



Wildlife
Trust
of India

ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16





Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) is a leading Indian nature conservation organisation committed to the service of nature. Its mission is to conserve wildlife and its habitat and to work for the welfare of individual wild animals, in partnership with communities and governments. WTI's team of 150 dedicated professionals work towards achieving its vision of a secure natural heritage of India, in six priority landscapes, knit holistically together by seven key strategies or Big Ideas.

Our vision

A secure natural heritage of India.

Our mission

To conserve wildlife and its habitat and to work for the welfare of individual wild animals, in partnership with communities and governments.

◀ On December 18, Ashok Kumar, WTI's Founder & Chairman Emeritus (*left*) was honoured with the Sanctuary Legend Award at the prestigious Earth Heroes event held at NCPA auditorium, Mumbai.

ON THE COVER: Carved ivory items seized after 'Operation Shikar', a major enforcement operation that WTI supported (see *Enforcement & Law*, pg 11)

WTI'S SEVEN BIG IDEAS // CONTENTS

WA WILD AID

To provide at least 500 short term, focused and innovative aid at times of emergencies and conservation issues so as to nip problems in the bud and provide game changing solutions to age old problems.

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SR SPECIES RECOVERY

To recover populations of at least six threatened species or sub-species by lowering their national or global status of threat through direct conservation action. *pg 17*

E&L ENFORCEMENT & LAW

To combat key wildlife crime using trade control, litigation and capacity building techniques that demonstrably reduce poaching or trade in at least a dozen species or habitats.

pg 11

CC COMMUNITIES for CONSERVATION

Reduce the dependence of at least a dozen local communities on wildlife or their habitats through ecologically appropriate livelihoods and people's participation in conservation.

pg 14

WR WILD RESCUE

To increase the welfare of individual displaced animals while enhancing conservation and pioneering science based rehabilitation, conflict mitigation and wildlife health across India and in doing so to save at least 5000 lives in the decade. *pg 21*

WL WILD LANDS

To secure critical habitats outside the traditional Protected Area system, especially habitat linkages, wetlands, grasslands, community reserves, Important Bird Areas and sacred groves, thereby increasing the effective protected area of India by 1%.

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AC AWARENESS for CONSERVATION

Create a positive and measurable change in people's perceptions to improve the conservation and welfare of wildlife in India with at least a dozen planned campaigns.

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Other Highlights *pg 32*
Balance Sheet *pg 34*
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Rapid Action Projects (RAPs)

Equipping remote forest outposts in Neora Valley National Park, West Bengal with solar lanterns; mitigating human-bear conflict in the Nilgiri district of Tamil Nadu; the rescue and relocation of a family of distressed Hoolock gibbons in Arunachal Pradesh; the fabrication of a larger-than-life model of a Great Indian Bustard for a sensitisation programme in Desert National Park, Rajasthan – a range of Rapid Action Projects were continued or sanctioned in 2015-16 in response to wildlife emergencies across the country.

And indeed, beyond the country. In Bhutan for instance, where **quick interventions that address conservation lacunae or nip wildlife crises in the bud form an important part of the tripartite MoU signed between WTI, IFAW and the Government of Bhutan in 2012.** Thus, for instance, support was provided in May to two Bhutanese officials from the Wildlife Conservation Division's rescue team to travel to IFAW-WTI's Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation (CWRC) in Assam, where they were trained in the long-term rehabilitation of wild animals.

In June, a series of four training

workshops were conducted in the border towns of Gelephu, Samste, Phunstholing and Samdrupjongkhar by a joint team of experts from India and Bhutan. The workshops, which were attended by 129 officials from across various Bhutanese enforcement agencies, aimed to increase inter-agency cooperation to combat wildlife trade, and develop the capacity of personnel to identify wildlife goods commonly being traded across borders.

An RAP to strengthen anti-poaching activities in Chimmony Wildlife Sanctuary, Kerala, resulted in field kits being provided to 49 forest department personnel in April. Each kit included a backpack, raincoat, cap, sleeping bag and an LED torch. Providing better equipment is a field-proven way to motivate frontline staff, besides assisting them in the execution of their duties.

Case in point: **a new RAP provided 44 anti-poaching camps in Bandipur Tiger Reserve, Karnataka, with LPG connections and cook stoves,** enabling forest guards to remain at their stations for longer periods of time and reducing their daily dependency on fuelwood.



2015-16 HIGHLIGHTS

First-ever Volunteer Response Team consisting entirely of women formed for Human Leopard Conflict in Assam >> **Equipped Bandipur TR anti-poaching camps with LPG connections and cook stoves** >> **Supported survey of leatherback sea turtle nesting sites in Nicobar Islands**

An ongoing project to mitigate Human Leopard Conflict through community participation in the Kamrup metropolitan area in Assam received a fillip with the David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation coming on board as a partner. In an awareness camp held under the project in May, women were urged to take a more active role in conservation and conflict mitigation. An appeal from social activist Mubina Akhtar led to the formation of the first-ever Volunteer Response Team comprised entirely of women, for Human Leopard Conflict in Assam.

Seeking to promote sustainable agricultural practices to build conservation partnerships with communities in the surrounding areas of Manas National Park, RAP teams, under the Greater Manas Conservation Fund (GMCF), carried out fencing, ploughing and the installation of a shallow tube well in one of the fringe villages through the first half of the year. A small shed/hut for crop protection was built, citrus trees were planted and de-weeding of plots was completed. Also under the GCMF, a Green Forest Conservation CBO (Community-based Organisation) was provided mattresses, utensils and other items in a morale-boosting exercise.

Following a request from West Bengal's Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF), an RAP team with personnel from WTI and Inometrics Ltd installed EleTrack units – solar-powered Animal

Detection Systems with infrared sensors that can detect the movement of large mammals and produce an audio-visual warning – in two villages of southern West Bengal with a high incidence of Human Elephant Conflict.

An extremely crucial RAP was implemented in August, through which WTI assisted the Kerala Forest Department in purchasing a Call Detail Records (CDR) analysis software to assist in the investigation of an elephant poaching case. The information derived using the CDR software blew the lid on a massive nationwide poaching network and resulted in the seizure of over 500 kilograms of ivory in Delhi a few months later (see *Enforcement & Law*, pg 11).

After its successful campaign for the conservation of Amur falcons in Wokha, Nagaland, WTI had in 2014 initiated an RAP in partnership with the Haflong-based Blue Hills Society to protect another major nesting site near Umrangso, Assam. This year, to reinforce awareness about the need to conserve the species, WTI helped the Blue Hills Society organise an Amur Falcon Festival in October. Amidst the tribal cultural showcases, a conservation awareness rally was held and an awards ceremony organised to commemorate the achievements of local conservationists in protecting the Amur falcon.

With a view to formulating future conservation measures, WTI supported the Dakshin Foundation in conducting surveys to assess the status and distribution of leatherback sea turtle nesting sites in the Nicobar Islands. There was an information lacuna on the status of the nesting sites on these islands, which support one of the largest leatherback populations in the Indian Ocean Region, post the 2004 tsunami. The survey results showed that Great Nicobar and Little Nicobar continue to be prime nesting sites; around 400 nests were reported in Galathea National Park alone, and other important nesting sites were found in Alexandria Bay, Dagmar Bay and Safed Balu. WTI also conducted a training workshop on hatchery management and monitoring protocols for the Andaman & Nicobar Islands Forest Department at Campbell Bay in March 2016.

◀ WTI supported the Dakshin Foundation in conducting surveys to assess leatherback sea turtle nesting sites in the Nicobar Islands

Executive Director's Discretionary Grant (EDDG)

Ex-gratia relief was provided to Mr Rajesh, a tiger attack victim from Emmadi, on the fringes of Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary in Kerala. The grant allowed the victim, a farmer, to receive medical treatment for injuries sustained during the attack.

EDDG travel grants were provided to two students during the course of the year: One travelled to Australia to attend a conference on animal behaviour, where she presented a paper titled 'A Whistle among Growls: Dholes in a Multi Predator System in Dry Deciduous Forests of India'. The other travelled to Berlin, Germany, to attend the International Conference on Behaviour, Physiology and Genetics of Wildlife, where she presented her work on reintroduced tiger populations in Sariska Tiger Reserve.

▼ A new RAP provided 44 anti-poaching camps in Bandipur Tiger Reserve, Karnataka, with LPG connections and cook stoves



Emergency Relief Network (ERN)

In September, a series of animal treatment camps were held in the flood affected areas of the Bodoland Territorial Area District with the help of the local organisations. The camps were organised in parts of Manas National Park, Manas Range Forest and Chakrashila Wildlife Sanctuary. More than 2000 livestock across 15 villages were treated.

Assistance was also provided to the forest department in Arunachal Pradesh, to support the repair of forest roads inside Pakke Tiger Reserve that had been destroyed by landslides during the monsoon.

▼ ERN team members carried out relief work for over 800 injured birds during and after the kite flying festival of Makar Sankranti



In January 2016, ERN team members carried out relief work for injured birds during and after Makar Sankranti, the kite flying festival in western India. Relief activities were carried out in Porbandar and Bhavnagar in Gujarat and Jaipur in Rajasthan. WTI collaborated with different NGOs and the respective forest departments in these cities, and over 800 birds were treated and released. Most of the birds – including wetland species like the painted stork, great white pelican, black ibis and white ibis, apart from pigeons, kites, lapwings, owls, parakeets and doves – had suffered severe soft tissue injuries to their wings.



ENFORCEMENT & LAW

WTI's longstanding commitment to combating wildlife crime and the illegal trade in wildlife and its parts and derivatives was furthered through its several Trade Control, Training and Litigation Support initiatives in 2015-16.

Trade Control

Two major seizures headlined WTI's trade control accomplishments for the year.

First, in a carefully planned covert operation in New Delhi in October, over 500kg of ivory was seized and a kingpin of the ivory trade apprehended by an enforcement team of the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB), Kerala Forest Department and Delhi Police. The suspect was a major buyer of ivory and a manufacturer and exporter of carved artefacts. The operation, codenamed 'Operation Shikar', began with the uncovering of an organised elephant poaching network in Kerala in June. The larger network was revealed when Call Detail Records (CDR) software was used to analyse the mobile phone records of middlemen and poachers from Kerala. WTI personnel assisted the enforcement agencies during the entire operation and provided much-needed technical and field support to the Kerala Forest

Department. The suspect was taken from Delhi to Kerala, where several cases were registered against him.

Then, in December, in another covert operation supported by WTI, 27.5kg of pangolin scales were seized from two traders, husband and wife, in Gwalior. The WCCB and Madhya Pradesh Forest Department apprehended the accused after prolonged surveillance using modern tracking methods. Pangolin scales are hot ticket items in the illegal wildlife trade and it is expected that 'Operation Shield-I', as the operation was known, will reveal linkages to other poachers, middlemen and buyers. WTI has also conducted a comprehensive study on the poaching and trade of pangolins in India and the information thus collected is being used to build intelligence that could result in more such operations across the country.

Litigation

In pursuance of a multi-pronged to tackling wildlife and forest related offences, WTI has been providing legal assistance to Pench and Kanha Tiger Reserves (TRs) on a monthly basis. WTI's Legal Assistance Team has helped the relevant authorities file cases and



▲ In July, WTI assisted the Nagpur Local Crime Branch unit of the Railway Police in an operation in which 98 live black spotted terrapins were seized from two persons travelling in the New Delhi-Pondicherry Express

▲ Pangolin scales seized as a result of Operation Shield - I, conducted in Gwalior in December

2015-16 HIGHLIGHTS

Over 500kg of ivory seized and a kingpin of the ivory trade apprehended in New Delhi » **27.5kg of pangolin scales seized** from two traders, husband and wife, in Gwalior » **Legal Assistance provided in over 100 cases** in Kanha and Pench Tiger Reserve

provided legal advice on prior cases pending in the local trial courts. Legal Assistance review meetings were held in Pench TR in October 2015 and March 2016, and in Kanha TR in March 2016.

Ongoing trial court cases in New Delhi, Uttarakhand and Lakhimpur Kheri were regularly monitored by WTI advocates. Sentences were awarded in two cases in Lakhimpur Kheri, with one prime accused awarded 4.5 years imprisonment and fined Rs 1 lakh for hunting a tiger, and another awarded 4.5 years imprisonment and fined Rs 50,000 for attempting to hunt a tiger.

Legal assistance was also provided to the Kerala Forest Department in the filing of cases against the New Delhi ivory trader apprehended under 'Operation Shikar'.

Trainings

WTI's Van Rakshak (Guardians of the Wild) Project team and Human-Wildlife Conflict cell jointly organised a **three-day training workshop on conflict mitigation in Jasrota Wildlife Sanctuary, Jammu, for 40 forest and wildlife personnel from Jammu & Kashmir** in April. The workshop sought to provide preventive and reactive strategies to handle conflict situations, which have seen an exponential rise in the state over the last decade.

Wildlife Crime Prevention Trainings were also held throughout the year under the Van Rakshak Project: for 277

frontline staff of Pench TR in June; for 100 forest guards from the Rewa and Shahdol forest circles of Bandhavgarh TR in August; for 84 forest guards from Panna TR, also in August; for 87 frontline staff from Indravati and Udanti-Sitanadi TRs, and 41 staff from Barnawapara Wildlife Sanctuary in September; for 98 frontline forest staff of the Gwalior and Shivpuri forest circles of Madhya Pradesh in October; for staff of the Haltugaon and Chirang forest divisions of Manas TR in November; for 70 frontline staff (in partnership with the Nature and Biodiversity Union) in Valmiki TR, also in November; and for forest guards in Kanha TR in January and Special Tiger Protection Force personnel of Nagarhole and Bandipur TRs in February.

The Van Rakshak Project's Supplemental Accident Insurance Scheme continued to provide **vital ex-gratia support to forest staff and their families in the event of injury or death in the line of duty**. Payments made under this scheme in 2015-16 included Rs 25,000 to Sanjay Parte, who was severely injured by a captive elephant in the Karmajhiri Range of Pench TR; Rs 1 lakh to the wife of the late Sunil Mahato, a tiger tracker in Valmiki TR; Rs 50,000 to the family of the late Naba Krishna Mahanta, a forester in Kaziranga National Park; and Rs 25,000 each to Shiva Kumar, a forest watcher injured in a tiger attack in Bandipur TR, and Dimbeshwar Bora, a daily wager in Karbi Anglong, Assam.

Sensitisation programs on human-wildlife conflict, the installation of Improved Cook Stoves (ICS) to reduce fuelwood consumption in forest areas, training workshops to encourage the adoption of green livelihoods – WTI engages with grassroots communities through a range of activities across several of its projects.

So, for instance, in April and May, a documentary on improved agricultural practices was screened for families of Self Help Group (SHG) members in the villages of Gardi, Majuraha and Naurangia in Valmiki Tiger Reserve, Bihar. In Assam, WTI collaborated with the Horticulture Department and the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) in Diphu to conduct a free maize seed distribution programme for villages dependent on the Kalapahar-Daigurung Elephant Corridor. In Gondia, Maharashtra, 65 villagers from Nava Tola and Sahakepar participated in training programmes on sustainable harvesting organised with the Centre of Science for Villages.

In July, to motivate students in Karbi Anglong, Assam, to pursue higher education and better understand the value of wildlife conservation, WTI,

supported by the UK-based Elephant Family, gave away the annual Elephant Awards during a ceremony held at LP School, Sar Kro village. Eleven students from villages dependent on the Kalapahar-Daigurung Elephant Corridor received a cash award of Rs 3800 each, along with a certificate and an elephant memento. Also in July, school kits were distributed to 40 students at the village of Jadegindam (a key village on the Rewak-Emangre Elephant Corridor) under the Garo Green Spine Conservation Project in Meghalaya.

Livestock vaccination camps were organised in August in Karikot and Rampurwa-Matehi, two villages near Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh with a high incidence of conflict, under the UP Big Cat Conflict Mitigation Project. Over 250 animals were inoculated and treated in these camps, which served the dual purpose of establishing a disease-free belt around the Protected Area and building a closer rapport with local communities. In a similar series of camps held in the fringe villages of Manas National Park and Chakrashila Wildlife Sanctuary earlier in the year, WTI,



the forest department and the Assam government's Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department had immunised and treated 2200 cattle.

In November, under the Western Himalayas Mountain Ungulates Conservation Project in Jammu & Kashmir, Participatory Rural Appraisals were conducted for two villages – Hirpura near the Hirpura Wildlife Sanctuary and Babagail in the Limber Wildlife Sanctuary near Kazinag National Park. The villagers raised issues such as the lack of basic and educational infrastructure, and livestock predation and crop raiding by wild animals. Livelihood issues were also discussed for which potential solutions such as training on eco-tourism and better agricultural practices were put forward. This was the first time steps had been taken to initiate community interactions around markhor (a species of wild goat) habitat in Kashmir.

The installation of Improved Cook Stoves in forest-adjacent villages across various projects continued through the year. So, for instance, under the Valmiki Tiger Conservation Project, 25 fuel-efficient cook stoves were installed in the village of Singrawaha, Done Valley, in April. The frequency of firewood collection by ICS users had previously been estimated to have reduced by between 38% and 60% as compared to users of traditional cook stoves. In June, about 500 ICS units were installed in five Priority-2 villages – Palkheda, Telankhedi, Halbi Tola, Jeera Tola and Murdholi – in the Nagzira-Navegaon wildlife corridor in Maharashtra. Improved cook stoves were also installed in Salegaon, Kunbi Tola and Ushikheda Tola villages in Gondia later in November-December. In December-January, about 250 ICS units were installed by youth trained by WTI in identified fringe villages of the Greater Manas landscape.

« Participatory Rural Appraisals under the Western Himalayas Mountain Ungulates Conservation Project in Jammu & Kashmir were conducted for two villages near Hirpura Wildlife Sanctuary and Kazinag National Park

« A training workshop on the manufacture and repair of Improved Cook Stoves was organised by WTI in Pandarwani, Madhya Pradesh

2015-16 HIGHLIGHTS

Installation of fuelwood-saving Improved Cook Stoves continues across four projects » First-ever Participatory Rural Appraisals conducted around markhor habitat in the Kashmir valley » Students from villages dependent on the Kalapahar-Daigurung Elephant Corridor receive annual Elephant Award



From critically endangered gharials in the Gandak River to whale sharks, the world's largest fish, off the coast of Saurashtra; from sarus cranes in eastern UP to eastern swamp deer in Manas National Park – WTI has a number of projects designed to bring threatened species and sub-species back from the brink.

Nearly 20 captive-bred gharials (*Gavialis gangeticus*; critically endangered and one of the world's largest crocodilians) had been satellite-tagged and released into the Gandak River bordering Valmiki Tiger Reserve in Bihar last year, as part of the Gharial Restocking Project run in these waters by the Bihar State Forest Department and WTI. The project team continued to monitor their status down the Indian portion of the Gandak, from the Gandak Barrage to Sonapur Bridge, over the course of the year.

A number of gharials had dispersed from their regular basking sites, possibly because a rise in water levels caused the submergence of mid-channel islands and sand bars, and due to the growth of vegetation as well as debris being deposited on other basking sites. On October 3, a released gharial (ID 21) was

captured from the Mahananda River along the Bihar-West Bengal border by locals, NGO personnel and the West Bengal Forest Department. The WTI team visited the eco park where it was being housed and confirmed its identity. It had travelled more than a thousand kilometres in the 142 days since its last sighting on May 14, near the release site.

Regular monitoring also continued at WTI's Central India Wild Buffalo Conservation Project in Udanti-Sitanadi Tiger Reserve, Chhattisgarh. The Asiatic wild water buffalo (*Bubalus arnee*) is listed in Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. Just 4000 individuals are left in the wild, and a WTI survey in 2010 estimated that not more than 50 individuals survive in three sub-populations across Indravati National Park, Pamed and Udanti Wildlife Sanctuaries in Chhattisgarh. Crucially, these individuals are thought to represent India's last remaining 'genetically pure' population of the wild water buffalo.

Kiran, the first female calf born in March to the project's only other female wild buffalo, Asha, was in good



2015-16 HIGHLIGHTS

Three whale sharks satellite-tagged, **self-documented rescues crossed 500** >> **Birth of fifth fawn to translocated Eastern swamp deer** in Manas, all deer released from boma into the wild >> **89 nests with 157 eggs monitored** in breeding season under Sarus Crane Conservation Project

health, as were the other animals at the Wild Buffalo Rescue Centre's bomas. With the aid of trackers appointed by the Chhattisgarh Forest Department, the team also tracked all individual free-ranging wild buffaloes and recorded their locations. In July, preparations got underway for the release of two sub-adult males, Mohan and Veera, from captivity into the wild.

Meanwhile, off the coast of Gujarat, three whale sharks (*Rhincodon typus*) were satellite-tagged under the Whale Shark Conservation Project this year: a 30-foot female on April 1, a 20-foot female on May 9, and an 18-foot male on October 7 – the third, fourth and fifth whale sharks satellite-tagged under the project, and in India. Also, a major project milestone was achieved, with the number of whale shark rescues under the project's Self-Documentation Scheme crossing 500. Fishermen from the village of Sutrapada had conducted the highest number of recorded rescues, followed by those from Veraval and Dhamlej.

In the Eastern Swamp Deer Conservation Project, where a historic translocation exercise involving the capture, transport and release of 19 deer from Kaziranga National Park to Manas had been undertaken in December 2014, a new fawn was sighted on June 11 in the pre-release boma – the fifth fawn born to the translocated deer. On August 4, the gates of the boma were opened to allow the herd to move out into the wild. Most of the deer remained in the boma for a few days, but they had all dispersed by the end of the month. Post-release monitoring was conducted on elephant back and through strategically placed camera traps. In December, a herd of swamp deer was photographed by the WTI team about two kilometres from the release enclosure. More reports of deer sightings were received from the Bhumuk Camp east of Kuribeel. It is assumed that most of the animals have scattered in smaller herds of two to three individuals and the Kuribeel herd is the largest among these.

<< The Sarus Crane Conservation Project looks to involve local communities in monitoring and providing protection to the nesting sites of India's only resident breeding crane species

>> Captive-bred gharials basking on the banks of the Gandak River in Bihar



Finally, we turn to the Sarus Crane Conservation Project, run across 10 districts of eastern Uttar Pradesh by WTI and Tata Trusts with support from the UP Forest Department. UP is a stronghold of the sarus crane (*Antigone antigone*), India's only resident breeding crane and the world's tallest flying bird, yet until a few years ago eastern UP was totally off the radar as a region of conservation importance for the species. Working through *Sarus Mitra*, farmers, and Sarus Protection Committees (SPCs) made up of local volunteers, the Sarus Crane Conservation Project has identified, monitored and provided protection to sarus nests across eastern UP since 2013. Crucial work has also been done at the Important Sarus Wetland Sites to improve water-use patterns, ensuring that the depleting water bodies will survive till the monsoon comes around each year to replenish them.

On May 22, International Biodiversity Day, a sarus counting exercise was conducted across nine blocks and 187 villages in the Maharajganj district of eastern UP. A total of 829 sarus cranes were counted during the exercise.

Two SPCs were formed in the Siddhartha Nagar district in June, among several constituted across eastern UP during the course of the year. A programme for capacity building and leadership development among SPC members was

organised at Campierganj from July 6 to 12. Over 50 individuals were trained by resource persons from AADHAAR, Dehradun. Also in July, binoculars, camera and a bird field guide were distributed among 12 SPCs in the Maharajganj district. The recipients were also trained to use the equipment.

An orientation programme was organised for *Sarus Mitra* in Gorakhpur in May. Their roles for the sarus nesting season were discussed and they were briefed about their responsibilities with regards to nest monitoring and data collection. Altogether, 89 nests with 157 eggs were monitored in six project districts between May and September. Signages were also installed at Important Sarus Wetland Sites during the season.

A number of sensitisation and training programmes on sarus-friendly agricultural practices were also conducted for farmers throughout the year. Scientists from the local Krishi Vigyan Kendras and Sir Dorabji Tata Trust partner organisations like Srishti Sewa Sansthan and Shohratgarh Environment Society (SES) supported these programmes.

The proposal for the project's second phase, to be conducted over three years, was approved by Tata Trusts in October.



An adult male hog deer bitten by stray dogs saved in Makanpur village, Uttar Pradesh; wild to wild translocation of a family of western hoolock gibbons family conducted in Wakro, Arunachal Pradesh; a rescued Chinese pangolin released back into Manas National Park; a 7.6-foot female king cobra rescued from Stationpara in Digboi Township; veterinary care rendered to an orphaned elephant calf at Manchbandha, Odisha; four critically endangered white rumped vultures rescued, treated and released into the wild in the Barekuri area of eastern Assam – WTI's Mobile Veterinary Service (MVS) units and Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) worked in cooperation with State Forest Departments across the country to rescue displaced, orphaned and/or injured animals and, wherever possible, rehabilitate them into the wild.

One of the highlights of the year was the inauguration, on June 9, of a new MVS unit at Bandipur Tiger Reserve (BTR) in Karnataka. This is WTI's first MVS unit to be deployed in South India and the seventh operational MVS unit overall.

It proved an eventful first year for the new team. In July it attended its

first tiger conflict case, having been called in to help the Karnataka Forest Department rescue an injured wild tiger in the N Begur / Sarguru Range of BTR. The big cat was believed to have lifted several cattle and goats in the area and a hostile crowd of about a thousand people had gathered, adding to the tension. The MVS veterinarian successfully darted the animal from a vantage point; it was transported to Mysore for treatment and found to have been wounded both by a bullet and porcupine quills.

In the second week of August, the MVS Bandipur team was asked to retrieve a kitten of suspected wild origins that had been picked up by villagers. It turned out to be a rusty-spotted cat, one of the smallest wild cat species in the world, classified as 'Vulnerable' on the IUCN Red List. The kitten was cared for at the MVS field station and was eventually rehabilitated into the wild in February 2016.

Throughout the year, the team tended to several cattle and sheep injured by leopards and tigers, and provided free treatment to domestic livestock when diseases such as foot and mouth,



for instance, made an appearance. In areas established as hotbeds of conflict between humans and big cats, this helped the team build a rapport with the local communities. The value of this approach was demonstrated on several occasions: in the last week of November, for example, the MVS unit was called in to attend to a case in which a tiger had killed a man and carried his body into the forest. A massive operation was launched in which the MVS veterinarian assisted the forest department in an attempt to capture the animal. In one instance, a mob of angry villagers could be dispersed only because they recognised the veterinarian, who had treated several animals in their village.

first-born was also sighted in the area, about 500 metres away from the mother and the new calf.

Monitoring of other animals rehabilitated under the Greater Manas Conservation Project continued through the year. Elephant calves Rani and Tora generated particular interest when they were spotted with a herd of wild elephants in April and May. However, while Rani continued to be seen with wild elephants later in the year, Tora had attached herself to a captive herd near the Mahal Camp area in Bansbari. Both calves, though, stayed away from humans.



In other big news for the year, **Ganga and Mainao, two of the female rhinos that had previously been rehabilitated by WTI into Manas National Park, gave birth to their second calves in the wild.** Ganga's calf was sighted on June 19 near the Kuribeel Camp in the Bansbari Range, while Mainao was seen with her newborn on July 30 near the Rupohi River in the Bhuyanpara Range. Mainao's

In the UP Big Cat Conflict Mitigation Project, the WTI Rapid Response Team (RRT) organised a joint meeting of Primary Response Teams (PRTs, comprised of local volunteers who assist the forest department and RRT personnel in monitoring and managing conflict situations) from Rampurwa-Matehi and Karikot in July. The needs of PRT members in resolving conflict cases on the ground were discussed.

2015-16 HIGHLIGHTS

New MVS unit inaugurated in Bandipur Tiger Reserve >> **Two previously rehabilitated female rhinos give birth to their second calves** in Manas >> **Surgical intervention at CWRC helps injured clouded leopard go back to the wild** >> **Two more rhinos rehabilitated into Manas taking total count to 10**

▲ The conflict tiger darted and rescued by the new MVS unit at Bandipur Tiger Reserve, a month after the unit was inaugurated

◀◀ Ganga with her second calf at Kuribeel Camp in the Bansbari Range of Manas National Park

(The efficacy of PRTs, if it needs reiterating, can be gauged from the Karikot PRT's successful resolution in earlier months of two human-leopard conflict cases, independent of intervention by the RRT and forest department, that saved the lives of two children.)

The MVS unit that had been established last year at Similipal Tiger Reserve was involved in an interesting reptile-related incident in September. The forest department received information about a python feeding on a goat near the Lulung and Pithabata villages in the tiger reserve's buffer area. The MVS team rushed to the spot but the goat had already been consumed by the snake. On seeing so many humans, the frightened python regurgitated the goat

and tried to make a getaway. The MVS team rescued the python with the help of FD staff and, to avoid any future conflict, later released it near a water source in the core area of Similipal.

October was a particularly busy month for the Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation (CWRC) in Kaziranga National Park, Assam. The team attended to 20 cases of wild animals in distress and were able to return 11 individuals to the wild. Four elephant calves were also admitted to the centre. Two of them were critically injured; while one had sustained injuries from a country-made gun, the other one had a dislocation in the right tarsal joint.

As 2016 dawned, four rescued bear cubs were being taken for walks in the

forests of Pakke Tiger Reserve, Arunchal Pradesh, to enable them to develop skills necessary to survive in the wild. This, as part of the unique bear rehabilitation programme practiced at IFAW-WTI's Centre for Bear Rehabilitation and Conservation (CBRC) at Pakke. Rescued at a very early age, these bear cubs were brought to CBRC from different parts of the north-east and the chances of their survival seemed uncertain. They were hand-raised under the watchful care of CBRC veterinarians and animal keepers, who acted as foster mothers. Now, as they embarked on their guided wild walks, they were just one step removed from complete wild rehabilitation.

One creature that made an unlikely journey back to the wild was a clouded leopard that had undergone

an emergency surgery at CWRC. The sub-adult female had been found by villagers and handed over to forest staff at the Merapani Range of Kaziranga, in extreme pain due to a puncture wound on the abdomen and an injured tongue. Its chances seemed bleak, but it was brought to CWRC for surgical treatment. Following a period of convalescence and monitoring, it was released into the wild on January 30.

And finally, in February, Purabi and Dwimalu, two of the rhinos undergoing acclimatisation at an enclosure set up by WTI, IFAW and the Assam Forest Department, were released into Manas National Park. The total count of rhinos rehabilitated by IFAW-WTI and the AFD now stands at 10.



◀◀ A severely injured clouded leopard made it back to the wild after an emergency surgery at CWRC in January

▶▶ A rusty spotted cat, one of the smallest wild cat species in the world, was rescued by the new MVS Bandipur unit and rehabilitated to the wild in February



Through events, publications, multimedia and partner programmes such as IFAW's Animal Action Education (AAE), WTI continued to engage with project stakeholders, students, teachers and the public at large in a bid to enhance knowledge and improve perceptions about conservation, the environment, and the need to ensure the welfare of wild animals.

In May, WTI's 40-foot whale shark inflatable was displayed at the Sea World exhibition in Ahmedabad, to build awareness of the species. An estimated 1.1 million people visited the exhibition.

On July 12, a workshop on increasing the interest of school children in wildlife conservation was organised for the teachers of local schools around Katerniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary and Dudhwa National Park at the Tiger Den Resort near Dudhwa. Nineteen teachers from different schools attended the event.

On July 14, an awareness programme was organised for the girls of the Kasturba Gandhi Aavasiya Balika Vidyalaya, situated near the north Kheri Forest Division. Many of the students

of this school come from remote conflict-prone villages in and around Dudhwa, and a majority belong to the underprivileged tribal communities of the area. The programme began with a short interactive lecture, followed by a screening of the Hindi version of the Animal Action Education film on tigers, 'Born to be Wild'. Children of this school had been provided AAE awareness packs in an earlier event in April.

A workshop for the capacity building of teachers under the AAE programme was conducted on September 23 at the Central Institute of Technology (CIT), Kokrajhar, Assam. A total of 37 teachers from the Chirang and Kokrajhar districts participated.

In September and October, 16 villages and five schools participated in awareness programmes conducted during Ganesh and Durga Utsav under the Central India Tiger Habitat Securement Project in Gondia, Maharashtra. Rangoli competitions with the theme 'Tiger in the Forest' were conducted and the AAE film on tigers screened for school children.





Wildlife Week celebrations under the UP Big Cat Conflict Mitigation Project included an awareness parade that saw the participation of over 350 school children from 12 local schools of Paliya Kalan and Lakhimpur Kheri districts on October 2. On October 5 a painting competition was conducted at the forest campus of Dudhwa for 60 children from 12 schools.

The Elephant Cup Football Tournament, which was first held last year with the aim of building conservation awareness among local communities, was flagged off on October 7 at Koilamati Arlongrupat High School, Karbi Anglong, Assam. The tournament's theme was 'Playing to Save Wildlife; Playing for Peace and Co-existence'.

In partnership with the State Forest Department and Tata Chemicals Ltd, WTI celebrated Gujarat Whale Shark Day in the coastal town of Mangrol on December 11, 2015. Over 300 students from three schools walked the streets of this small fishing town chanting messages in support of whale shark

conservation. The rally was followed by whale shark-themed cultural performances by students and the distribution of compensatory cheques to fishermen who had cut their nets to rescue whale sharks under the Whale Shark Conservation Project's self-documentation scheme during the year.

WTI continued its content partnership with the prestigious *Sanctuary Asia* and *Sanctuary Cub* magazines, providing the two magazines a mix of advertising and editorial content on its projects and activities. Projects featured in *Sanctuary Asia* in 2015-16 included the Pakke Conservation Project, the Central India Wild Buffalo Conservation Project, the Whale Shark Conservation Project and the Valmiki Tiger Conservation Project. In addition, material extracted from AAE workbooks 'Beneath the Waves', 'To the Rescue', 'Born to be Wild' and 'Break the Wildlife Trade Chain' had appeared in *Sanctuary Cub* by the close of the financial year. Across all media WTI generated an estimated global readership of 114 million, worth approximately Rs 44.9 million.

Last year, in a major achievement, the National Elephant Corridor Project team had been able to update the status of about 100 corridors after two years of intensive groundtruthing and surveys. To finalise the list of elephant corridors and discuss the corridor report prepared for each state, consultative workshops were jointly organised through the course of the year in several corridor ranging states (including Odisha, Jharkhand, Kerala, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal) by WTI, Project Elephant, the Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change, and the respective State Forest Departments.

Work continued on the Chilla-Motichur corridor in Rajaji National Park, Uttarakhand. By April 2015, 26 families from Khand Gaon III had vacated their houses and moved to the rehabilitation site in Lalpani, Rishikesh, and the forest department had marked these houses for demolition. By October, one more family from the village had been rehabilitated and the remaining three were expected to relocate pending the construction of their new houses.

WTI received approval from the

Maharashtra Forest Department's research committee for a project proposal to survey corridor connectivity between Navegaon and Kanha, and monitor corridors between Nagzira-Navegaon and Navegaon-Tadoba. Transect monitoring and camera trapping on the Nagzira-Navegaon corridor took place from May through September, while the Navegaon-Kanha corridor survey began in November. On November 3, a tiger was sighted by forest officials of the Ghonadi and Bonde beat; scat and pugmarks of wild dogs, a leopard, a sloth bear, and an Indian wolf were also encountered by the survey team.

In August, over 100 villagers attempted to encroach on land in the Kahitama beat, Bansbari Range, Manas National Park. Another attempt was made on December 31, this time with a well-coordinated gathering of 800 villagers from various districts of Assam. In both instances WTI personnel received advance information, and officials of the forest department, local police and Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) were able to rebuff the encroachment attempts. FIRs were lodged against the local leaders involved in these incidents.

2015-16 HIGHLIGHTS

WTI generates global media coverage worth Rs 44.9 million, a rise in worth of Rs 11 million from 2014-15 figures >> Awareness programme conducted for underprivileged girls near Dudhwa National Park >> Animal Action Education continues to widen its footprint across the country

<< A submission by Nandika Bhargava, Class 9 student of Gwalior Glory High School, Gwalior, to the Animal Action Education programme's painting competition

In October, under the Nilgiri Conservation Project, the Kerala Forest Department prepared a field verification certificate with WTI staff – the final step in acquiring the corridor land secured by WTI in the Thirunelli-Kudrakote elephant corridor.

In December it was reported that **18 coral garden nursery sites and 150 artificial reefs had thus far been created in the sandy tide-pools of the Mithapur reef**, under WTI's Mithapur Coral Reef Conservation Project. Rescued corals from the intertidal zone of the reef had been introduced at five coral garden nursery sites; they were being monitored for growth and survival.

Perhaps the biggest highlight of the year came right at the end of 2015-16. On March 21, 2016, all 19 families of Ram Terang, a village in the autonomous tribal Karbi Anglong Hills in Assam, shifted into their newly constructed homes in New Ram Terang, six kilometres uphill. This momentous event marked **the securement of the**

Kalapahar-Daigurung elephant corridor – a vital habitat linkage connecting Kaziranga National Park with the Nambor-Daigurung Wildlife Sanctuary.

The building of a consensus for voluntary relocation had in itself been a long-haul process, beginning seven years ago. After the villagers, bedevilled by human-elephant conflict, made the decision that shifting away from the elephant corridor was in their best interests, land for the new village was acquired at the end of 2012. In 2013 the traditional king of Karbi Anglong had laid the foundation stone for New Ram Terang. In November 2015, WTI Executive Director Vivek Menon and Elephant Family CEO Ruth Powys handed a ceremonial bunch of keys to a *gaon burha*, a village elder. Villagers then began the process of shifting their possessions to the new village.

Today, at the site where Old Ram Terang once stood, elephants have clear passage through the Kalapahar-Daigurung corridor.

2015-16 HIGHLIGHTS

Kalapahar-Daigurung elephant corridor secured: Construction of houses completed and all families shifted to their new dwelling units ►► Work continues on securement of Chilla-Motichur elephant corridor ►► Consultative meetings held with state governments to finalise **list of 100 elephant corridors**

◀◀ New Ram Terang as it appears today from the church that overlooks it



Other Highlights

The first **WTI Club Nature Meet** was organised from May 1 to 3, 2015, at Sawai Madhopur, Rajasthan. The purpose of the meeting, which was chaired by WTI and Vistara Chairman Prasad Menon, was to brainstorm on how corporate India could be a game changer for the protection of wildlife, and how wildlife conservation could be integrated into core processes so that companies could go beyond CSR to work with the government and civil society. Participants included eight CEOs representing India's top corporate houses, senior government officials, and from WTI, Executive Director Vivek Menon and Head - Policy and Programme Implementation Dr Jagdish Kishwan.

On June 30, WTI, in partnership with Elephant Family, World Land Trust, the International Fund for Animal Welfare and IUCN Netherlands, set up the **Asian Elephant Alliance** to raise funds for the securement of 100 elephant corridors across India. The alliance was officially launched in the presence of Their Royal Highnesses the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall at an event at Lancaster House, London, UK.

On November 15, Prakash Javadekar, Union Minister of Forests, Environment and Climate Change, visited **Amur falcon roosting sites** that WTI has helped protect at the Doyang reservoir, Wokha, Nagaland.

And in December, WTI and the Forest and Environment Department, Government of Odisha entered into a pioneering agreement entrusting WTI with the task of developing a comprehensive Wildlife Management Guidance for the entire state. Odisha is the first state to undertake the preparation of such a guidance. An inception workshop for the plan, called the **Odisha State Comprehensive Wildlife Management Guidance (OSCOW-MAG)**, was held on March 10, 2016.



▲ Participants of the high-level WTI Club Nature Meet out on a wild excursion

» Heads of the Asian Elephant Alliance member organisations with TRHs The Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall

Balance Sheet

2015-16

WILDLIFE TRUST OF INDIA				
BALANCE SHEET AS ON MARCH 31, 2016				
AS AT 31.3.15 AMOUNT (Rs.)	FUNDS & LIABILITIES	AS AT 31.3.16 AMOUNT (Rs.)	ASSETS (Schedule " C ")	AS AT 31.3.16 AMOUNT (Rs.)
909,541.80	CORPUS FUND Opening Balance Add : Addition during the year	1,909,541.80	FIXED ASSETS	95,741,728.92
909,541.80				
69,253,048.28	CAPITAL FUND Opening Balance		CURRENT ASSETS, LOANS & ADVANCES	
2,947,560.07	Add : Addition during the year (Schedule C)		CURRENT ASSETS :	217,911.50
16,574,965.50	Add : Transfer from General Reserve		Cash in hand	538,299.14
88,775,573.85			Closing Stock (Social Enterprise)	9,239,739.36
347,507.53	Less : Sale/ Loss during the year		Bank balance	151,433,700.92
3,015,672.41	Less : Depreciation		Fixed Deposits	4,115,598.59
85,412,393.91		95,741,728.92	Accrued Interest	
57,352,615.61	GENERAL RESERVE (Schedule " B ")			
11,270,914.84	Opening Balance		LOANS & ADVANCES	983,344.00
-1,661,135.14	Add : Excess of Income over Expenditure		Security Deposits	15,702.08
16,574,965.50	Add : Net Addition (as per Schedule D)		Advances	
	Less : Amount Transferred to Capital Fund (As per Schedule C)			
0.00		49,228,476.10		
50,387,429.81	UNUTILISED FUNDS (Schedule " B ")			
114,783,121.47	Project Fund	121,837,168.24		
-2,971,417.24	Social Enterprise Fund	-3,692,652.59		
		1,937,810.41		
1,154,556.50	CURRENT LIABILITIES & PROVISIONS			
	Sundry Amounts Payable	266,962,072.88	Tax Deducted at Source	4,676,048.37
249,675,626.25	TOTAL	266,962,072.88	TOTAL	266,962,072.88

Significant Accounting Policies and Notes to Accounts - Schedule "E"
In terms of our report of even date attached

FOR KOSHI & GEORGE
Chartered Accountants
(Reg. No. 003916N)
New Delhi

GEORGE KOSHI
Partner
M.No. 82961

New Delhi
16.09.2016

(EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR)

FOR WILDLIFE TRUST OF INDIA

(TREASURER)



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