

**Wildlife Trust of India (WTI)** is a premier organisation, dedicated to the conservation of India's wildlife and its habitats.

**OUR MISSION**

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

**OUR VISION**

A secure natural heritage of India.

**OUR MOTTO**

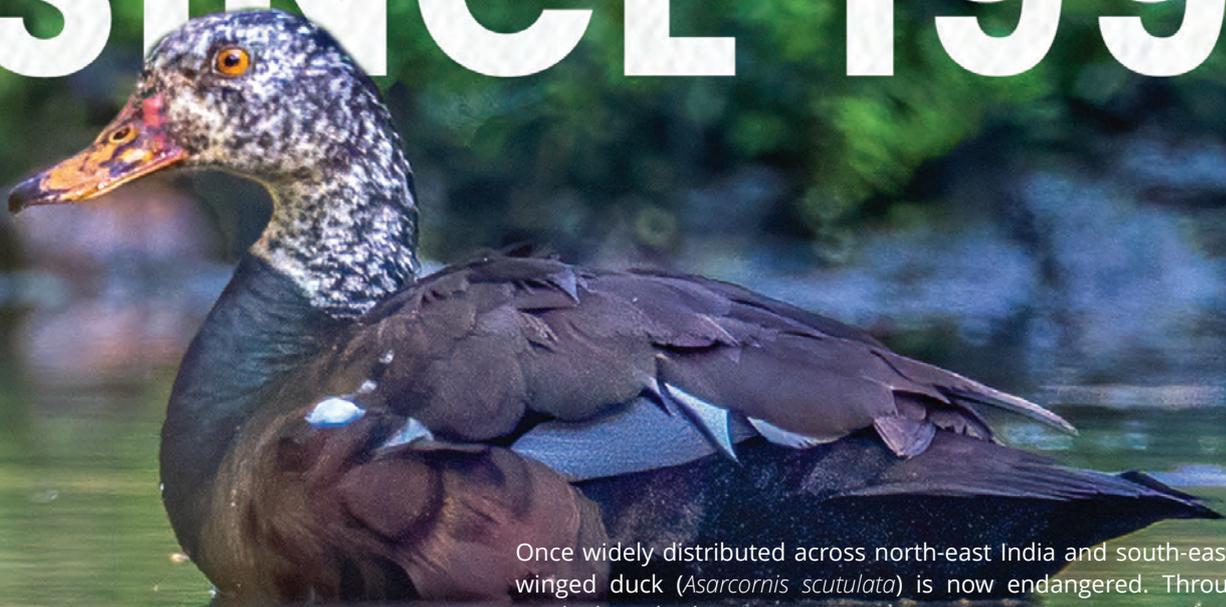
In service of nature

*On the cover:*

Uttar Pradesh is a stronghold of the sarus crane, India's only resident breeding crane and the world's tallest flying bird. With the help of the local community and the forest department, we have been protecting the bird's population that resides in agricultural fields and mosaics of wetland habitats, outside of protected areas.

*Photograph: Ansar Khan*

# IN SERVICE OF NATURE, SINCE 1998



Once widely distributed across north-east India and south-east Asia, the white winged duck (*Asarcornis scutulata*) is now endangered. Through 'Project Deo Hanh', launched in 2018, WTI aims to recover its status in the states of Assam (where it is the state bird) and Arunachal Pradesh.

Photograph: MS Ranganathan

# THE CONSERVATION IMPERATIVE

According to the **World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report for 2022**, the top three **"most severe risks on a global scale over the next 10 years"** are all related to the environment:

CLIMATE ACTION FAILURE

EXTREME WEATHER

BIODIVERSITY LOSS

Together with 'Human environmental damage' and 'natural resource crisis', **environmental factors make up five of the top ten perceived future risks.**

Around the world, biodiversity and ecosystem services are vanishing at an unprecedented rate and scale. Yet **the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat all rely on healthy natural ecosystems.**

So too does the global economy, for **it is estimated that over half of the global GDP is dependent on nature.**

Clearly, conserving and restoring natural spaces, and the biodiversity they contain, is no longer a matter of choice.

It is an imperative.

To address the issue of human conflict with Himalayan brown bears (*Ursus arctos isabellinus*) in Kargil, Ladakh, WTI initiated a Rapid Action Project in two villages. Sensitisation workshops were organised and 'Community Wildlife Watch' committees were formed to improve waste management, monitor bear movement and ensure crowd-control during conflict situations.

*Photograph: Surya Ramachandran*

## INDIA: A PRICELESS HERITAGE IN PERIL

In India, too, the need to conserve its priceless natural heritage is stark and urgent.

The country's wild landscapes encompass four of the world's 35 biodiversity hotspots, 75 of the world's most important wetlands, and eight natural World Heritage Sites.

Its ten biogeographic zones are home to **400+ mammal species, 1200+ bird species, 500+ reptile species, 300+ amphibian species, 3000+ fish species, 80,000+ invertebrate species, and 50,000+ plant species.**

However, this immense natural wealth is under threat.

The **illegal wildlife trade**, driven by increasing demand for wild animal parts and derivatives in Southeast Asia and the Far East, has adversely affected a multitude of species, big and small.

The anthropogenic pressures exerted by a billion-plus population are also taking their toll on the nation's biodiversity. The sustained **destruction, deterioration and fragmentation of wild habitats** has forced humans and wildlife into closer contact, causing **Human-Wildlife Conflict** to reach chronic levels, and raising the spectre of zoonotic disease.

Asian elephants, already beleaguered by the indiscriminate slaughter of bulls for ivory, suffer the increasing **impairment of traditional migratory routes**. The musk deer, the brown bear and the snow leopard face **poaching and habitat loss** in the alpine Himalayas. Several magnificent birds such as the white-winged duck, western tragopan, greater adjutant stork, sarus crane, great Indian bustard and Bengal florican require urgent attention. The pygmy hog, hispid hare, hoolock gibbon, Ganges river dolphin, gharial, olive ridley turtle and whale shark are but a few examples of **native and migrant species in extreme distress**.

# ABOUT US

**Wildlife Trust of India (WTI)** was formed in 1998 in response to the many crisis confronting India's wildlife and wild habitats.

At inception, we were all of four members strong. Today, we're a group of over 160 full-time professionals and consultants: field biologists, social scientists, conservation managers, veterinarians, lawyers, and specialists in finance, business management and communications.



The loss of its preferred montane habitats – due to poor grassland management, unregulated tourism and climate change – has forced the resplendent shrub frog (*Raorchestes resplendens*) into decline. WTI has initiated an Amphibian Recovery Project in Munnar, with the aim of recovering local populations of Threatened amphibian species.

*Photograph: Hadlee Renjith*

## OUR APPROACH

Over the course of our 25 years in service of nature, we've learned to be **agile in our response to exigent issues** (providing emergency aid to distressed wildlife, for instance), while **embracing the grind of long-term goals** (such as securing wildlife corridors).

We've forged **crucial partnerships**, working with community members, tribal council leaders and policy makers alike to achieve desired conservation outcomes.

Increasingly, we've **leveraged technology**, developing apps to mitigate conflict, creating automated systems to prevent wildlife train-hits, and using cutting edge surveillance to **disrupt wildlife crime networks**.

Our approach is underpinned by science and shaped by empathy. **We administer the vital stitch-in-time; we paint the broad strokes that make up the big picture.**

# MILESTONES (1998 – 2024)

© WTI



1

Mapped all the 101 corridors used by Asian elephants in India, drew out a green-print to secure them and worked out four securement models.

© Vivek Menon



2

Conceptualized the phrase Garo Green Spine to indicate the biodiversity rich range of the Garo Hills and notified over 6700 hectares of canopies, corridors and catchments in 40 Village Reserve Forests using a traditional community law based protected area network hitherto unused in India.

3 Pioneered systematic wildlife rehabilitation as a tool for conservation in India in partnership with IFAW.

4 Raised consciousness of judiciary, enforcement agencies and public to the word 'wildlife crime' and started a whole new arena of the fight against crime.



© Jose Louies / WTI

5 More than 16,000 wildlife staff of over 150 Protected Areas imparted Level 1 anti-poaching training. More than 20,000 frontline staff provided ex-gratia assurance against death or injury on duty.

© MSWRP



6

Successfully campaigned for the whale shark to be made the first fish to be protected under Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, in India and ensured its protection by a massive on-ground project in coastal India that led to rescue and release of over 1000 accidentally entangled whale sharks by mobilizing fisher folk along the west coast of India.

7 Showed how to bring back a once neglected Valmiki Tiger Reserve in Bihar and increased tiger and prey numbers in the park.

© WTI



8

Manas National Park removed from the UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites in danger and tripled in size politically with several endangered species being restocked.

9 Not a single elephant killed by trains in Rajaji National Park for over a decade (2001-11) after a project was undertaken to stop elephant deaths in Uttarakhand.

10 Shahtoosh formally banned in Jammu and Kashmir and a product called Pashm-e-Shahi created, creating an alternative model.



11

Exposed the illegal mongoose hair brush trade, lobbied and got all mongoose species protection under the Wildlife (Protection) Act.

**12** Persuaded the Nyishi tribe around Pakke Tiger Reserve to use fibreglass hornbill beaks in Arunachal Pradesh instead of killing four hornbill species and using their beaks to adorn their headgear.

**13** First comprehensive survey of the markhor (*Capra falconeri*), the largest goat in the world, triggers declaration of Kazinag National Park, expansion of Hirpora Wildlife Sanctuary and notification of Tatakuti Wildlife Sanctuary in Jammu and Kashmir.

**14** Played a supportive role to the Indian government in its fight against re-opening the ivory trade at CITES, ensuring several years without ivory trade.

**15** Played a key role in building the only global intergovernmental forum on tigers – the Global Tiger Forum.

**16** Assisted in expanding India's protected area network by getting new reserves demarcated in Jammu and Kashmir, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra.

**17** Highlighted snares as killers of tigers and their prey in southern India and assisted in India's first anti-snare walks in Bandipur Tiger Reserve in Karnataka.



**18** Conducted India's first private-public restoration of a degraded coral reef in Mithapur in Gujarat.

**19** Eradicated the dancing bear tradition in India and rehabilitated Kalandars in four states.

**20** Played a key role in a campaign in the north-east to conserve Amur falcons, which were being hunted in the tens of thousands.

**21** Successfully demonstrated the use of mass capture as a safe method for conservation translocation of eastern swamp deer in Assam.

**22** Worked with the Uttarakhand Forest Department to free the Chilla Motichur corridor of human habitation through voluntary relocation of Khand Gaon II and enabled secure passage for elephants and other wildlife in Rajaji Tiger Reserve, thus maintaining the Rajaji-Corbett elephant population as a single entity.

**23** Secured the vital Thirunelli-Kudrekote corridor in Wayanad, Kerala, through the voluntary relocation of four villages – the first elephant corridor secured through human relocation in India – and had the vacated lands legally notified as forest land

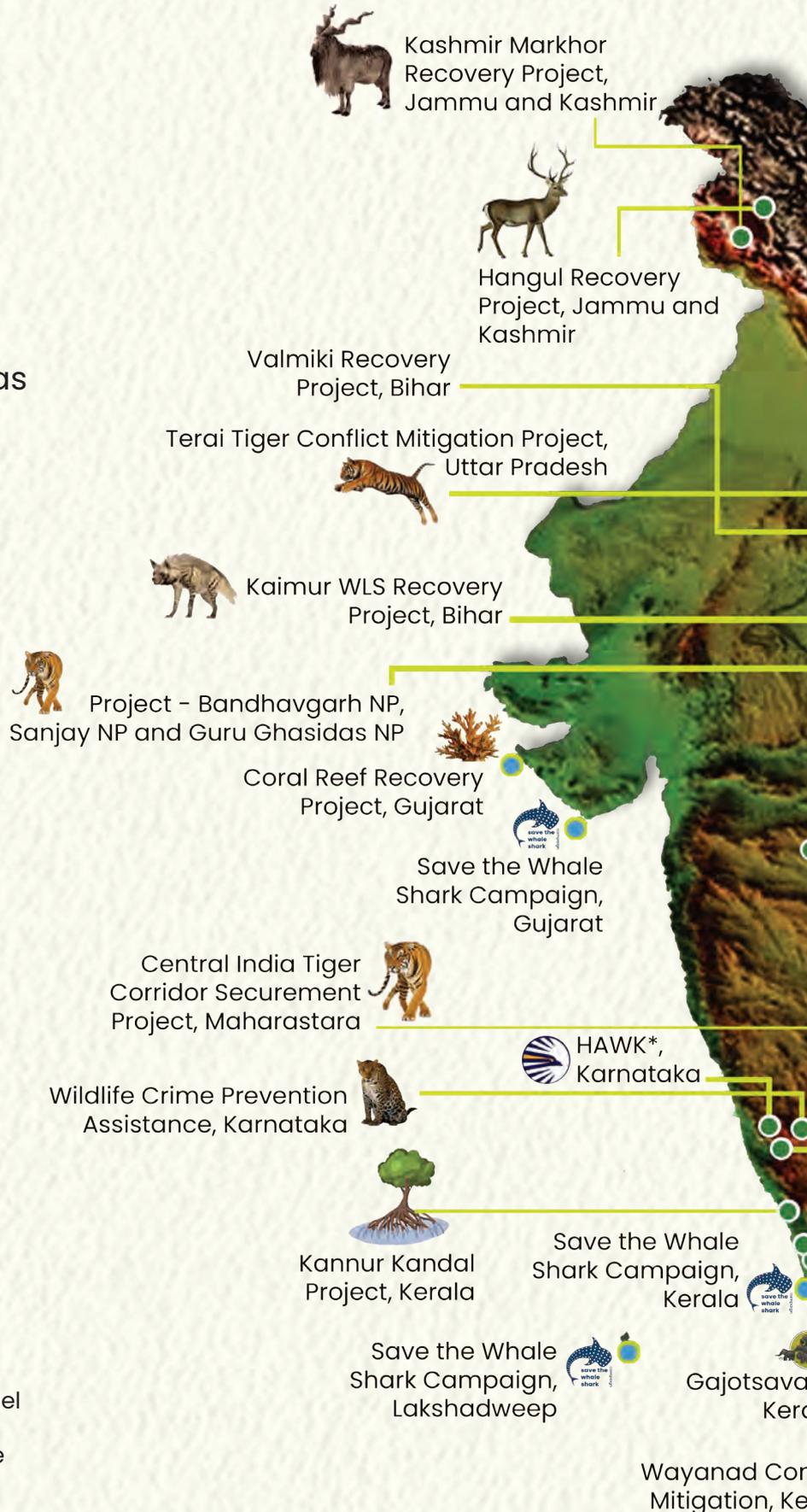


**24** Successfully developed and launched Hostile Activity Watch Kernel (HAWK), a pioneering wildlife crime database management system adopted and institutionalized by the State Forest Department of Kerala, Karnataka & Tamil Nadu to address wildlife crime and enhance decision-making on wildlife threats.

**25** Primary Response Team (PRT) – a local community driven voluntary stewardship to respond quickly to the conflict situations and effectively manage human-wildlife conflict and foster coexistence, pioneered by WTI is now widely adopted by governments and non-government stakeholders.

# OUR PROJECTS (2024)

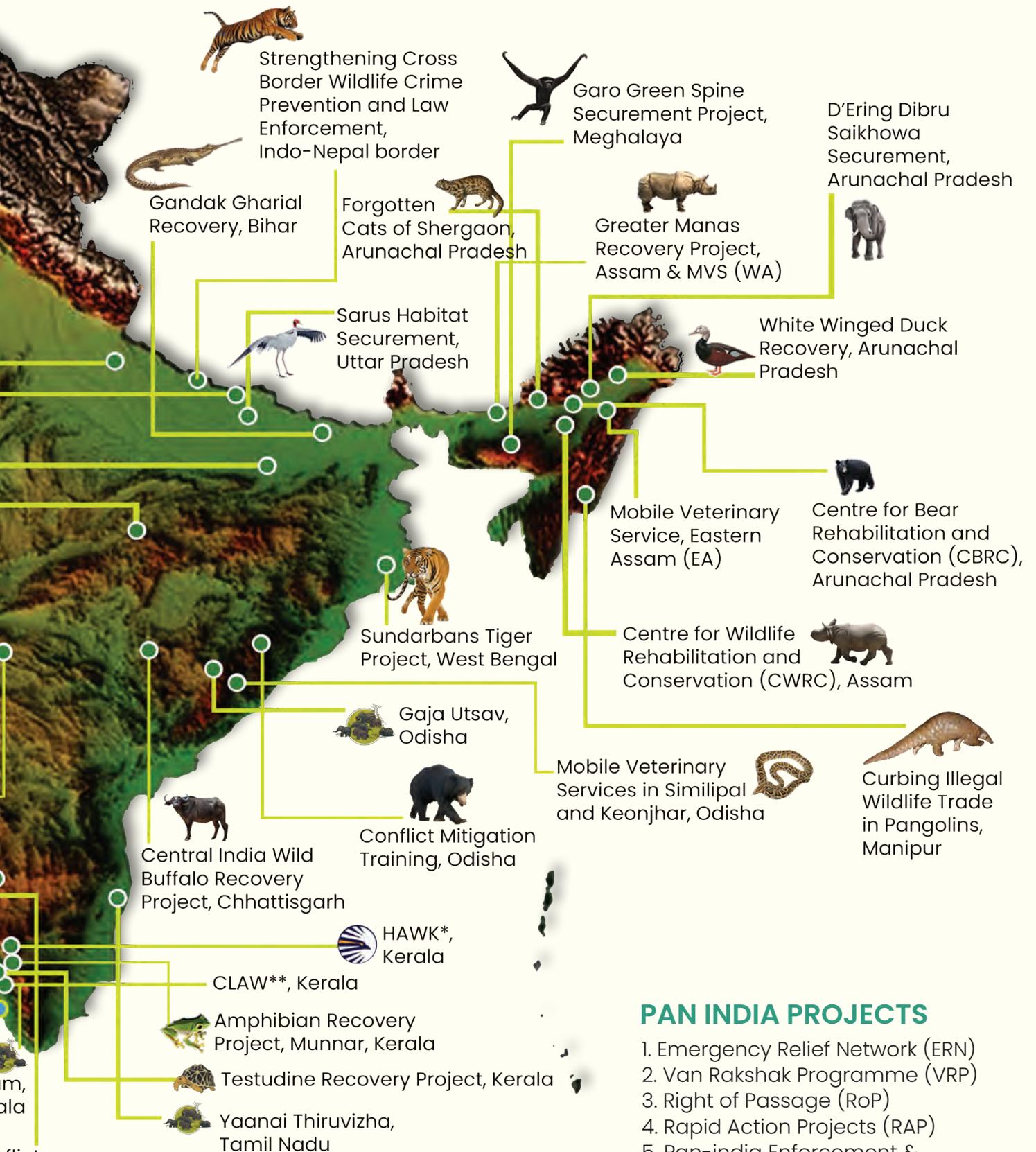
We run over **40 conservation projects** – from the Pir Panjal mountains in Kashmir to the mangrove forests of Kannur, Kerala; from Asiatic black bear forests in Arunachal Pradesh to whale shark pupping areas off the Gujarat coast.



**Disclaimer:** The map is used for general illustration only and is not intended to be used for reference purposes.

\* HAWK – Hostile Activity Watch Kernel

CLAW – Capacitate Legal Assistance against Wildlife Crime



## PAN INDIA PROJECTS

1. Emergency Relief Network (ERN)
2. Van Rakshak Programme (VRP)
3. Right of Passage (RoP)
4. Rapid Action Projects (RAP)
5. Pan-india Enforcement & Legal Assistance

# CONSERVATION ACTION

Our approach to securing the country's natural heritage is guided by a combination of nine **BIG IDEAS**:



WTI's Wild Rescue team focuses on **ENSURING THE WELFARE** of individual displaced animals.

We leverage on pioneering science-based animal rehabilitation techniques in our establishments that include the **Centre for Bear Rehabilitation and Conservation** (CBRC, Arunachal Pradesh), the **Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation** (CWRC, Assam), and the veterinary units stationed in Similipal Tiger Reserve and Keonjhar in Odisha, giving a diverse range of threatened species, a second chance at life in the wild.

In addition, **Mobile Veterinary Service (MVS) teams** address the care and rehabilitation of temporarily disadvantaged wild animals across the country. **In all, our rescue and rehabilitation teams have directly saved over 50,000 individual wild lives.**

WTI has also pioneered a pan-India network of wildlife rehabilitators known as the **Emergency Relief Network (ERN)**, through which we have assisted tens of thousands of animals over the years during times of natural disaster.



Through Protected Area recovery, WTI aims to improve the existing functionality of six selected Protected Areas (PAs) and restore their ecological integrity.

In Assam, we have assisted conservation efforts to 'Bring Back Manas', a UNESCO World Heritage Site that was ravaged



Orphaned Asiatic black bear cubs (*Ursus thibetanus*), hand-raised at the Centre for Bear Rehabilitation and Conservation (CBRC), explore their natural habitat as part of their 'soft rehabilitation' back into the wild.  
Photograph: Amrit Menon / WTI



A hand-raised clouded leopard (*Neofelis nebulosa*) is examined by WTI veterinarians following a radio-collaring procedure conducted prior to its rehabilitation back to the wild in Manas National Park, Assam.  
Photograph: Sashanka Barbaruah / WTI

by militancy in the 1990s. As a result, Manas area has been tripled in size and 350 sq km declared as the First Addition to the national park. **In 2021, another milestone was achieved with the notification of 422 sq km Raimona National Park, in the Greater Manas Landscape.**

Another important success was in **Bihar's Valmiki Tiger Reserve**, where we started a long-term conservation project in 2003. Deided as a 'tiger reserve without tigers' at the time, Valmiki is now regarded as a conservation success, winning the prestigious RBS Earth Guardian Award in 2017.



**SINCE ONLY 5.43 PERCENT** (as of June 2023) of India's total forest area is currently under the Protected Area network, we also work to secure critical habitats outside this network, especially wildlife corridors, wetlands, grasslands, Important Bird Areas, sacred groves, coral reefs, mangroves, coastal and marine habiats.

We're collaborating with state authorities and local communities to secure wetlands in human dominated landscapes, to support

© Arshad Hussain / WTI



aquatic biodiversity in general and sarus crane in particular, besides promoting wise use of the resource on the lines of RAMSAR convention, in 10 districts of Eastern Uttar Pradesh. **We have created 485 sq km of artificial reef area** to help conserve the degraded Mithapur Reef, situated 12 km south of the Gulf of Kachchh. We have also acquired a species-rich mangrove habitat at Kunhimangalam village in Kerala as the hub for our **Kannur Kandal (Mangrove Restoration) Project**.

In **Meghalaya's Garo Hills**, we're encouraging community-based protection to rewild and restore degrading forest patches and connect important habitats of **Garo Green Spine**. Till dat, the communities have set aside and protected close to 5,200 hectares of land as 35 Village Reserve Forests (VRFs) under the Garo Hills District (Forest) Act, 1958. In addition to this, 400+ ha of degraded forest patches has been restored through plantation and Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) with over 4,45,205 standing trees.



WTI has assisted in the voluntary relocation of villagers to secure the **Kalapahar-Daigrung Elephant Corridor** in Assam. We've worked with international and local partners to secure the **Thirunelli-Kudrakote Elephant Corridor**, a vital habitat contiguity in Kerala, Western Ghats. By helping to free the **Chilla-Motichur Elephant Corridor** of human habitation, we've helped initiate the first step in reestablishing a crucial link in the Terai Arc landscape.

In Vidarbha, where one of India's largest tiger populations lives cheek-by-jowl with a growing human population, we've played an important role in the notification of **Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve** – a wildlife corridor that allows big cats to disperse between Protected Areas.

**We've established a network of 22 teams across 52 corridors, comprising local individuals and organisations, our Green Corridor Champions (GCCs), to protect wildlife corridors across the country.**



**AS TIGER, LEOPARD AND ELEPHANT** populations rebound in India, these big cats, which typically require large home ranges, are found foraging out of increasingly saturated protected forests in search of food, water and suitable mates or to move between fragmented patches of Protected Areas. The fringe villages are consequently seeing a high incidence of conflict with large carnivores.

Our **Rapid Response Teams** comprising veterinarians, biologists and sociologists, lend forest departments, the much-needed support in the rescue and relocation of conflict-involved animals. Yet direct interventions are a last resort in our conflict mitigation projects. Instead, **local people, trained, equipped and moulded**

into **Primary Response Teams (PRTs)**, have proved remarkably successful in defusing conflict situations without human or animal casualties. The primary strategy is to simply allow wildlife, safe passage out of human areas, and back to the wild.

**Human-elephant conflict** is another pressing issue and while our long-term strategy includes the securing and monitoring of migratory corridors (see previous page, *Right of Passage*), we've engaged in several short-term interventions – for instance, a highly successful project in Rajaji National Park to prevent elephant deaths due to 'train hits'. We are also working in Wayanad landscape to help mitigate the rising crisis of human-elephant conflicts.



**Recovering populations of threatened wild species, is a key vertical of WTI.** We combine scientific and sociological methods to enhance habitats, mitigate threats, change perspectives and also consider ex-situ conservation (where necessary), while engaging local communities and state Forest Departments as key stakeholders in this process.

Our species conservation efforts span several biogeographic regions in India wherein we monitor and safeguard threatened species and their habitats from direct and indirect threats using conservation tools. We conduct field surveys to assess and monitor wild population and habitats while utilizing conventional community based tools to engage them in participatory management thereby instill ownership and stewardship towards the target species.

We currently emphasize on five endangered amphibians in the Western Ghats (Kerala), Kashmir Markhor and Hangul in Jammu and Kashmir, Gharial in the Gandak River of Bihar, Wild Buffalo in Chhattisgarh, and the White-Winged Duck in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.



A male markhor (*Capra falconeri*; the world's largest goat species) stands atop a rocky outcrop in Kazinag National Park, Jammu and Kashmir. WTI has been working to recover a fragile local population of the markhor since 2004.  
*Photograph: Shivang Mehta*



Hatchlings from a nest monitored and protected by local fishermen are brought to their mother in the Gandak River in Bihar, under WTI's Gandak Gharial Recovery Project.  
*Photograph: Subrat Behera / WTI*



Photograph: Pranav Capila

## ENFORCEMENT & LAW

THE BATTLE AGAINST illegal trade in wildlife and its derivatives is one of our key activities. Working through our network of operatives and informers, we've **assisted enforcement agencies in over 300 seizures of live animals and wildlife derivatives.**

In response to the growing sophistication of wildlife crime networks, we've developed **HAWK (Hostile Activity Watch Kernel)**: a real-time preventive intelligence gathering and information management system that monitors criminal networks and provides actionable inputs to enforcement officials. The system is being implemented by the Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu forest departments.

Another area of focus is ensuring that India's frontline forest personnel are trained, equipped and motivated to

protect the nation's natural heritage. Through our **Guardians of the Wild project** (a.k.a. the **Van Rakshak project**), we conduct Wildlife Crime Prevention workshops on subjects ranging from crime scene investigation to snare detection and removal.

So far, **we've trained and equipped over 21,000 frontline personnel in more than 150 Protected Areas** across India (and trans-boundary areas in Bhutan). The forest departments of 23 states have also joined our Supplementary Accident Assurance scheme (the only such pan-India NGO-run scheme), which currently covers over 21,000 frontline personnel under an ex-gratia umbrella. More than 500 families have already benefitted from the initiative.



**ACROSS INDIA, WILDLIFE** is plagued by innumerable threats that demand an immediate response. These issues worsen when responses are slow at the field level, eventually demanding greater logistical and financial investments. We've found that



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committed grassroots agencies can alleviate such problems in a timely manner, but are unable to act due to a lack of funds, expertise or logistical support. Through our **Rapid Action Projects (RAPs)**, we collaborate with and support grassroots organisations, government agencies and community stakeholders, providing help where and when it's most needed.

Working with grassroots partners, we've helped mitigate bird trapping in the Bhoj Wetland, a Ramsar site, in Madhya Pradesh. We've trained Nyishi tribals to manufacture **artificial hornbill beaks** for ceremonial headgear in Arunachal Pradesh. We've staged mock drills to mitigate **human-bear conflict** in Nilagiri, Odisha, and conducted surveys to assess the status of **leatherback sea turtle nesting sites** in the Nicobar Islands. We've undertaken a community-based approach to conserving **sea horses in the Palk Bay region** and helped form 'Hope Troopers' teams, wherein members

were drawn from among the local communities, to **mitigate human-leopard conflict** in the Jaipur district, Rajasthan.

**Over 700 Rapid Action Projects we've initiated thus far spanning 28 states and six union territories, and have impacted over 90 species of flora and fauna and their habitats.**



© Adhith Swaminathan



**CONSERVATION CAMPAIGNS ARE** our tool of choice to create awareness, change entrenched attitudes and bring a critical mass of people into alignment with specific goals.

Through sustained outreach, our

2004 **Whale Shark Campaign** made saving whale sharks a matter of community pride for the fisher folk of Saurashtra, laying the groundwork for a project that has saved over 700 of these gentle giants. The campaign has now shifted to the shores of Kerala and Lakshadweep.

**In 2017 we launched the Gaj Yatra, a campaign to establish on-ground support for securing elephant corridors.** The campaign is continuing in several elephant-range states.

Other campaigns have included an awareness drive around the **central Indian wild buffalo**, whose local population is Critically Endangered, across Chhattisgarh. Our **Say No to Shahtoosh** campaign led to the ban of shawls made from wool extracted after killing the Chiru, an endangered antelope. Our **Tibetan Conservation Awareness campaign**, launched by His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, led Tibetans to pledge against the use of illegal wildlife products. Our campaign against the use of **mongoose hair paintbrushes** led the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) to ban trade in mongoose hair.

Our campaign against the **dancing bear tradition** leveraged community involvement in its enforcement and by rehabilitating the kalandars with alternative livelihoods, ended the illegal trade in live sloth bears.

Building on its success in transforming hunters into protectors in coastal Gujarat, WTI's Whale Shark Campaign has launched in Kerala and Lakshadweep.  
*Photograph: WTI*



WTI's ongoing Gaj Yatra campaign brings local and international stakeholders together to forge support for securing critical elephant corridors across India.  
*Photograph: Madhumay Mallik / WTI*

# POLICY & ADVOCACY

Engaging with and advising policy makers, influencers and implementers is a crucial aspect of our work to protect India's wildlife and wild spaces.

Internationally, we participate in fora such as the **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)**, the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**, the **Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)**, the **International Whaling Commission (IWC)** and the **Global Tiger Forum (GTF)**, often acting as advisors to the Government of India.

## International Wildlife Trade

We've played an advisory role to the **Indian delegation to CITES** for over 20 years. In 2000 we helped influence the international community to keep the ivory trade ban in the 11th CITES Conference of Parties (CoP).

As part of the Indian delegation at the CMS CoP12 in 2017, we were able to influence members to **list whale sharks in Appendix 1**, affording the species greater protection. Our efforts also led to the **up-listing of the Tibetan antelope to Appendix 1** of CITES and the resultant ban on the international trade of shahtoosh. Our sustained lobbying for the **up-listing of Asian pangolin species** also bore fruit at CITES CoP17.

## Wildlife Management

We have been part of several MoEFCC committees, including those that drafted the **'Human-leopard Conflict Management Guideline'** in 2011, the **'Human-elephant Conflict Mitigation Guideline'** in 2017, and the **'National Wildlife Action Plan'** in 2018. We have also prepared wildlife management plans for the states of Odisha and Nagaland, for Hirpora Wildlife Sanctuary in Jammu and Kashmir and Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve in Tamil Nadu. We also helped elucidate the concept of elephant corridors in the **MOEFCC's Gajah Report** in 2010.

## Wildlife Crime Enforcement

We were instrumental, through our founder Ashok Kumar, in the constitution of the MoEFCC's Wildlife Crime Cell in 2004, which later became the **Wildlife Crime Control Bureau**.



## Global Tiger Forum

WTI played a key role in building the only global intergovernmental forum on tigers – the Global Tiger Forum (GTF). GTF's goal is to highlight the rationale for tiger preservation and provide leadership and a common approach throughout the world in order to safeguard the survival of the tiger, its prey, and its habitat.

## Expanding Protected Areas

In Assam we spearheaded efforts that led to 350 sq km of Manas Reserve Forest being declared as the First Addition to Manas National Park in 2016. 422 sq km of Raimona National Park was added in 2021. In Maharashtra we assisted the government to have Navegaon WLS, New Nagzira WLS and Koka WLS notified (the entire area has since been declared a Tiger Reserve). Our advocacy was also instrumental in the declaration of Man Singh Deo WLS in 2014, securing 183 sq km of critical tiger landscape connectivity between forests in Central India. Additionally, WTI facilitated the upgrading of markhor-bearing areas in Kazinag Range by recommending the elevation of the existing wildlife sanctuaries and a conservation reserve to a National Park. This further amalgamated 178 sq km, connecting the upper habitats of Lacchipora WLS, Limber WLS and the Naganari Conservation Reserves into the Kazinag National Park while retaining the lower areas as independent wildlife sanctuaries. The intervention also resulted in doubling the area of Hirapora Wildlife Sanctuary from 150 Km<sup>2</sup> to about 300 Km<sup>2</sup>. WTI made recommendations for the formation of the now Tattakuti Wildlife Sanctuary on the basis of its faunal assemblage. WTI's interventions also helped put 175 acres of the Pampore

wetlands in Kashmir under the purview of the J&K Wildlife Protection Act.

# COMMUNITIES

We engaged with the Kalandar community and supported them with alternate livelihoods to wean them off the 'dancing bear' tradition. In Central India, we promoted sustainable entrepreneurship among **Self Help Groups** in villages fringing the Nagzira-Navegaon wildlife corridor. We supported the local community through the **Kanamakra Weaving Centre** for Bodo women near Manas Tiger Reserve. Our team also imparted training in moonj grass basket weaving for **Tharu tribal women in Done Valley**, Valmiki Tiger Reserve.

All these activities fall within the ambit of our conservation projects across the country and the ultimate goal is to reduce anthropogenic pressures on wildlife habitats and demonstrate that living and thriving wild ecosystems can provide far more reliable livelihoods for local populations than marginal farming/fishing or the extraction of timber or minerals.

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# HIGHLIGHTS OVER THE YEARS

## 1998

**16 November.** A seed is planted. WTI begins with three members of staff in a small south Delhi office.

### FIRST THEMES OF WORK

- Rapid Action Projects (RAPs)
- Van Rakshak programme (later a project)
- Elephant Conservation
- Wildlife Crime Control

## 1999

**Wild Lands** programme initiated to create buffers for existing Protected Areas.

## 2000

**First RAP:** Equipment support to frontline forest staff of **Corbett National Park**.

First **Mobile Veterinary Service** started in Kaziranga

## 2001

**Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation (CWRC)**, Assam, established in response to the annual floods in Kaziranga NP.



© WTI

Awareness campaign launched against the **sale and use of Shahtoosh**, derived from the Tibetan Antelope.

## 2002

**Centre for Bear Rehabilitation and Conservation (CBRC)**, Arunachal Pradesh, established.

**Trade in mongoose hair brushes** exposed, resulting in all mongoose species getting higher protection under WPA Schedule II (Part II).

## 2003

**Whale Shark Conservation Campaign** launched on the Gujarat coast.

Protected Area Staff Status (PASS) database operationalised to maintain records of nearly 25,000 forest staff across the country.

Wildlife Rehabilitators Exchange Network (WREN), later called the **Emergency Relief Network (ERN)**, launched.

First pair of Asiatic black bears rehabilitated back to the wild from CBRC.

## 2004

**Sansar Chand** (famed wildlife trader) sentenced to five years in custody,

with WTI's active legal support.

Began working with the Nyishi tribe in Arunachal Pradesh to manufacture artificial hornbill beaks to be used in traditional headgear.

## 2005

**Tibetan Conservation Awareness Campaign** against illegal wildlife trade launched by His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, in New Delhi.

## 2006

**Greater Manas Recovery Project** launched, with a goal to restoring Manas NP's UNESCO World Heritage Site status.

**Wild Buffalo Recovery Project** initiated in Udanti WLS, Chhattisgarh.

## 2007

**19 acres of Mangroves** acquired in Kerala for protection, with support from World Land Trust (WLT).



© Jayesh Padichal

## 2009

**Two clouded leopards rehabilitated** in Greater Manas, Assam.

'A Shawl to Die For' film wins award for Technical Excellence in Cinematography at CMS Vatavaran 2009.

## 2011

"Return of the Clouded Leopard", a film by Sandesh Kadur, documenting the rehabilitation of two orphaned clouded leopards was featured in National Geographic Channel.

## 2012

WTI receives the **RBS Earth Guardian Award** at CBD CoP11.

## 2014

Another first: WTI successfully **translocates 19 eastern swamp deer** from Kaziranga NP to Manas NP.

## 2015

**Kalapahar-Daigrung elephant corridor in Assam secured.**

## 2017

WTI launches **HAWK, a first-of-its-kind wildlife crime intelligence monitoring system** for the country.

## 2018

**Gaj Mahotsav campaign launched** to celebrate the

National Heritage Animal of India.

**Ashok Kumar Memorial National Wildlife Law and Enforcement Conference** established.



Community-managed '**Manas Kanamakra Weaving Centre**' for Bodo women launched.

## 2020

**Two wild buffaloes successfully translocated** from Manas NP, Assam to Barnawapara WLS, Chhattisgarh.

## 2021

**Conservation Heroes Covid Casualty Fund** launched. Over 16,500 individuals supported through PPE kits and emergency rations.

Notification of **Raimona National Park** adds 422 sq km to the PA network.

'**Save the Whale Shark**' Campaign launched along the coasts of Karnataka, Kerala and Lakshadweep.

## 2022

**Gajotsavam launched in Kerala.**

## 2023

**HAWK application** officially adopted by Karnataka Forest Department.

**Gaja Utsav campaign** launched in Odisha and **Yaanai Thiruvizha** in Tamil Nadu.

IUCN-SSC partners with WTI to set up the **first Centre for Species Survival (SSC)** in South-Asia.



## 2024

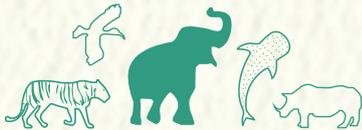
'**POACHER**', a drama series, directed by Richie Mehta and based on WTI's enforcement operations **launched on Amazon Prime.**

WTI pushes a resolution by the **Tangkhul Naga community to ban the trade, hunting and consumption of pangolins** in three districts across Manipur.

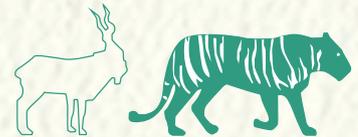


# WHAT THE NUMBERS SAY

These are our top eight impact indicators, with numbers updated till September 2024.



**55,343**  
animal lives saved



**07**  
animal connectivities secured  
(threats averted)



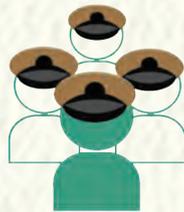
**1,78,474.55**  
hectares of natural habitat  
protected



**2,228**  
potential accidents of elephants  
on railway tracks averted



**327**  
enforcement operations to  
dismantle wildlife trade & traffickin



**21,602**  
forest guards trained under the  
Van Rakshak Project



**32,39,113**  
children made aware of  
conservation



**13,318**  
families enabled with green  
livelihoods, reducing dependence  
on wildlife



**01**  
threatened species  
recovered



**529**  
ex-gratia provided to  
frontline forest staff

# OUR FOUNDERS

**Wildlife Trust of India (WTI)** started small at an office in New Delhi, with a capital of Rs 15,000. Today, we're one of India's leading wildlife conservation organisations.

The organisation was founded by four leading figures of conservation in India. The country had a paucity of on-ground nature conservation organisations and the time was ripe for one such start-up.

The four friends were **Ashok Kumar**, a pioneering and prominent warrior in India's fight against the illegal wildlife trade – in fact it was he who introduced the term 'wildlife crime' to the Indian lexicon; **Vivek Menon**, a young conservation biologist who had already partnered Ashok Kumar in setting up TRAFFIC India and found the final trade destinations for Indian elephant ivory and rhino horn; **Tara Gandhi**, an ornithologist who worked on communities and conservation with both WWF-India and the Commonwealth Secretariat; and **Thomas Mathew**, the erstwhile Secretary General of WWF-India.



They went on to establish WTI on **16 November 1998** and served as Founding Trustees for the first ten years. Vivek Menon was nominated from the start as the Executive Trustee to run the organisation on a day-to-day basis.

Thomas Mathew, the founding Chair of the WTI Board, stepped down in 2005 due to personal exigencies. Ashok Kumar, having served on the Board first as Vice Chairman and then as Chairman, passed away in 2016. Vivek Menon and Tara Gandhi continue as WTI's Life Trustees with a strong Board that balances conservation, management and governance experiences (*see overleaf*).

# OUR TRUSTEES



**G V Prasad** *Chairperson*

Mr Prasad is the Co-Chairman and Managing Director of Dr Reddy's Laboratories Ltd. He has also been the Chairman of the CII National Committee on Pharmaceuticals and the CII National Committee on Environment, and is currently on the Board of Ashoka University.



**Tara Gandhi** *Founder & Vice Chairperson*

A conservationist and ornithologist, Mrs Gandhi headed the Community Biodiversity Conservation Movement programme at WWF-India and later worked with the biodiversity programme of the Commonwealth Secretariat in London. Her interest in involving communities in conservation action and her extensive field experience bring inclusivity and sustained outcomes in favour of nature.



**Vivek Menon** *Founder, Trustee & Executive Director*

Mr Menon is a wildlife conservationist, environmental commentator, author and photographer. He is a Senior Advisor to IFAW, the Chair of the IUCN SSC Asian Elephant Specialist Group and Regional Councillor of IUCN. He has authored more than 10 wildlife books and 150 articles and has been honoured with several awards for his service to nature.



**Raman Sukumar** *Trustee*

Well known as the elephant expert of Asia, Dr Sukumar is a professor at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. A former Chairman of the IUCN SSC Asian Elephant Specialist Group, he is currently a Steering Committee member of Project Elephant and a member of the National Board for Wildlife.



**Elias George** *Trustee*

Mr George was the Managing Director, Director and Additional Chief Secretary of Transport of Kochi Metro Rail Limited. As a senior IAS officer he held positions in several departments in the state as well as in central ministries. He is currently Partner and National Head of Infrastructure, Government and Healthcare at KPMG.



**Punit Lalbhai** *Trustee*

Mr Lalbhai is the Executive Director of Arvind Ltd, spearheading the organisation's initiatives in CSR, Sustainability and Innovation. His corporate life is driven by nature conservation. His Bachelor's Degree in Conservation Biology from the University of California and a Masters in Environmental Sciences from Yale University are invaluable as he spearheads initiatives in CSR, Sustainability and Innovation at Arvind.



**Mahesh Rangarajan** *Trustee*

Mr Rangarajan is an environmental historian with a special interest in human-wildlife relations in colonial and contemporary India. He chaired the Elephant Task Force in 2010. He formerly taught at the Universities of Cornell, Delhi and Jadavpur and is a Professor of History and Environmental Studies at Ashoka University.



**Kaushik Barua** *Trustee*

Mr Barua is a well-known entrepreneur and wildlife conservationist based in Guwahati, Assam. Besides enterprises that range from manufacturing to construction and investments, he has founded the Assam Elephant Foundation which works towards the conservation of Asian elephants.



**G S Rawat** *Trustee*

Dr. Gopal Singh Rawat, formerly Dean and Director at the Wildlife Institute of India Dehradun, has been actively engaged in teaching, research and academic activities since last 40 years. He has over 300 publications including peer reviewed papers, books, reports and popular articles on a wide range of topics including plant systematics, habitat ecology and management of wildlife habitats in India.

**BOARD – EMERITUS**



**M K Ranjitsinh** *Emeritus Member of the Board & former Chairman*

Dr Ranjitsinh has been at the forefront of shaping conservation strategies for flagship species and key habitats in India. He framed the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, which laid the foundation for India’s wildlife movement. He was also the Member Secretary of the task force that put together Project Tiger.



**Ajay Balram** *Emeritus Member of the Board & Honorary Treasurer*

Formerly the Director of Tate & Lyle Investments (India) Pvt Ltd, Mr Balram brings a vast expertise in management and finance to WTI. He was also an Olympic judge in yachting and a well-known theatre personality. He has had a long-term interest in wildlife conservation.



**Parimal C Bhattacharjee** *Emeritus Member of the Board*

A respected academic and a retired Professor of Gauhati University, Dr Bhattacharjee pioneered wetland studies, primatology and biodiversity studies in north-east India. He is a member of several governmental and state committees on wildlife conservation, including the National Biodiversity Authority and the State Wildlife Board (Assam).



**Erach Bharucha** *Emeritus Member of the Board*

Dr Bharucha is a renowned surgeon by profession. His passion for nature conservation led him to establish the Bharati Vidyapeeth Institute of Environmental Education and Research (BVIIEER), Pune. His leadership as Director of the institute has led to the environment education course that is today taught to all graduate students.

# OUR PARTNERS

## INSTITUTIONAL PARTNER



International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) is a global conservation and animal welfare organisation that works to improve the welfare of wild and domestic animals throughout the world by reducing commercial exploitation, protecting wildlife habitats and assisting animals in distress. IFAW seeks to motivate the public to prevent cruelty to animals and to promote animal

welfare and conservation policies that support the well-being of both animals and people. IFAW is represented in 12 countries around the world and has been in India in a unique partnership with WTI. Both organisations have been working towards a common goal through joint strategies on multiple fronts for the last 15 years.

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT



As WTI's Ambassador I have come to know its people; I have come to admire their scientific expertise, their empathy and the abiding passion that underpins their tireless striving to protect wildlife and wild habitats. I'm proud that their stories are now intertwined with mine. My life has been enriched and my purpose defined by the time shared with WTI.



~ Dia Mirza, WTI Ambassador

Actor | Producer, One India Stories LLP

Advocate, United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Goodwill Ambassador, United Nations Environment Programme

## GOVERNMENT SUPPORT



BODOLAND  
TERRITORIAL  
COUNCIL

## Wildlife Trust of India

F-13, Sector 8  
Noida – 201301  
National Capital Region (NCR)  
India

Know more at [www.wti.org.in](http://www.wti.org.in)

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**HELP US KEEP WILDLIFE FOREVER WILD.**

Scan the QR code to make a donation,  
or get in touch with us at  
[info@wti.org.in](mailto:info@wti.org.in).

