

# ANNUAL REPORT

2017-2018





## Annual Report

2017-18



### Wildlife Trust of India

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## CONTENTS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Note from the ED .....  | 5  |
| Our Achievements at a Glance .....  | 6  |
| Wild Rescue: Rescuing and<br>Rehabilitating Troubled Wild Animals .....           | 10 |
| Wildlife Crime Control - Preventing Wildlife Crime .....                          | 14 |
| Wild Aid - Addressing Conservation Emergencies .....                              | 16 |
| Species Recovery - Recovering Endangered Species .....                            | 22 |
| Wild Land - Securing Wild Habitats .....  | 26 |
| Protected Area Recovery – Re-wilding Habitats .....                               | 28 |
| Conflict Mitigation – Encouraging Non-violent Human<br>Wildlife Coexistence ..... | 29 |
| Natural Heritage Campaigns - Spreading Conservation<br>Awareness .....            | 30 |
| Other Major Achievements .....  | 33 |



## 1. NOTE FROM THE ED

### YEAR THAT WAS

The year 2017-18 is an important year for us at the Wildlife Trust of India, as we are on the verge of successfully completing two decades of our conservation journey. In these years, we have not only broadened our scope of work to include six priority landscapes but also increased our team many folds to include expert conservationists, biologists, lawyers, veterinarians, and professionals from finance, management, and communications who have worked tirelessly to achieve all the milestones that we are so proud of today.

From the time of WTI's inception till today, the issues facing India's wildlife and biodiversity have not only grown but have also added layers of complexity to them. Apart from unabated wildlife crime, increasing changes in land use pattern due to growing urbanisation and livelihood needs of a rising population, infrastructure development, and illegal felling of trees for timber has resulted in massive loss of numerous natural habitats. The impact of a warming climate is now being increasingly felt across various bio-geographic regions, especially those resulting in extreme weather events and natural disasters, which in turn are causing further loss of wildlife and biodiversity. Despite such a grim scenario, India still remains one of the most bio-diverse countries in

the world. This is also a place where, in spite of growing conflict with wildlife, communities have largely continued to live peacefully in close proximity with nature and wildlife.

Though, at the heart of all our work is securing India's immense natural heritage, conserve wildlife and their natural habitats in collaboration with the communities and governments, to tackle the changing nature of these issues, WTI, in 2017-18 has also continued to redefine its strategy to address as many aspects of the problem as possible through our now nine Big Ideas, while setting clear goals under each category. We have used new and innovative technology, campaigns, and engagement and partnerships with various stakeholders to create awareness as well as involve people in conserving our biodiversity.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all WTI team members, donors who have believed in and supported our work for years, partner organisations without whom our work could not be done, various other stakeholders including experts, consultants, government departments, institutions etc. who have continued to support us in our journey, and all our volunteers and well-wishers who have kept the spirit of conservation alive.



## 2. OUR ACHIEVEMENTS AT A GLANCE

| CATEGORY | 2017-18 | OVERALL | OTHER DATA |
|----------|---------|---------|------------|
|----------|---------|---------|------------|



### WILD RESCUE



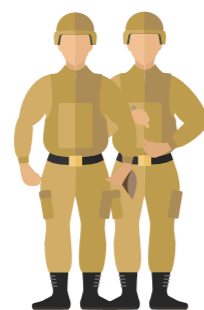
**695** CASES ATTENDED  
to CWRC, CRBC, MVS in Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha, Karnataka

**5000** cases of which  
**60%** RELEASED IN THE WILD

Species attended to – open billed stork, little egret, lesser adjutant stork, Himalayan griffon vultures, whistling duck chicks, hog deer, elephant, tiger, leopard, rhino, hog badger, swamp deer, wild buffalo, bear cat, asiatic black bear, palm civet, snakes and other reptiles



### WILDLIFE CRIME CONTROL



**167** FOREST PERSONNEL TRAINED AND EQUIPPED



**16400** FRONTLINE FOREST PERSONNEL TRAINED IN  
**150** PROTECTED AREAS



### WILD AID

ERN ATTENDED TO  
**20,000** cases during monsoon floods in 4 states; attended to  
**1500** cases of bird injury during kite flying festival in Gujarat



**WILDWATCH APP** – test pilot in Sabrimala pilgrimage route received 94 alerts in 67 days



**ROADWATCH APP** – 339 road kill alerts since launch



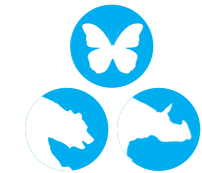


CATEGORY

2017-18

OVERALL

OTHER DATA

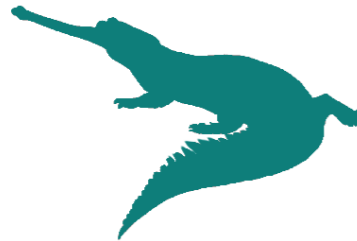


SPECIES RECOVERY



**17** deer translocated to Manas National Park; 4 fawns born to this group

Two gharial nests on the Gandak River protected till successful hatching in 2018



**119** gharial sighted in 2017 and **166** gharials sighted in 2018 in the Gandak River

**26** SWAMP DEER TRANSLOCATED IN MANAS NATIONAL PARK

**9 fawns** BORN TO THE TRANSLOCATED GROUP

**11** GHARIAL NESTS ON THE GANDAK RIVER PROTECTED DURING 2016-19



WILD LANDS



**6** corridors secured; **6** in the process of being secured

**324.3** hectares of forest notified and registered as Village Reserve Forest

**101** ELEPHANT CORRIDORS IDENTIFIED

**2822.3** HECTARES OF FORESTS NOTIFIED AND REGISTERED AS 17 VILLAGE RESERVE FORESTS



**138** SARUS CRANE NESTS identified and monitored in eastern UP

**1800** sarus cranes counted



PROTECTED AREA RECOVERY



**3** RHINOS REHABILITATED in Manas National Park

**ONE RHINO CALF BORN** to the female rehabilitated in Manas

**Three** captive reared and reintroduced females have reproduced in Manas

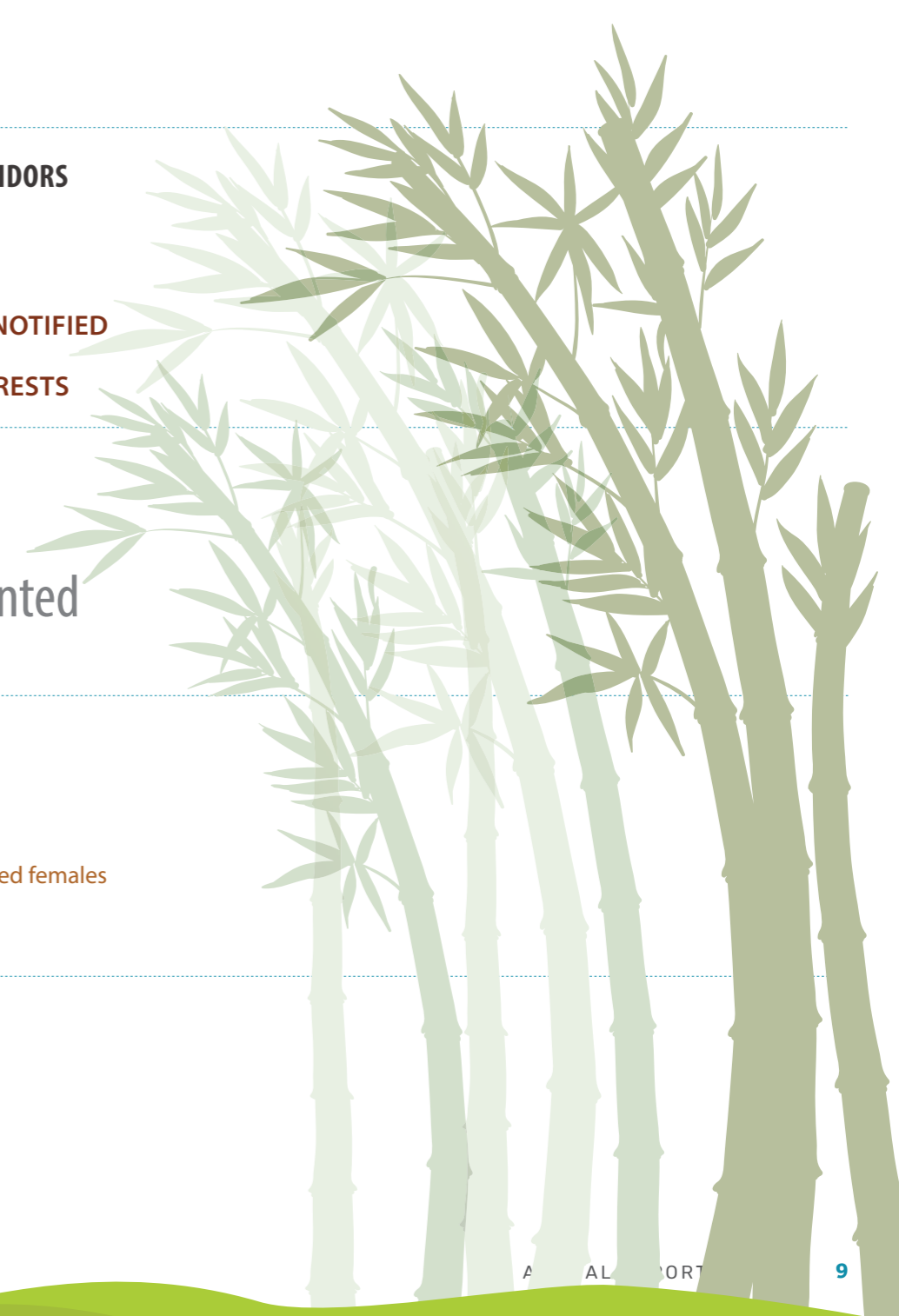


CONFLICT MITIGATION



**TERAI & VIDARBHA**  
4 leopards and 5 tigers captured, 2 leopards and 2 tigers released back into the wild; 3 hog deer, 2 monitor lizards, 1 crocodile, 1 spotted deer and 2 Gangetic turtles rescued and released back into the wild. 4 tigers and 5 leopards in Terai project provided safe passage actively by RRT/PRT

**RAJAJI**  
**1816** elephants detected on railway track in Rajaji and potential collisions with trains averted.



### 3. **WILD RESCUE:** RESCUING AND REHABILITATING TROUBLED WILD ANIMALS

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.

Since its launch in 2002, CWRC has successfully achieved the target of handling

**5000**

of several species,

**60%**

of which have been released back to wild till date.



### 3. WILD RESCUE: RESCUING AND REHABILITATING TROUBLED WILD ANIMALS

The Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation (CWRC) in Assam, a wildlife rescue, care and rehabilitation facility is the only facility of its kind in India where orphaned and/or injured wild animals of several species are hand raised and/or treated. The animals are subsequently returned to the wild through a process of acclimatisation and rehabilitation. The facility is jointly run by WTI, International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) and the Assam Forest Department. *Since its launch in 2002, CWRC has successfully achieved the target of handling 5000 animal cases of several species, 60% of which have been released back to wild till date.*

In 2017, CWRC and its Mobile Veterinary Service (MVS) unit handled 391 cases belonging to over 40 species of which 64% were released. Centre for Bear Rehabilitation and Conservation (CBRC), the first specialised rehabilitation centre for asiatic black bears in India and its MVS unit handled 19 cases of which 70% were released back, moving the total to 50 rescued bears till date. The other 5 MVS units handled around 200 cases belonging to several species.

This year, we were successful in rehabilitating three female rhinos rescued in 2016 from the devastating annual floods in Kaziranga National Park, into Manas National Park. *Jamuna, a female rhino who was rescued in 2004 and rehabilitated in 2010, gave birth to her second calf in 2017. With this, our*

*total rehabilitation of rhinos has now touched 13, with six calves being born in the wild of them.* We also relocated six elephant calves, rescued between 2013 and 2015, back to the wild in Manas National Park. Three calves will be radio-collared for monitoring post release. Five Asiatic black bear cubs were admitted to CBRC in 2017. Of these, two are being raised at the centre and the remaining three have been moved to the acclimatization site at Khari (Pakke Tiger Reserve), after being hand-raised at CBRC. After adequate acclimatization, the bear cubs will be released back to the wild as per our established bear rehabilitation protocol.

Three juvenile Lesser Adjutant Storks, who were rescued as fledglings and brought to CWRC on by Green Hope, an NGO working in the Nagaon-Kaziranga landscape have already been released in the wild. They were treated and cared for till the time they were able to act on their natural instinct and fly on their own.

In another heart-warming story, a three-month-old female elephant calf was rescued by frontline forest personnel after being stuck in a drain in Misa Tea Estate, Nagaon Wildlife Division. The natal herd has left her there as they were unable to extricate her. The forest officials made several attempts to effect a reunion but she was not accepted by the herd post which she was brought to CWRC for recovery and long term rehabilitation.



Rescued animals at CWRC, a wildlife rescue, care and rehabilitation facility in Assam





## 4. WILDLIFE CRIME CONTROL - PREVENTING WILDLIFE CRIME

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.

**W**has been implementing a multi-pronged strategy for preventing wildlife crime – training and equipping frontline forest staff, providing legal assistance to forest departments, intelligence gathering, collaborating, and networking. Through our ‘Van Rakshak’ (Guardians of the Wild) Project, we have been assisting the government in creating a strong, well-equipped and motivated force of frontline field staff across Protected Areas. *The project has trained over 16,400 frontline forest personnel across 150 protected areas since its inception in 2001.*

### Training of Forest Personnel

In 2017, 167 frontline forest personnel were trained and equipped through five wildlife crime control trainings while a supplementary accident insurance scheme which covers the frontline forest staff against death or disability on duty was granted to nine reported cases. IFAW-WTI’s Supplementary Accident Assurance Scheme is the only NGO-run scheme in India that brings frontline forest staff under an ex-gratia umbrella, providing coverage of up to INR 100,000 in case of death and a partial amount in case of permanent disability. *Till date, 20,400 staff has joined the scheme across 23 state Forest Departments, and 150 families have benefitted from the scheme so far.* The Guardians of the Wild (Van Rakshak) Project, under which this scheme falls, has also trained and equipped over 16,000 forest personnel in more than 150 Protected Areas of India, as well as trans-boundary areas in Bhutan.

### Providing Legal Aid

On the legal front, WTI’s Green Lawyers under the Litigation Project of WTI’s Wildlife Crime Control Division have been assisting Forest Departments in investigating and prosecution of wildlife crimes by filing comprehensive and error-free cases through a consultative process in the seven major Protected Areas across India – Kanha, Pench, Bandhavgarh and Dudhwa Tiger Reserves (TRs) in Central India, Manas TR in North-east India, Bandipur and Nagarhole TRs in Southern India. It is based on the understanding that wildlife and forest-related offences are fundamentally distinct from other crimes and require a specialised focus. Manas National Park was the latest to be covered under this project. The legal support given here is an extension of the training that the frontline staff receives on wildlife crime prevention. In the year 2017, we achieved a total of seven convictions and multiple favourable orders in on-going cases.

### Wildlife Crime Investigations

*Under our Wildlife Trade Control Project which addresses issues related to illegal trade in wildlife and its derivatives, WTI has achieved tremendous success this year by busting a massive illegal online trade on monitor lizard parts through an undercover investigation in collaboration with IFAW and the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB).* ‘Hatha-jodi’ (translated as clasped hand) was being sold as a ‘rare sacred root’ from a plant, superstitiously believed to be a powerful charm capable of bringing prosperity and good fortune to its possessor. However, the product

was not a plant but the bifurcated penis (also known as hemipenis) of any of the four species of monitor lizards found in India. All the species are protected under Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972 and listed on Appendix 1 of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), which prohibits the import or export of the animal or its body parts.

‘Hatha-jodi’ was being sold extensively through major e-commerce sites, specifically set up for selling these parts. It was also promoted through several you-tube videos which claimed potency of the product, leading customers to purchase the products without being aware of its true nature. Monitor lizards, whether male or female were caught indiscriminately for this. The meat, fat and skin of females were used anyway, but the hemipenis of the males were usually most sought after. The males were burnt alive, so that their penis could protrude further after which they were cut and sun-dried.

Following the investigation, WCCB has issued a national level alert to all Chief Wildlife Wardens and state forest departments across India against the selling of the product. This success story was covered in numerous mainline dailies and magazines across the country.



## HAWK

**the first of its kind wildlife crime intelligence monitoring system in the country initiated by WTI**

*WTI also initiated the launch of HAWK (Hostile Activity Watch Kernel), the first of its kind wildlife crime intelligence monitoring system in the country based on ‘TenBoma’, a project successfully used in Africa to tackle wildlife crimes. The system was created to tackle the massive ivory trade uncovered in 2015 in the state of Kerala. This project is part of a larger collaboration with State Forest Department and various other like-minded organisations to help develop a comprehensive solution to the trafficking problem. HAWK is a real-time technology-based solution to monitor criminal networks, criminal activities and associated incidents and has the potential to revolutionise wildlife crime intelligence and dismantling wildlife trade in India.*

*Frontline forest staff being trained on Wildlife Crime prevention*



A photograph of a herd of elephants in a lush green field. The elephants are in the middle ground, facing right. The field is filled with tall, vibrant green grass. In the background, there is a dense forest of tall, thin trees. A single, larger tree with a more complex structure is on the left side of the field. The overall scene is bright and natural.

## 5. **WILD AID** - ADDRESSING CONSERVATION EMERGENCIES

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.



## 5. WILD AID - ADDRESSING CONSERVATION EMERGENCIES

**W**TI's Rapid Action Projects (RAPs) seeks to address wildlife threats that require an immediate, short-term response to identify and resolve potential conservation adversities at an early stage through on-ground collaborations with grassroots organisations, government agencies and communities.

In 2017-18, 21 RAPs were sanctioned including conserving around 3200 short-toed larks in three districts of West Bengal; protecting fishing cat species through community participation in West Bengal; assisting local communities in addressing human-elephant conflict in Golaghat, Assam; launching an innovative mobile applications 'Wildwatch' to mitigate human wildlife conflict in Sabrimala, Kerala, and 'Roadwatch' where citizens can report wildlife road kills anywhere in the country; and emergency relief work during floods.

### Furthering Amur Falcon Conservation

Amur Falcons, migratory raptors from the Amur region of Russia, China and Mongolia, make an annual stop in the Wokha district of Nagaland on their 15,000 miles flight to southern Africa. Till about 2012, thousands of these birds were trapped and killed when they descended in the millions to roost by the vast Doyang Hydroelectric Reservoir and its surrounding jhummed lands. A remarkable conservation success story was crafted over the years due to the partnership between Wildlife Trust of India (WTI), local Village Council

Members (VCMs), the Amur Falcon Roosting Area Union (AFRAU), the Nagaland Forest Department and the Stop Poaching Fund which focused on improving the livelihoods of local communities and sensitising them towards the ecological and economic benefits of protecting Amur falcons.

Now, with zero mortality, the Doyang Reservoir is one of the safest places in India for the raptors and has recently been nominated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. To continue with this conservation effort, WTI constructed a guest house in Pangti using local Lotha architecture, and which could be used as an eco-tourism resource in the area. This was done keeping in mind the growing tourists in the region.

### Conservation of Short-toed Larks in Three Districts of West Bengal

Greater short toed larks are winter migratory birds that arrive in large numbers between September and April in three districts in West Bengal – Birbhum, Murshidabad and Bardhaman. They migrate from Russia, China and Mongolia to roost on ground in the agriculture fields, from where they are poached for its meat, a delicacy in these parts. A 3-month RAP was initiated which gathered intelligence about movement of poachers, preferred hunting grounds and markets, and helped prevent five poaching attempts, apprehend seven poachers, seized several bundles of mist nets, rescued over 3200 birds, and also helped spread awareness in the community through an intensive sensitising program.



### Protecting Fishing Cat through Community Participation

Fishing cat (*Prionailurus viverrinus*), listed as 'Vulnerable' under IUCN Red List and accorded highest protection under Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 faced threat due to retaliatory killing by communities in two districts of West Bengal. Fishing cat is the state animal of West Bengal and is one of the several smaller wild cat species found in the Indian subcontinent. This species is largely found in marshes, swamps, creeks and mangroves which are however shrinking leading to human-wildlife conflicts. A RAP was initiated in Amta Block administrative area of the Howrah district to build awareness among local communities about the importance of preserving the habitat of the fishing cats. 14 Fishing Cat Protection Committees (FCPCs) have been formed

comprising around 60 members through community participation; a consultative workshop was conducted with the State Biodiversity Board, Biodiversity Monitoring Committee, and FCPC members to understand the importance of wetland biodiversity; and camera traps deployed to monitor cat presence and their behaviour in the changing landscape.

### Addressing Human Elephant Conflict in Thoramukh, Golaghat, Assam

Human-elephant conflict is steadily increasing in Thoramukh region of Golaghat, Assam with reports of 70-80% of crops being damaged annually on an average. The region is close to three Protected Areas – Nambor Doi Reserve Forest, Garampani Wildlife Sanctuary

*ERN team addressing bird injuries during Kite Flying festival in Jaipur, Rajasthan*



and Daigrung Reserve Forest with an estimated 1700 wild elephants in the landscape (Elephant Census, 2011). Though the forest department has taken steps to reduce the incidence of crop raiding, the village communities unanimously felt they needed to provide local assistance in addressing the issue. Six anti-depredation squads comprising four to five village youth each were formed, who constructed machans at strategic points using their own resources. *WTI has provided them with basic field equipment such as high-powered searchlights and blankets, helping in efficient patrolling which has resulted in over 70% harvest from being raided.*

### WILDWATCH- Innovative Mobile app to Mitigate Human-wildlife Conflict

To mitigate human-wildlife conflict, WTI has partnered with a team of engineering students from Kerala, to create an innovative mobile app 'WildWatch' which has an SMS alert system, an early warning light system, and a fence



monitoring module. During its field test along the route of Sabrimala pilgrimage, which falls within Periyar Tiger Reserve, frontline foresters, officials of the Motor Vehicle Department and members of the Devasam (shrine) board were trained on the use of the app, a control room established, and trained ground personnel were positioned along the route.

*In 67 days, the team received 94 alerts/cases which included sighting, diversion from the path, and/or rescue of bengal tigers (4), asian elephants (54), wild pigs (3), and snakes (33).* The App has

received positive attention in local media, and a live demo has been given to the Kerala Forest minister and other officials.

### ROAD WATCH- Mapping and Preventing Wildlife Road Kills in India



WTI launched another mobile app 'Road Watch' to help citizens report wildlife road kills easily from anywhere in the country. It has been designed to gather necessary data such as photographic records, GPS location, type of animal, date of record etc. The gathered data will be open source and will potentially assist in the better planning of linear infrastructure such as roads. *Till date, we have received 339 road kill alerts with location, time and species details. 15 regional/national wildlife organizations have expressed their interest in partnering with the App which will help in increasing its reach.*

This app is available on Google's Play Store or can be downloaded from [www.roadwatchers.org](http://www.roadwatchers.org). Romulus Earl Whitaker, the well-known Indian herpetologist, has joined the "I brake for Wildlife" campaign to promote the App, which WTI plans to take forward nationwide.

### Emergency Relief Network

The Emergency Relief Team participated in flood-relief activities in the Uttar Dinajpur district of West Bengal, parts of northern Bihar, and the Chirang and



*Citizen volunteers at a Human-Snake Conflict Mitigation field workshop*

Kokrajhar districts of Assam after floods devastated large tracts of land in eastern and north-eastern India. An estimated 5000 animals were affected across four administrative blocks – Itahar, Hemtabad, Raiganj and Karandighi – in Uttar Dinajpur. ERN teams worked with People for Animals to provide emergency aid to animals in Itahar and Raiganj, which were the worst affected. They also released around 50 hog deer that were rescued by the forest department in and around Udaypur. Fodder was distributed for more than 4000 heads of livestock and medicines were also provided. *In January 2018, veterinary camps were held in Rajasthan and Gujarat to treat and rehabilitate birds that are injured during the kite-flying festival. Over 1500 cases were attended to with ERN's support in a span of 3-5 days.* Species attended to were largely pigeons and black kites.

In addition, five hoolock gibbons were translocated from Wakro to Kamlang WLS in 2017-18 to provide them with a suitable habitat with good forest cover. These gibbons were rescued in 2015 from Wakro where they were found in isolated patches without any connectivity.



*An ERN veterinarian attending to an injured bird*

## 6. SPECIES RECOVERY - RECOVERING ENDANGERED SPECIES

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.





## 6. SPECIES RECOVERY - RECOVERING ENDANGERED SPECIES

Our program on recovery of select threatened species uses improved techniques, intensive management, conservation breeding, and re-introduction and restocking. This year, we aimed to stabilise wild buffalo population in Chhattisgarh, and establish a viable population of swamp deer in Manas National Park, Assam.

### Central India Wild Buffalo Recovery Project

Despite being the state animal, the population of wild buffaloes is dwindling in Chhattisgarh who are facing additional threats like extreme competition for resources from livestock, conflicts and habitat degeneration etc. To stabilise their population in Udanti-Sitanadi Tiger Reserve (comprising only 11 individuals; 9 males and 2 females), the project being implemented in collaboration with ORACLE, is using numerous ex situ and in situ interventions.

Satellite collars deployed on 4 free-ranging male individuals are being regularly tracked to establish their home range. To improve their population, translocation of female wild buffaloes from Assam to Chhattisgarh is planned. The wild buffaloes of Assam are closely related to those in Chhattisgarh as genetic analysis of their dung has revealed (by Centre for Cellular & Molecular Biology (CCMB)). Awareness campaigns, health check-up of wild buffaloes, de-weeding of more than 500 ha of favourable foraging area, and vaccination of over 3000 cattle

from surrounding villages have been conducted as part of the recovery project.

With 4000 individuals remaining in the wild, the wild buffalo has been listed as Schedule I of the Indian Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 and also classified as endangered in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. As part of the awareness campaign launched by WTI in collaboration with ORACLE and Chhattisgarh Forest Department, a wild buffalo and hill mynah mascot (Shyamu-Radhe) was unveiled by the Hon' Chief Minister Dr. Raman Singh in November, 2017. The mascot was illustrated by the noted wildlife cartoonist/artist Rohan Chakravarty and will be used in all official campaigns to reach out to various demographics.

### Eastern Swamp Deer Recovery Project

Eastern swamp deer, once found thriving in Manas National Park, Assam has been nearly wiped out due to the civil strife in the region. The only other region that has a sizable population is the Kaziranga National Park. The project, supported by ONGC, aims to establish a viable population in MNP by translocating individuals from ZNP in two phases. The first batch of 19 eastern swamp deer was translocated in 2014, completing the first-ever mass capture and translocation of any large ungulate in India. The second batch of 17 eastern swamp deer was translocated in early 2017. Five fawns born to the first translocated



WTI's Gharial Restocking Project with the Bihar Forest Department on the Gandak river has been steadily releasing and replenishing the declining stock of Critically Endangered Gharials since 2014



herd, and four fawns born to the second translocated herd makes this project a huge success.

A population estimation exercise revealed a stable population of about 80-100 eastern swamp deer in Manas

National Park. A short documentary film titled "Project Dol Horina", produced by world-renowned filmmaker Sandesh Kadur and his team showcases the translocation processes and conservation work. The film is available on social media platforms for generate mass awareness.

WTI's Eastern Swamp Deer Conservation Project established a viable population of the subspecies in Manas National Park



## 7. WILD LANDS- SECURING WILD HABITATS

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%.

**A**iming towards securing critical habitats outside traditional Protected Area system, the 'Wild Lands' division in 2017-18, has worked towards ensuring survival of existing mangroves in Kannur, Kerala; increasing elephant corridors in Meghalaya, and securing six more corridors in Assam.

### Kannur Kandal Project

Kannur district in Kerala has approximately 45% of the state's total mangrove forests, mostly under private ownership, and therefore highly threatened. Since 2016, the project, with support from Apollo Tyres, is working to ensure 'social fencing' of mangroves by local communities for its long-term survival. In 2017, several awareness programs such as international mangrove day and world environment day celebrations, teacher training program etc. focusing on the importance of mangrove ecosystems were organized that saw participation from policy makers, business, and academic communities, and like-minded organisations. A one-day national conclave on mangrove conservation was also organised by WTI and Apollo Tyres with support from IUCN with the aim of creating a platform for policymakers, academicians, and business communities to work together for mangrove conservation. The conclave was attended by approximately 200 participants including students and representatives from various corporates and their CSRs.

### National Elephant Corridor Project

The second edition of the 'Right of Passage' publication series listing 101 corridors was released in 2017. This project aims to attain uninterrupted elephant movement between key habitats connected by these identified 101 corridors. 6 corridors have already been secured and 6 are currently in the process of being secured. In 2017, 324.3 hectares of forest area under two villages within Garo Green Spine in Meghalaya were notified and registered as Village Reserve Forests (VRFs). As compensation, villagers were given benefits such as construction of concrete footpath for school children in Jadegindam village, improving road connectivity between Darichikgre and Aklanggre villages, and installation of rice husking mill in Daribokgre village. **With this addition, total land voluntarily set aside by the community now adds up to 2822.3 hectare notified as 17 VRFs by the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council (GHADC).**

Under Kaziranga Karbi Link Project in Assam, 6 crucial corridors have been identified to be secured within Kaziranga National Park-Karbi Anglong landscape. In 2017-18, WTI in continued collaboration with Elephant Family, IUCN-NL, the Japan Tiger and Elephant Fund, KAAC, and the Assam Forest Department helped rehabilitate 19 families who voluntarily relocated outside the very important 'Kalpahar-

Daigrung' corridor a year back. Apart from strengthening their livelihood through linking various government schemes like integrated fishery farming system (IIFS), developing scientific bari system, organizing training programs on mushroom cultivation etc., in September, 2017, the families were formally presented with pattas (legal land titles) over 0.35 acres of settlement land and 1.33 acres of agricultural land each.

The other 5 critical corridors are being monitored and secured through a tie-up with two local organizations – UMANG and DBCSL who are part of the cadre of local individuals called Green Corridor Champions or GCCs.

One of the strategies used by WTI to build and strengthen ties with local communities is the use of a local popular sport. This year, WTI in partnership with Japan Tiger and Elephant Fund (JTEF), the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), and the Assam Forest Department (AFD) organised a successful 4th edition of the Elephant Cup Football Tournament which was kicked off at the Nohorsala Playground on November 10, 2018. Thirty teams from the Silonijan

Forest Range participated in the tournament, which aims to ameliorate local attitudes, particularly among the youth, towards elephant conservation. The participating teams led a signature campaign to raise conservation awareness among local communities where many pledged to help protect the Asian elephant, India's National Heritage Animal.

Under its Sarus Habitat Securement Project, which was initiated in 2013, 26 farmers from Maharajganj and Kushinagar districts were felicitated for their stellar efforts in protecting the habitat of the sarus crane. Sarus crane, the state bird of UP, nests in the agricultural fields and surrounding wetlands. 123 nests were identified and monitored by WTI in 2017. The support of the farmers is crucial for securing the habitat of these birds, and they are encouraged to use eco-friendly technologies in their farms and sustainable and wise use of the nearby wetlands for the survival of these tall birds. As per a count done in 2017 by the village-level Sarus Protection Committees constituted under the project, there are now more than 1800 sarus cranes in these districts.

*The Kannur Kandal project aims to ensure the survival of existing mangroves and increase their acreage Kannur.*





## 8. PROTECTED AREA RECOVERY – RE-WILDING HABITATS

To improve the existing functionality of six selected Protected Areas (PAs) and restore their ecological integrity.



Street play performance towards community awareness by children in Manas

**W**TI has been working with IFAW, Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), and the Assam Forest Department to 'Bring back Manas', a UNESCO World Heritage Site which has been ravaged by the militancy during the late 80s and the 90s. In August last year, an area of 350sqkm from the erstwhile Manas Reserve Forest was officially declared as the first addition to Manas National Park. The foundation of the first pillar was laid in October, 2017 as part of the formal inauguration event which marks a significant landmark in the organisation's conservation efforts. The inauguration was attended by many important state dignitaries, media, and village communities from surrounding areas.

As part of the community awareness campaign under the Greater Manas Recovery Project, a street play was organised by WTI-IFAW, Assam Forest Department, and BTC. The play was performed by the students of Bansbari, a MNP fringe village laid emphasis on the importance of flourishing wild habitats and ways people can help in its conservation. Based on the theme 'Why Manas River dried up', the play was conceived by local artiste JP Das and WTI's Head Veterinarian (North-East) Dr. Bhaskar Choudhury, who also heads the IFAW-WTI Greater Manas Recovery Project. Eminent local theatre personality Siddhartha Mukherjee scripted and directed the play, and artist and social worker Dhiraj Bharali created the paper clay masks that the children wore during the performance. The street play was developed as part on an ongoing community awareness campaign under the Greater Manas Recovery Project. The play marked the opening day of the national park and saw a footfall of over 500 people including media, tourists, park officials, and local communities.

Another success in the Greater Manas Recovery Project was the birth of Ganga's grandson. Ganga is a female rhino rescued from Kaziranga in 2004, hand-raised in CWRC, and then rehabilitated in Manas in 2007. Ganga gave birth to a female calf in the wild in 2013, who almost five years later gave birth to Ganga's grandson. This second generation breeding speaks volume about the success of WTI's rhino rehabilitation efforts.



## 9. CONFLICT MITIGATION – ENCOURAGING NON-VIOLENT HUMAN-WILDLIFE COEXISTENCE

Demonstrate seven innovative and replicable models of Human Wildlife Conflict reduction to catalyse appropriate changes in policy.

**S**hrinking habitat due to large scale anthropogenic activities are increasingly bringing wildlife into close proximity with human habitats, often with horrific results. WTI's Rapid Response Teams (RRT) which comprises an all-encompassing conflict mitigation unit with veterinary, biological and sociological skill sets and vital immobilisation and capture equipment were formed in order to quickly respond to such conflict situations before anybody is harmed. In 2017, the team had to respond to two such occasions in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra.

In Tumsar region of Bhandara district, a full grown male tiger had entered a village killing a few local animals before hiding in a thicket nearby. In another incident, two sloth bear mothers had decided to den in abandoned structures and culverts close to human habitation in the villages of Jamnapur and Chiklabodi. In all the cases, the RRT responded swiftly, and post discussions with villagers to allow them to work, had successfully managed to keep the animals from harm's way.

WTI also conducted human-wildlife conflict mitigation training for frontline forest staff of the Dudhwa National Park. The workshop was organised in December, 2017 in partnership with the Uttar Pradesh Forest Department and Aircel Ltd to build the capacity of

forest staff to handle conflict situations independently in the future.

The Mobile Veterinary Service (MVS) unit in Karnataka saw hectic three days responding to three separate cases of large carnivore conflict from Bandipur and Nagarhole Tiger Reserves.

**Case 1:** An injured and dehydrated female tiger in her prime was found frequenting the cotton fields of Dodburgi in the Hedyala sub-division of Bandipur Tiger Reserve. She had attacked a village woman who had chanced upon her while she was devouring her kill. The MVS with the help of the Forest Department sedated the animal before moving her to Mysore Zoo where she was treated and kept under observation.

**Case 2:** An old tiger that had lost its teeth had strayed into one of the villages in Antharsanthe Range of Nagarhole Tiger Reserve and was found to have attacked few livestock heads. The MVS team with the help of a trained elephant helped tranquilise the tiger and shift it to Mysore Zoo for treatment and observation.

**Case 3:** A leopard that had strayed into Kongalli village had attacked a male villager as well as a calf. The MVS team not only treated the injured calf, but also rescued the leopard by laying traps and relocating it.



## 10. NATURAL HERITAGE CAMPAIGNS - SPREADING CONSERVATION AWARENESS

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.



Our brand ambassador, Dia Mirza and Vivek Menon, CEO, WTI along with other dignitaries releasing 'Right of Passage, 2nd Edition'; a comprehensive listing of India's 101 mapped elephant corridors by elephant experts

The focus of campaigns this year has been on creating awareness on the shrinking habitat of India's wild elephants and the need for contiguous forest areas for their survival, and to improve the status of conservation of whale sharks in the Arabian Sea, especially in Gujarat and Lakshadweep.

### Elephant Awareness Campaigns and Events

'Gaj Yatra', a massive campaign to raise awareness and capture the attention of policy makers, corporates, celebrities, and people at large on the shrinking habitat of India's largest land mammal was formally launched by WTI in partnership with IFAW, Project Elephant, and Ministry

of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) on 12th and 13th August, 2017 in two separate events.

The first campaign was flagged off from Teen Murti Bhawan, Delhi in the presence of Dr. Harsh Vardhan (MoEF&CC) and attended by over 400 policy makers, conservationists, media, well-wishers, and over 200 school children from 20 schools in Delhi. The second campaign was launched in Mumbai from the revered 'Shri Sidhivinakaya' (elephant god) temple in the presence of Union Minister for Railways, Mr. Suresh Prabhu and various celebrities from the Indian film industry. Both the events received widespread coverage in mainstream media as well as all social media platforms. WTI's online and social media reach was close to 9 million views across our Facebook, Instagram and Twitter Handles over the two days of the launch.

Post launch, 'Gaj yatra' was showcased



Gaju, the Gaj Yatra mascot

at various events and conferences – SCCS student's conference in Bangalore, Ziro Musical Festival in Arunachal Pradesh, Roundglass Samsara Festival in Bangalore, Karnataka, CMS Vatavarn Festival in Delhi, Wangala Festival in Meghalaya, Pakke Paga Festival in Arunachal Pradesh, HCL Carnival in Noida, UP, and Kala Ghoda Arts Festival in Mumbai, Maharashtra. Hundreds of people pledged their support for the campaign and agreed to #Join our Herd.





The Whale Shark inflatable (life sized, 40 ft.) has proven to be a effective community awareness tool

Elephant Parade India, an awareness and fund raising campaign organized by Elephant Family, WTI's international partner was inaugurated in February 2018. Painted elephant sculptures were displayed in herds in prominent locations across Mumbai, Jaipur, Kolkata, and New Delhi. The pieces sold through auction will help raise funds for projects to address human-elephant conflicts across India.

### Whale Shark Campaign

In a follow up to the hugely successful and widely acclaimed campaign to stop the slaughter of whale sharks (Schedule I of India's Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 and Appendix II of CITES) along the Gujarat coast in 2004, which converted fishermen into protectors, WTI conducted off-shore sea field surveys to monitor and encounter possible free ranging whale sharks that were tagged in 2008. Several awareness activities like celebrating International Whale Shark day in

Somnath, celebrating Gujarat Whale Shark day in Dhamej, demonstrating project activities to school children from 50 schools in a Science Fare organized by Shri Somnath Education and Charitable Trust were also organised this year.

Under the Whale Shark Conservation Project (in collaboration with Gujarat Forest Department and Tata Chemicals Ltd.), a male whale shark was rescued and satellite tagged off the fishing village of Sutrapada on the Saurashtra coast marking the eighth such successful tagging. The tags are programmed to transmit signals every day for the first 20 days and every alternate day after that. The data will help scientists develop a better understanding of whale shark migratory behaviour in Indian as well as international waters. In one of the biggest success of this programme, a satellite-tagged female whale shark has been monitored for over 200 days, the first and longest migratory movement of

whale sharks ever recorded from the Indian subcontinent garnering much interest amongst marine scientists across the world. The whale shark has covered a distance of about 5500km (2970 NM) since it was tagged, moving from Sutrapada towards the coast of Somalia, and now circling back to the Gujarat coast.

A neonatal whale shark (or a pup) was rescued and freed in the coastal waters off the fishing village of Sutrapada as per protocol by a fisherman who also documented the effort on his mobile phone. This was the fifth encounter with whale shark pups in this coastal area. Given the significant recorded presence of these pups in the coastal waters of Gujarat, researchers speculate that Arabian Sea might be the breeding ground of whale sharks.

On International Whale Shark Day (August 30), another massive campaign was launched in Kerala in collaboration with Cochin Shipyard Pvt. Ltd. to sensitize marine fishers and local communities regarding whale shark conservation, and to secure the future of whale sharks in the coastal waters off Kerala and Lakshadweep. A survey conducted in 2012-13 with support from IUCN along India's west coast had found the highest numbers of whale sharks to be near Lakshadweep waters. Marine fishers from Kerala going into the waters of Lakshadweep have resulted in high incidental landings of whale sharks. A similar change in perception where the fishermen are converted into protectors of the fish is hoped through the project. The project has already organized 12 awareness programs in the region since its launch.

## 11. OTHER MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

WTI signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) to collaborate across a range of initiatives aimed at protecting India's natural heritage, specifically its National Heritage Animal, the Asian elephant in 2017.

On World Environment Day in 2017, Dia Mirza – renowned actor, filmmaker and humanitarian formally joined WTI team as its Brand Ambassador. Ms. Mirza was also appointed UNEP's Goodwill Ambassador for India.

In recognition of his exceptional contribution to the field of wildlife conservation during a career spanning three decades, WTI founder and CEO, Mr. Vivek Menon was honoured with RG Samsara Lifetime Achievement award.



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