readers to act responsibly. Whispering Wilds, features stunning photography and artwork that showcases the beauty and diversity of nature. The magazine features interviews with experts and scientists who offer valuable insights on wildlife research and conservation.

Get Your Wilderness Stories Published

- **Subject Line:** In the subject line of your email, use the exact heading of the article you're submitting. This helps us quickly identify and process your submission.
- **Grammar Check:** Prior to submission, review your article for any grammatical errors. While we appreciate your efforts, please be aware that our editorial team will also conduct a thorough language and grammar check.
- **Content Arrangement:** Organize your photographs and write-up sequentially in a Word document. Ensure that the content flows smoothly from start to finish.
- **Photo Attachments:** Send your photographs as separate attachments in .jpg format. Make sure the dimensions of the images are 1024 pixels at the longest edge and that they have a resolution of 300dpi. Also include species name as the file name. Include all the images in the same email.
- **Personal Information:** In the body of the email, include your full name, designation, company (if applicable), and your location. Provide your contact number for easy communication.
- **Send to Email:** Email your article to us at whisperingwilds1981@gmail.com.

By following these instructions, you'll ensure that your article submission is well-organized and can be efficiently reviewed by our team. We look forward to receiving your contribution.

Launching Soon...

Introducing "Advertorials: The Power of Conversation"

Dive into an Immersive World of Knowledge and Inspiration with our Video-based E-Magazine!

"Advertorials" present engaging interviews with industry experts, thought leaders, and change-makers.

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Experience captivating stories, stunning visuals, and VIDEO-based ads!

Engage with short, visually enticing videos that blend seamlessly with our eco-friendly content.

From sustainable fashion to wildlife conservation, let the whispers of the wild inspire you!

- Introducing video-based advertisements is a powerful way to promote your products, services, or brand using engaging and visually compelling content. Video ads have become increasingly popular in the digital marketing landscape due to their ability to captivate audiences, convey messages effectively, and drive higher engagement rates compared to other advertising formats.

Video advertisements are promotional videos created to showcase products, services, or brands through visual storytelling. Video ads have the advantage of being highly engaging, memorable, and effective in conveying messages to a wide audience.

Use Hashtag #WhisperingWilds

Tag us when you post animal images on social media



Exploring Nature
CALL OF THE WILD

OUR BRAND PARTNERS



Whispering Wilds (e-magazine) is your portal to our planet's incredible biodiversity. Share your love for animals and nature. Tag us when you post animal images on social media. Who knows, your image could win a place in our magazine! Let's raise awareness and celebrate our coexistence with millions of species!



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