

THE MUD ON BOOTS PROJECT



IMPACT REPORT
JULY - DECEMBER 2017

Sanctuary
NATURE FOUNDATION

**THE MUD ON
BOOTS PROJECT**

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The Mud on Boots Project is a Sanctuary Nature Foundation programme designed to empower grassroots conservationists across India. Such individuals are identified by the *Sanctuary* team with support from a reliable network of wildlife conservationists from whom nominations are invited. Over a two-year period, the selected Project Leaders receive a monetary grant and other strategic support from *Sanctuary*. The Project has been developed to be flexible to the needs of each Project Leader and *Sanctuary's* support to each one is customised. This ensures that each project develops holistically. Nominations for the Mud on Boots Project are considered on a rolling basis, as and when funds become available.

Who are our donors?

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Project Leader Manoj Gogoi from Assam releases a rescued Barn Owl back into the wild. The owl was a victim of a road accident and remained under Manoj's care for 39 days.



| COLLABORATIONS

The TINA Grant

The Tina Abraham-Sanctuary Initiative for Nature Action (TINA) was launched in 2015 by banker Paul Abraham and Sanctuary in memory of Tina Abraham, who was a staunch wildlife defender. It set the blue print for the Mud on Boots Project which was established two years later, in 2017. The TINA Grant empowers three grassroots conservationists through the Mud on Boots Project.

The Hemendra Kothari Tiger Defenders Fund

Investment banker Hemendra Kothari is widely-recognised as the single largest individual donor to wildlife conservation efforts in India. In 2016, in honour of Mr. Kothari's 70th birthday, his friends and colleagues pooled their resources to establish the Hemendra Kothari Tiger Defender Fund to be disbursed through the Mud on Boots Project. Currently, three Project Leaders, each of whom is working in tiger landscapes, is supported via the fund.

Kādu Wines

In December 2017, Sula Vineyards Pvt. Ltd. launched Kādu, a brand of premium wines made entirely in Karnataka and sold exclusively in the state. Sula has generously committed a percentage of proceeds from each bottle of wine that is sold to the Mud on Boots Project. The first Project Leader to be supported by Sula Wines will be announced in February 2018.

| Where are our Project Leaders?



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Anoko Mega



LOCATION: LOWER DIBANG DISTRICT, ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Eastern Hoolock Gibbon Conservation

A community leader, visual media enthusiast and conservation educator, Anoko concentrates on the conservation of the eastern hoolock gibbon *Hoolock leuconedys* in and around the 282 sq. km. Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary. After spending the first six months of 2017 surveying and engaging with the *Mishmi* tribal inhabitants of the Lower Dibang valley to gauge their attitude towards conservation, Anoko has been focussing on the condition of the endangered eastern hoolock gibbon outside the Protected Area.

He has identified gibbon families residing in “forest islands” within agricultural lands in the six villages of Iduli, Rukmo, Denlo, Abongo, Abali and Korunu. Hoolock gibbons locomote via brachiation and seldom come down to the ground, where they are ungainly and vulnerable to predation. The destruction and fragmentation of forests in the valley has left innumerable gibbon families stranded in forest patches that are too small to sustain them but which they are unable

Anoko Mega, along with being a conservationist is also a stellar filmmaker. Under the Mud on Boots project, he documents the lives and habitat of the eastern hoolock gibbons of Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary and its fringe areas.



to leave. Anoko observed such stranded gibbons to be exhibiting signs of stress and reports that several gibbon families have altered their naturally-varied diet to include the maize that is being cultivated in the fields in order to survive. Anoko is now working with the landowners in Abango and Injunu, two of the six identified sites, to protect the resident gibbons, and is exploring eco-tourism opportunities with them. To this end, he is collaborating with local travel agents to bring tourists to these sites for a small fee and is thus incentivising the farmers to expand the habitat and conserve the species. The concerned land owners, Eketo Misu and Jitu Miri, have expressed an interest in developing this initiative and now claim emotional attachment to the gibbons that reside in their farmlands. Three families of gibbons including one female and three males in two families and one female and two males in the third family reside in three different locations in these farmlands.

Anoko takes school children on a field trip to learn about the vulnerable eastern hoolock gibbon.



Conservation Awareness

Anoko continues his community engagement endeavours through workshops and programmes in schools in the villages of the Lower Dibang valley. Over the past six months, he has held eight such programmes, which have included documentary screenings, interactive discussions, drawing competitions and quizzes. In October, he also collaborated with the REH Festival Committee to organise an awareness run for the citizens of Roing town with the tagline 'People Connecting to Nature'. Over a hundred people participated in the marathon that was from Roing to Simari. The runners completed the marathon while carrying banners and chanting slogans encouraging respect for nature and wildlife conservation. As an alumnus of The Green Hub, Anoko is a passionate and trained wildlife photographer. Over the past year, he has also documented 23 species of butterflies in the Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary.

A male gibbon peers out from the canopy of a patch of forest in the lower Dibang valley that is now surrounded by farmland. The fragmentation and destruction of forests has left some gibbon populations stranded and separated from the dense Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary.

The Flying Squad



MEMBERS: ARPIT MISHRA, VIVEK MISHRA, MUKESH TIWARI
LOCATION: SEONI CIRCLE, MADHYA PRADESH

Wildlife Rescues

The three-member Flying Squad team rescued an incredible 305 venomous and non-venomous snakes, 15 monitor lizards and one pangolin from human-wildlife conflict situations in the Seoni Circle of Madhya Pradesh in the last five months of 2017. The team also dealt with two serious cases of venomous snakebites, and in all probability saved the lives of the two victims by convincing their families to rush them to the hospital instead of resorting to the widely-accepted but completely unscientific and ineffective remedies prescribed by witchdoctors and village shamans. At the site of each rescue, the team briefed the gathered locals on snakebite management protocols and the basic biology of snakes. The Mud on Boots Project has also allowed the team to purchase and maintain equipment that is necessary for the safe handling of wildlife. This includes LED torches, raincoats, snake hooks and gum boots.

The Project Leaders of The Flying Squad, Seoni, undergo a day's training on snake handling and snakebite management with renowned herpetologist Gerry Martin.



Conservation Awareness

The team conducted intensive snake awareness workshops in 16 villages in the Seoni Circle that were attended by an estimated 200 individuals, ranging from children to village elders. A similar awareness camp was organised for 30 students of the Agriculture Institute, Jabalpur, and for 800 staff and students of Navodaya Vidyalay Kanhiwada. At the latter institute, the school guards were also trained to safely handle and release snakes. In August, they also held a snake rescue and handling workshop for 82 trainees of the Forest Training Institute, Lakhnadon.

Arpit Mishra of the Flying Squad, Seoni, releases an Indian rock python rescued from a neighbouring village.



Trainings and Collaboration

In the month of November, the team attended a day-long intensive workshop on best animal-handling practices, snake rescue and release protocols, snakebite management and essential safety measures. The workshop was led by renowned herpetologist, Gerry Martin of The Gerry Martin Project, and was organised by the Sanctuary Nature Foundation in collaboration with the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department. The team aims to expand their work in the coming years and four new rescuers from less-accessible localities in Seoni have been recruited, trained and made a part of the team. The newly-expanded team is now also in touch with 40 other snake rescuers from various organisations working in different areas of Madhya Pradesh. This network of rescuers is sharing information and exploring avenues for future collaborations.

Forest trainees at a snake handling workshop conducted by The Flying Squad, Seoni.

Joydeb Pradhan





**LOCATION: HOWRAH DISTRICT,
WEST BENGAL**

The Seed Goat Reserve

This innovative initiative by Project Leader Joydeb Pradhan is aimed at providing some support to economically-challenged families while diffusing community resentment against fishing cats. These felines sometimes prey on goats, the main livestock of the villagers in the region. Over the past year, a self-replenishing 'bank' of goats has been created in the area, allowing Joydeb to compensate any villager who loses an animal to a fishing cat.

In July, four families received two goats each and two families received one pregnant goat each. The recipients were from the villages of Saoria, Sardah, and Kushberia, which lie within a proposed Biodiversity Heritage Site under the *Indian Biological Diversity Act, 2002*. These recipients were from economically-challenged families that had lost goats to fishing cats in the past. They were given the goats with the understanding that any kids born to these goats would serve as a seed bank to replace goats in the event of future goat predation by fishing cats. In August and September, goats were given to six families in Amta Block II, Howrah, in association with the district council, Howrah Zilla Parishad and the Forest Department. In October and November, 11 goats were disbursed to eight families that reside in conflict hotspot villages. One such hamlet, Mirpara, saw the predation of six goats by fishing cats in a span of two months.

Joydeb Pradhan works with local communities, field biologists and authorities for the conservation of the vulnerable fishing cat.



Conservation Awareness

Between the success of the Seed Goat Reserve and the awareness created by Joydeb and his colleagues, the local community has also realised that goat predation by fishing cats has been over-represented. Since the Seed Goat Reserve is essentially owned and managed by the community, there has been no false reporting of predation. This has changed the erstwhile-pervading belief that goats comprise the main prey of the fishing cat. In fact, members of the community have independently identified that it is in hamlets situated within reed beds where goats are most vulnerable to being attacked by fishing cats, as reed beds are fishing cat habitat.

The villagers have proposed that sign boards informing people of ways to keep their goats safe, especially in the dry season when fish are removed from ponds, be put up in these hamlets. Due to this seasonal dearth of prey, goat predation is more likely to happen at this time. The Sanctuary Nature Foundation is working on this request. Meanwhile, Joydeb is now working towards erecting road signs that will indicate to vehicles to slow down along vulnerable stretches of the road as in the last six months, three fishing cat deaths by vehicle collisions have been recorded. Members of The Fishing Cat Project, of which Joydeb is a part, have also started interactive classroom sessions with students who attend the government school in the area with the aim to generate ecological literacy. These sessions that include drawing competitions, theatre, documentary screenings and quizzes, are ongoing.

Joydeb's work serves the dual purposes of conserving fishing cats as well as preserving the unique wetland ecosystems that they inhabit.



Manoj Gogoi



LOCATION: BOKAKHAT, ASSAM

Wildlife Rescue

Over the past six months, Manoj has rescued a staggering 147 individual wild animals from conflict situations around the Kaziranga National Park. Noteworthy amongst these was the rescue of a four-meter-long king cobra from a home in Jokhlabanda village. The reptile was in poor condition as the terrified homeowner had poured phenyl, a strong disinfectant, on it. Manoj removed the snake from the house, cleaned it, and kept it under observation for a month before releasing it back into the wild. He also successfully rehabilitated a Barn Owl that was victim to a speeding vehicle. Manoj's wildlife rescue and rehabilitation work is supervised by Dr. Naveen Pandey of The Corbett Foundation and is undertaken with the consent of the Forest Department.

A concerned Manoj Gogoi inspects one of his rescues at his rehabilitation centre in the village of Dumjan near Kaziranga.



Manoj and his team of volunteers work to rescue a stranded rhino. Manoj has built a network of over 90 community volunteers from the fringe villages of Kaziranga National Park.

Conservation Awareness

Educating the public about wildlife and wildlife conservation is a crucial aspect of Manoj's work. In the second half of 2017, he conducted wildlife documentary screenings and awareness workshops in five villages around Kaziranga, and led nature trails for four schools. In this time, he also coordinated two litter collection drives in the buffer areas of the park that saw the participation of volunteers young and old. Along with the team from The Corbett Foundation, Manoj has reached out to 30 villages in the area with information on how to help wild animals during the annual flooding of the reserve.

As of date, there are 90 rescue volunteers in the villages that Manoj works in. These volunteers apprise Manoj of conflict situations and help him in myriad other ways. The impact of Manoj's work can be ascertained from the story of a recent rescue. Manoj was called to remove a python that had entered a village home. The snake had obviously recently eaten and while being released into a safe environment, regurgitated five domestic ducks. That the homeowner of the house where the snake was found chose to call Manoj and not kill the snake that had caused him the loss of five ducks, each of which cost Rs.300, is proof of a growing positive attitude towards conservation.

Rajeev Chauhan



LOCATION: ETAWAH, UTTAR PRADESH

Conservation Awareness

In the last six months, Rajeev conducted various capacity building programs to promote the sustainable use of natural resources and to tackle problems such as poaching and forest degradation with teachers and students from eight schools in Uttar Pradesh. Conservation education workshops were carried out in 24 schools and four junior colleges in Etawah and 10 schools in Agra. Apart from this, various field-oriented games and activities were conducted in nine schools in Etawah and one school in Agra. Under the School Forest Program initiated by Rajeev through the Mud on Boots project, ten saplings of indigenous trees were planted in 12 schools with the help of both teachers and students.

The Chambal Biodiversity Information Centres conceptualised by the Project Leader are pinboards that serve as repositories of information on the biodiversity and conservation of the National Chambal Sanctuary. Here, posters, pamphlets and photographs are displayed and maintained by the students. Nine schools and one college in Etawah now host such centres, which are made accessible to all members of the community.

Beyond engaging students, Rajeev has also conducted community awareness programs in 14 villages

In the past year, Rajeev Chauhan's conservation awareness initiatives have reached four colleges, 34 schools and 14 villages in the state of Uttar Pradesh.



around the National Chambal Sanctuary. During these events, he focussed on highlighting the uniqueness of the Chambal landscape, the importance of gharial conservation and the responsibility of the community towards environmental protection. Awareness programs were conducted by Rajeev through banners, posters and public discussions. Around a thousand people attended these programs.

Chambal Mitras

The Chambal Mitra programme involves a network of volunteers from villages along the Chambal river. These volunteers, who range from all walks of life, are committed to the conservation of the Chambal ecosystem and are selected and trained by Rajeev to serve as communicators, informers and advocates for conservation. The Chambal Mitras also carry out the important task of keeping a watchout for any illegal activities taking place in the Chambal landscape. Nine new members were added to the Chambal Mitra family in the last six months, and Chambal Mitras are now present in 21 villages along the river. The Mitra groups in various villages are now self-governed and are consistently guided and trained

Rajeev Chauhan promotes plantation of various native trees through his new initiative –The School Forest Program.



by Rajeev and his team. Meetings to promote sustainable farming practices with the aim of reducing water pollution were conducted by the Chambal Mitras in their own villages, over the past few months. In addition, as a result of their continuous engagement with the local communities, six pythons, one sand boa, one krait, one cobra and a mugger crocodile were rescued by the team with the help and support of the villagers.

The Chambal Mitra program has considerably strengthened the relationship between the community and the forest department. With the support of the Chambal Mitras and alert villagers, a three-striped roof turtle was seized from poachers in Udi village and 129 Indian softshell turtles and Indian flapshell turtles were rescued from poachers from Etawah with the help of locals and the Forest Department in September 2017. The turtles were released into the Yamuna river.

Sand mining continues to be a grave threat to not just the landscape but also to those who work to protect it. Rajeev's team regularly faces threats from the sand mining mafia, and efforts are now being made to keep all members motivated and safe.

Rajeev and his team of Chambal Mitras rescue a mugger crocodile from a farm. The rescued crocodile was later released into the Chambal river.



LOCATION: MOYAR VALLEY, TAMIL NADU

Vulture Distribution Survey

In May 2017, the team of volunteers and forest watchers led by Chandru surveyed vulture nesting sites along the Moyar River in the North Nilgiris range and the Sathyamangalam range. A total of 29 nests were observed in the surveyed area during this period. When these sites were revisited in November, during the new breeding season, the team found the nests to be less active than expected. Only four new White-rumped Vulture nests were observed while eight nests were being reused. Three of the 12 nests had eggs that were being incubated. Chandru postulates that the decline in the count could be due to the delay in the breeding season because of changing weather conditions.

Through the later months of 2017, Chandru and his team were moving through elephant and tiger habitat on foot and unarmed. While the team enjoyed many wonderful moments spent observing herds of elephants bathing in water holes, they had to be alert to unexpected encounters at all times. One member of the team

S. Chandrasekaran surveys vulture nesting sites in the Moyar Valley.



was also instrumental in identifying a wounded wild elephant, alerting the Forest Department and aiding them in its rescue. Unfortunately the elephant succumbed to its injuries. The anti-poaching forest watchers who work in close association with Chandru reported two separate and significant vulture congregations on tiger kills. Sixty White-rumped vultures were seen at one site and 40 at the other. The North Nilgiris Forest has been home to four species of vultures: the White-rumped Vulture, Long-billed Vulture, Red-headed Vulture and Egyptian Vulture. A major decline in the number of Egyptian Vultures has been observed over the past few years. Changes in the habitat and a decrease in the availability of livestock carcasses are probable reasons for the decline according to Chandru.

Community Engagement

To achieve a better understanding of vulture distribution and densities, Chandru and his team conducted surveys of the resident *Irula* and *Kuramba* tribal communities to collect data on the presence, movement, and behaviour of vultures in the area. Areas that were known to have a teeming population of vultures in the

Chandru listens in rapt attention to an anti-poaching watcher as he shares anecdotes and information about the flora and fauna of the Moyar valley.



past as per old records and studies were selected for this exercise, and in total, six villages, including Nandipuram, Tengumarahada, Pudukaad and Kallampalayam in Satyamangalam Tiger Reserve, and Theppakadu and Thorappalli in Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, were surveyed. Thirty five individuals were interviewed from these settlements. Along with answering the questions related to vulture distribution and behaviour and the changes observed over the years, the interviewees shared valuable anecdotes and experiences. Particularly interesting were the stories shared by six old *Kota* tribal men who had assisted the British on hunts during the time of the Raj!

Chandru's surveys and study in the Moyar valley, the last stronghold of the Gyps vultures in south India, are key to understanding the past and current distribution and density of vulture species in the valley, and will lay the foundation for management plans for their protection. His reliance on the knowledge and skills of the tribal anti-poaching watchers that are employed on a daily wage basis by the Forest Department, and who are part of his team, has granted him access to little-known areas and gifted the study an authenticity beyond mere numbers.

Chandru and his team conduct regular vulture surveys in the forests of Moyar valley, often in close proximity to other uninhibited denizens of the wild.



Sajal Madhu



**LOCATION: RAIGARH DISTRICT,
CHHATTISGARH**

Conflict Documentation

The severe and often fatal Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC) in Chhattisgarh is both under-reported and poorly documented. Over the past six months, Sajal has made a concerted effort to collate information on elephant deaths, human deaths and property/crop damage caused by the conflict. By utilising the *Right to Information Act* and through direct interviews and surveys, Sajal is slowly outlining the scale of the problem in the Dharamjaigarh district of the state. In August and September, he recorded four human deaths and two elephant deaths in four villages. He also served as a facilitator between the bereaved families and the state government by guiding the former on how to apply for the compensation stipulated by the government in such cases.

Sajal Madhu takes notes from aggrieved villagers at a site disrupted by a herd of elephants in Dharamjaigarh.



Community Facilitator

Sajal serves as an informal link between village communities and the Chhattisgarh Forest Department. As the Founder of the Hathi Bachao Sangharsh Samiti, he is well-known and trusted in the villages of his district and is often the first outsider to receive information on conflict incidents, which he then reports to the Forest Department. In November, when 18 homes in Kancheera village were destroyed by wild elephants, Sajal played a crucial role in assessing the damage and facilitating the interaction between the victims and the department. Simultaneously, Sajal remains in constant contact with Forest Rangers in Dharamjaigarh, who also apprise him of conflict incidents. Sajal is now in discussions with District Forest Officer Pranay Mishra on ways to mitigate and ease the simmering conflict.

Habitat destruction and fragmentation have forced herds of these gentle giants into human settlements. While corporate conglomerates plunder the land, humans and animals alike struggle to consolidate what little remains.



Outreach

In October 2017, Sajal launched a public awareness campaign titled 'Haathi Sabka Saathi' in Dharamjaigarh. Through the campaign, Sajal hosts community meetings where conflict afflicted villagers get the opportunity to interact with a senior member of the Forest Department in order to resolve any pending issues. He also screens an educational short film on elephant behaviour during these meetings. Thus far, the campaign has reached the villages of Krundha and Baisa, where villagers enthusiastically participated in the sessions and had the opportunity to discuss several issues with the DFO. In October, Sajal organised Forest Protection Week in collaboration with the forest department in the village of Ududa during which he held meetings on HEC. In the sessions that were conducted, Sajal reached out to over 1500 people.

Sajal Madhu has tactfully taken on the monumental responsibility of creating a sense of empathy for the pachyderms, amongst the people most affected by the conflict.

Takam Nabam (Ghora Aabhe Society)



LOCATION: SEIJOSA, ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Outreach

Chairperson of the Ghora Aabhe Society that comprises *Nyishi* tribal elders from villages around the Pakke Tiger Reserve, Takam *ji* has been busy supervising the conservation work and organisation of the society. With support from the Mud on Boots Project, Takam *ji* was able to commission a website for the society-owned and run Pakke Jungle Camp, an eco-tourism venture from which profits go back to the community. He has also been key to the development of an eight-minute-long film on the history and legacy of the Ghora Aabhe Society, which is widely-recognised as one of India's most conservation-friendly tribal councils. Amongst the

A strong contributor to the Hornbill Nest Adoption Program, Takam ji and the members of the Ghora Aabhe Society play a key role in protecting Pakke from illegal activities such as logging and poaching.



many initiatives that the film touches upon is the successful Hornbill Nest Adoption Programme, as part of which members of the community monitor and protect hornbill nests. As a team-building exercise and in an effort to communicate the contribution of the many members of the society, each member of the society was profiled by volunteers under Takam *ji*'s supervision. The members of the society are newly-acquainted with social media and are now employing the help of volunteers and young members of the community to communicate the work of the society on online platforms. In the month

As the day sets, a congregation of Wreathed Hornbills is spotted at a roosting site in Pakke. Once hunted, hornbills are now revered by the Nyishi tribals.



of September, Takam *ji* chaired a meeting on the future of the society. Various conservation proposals were discussed, along with strategies to recruit more young members to the society. Takam Nabam serves as a catalyst for change and action within the *Nyishi* community. As a well-respected village elder who supports conservation projects and collaborates with the Forest Department, various conservationists and scientists, he has developed a radical conservation-friendly culture that is bringing his community recognition and accolades.

Members of the Ghora Aabhe Society lead a procession in support of the 54th Wildlife Week. The society has been the driving force behind the community-based conservation programmes in Seijosa.

Tsuseki Yimchunger and
Limthure Yimchunger





**LOCATION: KIPHRE DISTRICT,
NAGALAND**

Bhutan Glory Eco Club

The voluntary club founded by Tsuseki and Limthure in Fakim village, on the edge of the Fakim Wildlife Sanctuary, has continued to flourish, with weekly activities for the members including butterfly walks, nature trails, photography workshops and drawing competitions. It is a matter of pride that nine members of the Fakim Village Council are now part of the club and earnestly participate in the activities. This has encouraged other members of the community to join the Project Leaders' mission, and today the Bhutan Glory Eco Club is 25 members strong. Tsuseki and Limthure have also been working to involve more women with the work of the club and to this end have started conducting monthly cleanliness drives exclusively for women in the village.

Our Mud on Boots Project Coordinator Maitreyee Mujumdar visits Project Leaders Tsuseki and Limthure, locally known as the "master educators", in Fakim, the first LED-powered village in Nagaland.



Conservation Awareness

In July, Tsuseki and Limthure collaborated with the state Forest Department to conduct an intensive awareness program for the citizens of Fakim. The presentation was followed by a reforestation drive during which 15 species of native trees were planted on land impacted by *jhum* or slash and burn cultivation. The Project Leaders have taken it upon themselves to establish Eco Clubs in all four villages that fringe the Fakim Wildlife Sanctuary. Over the last six months, they have conducted community meetings and workshops in the villages of Salomi, Tsudang, Penkin and Thanamir, the last of which now boasts its own Eco Club. The duo has also been focussing on the protection of Amur Falcons, which migrate through Nagaland in the thousands and which are often hunted. In collaboration with the Forest Department, they have thus far conducted awareness workshops on the species and its conservation in the villages of Phuvkiu and Shongkiu.

In November 2017, Tsuseki and Limthure received the Nature Conservancy Award from the Balipara Foundation in recognition of their conservation work with local communities through the Bhutan Glory Eco Club.

Women of Fakim participate in a cleanliness drive organised by The Bhutan Glory Eco Club. The club is encouraging the participation of women in community-based conservation activities.

Uras Kha





**LOCATION: JAISALMER DISTRICT,
RAJASTHAN**

Closure Patrol

Through the year, Uras monitors the 17 closures established by the Forest Department for the Great Indian Bustards (GIBs) that tenuously survive in and around Rajasthan's Desert National Park. Uras walks upto 25 gruelling kilometres in a day in order to achieve this task and surveys one closure each day of the month. During this monitoring exercise, he counts the number of Great Indian Bustards

In the harsh conditions of the Thar desert, goatherd Uras Kha's resolve to protect the Great Indian Bustard shines bright and strong.



that he sights, and notes the presence of any predator or other disturbance. He also records all other wildlife that he sees in and around the closure. From July to December 2017, Uras patrolled the GIB breeding core areas, reporting any signs of poaching or damage to the closure to the Forest Department. Even though community resentment regarding habitat protection still persists, Uras recorded additional information related to GIB movement and presence with the help of members of the local community.

Apart from being one of the last strongholds of the Great Indian Bustard, the Desert National Park in Jaisalmer is home to myriad other species of flora and fauna.

Zakhuma Don



LOCATION: WEST PHAILANG DISTRICT, MIZORAM

Documentation

Since July 2017, forest guard Zakhuma has taken hundreds of pictures in the Dampa Tiger Reserve of which he has selected 120 wildlife photographs for his ongoing project to establish an extensive photo library on the biodiversity of the park. In addition to his anti-poaching patrol duties and biodiversity documentation, he has also recorded various meetings and initiatives of the Forest Department and the richness of the indigenous *Chakma* tribal culture. In November, Zakhuma documented the capture and release of a clouded leopard that had been preying on livestock in a village near Aizwal for several months. In this particular case, Zakhuma also played the role of a mediator between the concerned villagers and the Forest Department, ensuring that the operation was conducted smoothly.

Project Leader and Forest Guard Zakhuma Don was honoured with the Forest Guard and Rangers Award at The Balipara Awards 2017 for his relentless anti-poaching work and prolific documentation of the biodiversity of Dampa.



Conservation Awareness

Zakhuma attended the All Mizoram Forest Field Staff Association Conference in W. Phaileng where the Chief Guest was Lalthangliana Murray, IFS (CCF Admn.). Various aspects of wildlife conservation and management were discussed at the meeting and Zakhuma was able to share his experiences and learn from the experiences of others. The Project Leader was also invited as a speaker at the Nature in Focus Festival that was held in Bengaluru in August 2017. Here, he showcased a video clip on the natural treasures of Dampa and spoke about his experiences as a forest guard to a large crowd of wildlife enthusiasts, most of whom knew little about this tiger reserve. In November 2017, Zakhuma was honoured at the annual Balipara Foundation Awards with a Forest Guard Award in recognition of his service to the natural heritage of northeast India.

Dampa Tiger Reserve, located along the Indo-Bangladesh border, is under constant threat from poachers. A member of the Forest Department, Zakhuma is one of the frontline protectors of the wildlife in the region.

INDIVIDUALS

- Anadya Singh
- Anirudh Nair
- Annirudha Dhamorikar
- Aparajita Datta
- Chandni Chabra
- Chetan Agarwal
- Debadityo Sinha
- Dipani Sutaria
- Dr. Pramod Patil
- Gaurav Shirodkar
- Gurmeet Sapal
- Hemant Kamdi
- Imrana Khan
- James
- Jadumoni Goswami
- Kaustav Patel
- Kedar Gore
- Lansothung Lotha
- Nandini Velho
- Naveen Pandey
- Neha Sinha
- Nikhil Eapen
- Peeyush Sekhsaria
- Phagun Dhakka
- Pradip Krishen
- Prerna Singh Bindra
- Purva Variyar
- Ramesh Agrawal
- Rita Banerji
- Ronak Bedi
- Rupak De
- Sachin Pillai
- Satem Logchar
- Sanjay Shukla
- Siddharth Jalan
- Shashank Dalvi
- Shivaram Subramaniam
- Shraddha Rathod
- T. R. Shankar Raman
- Tana Tapi
- Tiasa Adhya

ORGANISATIONS

- Arunachal Pradesh Forest Department
- Balipara Foundation
- Chhattisgarh Forest Department
- Kaziranga Forest Department
- Madhya Pradesh Forest Department
- Mizoram Forest Department
- Nature in Focus
- Rajasthan Forest Department
- The Corbett Foundation
- The Green Hub
- The Gerry Martin Project
- Uttar Pradesh Forest Department

ACHIEVEMENTS



- In July, Project Leader Anoko Mega was nominated for an award under the 'amateur' category of the Ninth Centre for Media Studies 'VATAVARAN' International Environment and Wildlife Film Festival and Forum for his short documentary on the Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary.
- In July, Mud on Boots Project Head Cara Tejpal raised Rs.1,072,000 for the project through a crowd funding campaign held on Ketto.com over a period of 45 days.
- In August, Project Leader Zakhuma Don participated as a speaker at the Nature in Focus Festival held in Bengaluru. Zakhuma presented a short clip on the biodiversity of Mizoram's Dampa Tiger Reserve, where he works as a forest guard.
- In September, our young subscribers to *Cub* magazine sent letters of support to Project Leader Manoj Gogoi in acknowledgment of his wildlife rescue work in and around the Kaziranga National Park during the monsoon floods.
- In November, Project Leaders, Tsuseki and Limthure Yimchunger from Nagaland and Zakhuma Don from Mizoram were recognised for their contribution towards wildlife conservation at the the fifth annual Balipara Foundation Awards held in Guwahati, Assam.
- Through the Mud on Boots Project, the Sanctuary Nature Foundation organised a capacity building workshop for our Project Leaders in Seoni, Madhya Pradesh. The workshop was led by Gerry Martin, one of India's leading herpetologists.

- In November, artist and founder of jaypore.com, Shilpa Sharma raised 1.5 lakh for the Mud on Boots Project from an exhibition and sale of her artworks. From this, an amount of Rs. 50,000 was awarded to Sevaram Parihar for his relentless efforts towards the protection of Demoiselle Cranes in Rajasthan.
- Our Project Leaders in Nagaland, Tsuseki and Limthure, succeeded in enrolling all nine members of the Fakim Village Council in their Bhutan Glory Eco Club.
- As per information received from our ground sources, Project Leader Joydeb Pradhan's innovative 'Seed Goat Reserve' is successfully allaying community resentment towards fishing cats in the villages of Amta II in West Bengal.
- In January 2018, in recognition of his consistent fieldwork, Project Leader S. Chandrasekaran was invited by the National Tiger Conservation Authority to give a presentation on vulture conservation in the Moyar Valley.

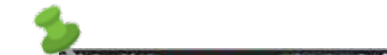


MEDIA COVERAGE



Unlady Warriors
 4 Crowdfunding Campaigns Aim to Support and Empower An Army Of Unconventional Conservationists From Across The Country

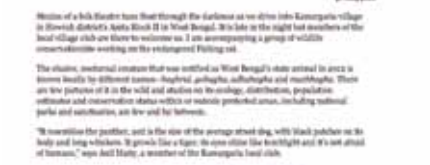
Shivdip Singh, the father and son, the country's...
 Shivdip Singh is a shepherd from the little known village of...



'Mud on Boots' project launched to support conservationists



The cat that stole their fish



Stories of a fish trader from that through the forest as he drives into Ranaganga village...



Anoko Mega, Takam Nabam awarded Grassroots Conservation Leaders

Painting competition mark Wildlife Week at Kiphire



The organizers and officials with participants during the celebration of Wildlife Week 2017...




हाथियों ने पूरे गांव को किन्या बेघर दहशत के साथे सामना



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- Pg. 48 - Dr. Pramod Patil
- Pg. 49 - Uras Kha
- Pg. 50 - Zakhuma Don
- Pg. 51, 52, 54, 55 - Vijender Sharma and Rohit Gusain
- Pg. 56-57 - Maitreyee Mujumdar

A group of children in school uniforms are playing in a field of yellow flowers. Some are sitting on the ground, while others are standing and playing. The background is a dense forest of tall trees.

The Sanctuary Nature Foundation
is a Section 8 Company registered under the *Company
Act, 2013*. It is also registered under Section 12A of the
Income Tax Act, 1961.

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on maitreyee@sanctuaryasia.com

*Note: Donations are eligible for a tax deduction under
Section 80G of the Income Tax Act.*

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