

SANCTUARY NATURE FOUNDATION

Impact Report 2020-2021



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FOUNDATION**

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Bittu Sahgal

**Founder,
Sanctuary Nature Foundation**

Editor of *Sanctuary Asia*, India's first and largest circulating wildlife and ecology magazine (1981) and Founder-Editor of *Sanctuary Cub* (1984).

A YEAR UNLIKE ANY OTHER

We are passing through strange times. But the biosphere is self-repairing and, more than ever before, Sanctuary recognises the wisdom in communicating and cooperating as a survival strategy. The children Sanctuary influenced decades ago are now in drivers' seats, poised to lead us to safe harbour. *Sanctuary Asia* and *Sanctuary Cub*, were never 'just magazines' – since their birth in the 1980s, they have evolved into strong movements that have led to the creation of diverse, yet umbilically connected projects.

Kids for Tigers now reaches over a million children through one of India's most successful school outreach programmes focused on biodiversity and climate change. Our Mud on Boots project provides customised grants to gritty individuals working on the ground in virtually every biogeographic zone on the Indian subcontinent. Sanctuary's COCOON Conservancies concept has been tested over the past five years at Gothangaon in Maharashtra and is currently poised to be scaled as a community-driven, rewilding initiative across the country. Our key? Ensure that diverse local communities are the primary beneficiaries of biodiversity restoration so they are the agents of positive change.

To communicate the rationale for our mission, Sanctuary organises three annual events to spotlight conversation actions executed by individuals who are working to improve the lives of locals and our wildernesses. The Sanctuary Debates, styled after the iconic Oxford Union-style Debates, engage policy makers and implementers into the tri-junction of biodiversity, economics and climate change. The Sanctuary Wildlife Photography Awards coalesces multitudes of people behind the objective of turning wildlife photography into an effective conservation tool. The Sanctuary Wildlife Service Awards were instituted over two decades ago to honour India's wildlife defenders who perform various roles as activists, lawyers, researchers, citizen scientists, educators, entrepreneurs and more.

The Sanctuary Nature Foundation holds on to the ethics and ideals drilled into us by the likes of Dr. Sálim Ali, R.E. Hawkins, Humayun Abdulali, M. Krishnan, Kailash Sankhala, Dharmakumarsinhji and scores of others who, in the early 1980s, helped *Sanctuary* magazine take its first tentative steps towards wildlife conservation horizons of the kind never quite tried before in India. And now, 40 years later, as we continue to weave nature journalism, action and conservation policy into the Indian environmental conservation movement, we invite you to be part of Sanctuary's mission to save natural India.

“ The Sanctuary Nature Foundation holds on to the ethics and ideals drilled into us by the likes of Dr. Sálim Ali, R.E. Hawkins, Humayun Abdulali, M. Krishnan, Kailash Sankhala, Dharmakumarsinhji and scores of others who helped *Sanctuary* magazine take its first tentative steps towards wildlife conservation horizons of the kind never quite tried before in India. ”



Paul Abraham

President, Hinduja Foundation

Paul Abraham was Chief Operating Officer (COO) of IndusInd Bank and has over 35 years of banking experience. President of the Hinduja Foundation and Chair, Advisory Board of the Sanctuary Nature Foundation, he also founded the museum initiative Sarmaya Arts Foundation.

IN NATURE WE TRUST

Today, more than at any time, we have been shown up as a global collective. Nature has shown us that our consumptive lifestyle is unsustainable. Our belief that we can be irresponsible masters of the planet is beyond hollow. It is arrogant and for an apparently intelligent species, an amazingly stupid misconception. It also shows us as selfish and at a very fundamental level, so preoccupied with ourselves that even our children and their future can be put at stake for our greed today.

Sanctuary believes that we cannot feel despondent; that if we ground ourselves in the optimism that with education and awareness of the intrinsic connection of the well-being of our planet to our very own, we can repair the damage we've made. We thus firmly place ourselves at the forefront of advocacy with a sense of urgency. We believe that nature represents soft power as also an incredibly effective and advanced economic infrastructure that is well worth protecting. We believe the future ranking of countries will depend on the stock of natural resources and their management. The only way forward is to ensure that the basic needs of our citizenry are safeguarded. There is no economic model that says monetary wealth ranks above water security, clean air and good health.

Sanctuary will continue playing its part in highlighting these key perspectives and being the platform, which showcases solutions that address the key challenges that we face. I am glad I am part of Sanctuary and its important mission and purpose that seek to address this crisis and reverse the damage through proactive and urgent action. We need the voice of this world to reach the powers that be and sentinels like Sanctuary can show the way through an impartial but committed advocacy. If we achieve even the smallest positive outcome in protecting our planet and reversing the damage that we inflict upon it, then we have played our part.

“Sanctuary believes that with awareness of the intrinsic connection of the well being of our planet to our very own, we can repair the damage we've made.”

Advisory Board Members

The Board Members of the Sanctuary Nature Foundation form the solid edifice upon which all our communication, outreach, research advocacy, and project work thrive. They help connect the organisation's purpose to strategy.



Lord Nicholas Stern

Economist, Academic, Author and Climate Expert

I.G. Patel Professor of Economics and Government, London School of Economics; former President, British Academy; Chair, Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change; and former Chief Economist, World Bank.

“Sanctuary is not only inspiring us to appreciate the world's natural wonders, it is also demonstrating that nature and natural capital are central to our well-being and our survival.”



Dia Mirza

Actor, Producer, UN Environment Goodwill Ambassador and UN Secretary-General Advocate for SDGs

A champion of nature, she spearheads the movement to reignite and strengthen the connection between man and nature and contribute to positive social change.

“Working with Sanctuary has added value and meaning to my life. It has improved my awareness and helped me engage with society and governments for environmental action.”



Nikkhil Advani

Cofounder, Emmay Entertainment

An award-winning film producer, director, and screenwriter, he worked on India's first stereoscopic animation film 'Delhi Safari' (2006), about habitat loss in the Sanjay Gandhi National Park. It won a National Award.

“My association with Bittu Sahgal and his relentless pursuit of a better, safer, more sustainable future for all has led to me being part of Sanctuary. Our work really has just begun.”



Tara Lal

Founder, Wild Blue Foundation

Tara Lal came to conservation science later in her career after years in art, architecture and design. She received her Masters of Science in conservation from Imperial College, London, where she is currently working on her Ph.D.

“Sanctuary continues to inspire by showing the way to a just and sustainable future. Community collaborations such as COCOON Conservancies have the potential to make real change in India.”

Advisory Board Members



Kartik N. Shukul

Advocate, Bombay High Court and Supreme Court of India

A commercial and constitutional lawyer by profession, he also dedicates his time to conservation litigation. He is part of a State Level Committee that deals with human-animal conflict and acts as a Special Public Prosecutor.

“ From the Mud on Boots Project to the Leave Me Alone campaign, each initiative by Sanctuary has a nuanced approach to tackling some of the most pressing conservation issues of our time. ”



Miel Sahgal

Writer, Editor

Miel has held various positions at Sanctuary over the past two decades, including Managing Editor of *Sanctuary Asia*. She was part of the founding team of Kids for Tigers, and spearheaded Sanctuary events, nature walks and workshops.

“ It’s been inspiring to witness Sanctuary’s evolution from a lone voice for the wilderness into an empowered foundation. Sanctuary remains steadfast in its mission to safeguard our collective future. ”

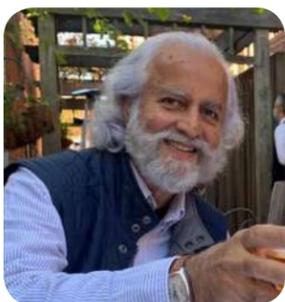


Norma Alvares

Advocate, Bombay High Court

An activist and campaigner on social and environmental issues of public concern, especially in her home state of Goa. In 2002, she was awarded the Padma Shri for her work towards the protection of animals and the environment.

“ I am always impressed with the extent of preparatory work that goes into each project by Sanctuary and the professionalism with which it is assessed and evaluated from time to time. ”



Indru Advani

Executive Member, Advisory Board, Sanctuary Nature Foundation

A Mechanical Engineer and Management Graduate, he has 46 years of Project, Marketing and Corporate experience. He retired as President and CEO of BAPL, an automotive components company.

“ I have been inspired by the passion exhibited by Bittu and the Sanctuary team in their commitment to wildlife conservation. I’m honoured to play a small role in this journey. ”



SANCTUARY 40 YEARS OF IMPACT 1981-2021

Bittu Sahgal, inspired by the late Fateh Singh Rathore, published the first issue of *Sanctuary Asia* in October. India's first wildlife conservation magazine began as a quarterly and later became a bi-monthly in January/February 1990 ([more on page 16](#)).

1981

Sanctuary Cub published in January/February 1984. It aimed to inculcate an appreciation for nature among children and encourage them to protect our wild heritage ([more on page 16](#)).

1984

Sanctuary Films produced two wildlife conservation serials for Doordarshan, India's national television network.

Late 1980s

Sanctuary Features Syndication began to reach a wider audience through the syndication of articles on nature, wildlife, travel, health and conservation from renowned writers such as Ruskin Bond, Vijaya Venkat, Dilip D'Souza, Pritish Nandy, Ranjit Lal, and more.

1989

Sanctuary Photo Library was set up as a repository of natural history images. It now has a fully computerised and expansive database of wildlife photographs.

1990

Sanctuary published *The Ecologist Asia*, an Indian edition of the U.K. journal *The Ecologist*, founded by Edward Goldsmith. *The Ecologist Asia*, whose co-editors were Bittu Sahgal, Vandana Shiva, Claude Alvares and Smitu Kothari, was dedicated to disseminating environmental and developmental news relevant to the region. It ran until 2003.

1993

Kids for Tigers, an educational outreach programme for schools was launched, and the world's largest 'Save the Tiger' scroll, as certified by the Limca Book of Records, was created ([more on page 24](#)).

1999

The first Sanctuary Wildlife Service and Photography awards was held at NCPA, Mumbai ([more on page 48](#)).

2000



First coffee-table book *The Kaziranga Inheritance* launched. Since then Sanctuary has published over 11 coffee-table books and nine guidebooks on varying landscapes ([more on page 16](#)).

2005

The Sanctuary Nature Foundation was established as a section 8 Foundation ([more on page 17](#)).

2015

Community Owned Community Operated Nature (COCOON) Conservancies, a critical rewilding initiative, launched with the first project in Gothangaon village, Maharashtra ([more on page 32](#)).

2015

The first Sanctuary Debate was held in Royal Opera House, Mumbai. Hosted annually, these debates have brought stalwarts of the conservation world and students together in healthy discussion on wildlife policy ([more on page 46](#)).

2017

The Mud on Boots Project, a booster programme that supports 'mud-on-the-boots' conservationists in India over a two-year period, launched ([more on page 28](#)).

2017

A new website, with a user-friendly layout, digital magazine and more features to connect with our followers launched in October.

2019

Sanctuary partnered with WILD Foundation and the Government of Rajasthan to organise WILD11 in Jaipur, but this was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic ([more on page 18](#)).

2020

With the world having slowed down for a year, Sanctuary has embraced a new normal and transitioned to an entirely digital platform, with our publications and events going online since April 2020 ([more on page 20](#)).

2021 & Beyond

OUTREACH & COMMUNICATION



PUBLICATIONS

“Sanctuary makes an insightful reading on issues relating to wildlife and nature conservation. Have retained copies of the magazine for the last 20 years in bound volumes in my library.”
– Bijay Kumar Sharma, IPS



SANCTUARY ASIA & SANCTUARY CUB MAGAZINES

The Sanctuary Nature Foundation's flagship magazine *Sanctuary Asia* has been in continuous publication since 1981 and remains India's leading and best-loved magazine in its genre. Upon receiving overwhelming support, an edition for younger readers, *Sanctuary Cub*, was launched in 1984 and has been inspiring generations of young naturalists ever since. Though the COVID-19 pandemic halted the release of the print edition in April 2020, the magazine is still released as a digital edition.

Sanctuary's six issues in 2020 offered readers insight into some of the most pressing conservation issues, from the threats to the artisanal fishing livelihoods of the Koli community, the uncertain future of the globally trafficked pangolin, various landscapes in the Himalaya destabilised by climate change and the little-known link between animal health, human health and the environment to the dangers of expanding a commercial port at a biodiverse lagoon and more.

Sanctuary Cub actively encourages its readership to contribute to the publication, creating a community of children who are passionate about learning and sharing their explorations of Earth. Children send in articles, book reviews, art, updates on their activities, and letters that are published with due credit.

Read more about our magazines on our website.

COFFEE TABLE BOOKS

Sanctuary's key goal has always been to galvanise public attention to the amazing natural fecundity our country has been blessed with and to highlight our need to

secure this wild heritage. Toward this, we began producing large-format *coffee table books and guidebooks* on various Protected Areas around the country. Sanctuary's core competence has always been its nature and wildlife writing, editing and photography. Our stringent production quality is an industry standard and our campaigns to protect wildlife bring on board both government and non-government supporters of wildlife conservation. In 2005, we produced our first coffee-table book *The Kaziranga Inheritance* to stimulate pride about the heritage of this rhino, elephant and tiger habitat in Assam, and to make a strong visual statement and spotlight its defenders. Following the tremendous success of the book, Sanctuary followed this with the *Inheritance* series, *Wild* series and *guidebooks*.

SANCTUARY PUBLICATIONS

Inheritance Series

Kaziranga	2005
Revised edition	2007
Bharatpur	2006
Corbett	2007
Sundarbans	2007
Bandhavgarh	2008
Periyar	2008
Tadoba	2015

Guide Books

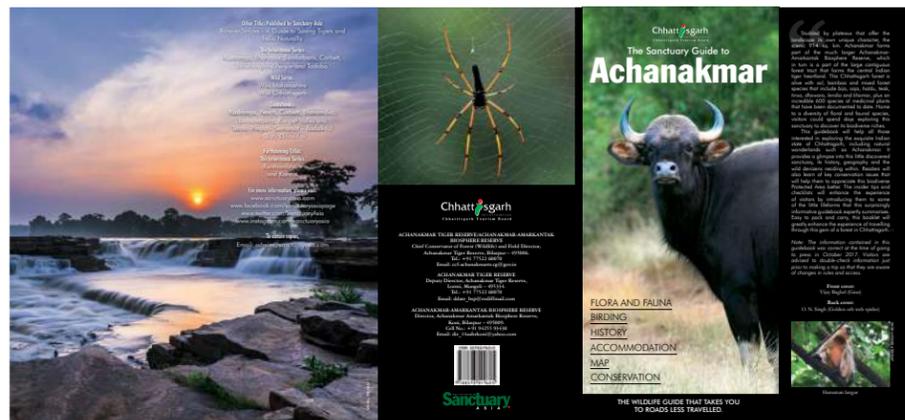
Corbett	2009
Pench	2013
Kaziranga	2014
Achanakmar	2017
Barnawapara	2017
Bhoramdeo	2017
Kanger	2017
Tamor-Pingla-Samarkot-Guru Ghasidas	2017
Nameri	2018

WILD Series

Maharashtra	2012
Revised edition	2015
Chhattisgarh	2017
Madhya Pradesh	2018

Other Coffee Table Books and Publications

Forever Stripes	2007
India Naturally	2008
Sankhala's India	2008
Lest We Forget	
PLAN B	2008
Mobilising to Save Civilisation (English & Hindi)	



SANCTUARY NATURE FOUNDATION

Building on the magazine's wide network of conservationists, naturalists, photographers, writers and editors, the *Sanctuary Nature Foundation* was born in 2015.

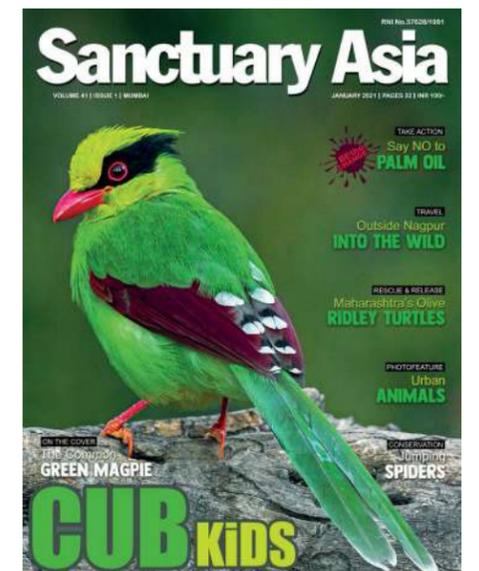
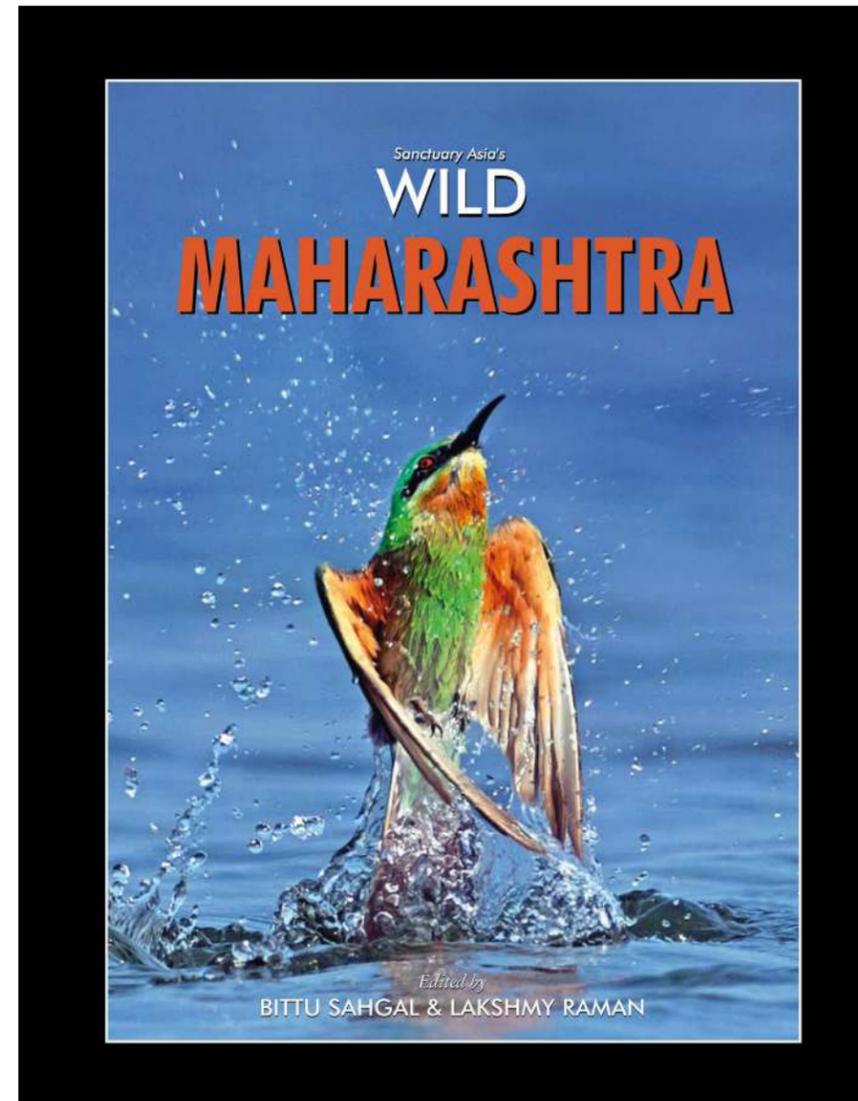
A Section 8 Foundation under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, the foundation's reach spans policy, advocacy, science, on-ground support for field workers and environmental education. The mission was, and continues to be, to produce well-researched communications built upon a bedrock of good science, to conceptualise and implement conservation projects while taking a holistic view on human, wildlife and climate issues.

Apart from the *Sanctuary Asia* print and digital editions, book publishing and the production of responsible wildlife tourism guidebooks, we organise nature festivals,

expeditions, rallies, climate change workshops, talks, debates and more. Working at the tri-junction of biodiversity, economics and climate change, the foundation offers thought leadership by uniting disparate but credible groups through conflict-resolution and bridge-building initiatives.

Today, the Sanctuary Nature Foundation network includes organisations and individuals across the globe with whom we work collaboratively on policy, advocacy and action. With the express vision to shape a world with abundant biodiversity, a sustainable climate and an equitable future for all, the Sanctuary Nature Foundation will carry forth the legacy of *Sanctuary Asia* to promote, support and consolidate the wildlife and nature conservation movement in India.

“At the heart of our purpose lies the conviction that the economies of nations sit on a foundation of stable ecosystems. Sanctuary envisions a world with abundant biodiversity, a sustainable climate and an equitable future for one and all.”



11th WORLD WILDERNESS CONGRESS

“WILD11 was to unify the dual emergencies of climate breakdown and mass extinction with a single solution: protecting wild nature. It was planned to challenge world leaders with the question: How much nature do we need to survive?”

– Vance G. Martin, President, WILD Foundation



For over four decades, Sanctuary has been working purposefully along with organisations such as the WILD Foundation – focused on wilderness, wildlife and people – and Forest Departments, conservation leaders and grassroots activists, pooling our respective strengths, to defend and safeguard our planet. In 2020, the WILD Foundation partnered with Sanctuary to convene the 11th World Wilderness Congress (WILD11) between March 19 and 26 at Jaipur, Rajasthan, India. It was expected to attract 1,500 to 2,000 delegates from India and overseas. This global gathering which

would have included youth, women, traditional communities, business heads, as well as policy makers and leading politicians had to be indefinitely postponed due to COVID-19.

However, our joint mission remains stronger than ever – to protect the essential natural infrastructures that produce our healthy water, air and soil. Only by coming together as a movement... not a single organisation... can we hope to find a path out of the maze of self-inflicted damage of climate chaos and species extinction.



COURTESY: WILD FOUNDATION

HISTORY OF THE WORLD WILDERNESS CONGRESS

The World Wilderness Congress (WWC) was born in Africa, the result of the work of two men... conservationist Ian Player and traditional Zulu chief, Magqubu Ntombela. They created the first multi-racial environmental experience programme in South Africa, which ultimately led to the 1st World Wilderness Congress in Johannesburg in 1977. Vance G. Martin, President, WILD Foundation, says, the principles of the WWC are simple and dedicated to:

- collaboration across cultures, races, nations and professions
- continual search for new, necessary, practical, and positive solutions that protect wild nature and meet the needs of people
- the importance of culture – language, art, community and communications – combined with the very best policy, science and business to create the most effective solutions.

It is the longest running, international, public conservation congress and since the very beginning has been working to protect species, wildernesses, and the well being of people and communities, across our planet. This collective is organised and run by civil society and is focussed on providing solutions and generating practical policy solutions to the current environmental issues.

ABOVE RIGHT *The World Wilderness Congress is the longest-running environmental forum to build awareness and support for wild habitats and strengthen conservation policy. The last congress, WILD10, convened in Salamanca, Spain, in October 2013.*

Sanctuary and the WILD Foundation encourage their supporters to engage with the ideas and outcomes to come out of the process leading up to WILD11, especially the Survival Revolution (see box) and stay tuned for news about next steps, new plans, and upcoming gatherings to build dynamic and powerful communities and coalitions for the protection of our wild and healthy Earth.

The Survival Revolution

If you find yourself in a hole, the first thing to do is stop digging. As Earth rapidly approaches global tipping points beyond which we are without sufficient nature to solve the climate and extinction emergency, we still have time to set aside HALF the planet's land and seas and avert ecological collapse. The Survival Revolution is a common-sense plan to protect wilderness on a global scale. Setting aside 50 per cent of Earth for nature is the most efficient way to fight climate change. Join the #SurvivalRevolution. Be an ambassador and help make history in 2020 for humanity and the wild planet upon which we depend. The Wild Foundation is recruiting ambassadors and influencers for the Survival Revolution and you can sign up [here](#). Details of how you can help influence the coming United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity will also be available soon.

YASHPAL RATHORE – EDITORS CHOICE : SANCTUARY WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS 2020

EMBRACING A NEW NORMAL

“Heartbreaking images of wild species knee-deep in a mess of our making. Glad to have been part of an effort to bring this issue to light.”
– Vaishnav Tirth, Mumbai

In April 2021, the world was forced into lockdown mode. Our Mumbai office was closed down, our publishing offices shut. And our team was relegated to the safety of their homes. Despite a key event (see page 18) organised by Sanctuary being cancelled and the challenges of working remotely from across different states, Sanctuary continued to publish the magazine digitally every month on the dot, and took several steps further to engage with our audiences. From online webinars to launching a brand new newsletter, here’s a look at all the ways Sanctuary embraced the power of digital communication.

NEWSLETTER

Sanctuary launched its monthly newsletter in September 2020, reaching just under 10,000 recipients, with updates on our projects, publications, campaigns, events and more. A bi-monthly newsletter for children was also launched in the same month, reaching our country-wide network of Kids for Tigers students and subscribers.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The pandemic also saw Sanctuary strengthening its digital presence. The team worked to better understand the kind of messaging that would move people and interest them online.

While there is so much more to do, Sanctuary’s networks on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp and email reach out to over half a million citizens across the world. A look at our social media numbers (as of April 12, 2021):

-  @sanctuaryasiapage
@sanctuaryasiagroup
264K followers
-  @SanctuaryAsia
29.4K followers
-  @sanctuaryasia
113K followers
-  YouTube Sanctuary Nature Foundation
3.53K subscribers

SEEK SANCTUARY

For Earth Day 2020 (April 22, 2020), Sanctuary partnered with BookMyShow to release an online limited series ‘Seek Sanctuary - Reboot the Planet’ that screened on Facebook and YouTube to a global audience. Several stalwarts of the conservation world were invited to speak on a variety of topics – Vandana Shiva on ‘The Link between Agriculture, Ecology

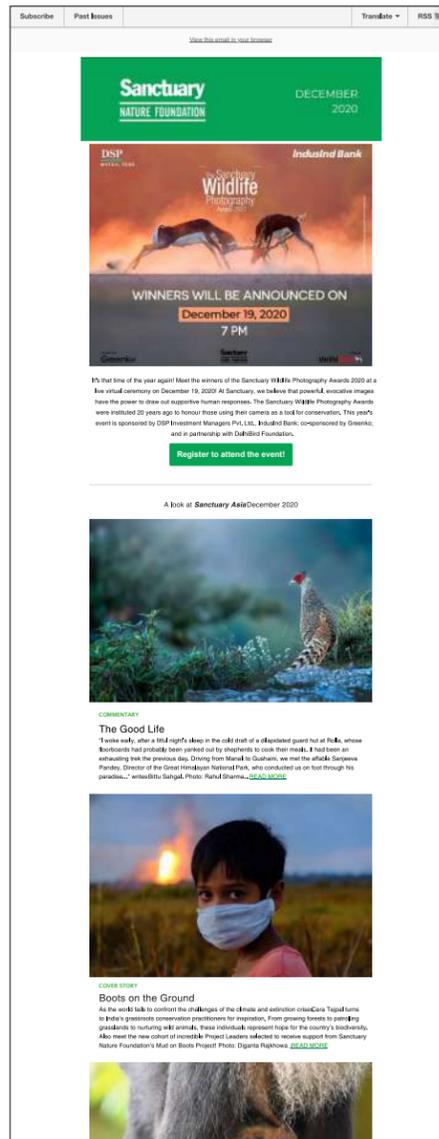
and Health’, Jairam Ramesh on ‘The Ecological Rise and Fall of India’ – and more.

A few months later, Sanctuary released Season 2 of Seek Sanctuary, that brought legendary and veteran conservationists such as Dr. M.K. Ranjitsinh, Y. Jhala and environmental journalist and author Prerna Singh Bindra (below), together to share the challenges of their work.



“Indeed “the time for platitudes and conferences has long gone”. Such well-made points to think about consumption, nature and the way forward. Thanks, Sanctuary.”

– Geeta Rao, Former Beauty Director, Vogue India



#InOurFiltth

Starting October 2020, Sanctuary curated an online series #InOurFiltth to inspire followers to lobby for better waste management systems in their villages/cities/towns. Hard-hitting images of wildlife forced to navigate human trash in their wild habitats garnered the attention of several thousand people across the world. The series was covered in Scroll.in, Outlook India, The Wire, The Week amongst other publications.

The image seen below was part of the series.



their habits. Researchers have observed that these macaques are spending more time on the ground and are having more negative interactions with humans – including raiding homes and foraging for human foods. Single-use plastics are cheap and convenient, but they’re terrible for our planet and our fellow Earth inhabitants. Poor waste management coupled with ignorant tourists who feed the lion-tailed macaques, make for sorry sights such as this.

Single-use Sins

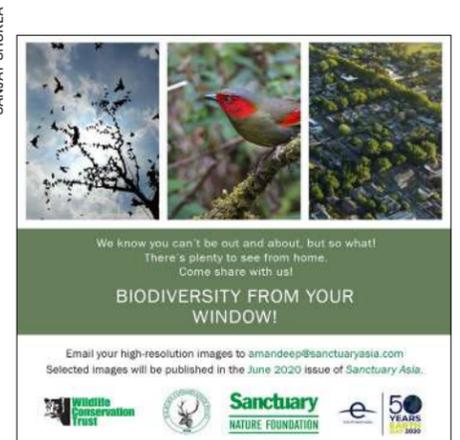
In Valparai, Tamil Nadu, a lion-tailed macaque rips into a discarded single-use packet filled with curry. This incredible and distinctive species is endemic to small pockets of India’s Western Ghats. They are rainforest dwellers whose primary diet is, or should be, fruit! But with forests being degraded and fragmented, roads and townships cutting through their habitat, and garbage piling up, they’re being forced to change

BIODIVERSITY FROM YOUR WINDOW

One positive effect of the lockdown that couldn’t be overlooked by citizens was the quiet solitude it provided our wild denizens that curiously ventured closer to our residences. Sanctuary asked supporters and readers to send us the best images of biodiversity they could document from their homes. Over 300 people sent in 2,000+ images. The most striking of these were handpicked for Sanctuary Asia June 2020.

LOCKDOWN DIARIES

With wildernesses and national parks closed during lockdown, Sanctuary spoke with conservationists from different areas of work (researchers, writers, photographers and filmmakers) about how the lockdown had impacted their work and how they are advocating for wildlife and the environment while staying indoors. The Lockdown Diaries was born, with wildlife filmmaker and founder of Pangea Films Eshika Fyze featured on the first episode. Later, a children’s edition was also inaugurated (see page 27).



Sanctuary launched a monthly newsletter in September 2020 reaching out to an audience of about 10,000 recipients, and counting.

LEFT A juvenile Bengal monitor lizard photographed at a fifth-floor apartment in Badlapur, Maharashtra. This image was one of the entries to the ‘Biodiversity From Your Window’ contest.

PROJECTS





PROJECT: KIDS FOR TIGERS

1999-Present

In 2000, Sanctuary launched Kids for Tigers, an environmental education programme that snowballed into one of India's largest mass movements to save the tiger, inspiring millions of children in schools across India. The core purpose of Kids for Tigers is to introduce children to nature in a gentle and reassuring manner.

Central to our mission has been the need to communicate the rationale for conservation to children, using the tiger as a metaphor for all of nature. Despite all the problems that grip wild India, we communicate to kids the brighter

side of things; that nature is resilient and self-repairing, that the tiger will spring back to safe numbers if we offer it seclusion and protection. We highlight the connection between biodiversity, forests and water, and explain how forests help us fight climate change. All this is through carefully created fun activities and lessons. We are determined not only to leave a better planet for our children, but also better children for our planet!

To read more about the programme and for details on how to become a part of it, head to our [website](#).

“ I have worked with Kids for Tigers for 21 years, and have represented the National Tiger Conservation Camp, along with our Student Ambassador three times – 2011, 2013, and 2017. I was awarded the [Sanctuary Green Teacher Award](#) in the year 2017, which encouraged me to do more for my students.”

– K.S. Smitha, M.P. Birla Foundation Higher Secondary School, Kolkata



MAP NOT TO SCALE. BORDERS NEITHER AUTHENTICATED NOR VERIFIED.



21 years since inception | **38** cities across India | **800** schools reached | **1 million+** children and teachers impacted

KIDS FOR TIGERS ACTIVITIES

There are no dull moments with Kids for Tigers! Kids made a lot of positive noise through tree planting drives, rallies, fests and more. Our coordinators help our Kids for Tigers students and point teachers from across India's cities organise exciting activities that help discover secrets about our exceptional natural treasures, including the one that symbolises it all, our very own tiger!

Here's what happens when a school joins the Kids for Tigers network.

Stage 1: Registration of schools and introduction to the programme.

Stage 2: Teachers' Training Workshop for educators.

Stage 3: Audio-Visual shows linking tigers with climate change.

Stage 4: Nature walks – especially to gauge students with an affinity and commitment to the environmental imperative.

Stage 5: Petition drives, tiger parades and rallies, creative art competitions, fests, Wildlife Week events, and information-rich notice boards and school projects.

Stage 6: National Camp.

Stage 7: Conclusion, feedback, gifts/certificates to teachers and/or principals, trophies to schools and a road map for the next year.



TOP Kids for Tigers coordinator Govardhan Meena leading students from the Government Middle School, Kutalpur, Sawai Madhopur district, Rajasthan, on a safari.

MIDDLE In 2001, then Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee wrote a letter of congratulations to the Kids for Tigers children, stating, "The tiger is an indicator of the environmental health of India."

BOTTOM Kids dressed up as tigers perform a street theatre piece at a Tiger Fest in Mumbai. Street theatre as a form of communication is deeply rooted in Indian tradition.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2020 AND 2021

Due to the pandemic, the regular sequence of the Kids for Tigers programme was disrupted. However, our team adapted to the new virtual normal and connected with students and teachers in innovative ways. In addition to these, our coordinators have taken children on nature trails wherever it is safe to do so.

LOCKDOWN DIARIES: AN ONGOING SERIES

Kids for Tigers asked children to keep us updated on their activities during their time indoors. Children sent us photos of new hobbies, biodiversity spotted in their balconies and backyards, new skills they've picked up and personal projects they're proud of!

"I have had a lot of fun with local wildlife during lockdown. In the early days, I looked after a baby bulbul that had been abandoned. He grabbed my finger and refused to let go so I decided to name him Grip. I fed him using a syringe. After a week, I noticed an adult bulbul looking at him from outside my window. I opened it and set him free! I also took care of two baby garden lizards for two and a half weeks."

– Zreh Adjanina, 12, Mumbai

EARTH DAY: VIRTUAL LESSONS

For over 50 consecutive years, Earth Day has been celebrated to celebrate our love for Earth and remind humanity of the pressing need to repair our relationship with the planet. Kids for Tigers organised several enlightening online sessions for Earth Day 2020, including the following by:

- Jyoti Sharma (Sanctuary Young Naturalist Award 2017) on the Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve
- Nikit Surve on human-leopard conflict in Mumbai
- Preeti Takle on urban farming for the amateur
- Rituraj Phukan on climate change and the water crisis
- Vaishali Rawat on finding biodiversity in our own backyards
- Neha Sinha on conservation for beginners and green careers

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY: CONTEMPLATIONS

A series of six short videos was compiled to address the connection between humans and biodiversity, featuring Debadityo Sinha, Nehara Pandey, Preeti Takle, K.S. Smitha and Dr. Parvish Pandya. An attractive poster on the 'ABCs of sustainable living' was also shared with our audience.

GLOBAL TIGER DAY: POSTER-MAKING COMPETITION

500+ students from classes II to VIII participated enthusiastically, creating imaginative posters to raise awareness about the tiger. Art by the finalists was published in Sanctuary Cub September 2020.

KNOW YOUR BIRDS WITH SAURABH SAWANT

As children began spending much of their time indoors during the COVID-19 pandemic, Sanctuary collaborated with Saurabh Sawant to put together a video lecture featuring the most common birds that can be spotted from their windows.

UNDERSTANDING BATS WITH ROHIT CHAKRAVARTY

COVID-19 landed a blow on millions of people in many ways, affecting public health, economy, education and other sectors. Another victim that faced the brunt of the impact was the bat. Misguided media reports caused much of the public to consider bats the culprit, rather than our own broken relationship with nature. Chiropterologist and Kids for Tigers alumnus Rohit Chakravarty broke myths and enlightened our children about the ecosystem services offered by bats.

QUIZ TIME

Kids for Tigers created fun, interesting quizzes on several topics, including International Biodiversity Day, Earth Day, mangroves, the wild representatives of Indian states (official state animals and birds), World Turtle Day, World Migratory Bird Day, Global Tiger Day, World Rainforest Day, World Environment Day and types of Indian trees.

SANCTUARY EDUCATIONISTS ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP WEBINAR

Kids for Tigers' annual workshop for teachers went virtual on October 17, 2020, in association with The Shri Ram School. Over 500 teachers attended the webinar. Part of the discussion focussed on the use of creative methods to sensitise the students and parents to conservation issues that plague India. Dr. Parvish Pandya, Bittu Sahgal, Madhu Bhatnagar, Preeti Takle and Amandeep Kaur led this workshop.

NATURE TRAILS

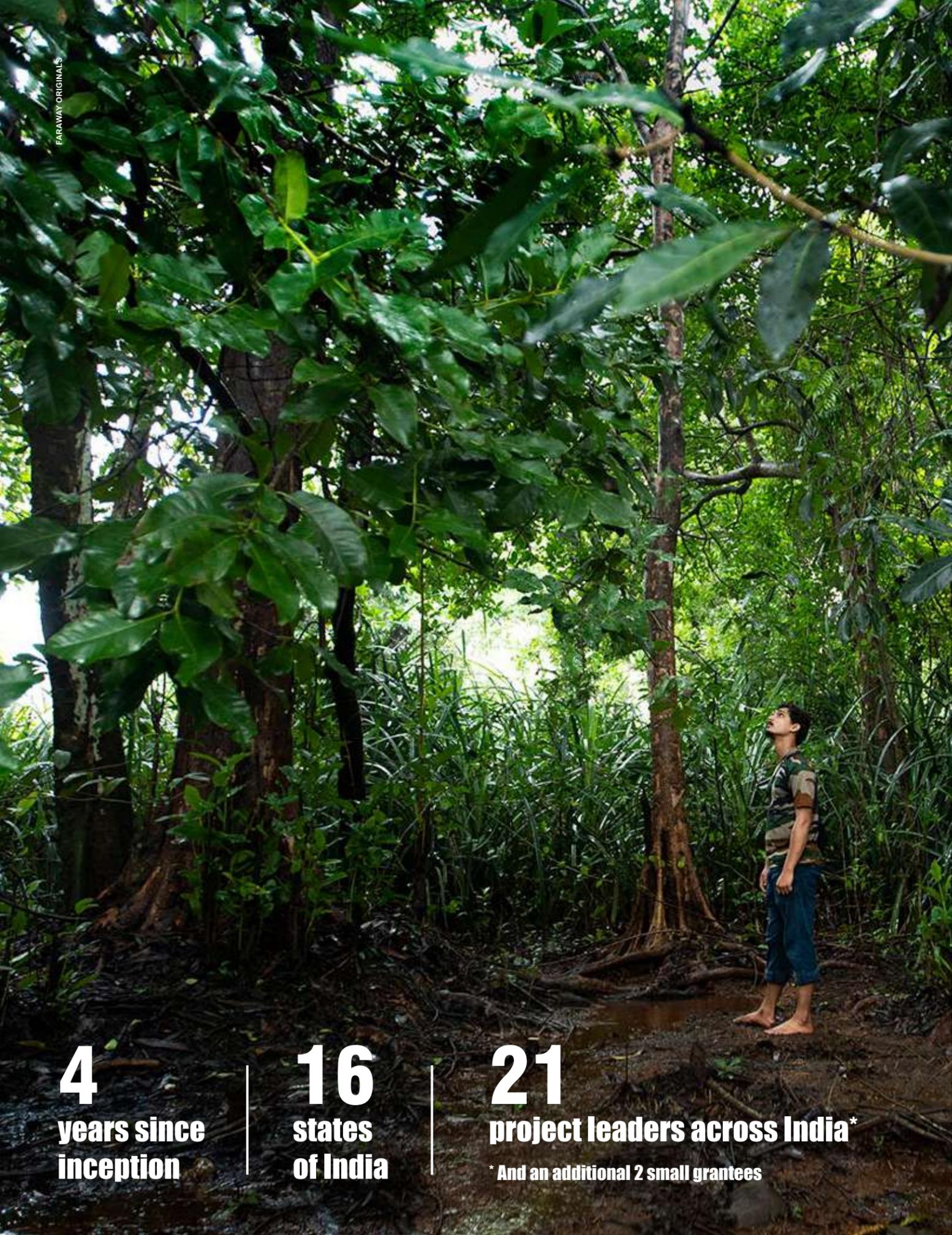
While it was not possible to conduct nature trails in all our cities, some of our coordinators guided small trails.

“Climate change is a multilateral problem, and it is vital that we strike a chord with the younger generation, now more than ever. The Kids for Tigers team exemplifies this by adding a unique perspective and expertise to the elephantine crises our planet is experiencing.”

– Preeti Takle, Mumbai Coordinator, Kids for Tigers



Twelve-year-old Zreh Adjanina, Mumbai with two juvenile garden lizards in his home. This was one of the entries for the 'Lockdown Diaries: Children's edition.'



4
years since
inception

16
states
of India

21
project leaders across India*
* And an additional 2 small grantees

PROJECT: MUD ON BOOTS

(2017-Present)

The Mud on Boots Project is Sanctuary's unique booster programme designed to recognise and empower grassroots level wildlife conservationists in India.

The project focuses on those individuals who are community leaders but whose contributions are overlooked because of a lack of affiliations, educational qualifications, mainstream opportunities and language barriers. Over a two-year period, such individuals receive a monetary grant and strategic support from the Sanctuary Nature Foundation team. Such support can include communications, field trips, expert input, publicity and more!

Since its inception in 2017, the Mud on Boots project has supported over two dozen grassroots conservationists from 16 different states in India. The project has also extended support to small grassroots organisations and citizens groups that are campaigning for environmental protection.

Owing to the pandemic, 2020 has been an exceedingly difficult year. Despite this, the Mud on Boots Project has continued to grow.

To read about the work of all our present and alumni Project Leaders, go to our [website](#).

“This is amazing work, and I am very proud of your efforts to keep this going, to continue to support grassroot workers across a diversity of habitats even in these difficult times.”

– Prerna Singh Bindra, award-winning environmental journalist and author



Between August and November 2020, the Sanctuary team pored over nominations for the Mud on Boots Project, and announced **six new Project Leaders** for 2021-2022 in the December 2020 issue of *Sanctuary Asia*!



Mud on Boots won the Gold Award for Best Wildlife Project 2020

On January 17, 2020, Sanctuary Nature Foundation's Mud on Boots Project won the Gold Award for Best Wildlife Project at the Outlook Responsible Tourism Awards held in New Delhi. The jury included conservationists Belinda Wright, Prerna Singh Bindra and Ranjit Lal. Cara Tejpal, Director of the Mud on Boots Project, accepted the award on behalf of the Project Leaders. At the Sanctuary Nature Foundation, we recognise that conservation is driven by communities, and only by recognising and empowering community champions can we hope to protect the biodiversity that supports us all.

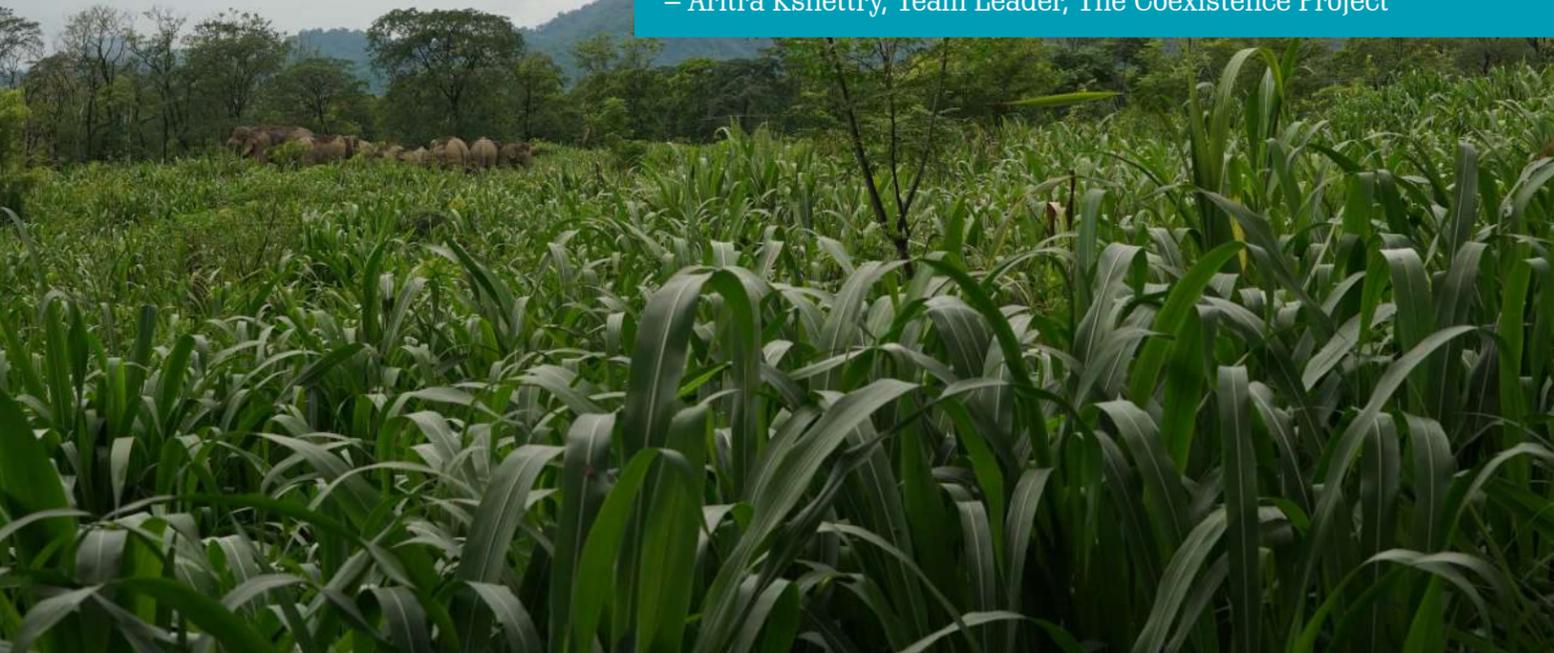




Amir Chhetri

"I appreciate Sanctuary Nature Foundation's efforts to enable grassroots conservation initiatives. The work of each Mud on Boots Project Leader is inspiring. We will continue to guide and mentor Amir Chhetri's work as he is a valuable member of our core research and conservation team at The Coexistence Project."

– Aritra Kshetry, Team Leader, The Coexistence Project



HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2020

- During the lockdown, Project Coordinator Maitreyee Mujumdar organised a series of webinars for Project Leaders. The lectures covered diverse topics related to conservation, and guest speakers included Praveen Bhargav, Umesh Srinivasan, Neha Sinha, Parvish Pandya and Samyukta Chemudupati amongst many others.
- Sanctuary collaborated with conservation enterprise Tech for Wildlife to develop maps for Project Leader Malhar Indulkar's work site in Maharashtra.
- In Himachal Pradesh, Project Leader Shiv Kumar documented incredible wildlife sightings, including some firsts! The Himalayan goral and Yellowhammer bird were reported by him from Lahaul for the first time.
- Alumni Project Leader Anoko Mega from Arunachal Pradesh made a strong representation to India's Forest Advisory Committee against the proposed Etalin Hydro Project in Dibang Valley. The Sanctuary team has also worked extensively on this issue under the #SaveDibangValley campaign. (See page 40).
- In Karnataka, Project Leader Bhuvaneshwara H.C. has identified a degraded forest patch for restoration efforts. He has nurtured a nursery of 675 native saplings for this.
- Project Leader Sunil Harsana also undertook forest restoration work in Haryana. Along with volunteers and community members, Sunil undertook the plantation of 700 indigenous saplings in degraded parts of Mangar Bani.

CHALLENGES

The Mud on Boots Project runs on public donations. It has been exceptionally hard to raise funds this year because of the ongoing pandemic. The resulting lockdown also put a halt to fieldwork for several months of the year.

LOOKING AHEAD

The Sanctuary team is looking forward to working with the new batch of Project Leaders and their mentors on community conservation and rewilding projects in five different states of India.

A crowdfunding campaign has been planned for April 2021 to cover the deficit in fundraising for the new batch. The pending disbursement of funds to two grassroots organisations working for wildlife rescue and rehabilitation will be completed in 2021.

A virtual Mud on Boots leaders, partners and alumni meet has been slated for June 2021. This will be an opportunity for our grassroots conservationists to learn about one another's works, interact with senior wildlife professionals, and nurture a feeling of team work.

Collaborations are essential to the Mud on Boots Project. The team is keen to forge new collaborations and partnerships with individuals and organisations who have the same vision as Sanctuary.

We at the Sanctuary Nature Foundation have huge respect for those whose boots are muddy from the hard work and toil that wildlife conservation in the field demands. The Mud on Boots Project is our ongoing salute to such individuals.

“ Collaborations are essential to the Mud on Boots Project. The team is keen to forge new collaborations and partnerships with individuals and organisations who have the same vision as Sanctuary. ”



Shiv Kumar

"The exposure and guidance Shiv Kumar has received as a Mud on Boots Project Leader have visibly benefited him. He has been instrumental in mobilising a group of like-minded individuals from the area who are now active in sharing, discussing and acting on conservation issues. I think this programme deserves a lot of credit for this change in him."

– Ajay Bijoor, Assistant Programme Head for Conservation at High Altitude Programme, NCF-India



COURTESY: VISHAL AHUJA

Vishal Ahuja has been facilitating the rewilding of abandoned agricultural terraces in Chamba valley to bring back native flora and fruiting trees.



6
years since
inception

105
acres of farmland
rewilded

3
more projects
on the anvil

PROJECT: COCOON CONSERVANCIES

(2015-Present)

The central tenet of the Sanctuary Nature Foundation's Community Owned Community Operated Nature (COCOON) Conservancies is that it is designed as a social upliftment programme that creates sustainable, dignified livelihoods, with enhanced biodiversity being a measurable, collateral benefit. Acutely aware that solutions to alleviate farmer stress and improve the relationship between people and parks was floundering, the Sanctuary Nature Foundation decided to demonstrate

that it was possible to rewild abandoned and failed farms located right next to sanctuaries and national parks.

Sanctuary's COCOON Conservancies involve working with several partners that share our rewilding vision as a key strategy to moderate the impacts of climate change. These include the WILD Foundation, Wildlife Conservation Trust and Forest Departments across different states.

For more information about COCOON Conservancies, go to our [website](#).

“ The primary beneficiaries will be those living on the edges of, or close to India's finest, most biodiverse wildernesses through livelihoods whose collateral benefits will be biodiversity enhancement. ”



SANCTUARY NATURE FOUNDATION



SANCTUARY NATURE FOUNDATION



SANCTUARY NATURE FOUNDATION

MISSION

To collaborate with communities living adjacent to wildernesses in India to create sustainable, dignified livelihoods, with enhanced biodiversity being a collateral benefit.

VISION

To demonstrate to planners, politicians, and village youth that the quality of life of the people of the Indian subcontinent has everything to do with restoring health to the biodiversity of its ecosystems without which no human aspirations have any hope of success.

VALUES

COCOON Conservancies focus on solutions that are both ecologically and economically practical.

TOP In Gotbangaon, Maharashtra, where the pilot COCOON Conservancy was initiated, training programmes have been held for women in making lac bangles to provide them an income.

MIDDLE Regular training programmes are also organised for local youth to help build alternative livelihoods in tourism as nature guides and hospitality professionals.

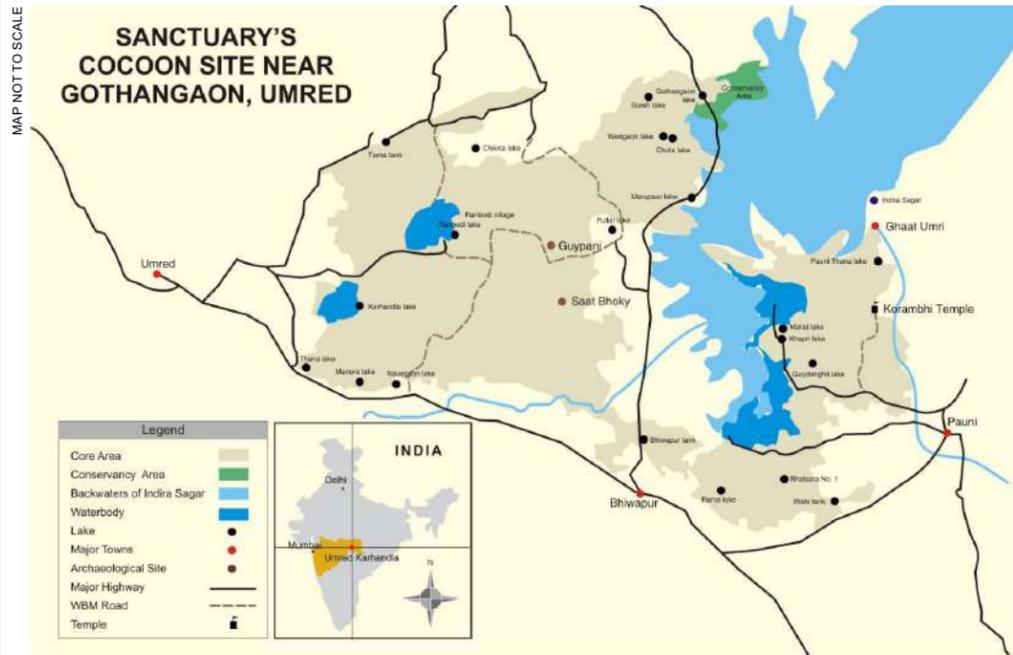
BOTTOM Supporters of the first COCOON Conservancy site contributed to the quality of life for rural communities, helping create a more healthy relationship with the rich forests they live next to.

**Pilot Project:
Gothangaon,
Maharashtra**

The pilot project at Gothangaon village, next to the tiger forests of the Umred Pauni-Karhandla Wildlife Sanctuary, has turned out to be a success. Here, 37 families have stopped farming and allowed the forest to regenerate on their own land holdings. For five years, the farmers were compensated equal to what they would have earned had they farmed. A way was worked out to gift families homestays with titles in their names, which they in turn entrusted to the management care of professional homestay operators for 30 years. Everyone came out winning. The tigers got the space they needed. Sanctuary has now exited from Gothangaon and the project is being implemented independently by the community, led by Honorary Wildlife Warden Roheet Karoo.

SCOPE OF THE PROJECT:

1. Upliftment of marginal and/or rural communities socio-economically.
2. Empowerment of marginal and/or rural communities with ecological information, and their rights, and providing a sustainable, beneficial alternative to selling their lands for short-term gain.
3. Generation of jobs and livelihoods for marginal farmers, landholders and landless people living close to some of India's best biodiversity vaults.
4. Demonstration of the advantages of **rewilding** as a long-term sustainable strategy.
5. Securing health and financial security and providing skill-training for community youth.
6. Sharing, communication and outreach with like-minded NGOs and tourism professionals/lodge owners across India.
7. Reduction of negative human-animal interactions, creating exemplars of localised climate mitigation through biodiversity and rewilding.
8. Setting up of community-owned Sanctuary Conservation Education and Nature Interpretation Centres for monitoring, reporting and research.
9. Creation of self-sustainable projects in approximately five years.
10. Reduction of conflict, to enable greater collaboration with the Forest Department.



LOOKING AHEAD

Sanctuary has shortlisted some potential sites, while more are being considered. However, progress depends on fundraising, the consultation process and the acquiescence of the communities. Currently, the following potential sites and respective Project Directors have been identified:

- Jamtara COCOON Conservancy – Pench Tiger Reserve (M.P.) – Amit Sankhala
- Toria COCOON Conservancy – Panna Tiger Reserve (M.P.) – Raghu Chundawat
- Dara COCOON Conservancy – Dachigam Wildlife Sanctuary (Kashmir) – Nadeem Qadri
- Pakhiralay COCOON Conservancy – Sundarbans Tiger Reserve (West Bengal)

- A 29-acre coffee estate on the outskirts of Nagarahole (Karnataka)
- Mangalajodi COCOON Conservancy – Chilika Lake Bird Sanctuary (Odisha)
- Kanda COCOON Conservancy – Pawalgarh Conservation Reserve (Uttarakhand) – Paramjit Singh
- Ranthambhore COCOON Conservancy – Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve (Rajasthan) – Govardhan Meena.

The short and long-term impacts of COCOON Conservancies will be assessed by the response to the various initiatives involving the local community, biodiversity monitoring, socio-economic progress, instances of human-animal conflict, water and soil quality, greater awareness, and improved cultural and psychological health of the community as well as overall feedback.

COCOON is ready to roll out COCOON Conservancies at Pench and Panna in Madhya Pradesh. We have received the initial funding for these projects, but are looking for support to engage communities to scale up and implement the next phase of our project.

Write to Dr. Parvish Pandya at parvish@sanctuaryasia.com for more details.



FACING PAGE When the Gothangaon dam was built around six years ago, the old Gothangaon village was submerged under the waters of the Gadvi river, displacing most of the community.

LEFT Sanctuary COCOON Conservancies, as marked on the map, have been proposed near wilderness habitats across India, currently in varied stages of negotiation.

CAMPAIGNS



ADVOCACY OVER THE YEARS

The Sanctuary Nature Foundation runs nationwide advocacy campaigns to raise public awareness about various environmental issues that need greater attention. In the past, Sanctuary has

advocated for action on several pressing issues. Here are a few key campaigns that we wanted to highlight. However, as legendary conservation scientist George Schaller says:

“There are never victories in conservation. If you want to save a species or a habitat, it's a fight forevermore. You can never turn your back.”

LEAVE ME ALONE JULY 2013

Sanctuary launched a petition on Global Tiger Day to underscore the reality that India's wild tigers need to be 'left alone' with no human interference for wild habitats and biodiversity to flourish. Emphasising that to secure the future of our people, we need to secure that of our tigers, a petition was launched on Change.org to call for the protection of our tigers' forests and rewilding of our degraded lands. Over 45,000 people signed, and a host of celebrated Indians [spoke in support](#) of the campaign, including Dia Mirza, Purab Kohli, Boman Irani, Sudhir Pandey, Kitu Gidwani, Naseeruddin Shah and the late Om Puri.

TIGER TEMPLE TAKEDOWN FEBRUARY AND DECEMBER 2016

About 2,500 tigers are held in captivity within 30 sanctioned tiger breeding facilities across Thailand; many of them present themselves as tiger tourism attractions. In 2016, Sanctuary ran a campaign to build

awareness on the neglect, abuse and illegal trade of tigers at the hands of one such attraction, Thailand's 'Tiger Temple'. Allegations of the abuse across media worldwide eventually prompted a raid by government officials, who confiscated all of the monastery's 147 tigers and also discovered the frozen bodies of tiger cubs, along with tiger pelts and other illegal wildlife products. The rescued tigers (over half have died since) now live in government wildlife centres, while the temple has closed.

In December that year, Thailand granted the Tiger Temple, now under the name Golden Tiger Thailand to distance itself from the previous scandal, a permit for a 'tiger zoo'. It allowed visitors to interact with tigers, much like the Tiger Temple did. Conservationists feared that such attractions 'leaked' tigers into the endangered wildlife trade. Sanctuary, with the support of various organisations such as the Wildlife Protection Society of India, TOFTigers, Conservation India and Satpuda Foundation, revived the campaign to ask that the license be revoked, but the government has stayed mum as construction continued.



SHARON GUYNUP

Over the years, Sanctuary has been prompt in supporting those who speak out against the misinformed, relentless destruction of our wild habitats and the displacement of indigenous people from their forest homes. Each issue of *Sanctuary* focuses on a vital campaign to inform and empower our readers. We also publish insights, toolkits and open letters to enable environmental advocacy led by the extended conservation community, including but not limited to:

Save Mollem: Toolkit for the campaign
A Country of Campaigns:

By Abinaya Kalyanasundaram
New Draft of EIA will Endanger India's Wildernesses: By Sejal Mehta

Beyond the Dihing Patkai National Park:
By Rituraj Phukan

Oil Well Blowout in Baghjan:

By Rituraj Phukan
India, Dammed: By Neeraj Vaghlikar, Parineeta Dandekar and Himanshu Thakkar

GIANT REFUGEES FEBRUARY 2017

In Athgarh, on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar city, Odisha, a herd of wild elephants was caught in a simmering conflict with humans. The nearby Chandaka-Dampara Wildlife Sanctuary, the natal home of their matriarch Laxmi, is too small and

degraded to support them. So they often wander through rural lands and degraded forests in search of food, and are regularly harassed and abused. In 2017, Sanctuary asked the Chief Minister of the state to implement short-term and long-term solutions for the protection of the animals. Publications such as *First Post*, *Nature in Focus* and *The Wire* also wrote about the Athgarh elephants and the Giant Refugees campaign.



ADITYA CHANDRA PANDA

SAVE THE GREAT INDIAN BUSTARD DECEMBER 2018

The Great Indian Bustard (GIB) is critically endangered. Only a hundred or so of the birds are left in India's vulnerable grassland habitats in Gujarat and Rajasthan. These heavy, low-flying birds suffer high mortality from the overhead power lines that criss-cross their habitat. Moreover, their habitats, often wrongly termed as wastelands, are being wiped out. On December 7, 2018, Sanctuary partnered with Conservation India and The Corbett Foundation to launch a national

campaign to save the GIB. Prominent wildlife supporters and thousands of concerned citizens endorsed the campaign. A petition directed at the Ministry of Power was launched. Though the campaign garnered over 11,000 signatures and prompted movement from bustard range states and the centre, a direct response from the Ministry of Power was not received.

However, there is a glimmer of hope. On April 19, 2021, after three years of advocacy, the Supreme Court directed the formation of a committee to assess the feasibility of laying underground power lines to help save the Great Indian Bustard from extinction.



DHANANJAY JOSHI

Read: Cara Tejpal, Director of the Mud on Boots Project at Sanctuary, interviews GIB experts [Dr. Sumit Dookia](#) and [Dr. Mamta Rawat](#) on efforts to save the species.

LEFT Today, less than a hundred Great Indian Bustards can be found in the wild. While a successful captive breeding programme is underway, the species is still at risk of extinction unless other critical issues, such as overhead power lines, their disappearing grassland habitats and the threat of feral dogs, are addressed.



SAVE DIBANG VALLEY

APRIL 2020

During the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, India's Forest Advisory Committee met virtually to deliberate granting forest clearance to the proposed Etalin Hydroelectric Project. The project threatens to devastate 2,80,000 trees in Dibang valley, Arunachal Pradesh. Dibang is a 9,000 sq. km. district with forests that support a rich diversity of old growth trees, endangered and endemic fauna. These forests have been protected and conserved by the indigenous *Idu Mishmi*.

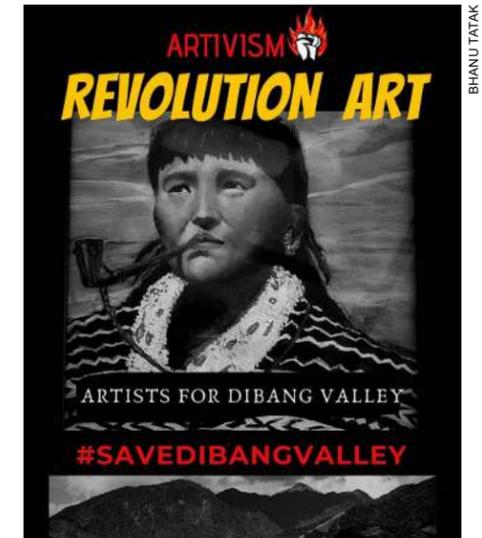
Sanctuary asked the general public to educate themselves about the dangers of the project and write letters to warn authorities. The team compiled warnings

from ecologists and scientists on the hazards of the project for both people and wildlife, and shared open letters from the conservation community that cited the global importance of the rich valley. A [detailed toolkit](#) prepared by Sanctuary and updated regularly was shared widely. As of April 2021, a decision is yet to be made over the proposal.

Several artists from across the country came together to raise awareness on the issue.

Anoko Mega is a member of the *Idu Mishmi* community who have lived peacefully and sustainably in the Dibang forests. He is an alumnus of the [Mud on Boots Project](#). Says Mega:

“Despite mass protests from our community, India's biggest dam – the Dibang Multipurpose Project – has already been approved on the Dibang river. Our sentiments on this matter were disrespected and the project was approved under the false guise of ‘development’ and ‘economic boom’ and our resistance was crushed. It is unethical for the government to force another mega dam on our rivers. Between both dams it is expected that six lakh trees will be cut down. With the destruction of the Dibang valley, where will my community turn and what will be left for our future generations?”



FACING PAGE In 2013-2015, Dr. Sahil Nijbawan led a study in Dibang valley involving hundreds of camera traps which revealed that the valley was home to the highest-living population of tigers in India! Six colour morphs of the Asian golden cat that had previously never been seen (the tightly rosetted morph pictured on top) were also caught on camera! Read more about Dibang valley's stunning biodiversity on our website.



STOP SLAUGHTERING WILDLIFE

Prevent the next pandemic
In partnership with The Corbett Foundation
September 2020

The Goal: Target the wildlife markets and the illegal wildlife trade emerging in India with support from wildlife supporters from India and around the world.

The campaign aimed to do this by:

- Working with key partners, food and health professionals, government agencies and local communities across India to create awareness about the impact of degradation of habitats and the commercial trade of wildlife species
- Upliftment of communities and generation of alternative livelihood opportunities
- Recognising grassroots conservationists, each of whom are contributing steadfastly to biodiversity conservation and community engagement in distinct and measurable ways
- Working with government agencies, social media giants and advertisers to target online markets being used by the illegal wildlife trade
- Communicating the consequences of close human – wild species contact
- Mobilising communities and decision makers
- Slowing down the pace of species extinction due to the illegal trade

Crowdfunding and soliciting funds from the public mid-pandemic was not a cakewalk despite the timeliness of the campaign. Garnering influencer support had its own roadblocks owing to the socio-political landscape in India at the time.

The campaign was hosted on the crowdfunding platform Ketto.
Amount Raised: Rs. 15,00,000 (\$20,000~)

LOOKING AHEAD

Sanctuary and The Corbett Foundation have identified and appointed a campaign in-charge as well as campaign coordinators in the areas outlined in Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, and Assam. Grassroots conservationists have also been identified to communicate the consequences of contact between wild species and humans within their communities.

These coordinators and grassroots leaders will begin work in tandem with key partners, food and health professionals, government agencies and the local communities to create awareness about the impact of degradation of habitats and the commercial trade of wildlife species.

FUTURE PANDEMICS

While many viruses and bacteria do not affect the wild animals they live on, they can be dangerous for humans. As wild habitats continue to face large scale destruction by anthropogenic activities, there is also increasing evidence that pushing human communities and wildlife closer together only heightens the risk for pathogen spillover – meaning the likelihood of pandemics is on an incline.

The proceeds will be used to support grassroots organisations and individuals who will work with Sanctuary and The Corbett Foundation to build bridges with local communities and create awareness about the impact of close contact with wild species for the wildlife trade.

Communities identified on the ground:

- Gond community in Khara village, nestled deep in the forests of Kanha-Pench Corridor, Madhya Pradesh.
- Rongmei Nagas community in Dailong, a picturesque village in Tamenglong district, Manipur.
- Pardhi community members Batal Pardhi and Mahila Bai and Kheer Babu and Kunti bai of Panna in association with The Last Wilderness Foundation.
- Karbi community in a Karbi village along the foothills of Karbi-Anglong Hills, Assam.



VISHRUTH CAVALE

India's traditional forest communities have survived for centuries in harmony with wild flora and fauna. However, the cold-blooded international wildlife trade cartels lure a handful of members from such communities whose hunting skills are then put to use to feed bottomless markets. (Facing page) A woman selling bull frogs in a market in Kohima, Nagaland. (Left) Sharks being weighed before sale in Mangalore, Karnataka.



EVENTS

THE SANCTUARY GLOBAL DEBATE 2020

“It’s money and the profit motive that are ruling our action and unfortunately, not the environment. Countries are pledging [to environmental protection goals], but not delivering and there’s an accountability gap.”

– Dr. Jyotsna (Jo) Puri

For the last two years, Sanctuary Nature Foundation has organised an ‘Oxford Union-style’ debate between some of the most erudite speakers, all focused on the tri-junction between economics, biodiversity, climate change and health. The Debate brings together renowned experts from various fields to have a much-needed discussion on environment conservation in today’s day and age. Due to the pandemic, the third Debate was moved online for the first time.

The *Sanctuary Global Debate 2020*, sponsored by Morningstar and held in partnership with Sanctuary Nature Foundation, BookMyShow and CarbonCopy, was held on Friday, October 30, 2020.

The speakers for the motion were Dr. Maria Neira, Pavan Sukhdev and Navroz Dubash. The speakers against the

motion were Dr. Jyotsna Puri, Priyanka Chaturvedi and Rohit Bansal. The Debate was chaired by Amitabh Kant and Julia Marton-Lefèvre was the keynote speaker.

The speakers for the motion had various stances; Dr. Maria Neira spoke about the importance of environment protection for public health and thus economy; Pavan Sukhdev highlighted that it was the environment that built the economy; Navroz Dubash reminded the audience that it was mistreatment of the environment that led to COVID-19, thus disrupting the economy; Dr. Jyotsna Puri stated that economic growth is in conflict with the environment; Priyanka Chaturvedi iterated that the two entities need to remain separate for the betterment of both; and Rohit Bansal suggested that the economy and environment had different agendas and histories.

THE SANCTUARY DEBATE FOR YOUNG INDIA 2020

Sanctuary believes that adults have had their say, and it is time humanity turned to our future leaders for guidance on how to build a better world for wildlife and people alike. This year, we brought the Debate to our youth in educational institutes across India. The discussion was held virtually in three rounds. Students of St. Xavier’s College, Mumbai, and Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT Bombay) competed in the *first round* on February 23, 2021, while the *second round* saw Sophia College for Women and Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies (NMIMS) engage in a discussion on February 28, 2021. The two winning teams, IIT Bombay and NMIMS, participated in the *final round* of the debate on March 17, 2021.

The Proposition for Round 1 and 2: “This house believes that the economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of the environment.”

The Sanctuary Debate for Young India 2021 was sponsored by Morningstar, in partnership with CarbonCopy. The event was chaired by Vance Martin, an acknowledged expert in international nature conservation and wilderness protection and the President of WILD Foundation. The Jury panel consisted of Dr. Anish Andheria, President and CEO of Wildlife Conservation Trust; Belinda Wright, Founder of WPSI; Payal Mehta, naturalist and tour leader; Dr. Raghu Chundawat, conservation biologist; Neha Sinha, conservation biologist and writer/author; and Cara Tejpal, Conservation Initiatives, Sanctuary Nature Foundation.

“Existing tourism goals are not in tandem with conservation goals. The tourism industry focuses majorly on economic impacts. But social and ecological impacts are left out.”

– Aditi Samant, IIT Bombay



“Over the past year, on account of reduced tourism because of the pandemic, poaching has increased exponentially. Low revenue has forced local communities to resort to poaching for survival.”

– Samkeet Shah, NMIMS



MORNINGSTAR
Presents

THE SANCTUARY GLOBAL DEBATE 2020

Proposition “This House Believes that the Economy is a Wholly-owned Subsidiary of the Environment”

Date October 30, 2020
India Time 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

FOR
the Motion



Dr. Maria Neira
Director, Department of Public Health and Environment, WHO



Prof. Navroz Dubash
Centre for Policy Research
Climate: Energy: Policy



Pavan Sukhdev
Founder-CEO, GIST Impact,
President WWF International

AGAINST
the Motion



Dr. Jyotsna Puri (Jo)
Leads the Independent
Evaluation Office of the
Green Climate Fund



Priyanka Chaturvedi
Member of Parliament,
Rajya Sabha from
Maharashtra



Rohit Bansal
Group Head -
Communications Reliance
Industries Limited



Chairman of the House
Amitabh Kant
CEO, NITI Aayog, India

MORNINGSTAR

Sanctuary
NATURE FOUNDATION

CARBONCOPY
MAKING CLIMATE SENSE

In association with:
book my show

MORNINGSTAR presents
THE SANCTUARY DEBATE
FOR YOUNG INDIA

Proposition: “This House believes that Wildlife Tourism has a net-negative impact on Wildlife Conservation.”

FOR the motion
Indian Institute of
Technology Bombay
(IIT Bombay)



AGAINST the motion
Narsee Monjee Institute
of Management
Studies, Mumbai



2
DAYS
TO GO

THE
INTER-COLLEGE
DEBATE FINAL

March 17, 2021
6:00 p.m. (IST)

Sanctuary
NATURE FOUNDATION

MORNINGSTAR

Partner
CARBONCOPY
MAKING CLIMATE SENSE

ZOOM FACEBOOK YouTube



Sanctuary Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2020:

Pratik Uday Pradhan: *Aurora Blues*



Joint Second Prize & People's Choice Award 2020:

Sitaram Dinkar Raul: *Ghost Protocol*

THE SANCTUARY WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS 2020

The Sanctuary Wildlife Photography Awards are considered to represent the apex of wildlife photography in India – a discipline that is as much an art, as it is a science. Our winners use the camera as a vital tool for conservation, bringing to light environmental issues that are often largely ignored. Biplab Hazra's image of torched elephants that won him the Sanctuary Wildlife Photographer of the Year Award in 2017 is one such capture that brought global attention to human-elephant conflict in Assam, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu and more. The Awards thus cherish unforgettable captures that render our jury speechless, and widely share stories that beg to be told.

In 2020, the ceremony was held online for the first time in its 20-year history, the silver lining being that we were able to reach out to a truly global audience. On December 19, 2020, the Sanctuary Nature Foundation, supported by DSP Investment Managers Pvt. Ltd., IndusInd Bank and Greenko, in partnership with Delhibird Foundation, presented the awards online at a virtual ceremony.

Swati Thiyagarajan, award-winning environmental journalist, hosted the event from her home in Cape Town, South Africa. After introductions to the awards ceremony, the 35 shortlisted images were showcased with brief natural history descriptions behind them. Finally, the winning images were announced. **The First, Second and Third Prize winners were each awarded Rs. 1,50,000, Rs. 75,000 and Rs. 25,000 respectively. The Certificates of Merit were awarded Rs. 2,500 each.**

The event was also graced by our sponsors Aditi Kothari Desai, wildlife supporter, Executive Vice President, of DSP Investment Managers, and Board member, Wildlife Conservation Trust; Roopa Satish, Head, Corporate and Investment Banking, IndusInd Bank; and our co-sponsor – Mahesh Kolli, President and Joint Managing Director, Greenko. Other prominent guests included Urvi Piramal, Chairperson of the Urvi Ashok Piramal Foundation, and Craig Foster, award-winning Wildlife Cinematographer-Director of the Netflix Documentary 'My Octopus Teacher', who presented awards to the winners.

Over 3,000 entries were received, which were shortlisted and winners selected by a world-class jury panel:

- Steve Winter, globally celebrated National Geographic Conservation Photographer
- Dr. Anish Antheria, Conservation biologist, wildlife photographer and President, Wildlife Conservation Trust
- Nayan Khanolkar, Educationist, Conservation Biologist and Wildlife Photographer
- Prasenjeet Yadav, Molecular Biologist, Himalayan trekker, National Geographic Explorer and Photographer
- Himanshu Sheth, acclaimed Travel and Nature Photographer, and founder of Himanshu Sheth Photosafaris
- Joanna Van Gruisen, Wildlife Photographer, Filmmaker and nature tourism professional, Sarai at Toria, Panna Tiger Reserve
- Dr. Parvish Pandya, Director, Science, Natural History and Photography, Sanctuary Asia
- Lakshmy Raman, Story Teller, Executive Editor, Sanctuary Asia
- Bittu Sahgal, Founder, and Editor of Sanctuary Nature Foundation
- Swati Thiyagarajan, award-winning wildlife journalist



BIPLAB HAZRA/SANCTUARY WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS 2017

An elephant mother and calf attempt to flee a mob in the Bankura district of West Bengal. Biplab Hazra (Sanctuary Wildlife Photographer of the Year Award in 2017) brought global attention to the adverse impacts of immense human-wildlife conflict across India. A long-term conservation strategy and consistent action are the need of the hour.



Joint Second Prize:
Mousam Ray: *Bird Bath*



Third Prize:
Priyanka Rahut Mitra: *Leap of Death*



FIRST PRIZE went to Pratik Uday Pradhan for his image 'Aurora Blues' – the ephemeral movements of a crane, skillfully captured in slow-shutter speed in Matheran, Maharashtra.

JOINT SECOND PRIZES went to Mousam Ray and Sitaram Dinkar Raul for their images 'Bird Bath' (a Crimson Sunbird bathing in the bowl-like petal of an ornamental banana flower in Coochbehar, West Bengal) and 'Ghost Protocol' (a fruit bat framed by the leafy branches of a tree before darting into the darkness, in Badlapur, Maharashtra) respectively.

THIRD PRIZE went to Priyanka Rahut Mitra for her image 'Leap of Death' – the fraction of a second before a leopard captured its

Malabar giant squirrel prey, in the Bandipur Tiger Reserve.

This year, the audience attending the live event also participated enthusiastically in voting for the first ever Sanctuary People's Choice Wildlife Photography Award. The winner was – Sitaram Dinkar Raul's image 'Ghost Protocol'!

SANCTUARY ALSO AWARDED:

CERTIFICATES OF MERIT: Mandar Ghumare, Arghya Adhikary, Umeed Mistry, Shiv Kumar and Tarak Chakraborty

HONOURABLE MENTIONS: Chandrasekar Das, Mayur Shinde, Hira Punjabi, Pushpal Goswami and Ashok Kallagunta

EDITOR'S CHOICE: Yashpal Rathore

The event was also screened live on our Facebook page, as well as seven other online streaming partners. Overall, till April 21, 2021, the ceremony video has reached 1,59,203 people on Facebook.

All of us at Sanctuary are gratified to see the evolution of wildlife photography into a strong conservation tool. This is one area where technology has been genuinely put to good use. We at Sanctuary have been fighting to protect species and wildernesses for four

decades and all our ceremonies have been at venues where humans could meet and interact with each other. This time however, the awards ceremony was virtual and while the hugs, backslapping and handshakes were missing, instead of the usual 1,000+ people who witness our 'shows' we were gifted an amazingly large viewership. We owe our loyal, strong and purposeful constituency a huge debt of gratitude for being the wind under our sails.

“ Apart from enjoying the event, I was thrilled to see the 10 final images. They were all so special and each told a fascinating story. It was particularly enjoyable to take part in the People's Choice Award and I was interested to see the two photos that I liked the best won joint second prizes. ”

– Carol Inskipp, Durham, England



“ I find it wonderful that an insect won the prestigious first prize. I was very moved seeing all these images, and the humility of the photographers comes through. Very powerful photographs. Thank you Bittu, you are such an inspiration to so many young people and to all of us here in South Africa. An absolute gem of a human being. Thank you for making me part of this event. ”

– Craig Foster, Award-winning Wildlife Filmmaker, South Africa





Belinda Wright became the first woman recipient of the **Sanctuary Lifetime Service Award in 2012**. The founder of the Wildlife Protection Society of India, she is a renowned tiger conservationist and campaigner who has pioneered investigations into the illegal wildlife trade in South Asia.

THE SANCTUARY WILDLIFE AWARDS 2020

The **Sanctuary Wildlife Awards**, instituted in the year 2000, attempts to turn India's eyes to exceptional men, women and children who work with steadfast passion to protect what remains of wild nature. Individuals from varied fields are considered – forest officers, entrepreneurs, artists, economists, students, writers, filmmakers... the common thread is their commitment to nature and wildlife conservation. Recipients of the Awards have subsequently had their work recognised widely by the conservation community and found access to aid for their ongoing projects in the form of support or funding.

Each year, we invite nominations and entries from the Sanctuary network – readers, supporters, writers, naturalists and photographers – looking for the best and brightest in India's biodiversity conservation canvas. After a gruelling selection process, winners are selected as the recipients of one of four prestigious titles.

Lifetime Service Award: To honour protectors of wild habitats who have been in action

for decades, inspiring millions, sparking movements, unearthing natural history knowledge, building conservation strategies, and shaping communities. Award: Rs. 1,50,000.

Green Teacher Award: To honour skilled educators who challenge norms and inspire youth to connect with the wild and join the conservation community as informed, concerned individuals. Award: Rs. 50,000.

Wildlife Service Award: To honour inspired wildlifers, forest employees, researchers, villagers... anyone currently involved with in-situ nature conservation who have displayed extraordinary courage, dedication and determination and set high personal standards for others to follow. Award: Rs. 50,000.

Young Naturalist Award: To honour driven youth leaders who set an example for their peers and older generations alike, through their thirst for knowledge and conservation entrepreneurship... motivated by hopes of their own future on planet Earth. Award: Rs. 25,000.

“ It was a privilege to be recognised at the Sanctuary awards and featured in the magazine. I am indebted to the Sanctuary Nature Foundation for being the voice of nature for so many decades. I know that *Sanctuary Asia* magazine is nearly as old as it took for me to grow the forest now known as *Molaikathoni*. ”

– **Jadav Payeng**, Sanctuary Wildlife Service Award (2012)



S. Theodore Baskaran, Sanctuary Lifetime Service Award winner in 2020, believes that indigenous knowledge and the need for conservation must be communicated in regional languages. He has contributed greatly to the discourse through his writings in Tamil and English.



ABOVE LEFT A snapshot from the Awards held at the National Centre for the Performing Arts, Mumbai in December 2019. A delightful evening of appreciation for many of Earth's defenders, it was hosted elegantly by award-winning actor Naseeruddin Shah.

LEFT The continued mismanagement of our wild habitats that led to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic forced us to honour our 2020 winners virtually. Despite the change in presentation format, the awards event was a resounding success.

Rita Banerji, Wildlife Service Award 2020, while filming 'Shores of Silence – Whale Sharks in India', which won a Green Oscar at the Wildscreen Festival in U.K., and led to a ban on killing whale sharks in India. Sanctuary Wildlife Award winners are courageous, dedicated conservationists whose work drives real change.



COURTESY: RITA BANERJI

TESTIMONIALS:

"Thanks Sanctuary, for giving recognition to a foot soldier of the Dudhwa Tiger Reserve (Brijlal, Wildlife Service Award 2020). The Terai is one of the toughest landscapes for conserving wildlife. I'm sure this will encourage many more to excel in the field and contribute significantly."

– **Ramesh Pandey IFS**

"It's just amazing to see such wonderful work being done by dedicated people, from ordinary walks of life. You really need grit, passion and determination to achieve what the recipients have! I salute their hard selfless work."

– **Deepak Parekh, Chairman, HDFC Limited**

"We have always wanted to contribute to Sanctuary's cause in any small way we could. And this was an opportunity we couldn't miss. There's a lot more we'd like to do. But this was a fantastic story to work on. And the learning was immense."

– **Pankaj Singh, Faraway Originals**

"I was so happy to see Brijlal ji getting a Sanctuary Award from Dame Jane Goodall. I have been fortunate to see the Dudhwa Tiger Reserve through his eyes. Our forest frontline staff are unsung heroes and deserve all the recognition and honour they get. Congratulations Meghna Banerjee and Suvrajyoti Chatterjee for winning the Sanctuary Wildlife Service Award. I am in tears and my heart bursts with pride. I personally know you both as courageous warriors with a fierce commitment to wildlife."

– **Prerna Singh Bindra, award-winning environmental journalist and author**

"The awards were just fabulous, the awardees amazing, and the award-givers legendary and inspiring. The Sanctuary Wildlife Awards 2020 was an opportunity to experience greatness. I loved Brijlal! Anurag, Ridhima and Suhaib are so, so special and future game-changers; and to hear and see Jane Goodall on this occasion... well, what can one say: a big thank you to Sanctuary!"

– **Romi Narang, Sanctuary well-wisher and supporter**

THE 2020 WINNERS

For the year 2020, Sanctuary awarded 13 incredible finalists in four categories working tirelessly in various roles to boost the conservation morale. Nominated by veterans in the field, superiors and colleagues, the finalists share true grit, a knack for innovation and a passion to build a better future for the planet's wild and human denizens. Sponsored by DSP Investment Managers Pvt. Ltd., IndusInd Bank, Morningstar India and Greenko, the Awards were held online on January 30, 2020.

The awards opening address was given by the legendary Dr. Jane Goodall. She also presented a Wildlife Service Award and was joined by veteran conservationists like Dr. Vandana Shiva, Dr. Bivash Pandav, and Belinda Wright and humanitarian Dia Mirza.

Lifetime Service Award: **Theodore Baskaran**

A conservation writer, historian, naturalist, author and veteran activist.

S. Theodore Baskaran has contributed greatly to the conservation discourse through his continuing legacy of writings in both Tamil and English.

Green Teacher Award: **Dr. P.U. Antony**

A long-time educator, inspiring youth leader and driven environmentalist.

A distinguished professor emeritus of zoology at Christ Deemed to be University, founder of Green Army and Forest Watch. Both within and outside the classroom, Anthony has been a green guiding force for students, initiating citizen science projects around Bengaluru.

Wildlife Service Award: **Dr. Sanjay Molur**

A passionate wildlifer, versatile conservation biologist and inspiring mentor.

Spending 28 years in the field, Sanjay has specialised in risk assessment and conservation planning of wild species, and has assisted in the assessment of more than 10,000 taxa within India, South Asia, and around the world.

Wildlife Service Award: **Rita Banerji**

A wildlife filmmaker, conservationist, youth icon and mentor.

Over the past two decades, her portfolio includes several path-breaking projects in the capacity of director, producer, editor and cameraperson. Her 'Shores of Silence – Whale Sharks in India' (2000) won the Green Oscar. After working as an apprentice for Riverbank Studios' Mike Pandey, she founded Dusty Foot Productions and Green Hub.

Wildlife Service Award: **Brijlal**

A self-taught naturalist and birder, avid wildlifer and Dudhwa connoisseur.

Inducted into the Dudhwa Tiger Reserve as a truck driver, Brijlal picked up a keenness to document the park's biodiversity and went on to identify 450 bird species and 136 butterfly species.

Wildlife Service Award: **Meghna Banerjee and Suvrajyoti Chatterjee**

Lawyer-herpetologist duo, fearless activists and wildlife-community conservationists.

Co-founders of Human and Environment Alliance League (HEAL), they have meticulously undertaken photo and video documentation of the barbaric ritualistic hunting of hundreds of wild animals since 2016.

Wildlife Service Award: **Latika Thukral, Swanzal Kak Kapoor and Vijay Dhasmana**

Gurugram's green defenders and rewilders of the Aravali Biodiversity Park.

Their colossal rewilding effort, spanning over a decade, including collaborations with municipal authorities, corporates and private citizens, led to the birth of the 380-acre Aravali Biodiversity Park.

Young Naturalist Award: **Anurag Karekar**

A multi-lingual nature educator.

Co-founder of NaturalisT Foundation at age 23, Anurag has led hundreds of workshops and nature trails for thousands of citizens, young and old, through wild habitats in Mumbai.

Young Naturalist Award: **Ridhima Pandey**

A climate change activist, public speaker, and conservation communicator.

She is one of 16 children activists petitioning the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child to hold five economic powers accountable for their climate inaction!

Young Naturalist Award: **Suhaib Firdous Yattoo**

An amateur naturalist, taxonomist, photographer and repository of natural history knowledge.

His passion for documenting microorganisms, fungi, flora and insects makes him an indispensable resource to the Wildlife Conservation Fund in Pampore, Jammu and Kashmir.

BEHIND THE SCENES



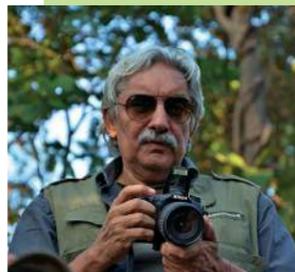
Sanctuary

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The **EDITORIAL & DESIGN** team rolls out communications for the Foundation and maintains our web presence, engaging with our readers and supporters through impact reports, newsletters, social media, guidebooks, coffee-table books and of course, the two magazine editions, *Sanctuary Asia* and *Sanctuary Cub*.

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Our in-house **NATURAL HISTORY** experts ensure our on-ground efforts and events run smoothly, maintain our world class Photo Library and engage with the extended conservation community to organise project collaborations.

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Director, Science and Conservation

PRACHI GALANGE



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SAURABH SAWANT



Consultant, Projects & Natural History

Our ongoing **PROJECTS** Kids for Tigers and Mud on Boots are making an impact on thousands of men, women and children through environmental education, and funding and support for grassroots conservation work.

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Director, Conservation Head, Communications and Strategy

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Project Coordinator, Mud on Boots

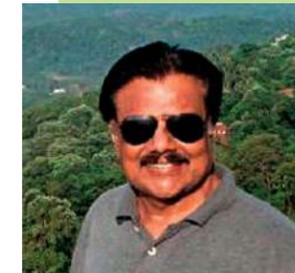
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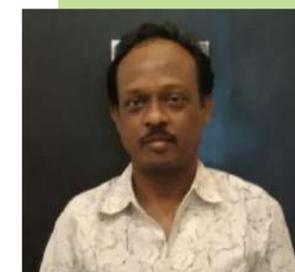
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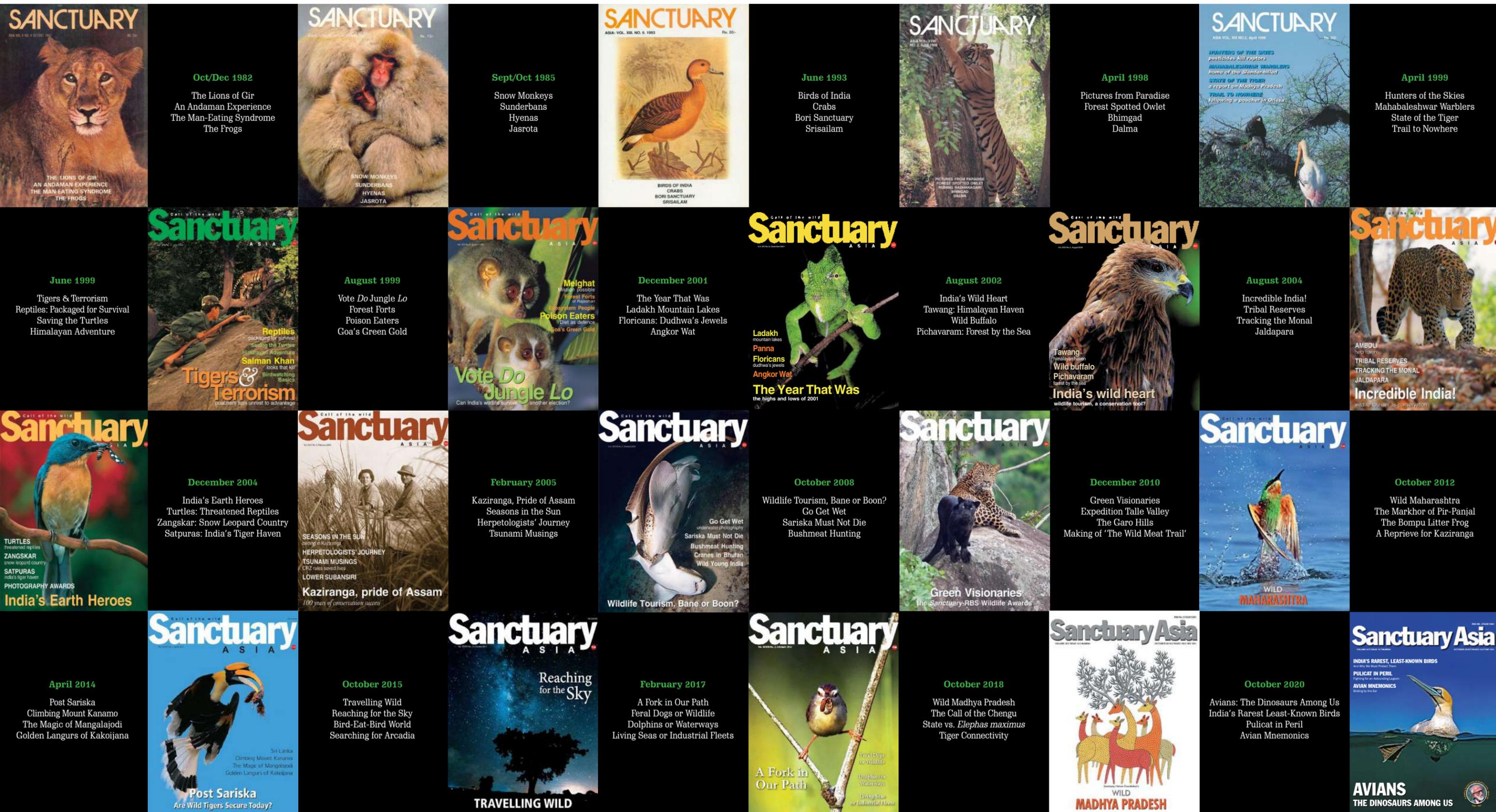
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