



# Brochure

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2026-27





**Wildlife Trust of India (WTI)** is the most trusted wildlife conservation charity organisation in India, dedicated to preserve and protect the natural world and its wild 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.

*On the cover:*

A Bengal tiger photographed alongside a sugarcane field in the Terai landscape. Popularly known as “Sugarcane Tigers”, these tigers have become permanent residents of these human-dominated landscapes, often resulting in negative human-big cat interactions. WTI has been working with local communities and the forest department for over a decade in the landscape to ensure co-existence.

*Photograph: Raghavendra Pratap Singh /WTI*

# IN SERVICE OF NATURE SINCE 1998

WTI has been supporting frontline forest department staff through capacity strengthening and equipment support across India's protected area network, aiding in better monitoring and protection of wildlife and wild habitats.

*Photograph: Madhumay Mallik / WTI*

# 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 crises’, **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 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 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 the nation's 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 the unceasing demand for wild animal parts and derivatives in Southeast Asia and the Far East, has adversely affected a multitude of species, great 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 crises 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.

Coral reefs are the underwater rainforests, harboring myriad marine lives and sustaining the livelihood of coastal communities. At Mithapur in Gujarat, WTI's Coral Reef Recovery Project aims to secure these coral nurseries through strategic management in partnership with local communities.

*Photograph: Madhumay Mallik / WTI*



## OUR APPROACH

Over the course of our 26 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 union ministers alike to achieve desired conservation outcomes.

Increasingly, we've **leveraged technology**, developing apps to mitigate conflict, creating automated systems to prevent wildlife train-hits, using military-grade 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

© Prashant CN / 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.

© Himdipita Kakati



2

Canopies, corridors and catchments of the Garo Green Spine protected using three flagship species in 16 Village Reserve Forests in the Garo Hills, Meghalaya.

© B Choudhury / WTI



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 Loujes / 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.

© MWSRP



6

Lobbied to make the whale shark the first fish to be protected under Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, in India and ensured its protection by a massive on-ground campaign in Gujarat.

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 Wild Life (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.

© Subhamoy B / WTI



**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.

© Vivek Menon



**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-snares walks in Bandipur Tiger Reserve in Karnataka.

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

© M Malik / WTI



**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 method of translocation and reintroduction 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.

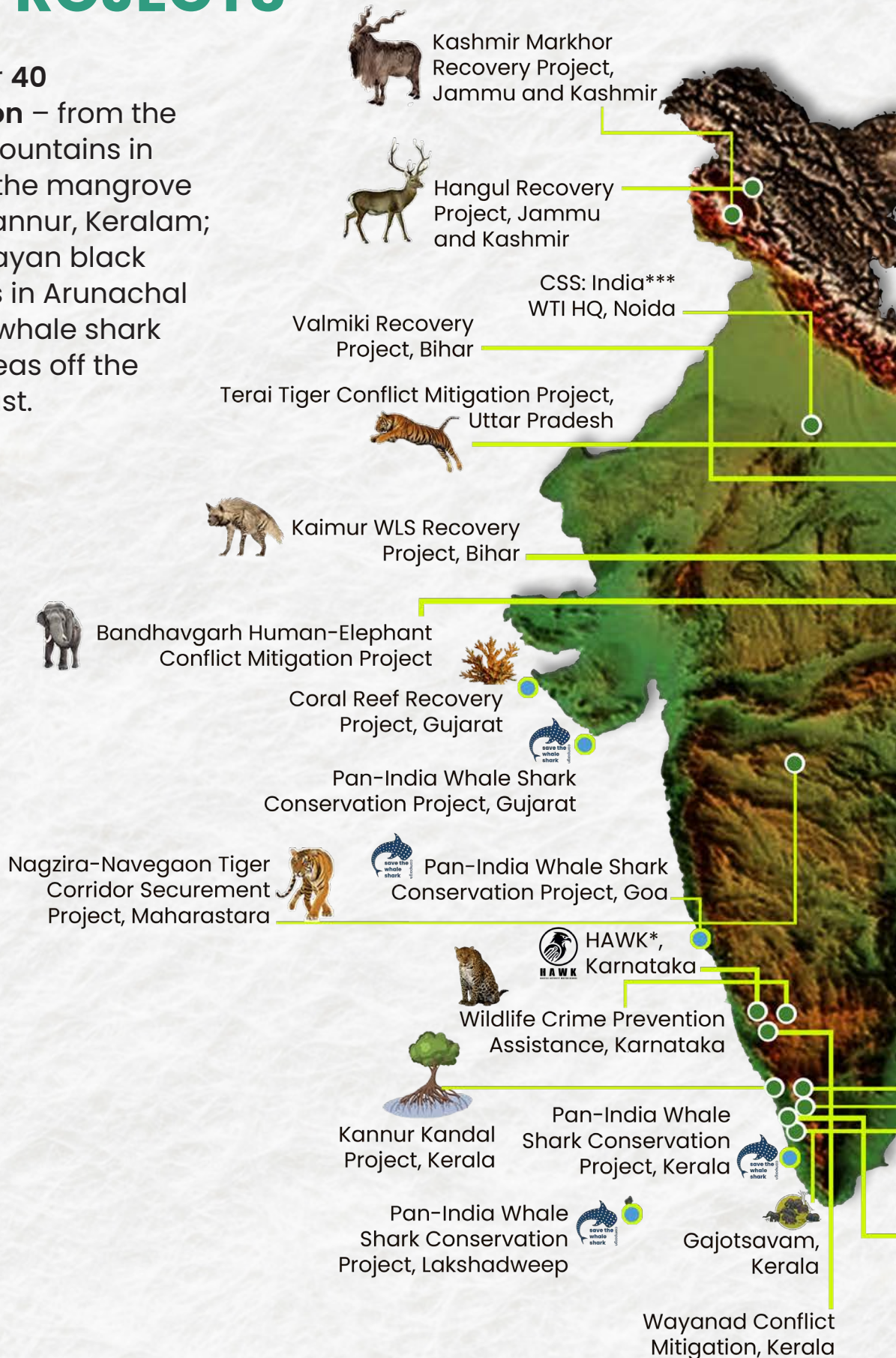
**23** Secured the vital Thirunelli-Kudrekote corridor in Wayanad, Kerala, through the voluntary relocation of four villages – the first elephant corridor secured through human relocation in India – and had the vacated lands legally notified as forest land.

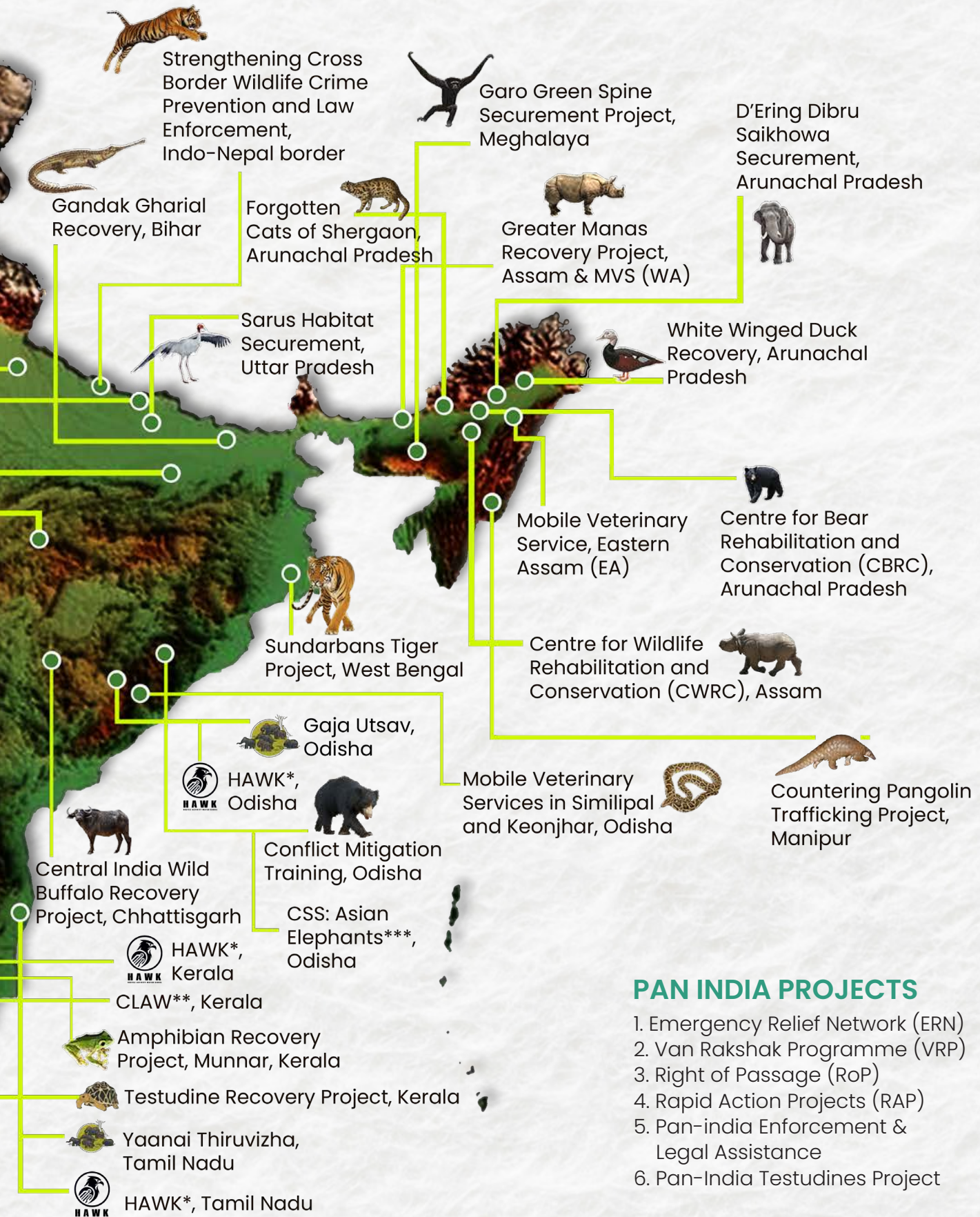
**24** Successfully developed and launched Hostile Activity Watch Kernel (HAWK), a pioneering wildlife crime database management system adopted and institutionalized by the State Forest Department of Kerala, Karnataka & Tamil Nadu to address wildlife crime and enhance decision-making on wildlife threats.

**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

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





## 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
6. Pan-India Testudines Project

# CONSERVATION ACTION

Our approach to conservation action is informed 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) and 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 57,000 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 by militancy in the 1990s. As a result, Manas' area has been



© Rushi Pathak



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



Two leopard cat kittens (*Prionailurus bengalensis*) under care at the Centre for Bear Rehabilitation and Conservation (CBRC), prior to their rehabilitation back to the wild.

Photograph: Panjit Basumatary / WTI

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 the 422 sq km Raimona National Park, an area of huge significance in the Greater Manas Landscape. Further, in 2025, 315.29 sq km of Sikhna Jwhlwao National Park was also added to the PA landscape.**

© Arshad Hussain / WTI



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 habitats.

We're collaborating with state authorities and local communities

to support 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've 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 species-rich mangrove habitat at Kunhimangalam village in Keralam as the hub for our **Kannur Kandal (Mangrove Restoration) Project**.

In **Meghalaya's Garo Hills**, we're encouraging community-based protection to re-wild and restore degrading forest patches and connect important habitats of **Garo GreenSpine**. Till date, the communities have set aside and protected close to 7,400 hectares of land as 35 Village Reserve Forests (VRFs) under the Garo Hills District (Forest) Act, 1958. In addition to this, 400+ hectares of degraded forest patches has been restored through plantation and Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) with over 4,45,205 standing trees.



## RIGHT OF PASSAGE

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 the Western Ghats. By helping to free the **Chilla-Motichur Elephant Corridor** of human habitation, we've helped initiate the first step in re-establishing 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 also established a network of 22 teams across 52 corridors, comprising local individuals and organisations, our Green Corridor Champions, to help monitor wildlife corridors across the country.**

© Madhumay Malik / WTI



## CONFLICT MITIGATION & COEXISTENCE

**AS TIGER AND LEOPARD** populations rebound in India, these big cats, which typically require large home ranges to flourish, 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 casualty.**

Their primary strategy: 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.



Leopard released back in Nambor Wildlife Sanctuary after rehabilitation at the Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation (CWRC), Assam.

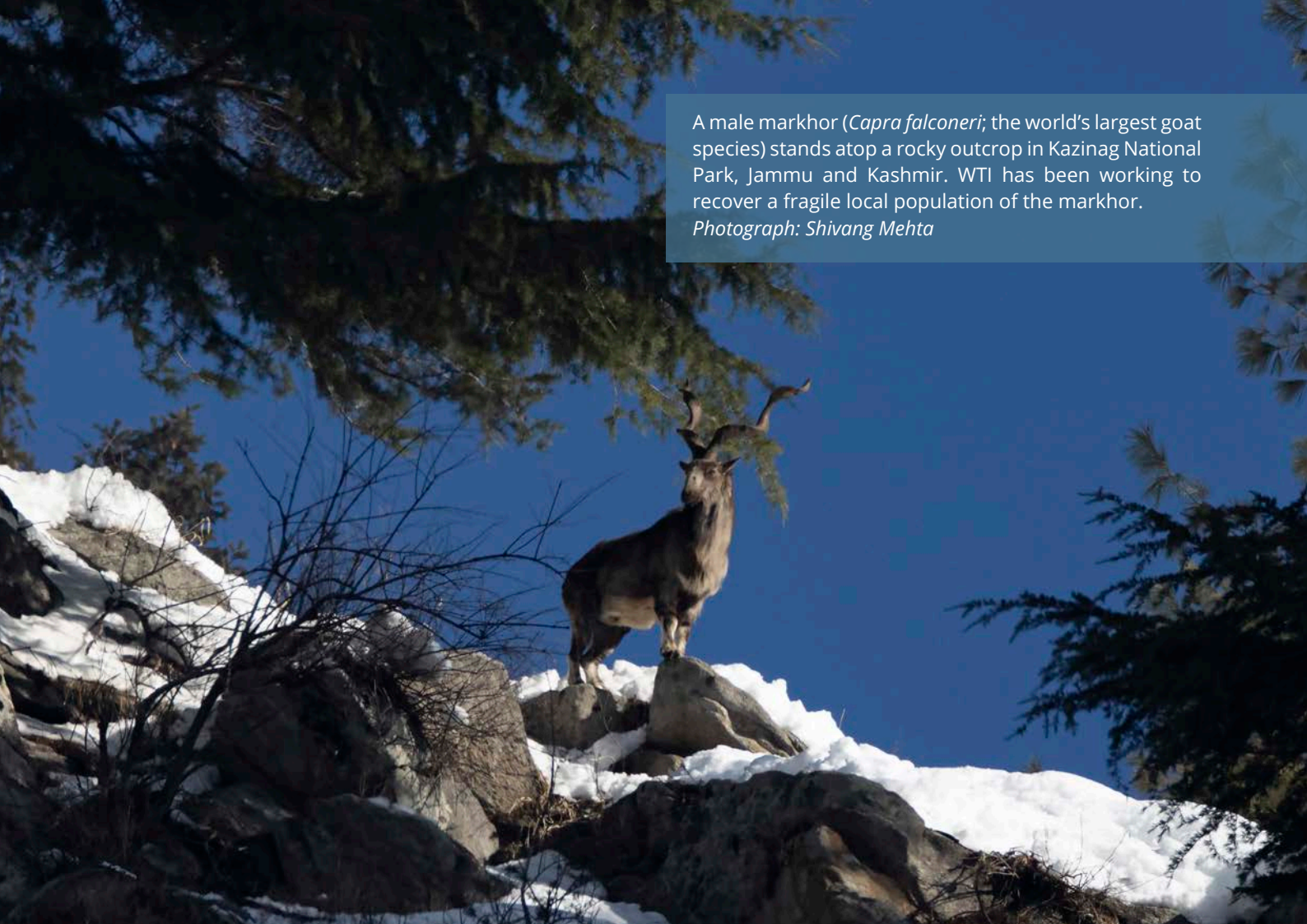
*Photograph: Subhamoy Bhattacharjee / WTI*




**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 access and monitor wild population and habitats while utilizing conventional community based tools to engage them in participatory management thereby instil ownership and stewardship towards the target species.

We currently emphasize on five endangered amphibians in the Western Ghats (Keralam), Kashmir markhor and hangul in Jammu & Kashmir, Gharial in Gandak River of Bihar, Wild Buffalo in Chhattisgarh and the white-winged duck in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. Besides this, we have also started a new project on testudines conservation in Western Ghats.



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.  
*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: Madhumay Mallik / WTI*



Photograph: Madhumay Mallik / WTI

## 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, Tamil Nadu and Odisha Forest Department.

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.

Thus far, **we've trained and equipped over 24,000 frontline personnel in more than 150 Protected Areas** across India (and transboundary 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 benefited 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



Removal of snare from an elephant

© Rudra P Mahapatra / WTI

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 of '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 have been initiated pan-India, and impacted over 90 species of flora and fauna and their habitats.



Indian spiny-tailed lizard in Kachchh, Gujarat  
© Madhumay Mallik / WTI

## NATURAL HERITAGE CAMPAIGNS

**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 1000 of these gentle giants. The campaign has now

shifted to the shores of Karnataka, Keralam 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 all 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.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Late Ashok Kumar at Tibetan Conservation Awareness Campaign event



Building on its success in transforming hunters into protectors in coastal Gujarat, WTI's Whale Shark Campaign has launched in Keralam, Karnataka, Lakshadweep and Goa.

*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 forums 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).

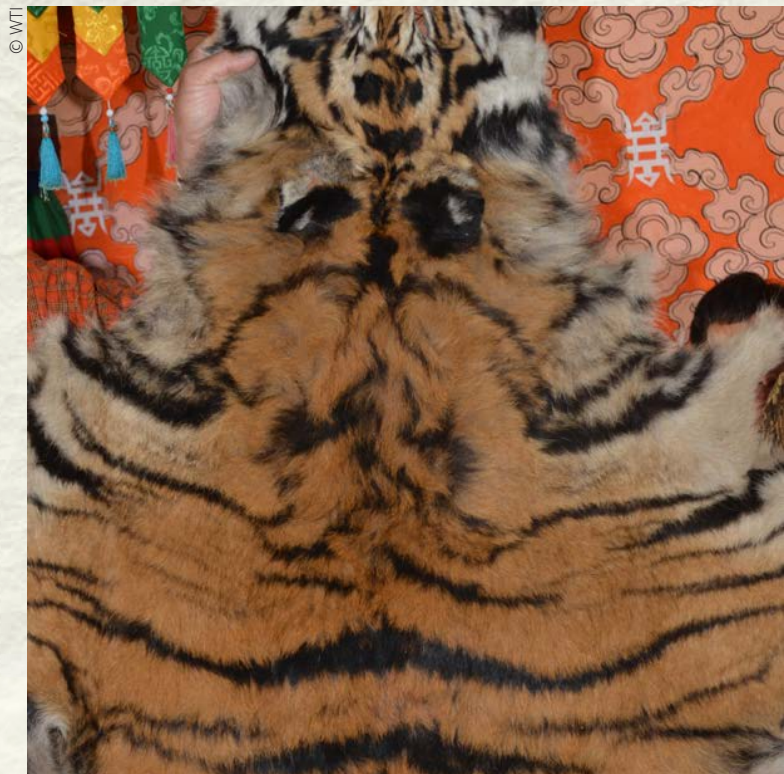
As part of the Indian delegation at the CMS CoP12 in 2017, we were able to influence members to **list whale sharks on Appendix 1**, affording the species greater protection. Our efforts also led to the **up-listing of the Tibetan antelope to Appendix 1** of CITES and the resultant ban on the international 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 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 in the constitution of the MoEF'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 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 and 316.29 sq km of Sikhna Jwhlwao National Park in 2025. 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 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 Hirpora Wildlife Sanctuary from 150 sq km to about 300 sq km. 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**, Valimiki 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 areas and demonstrate to communities 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.

© Dindi Padri / WTI



# 26 YEARS OF WTI

## 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.

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 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 Keralam for protection, with support from World Land Trust (WLT).

## 2009

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

## 2009

*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 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 (from forest departments and local communities) 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, Keralam and Lakshadweep.

## 2022

**Gajotsavam** launched in Keralam.

## 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 **Tangkhu Naga community to ban he hunting, trade and consumption of pangolins** in three districts across Manipur.

## 2025

Vivek Menon, WTI Founder and ED, elected to the chair of IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC).

Number of whale sharks rescue and release by fishermen crosses 1000, under WTI’s Pan-India Whale Shark Conservation Project, spanning Gujarat, Keralam and Lakshadweep Islands.

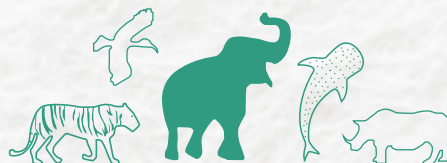
# WHAT THE NUMBERS SAY

\*updated till  
February 2026



**7**

animal connectivities secured



**57,681**

animal lives saved



**2,14,574.97**

hectares of natural habitat protected



**2,228**

elephants saved from train-hits



**366**

enforcement operations to  
dismantle wildlife trade & trafficking



**14,626**

families enabled with green  
livelihoods, reducing dependence  
on wildlife



**24,962**

forest guards trained under the  
Van Rakshak Project



**38,19,917**

children made aware of  
conservation



**1**

threatened species recovered



**562**

ex-gratia provided to frontline  
forest staff

# OUR FOUNDERS



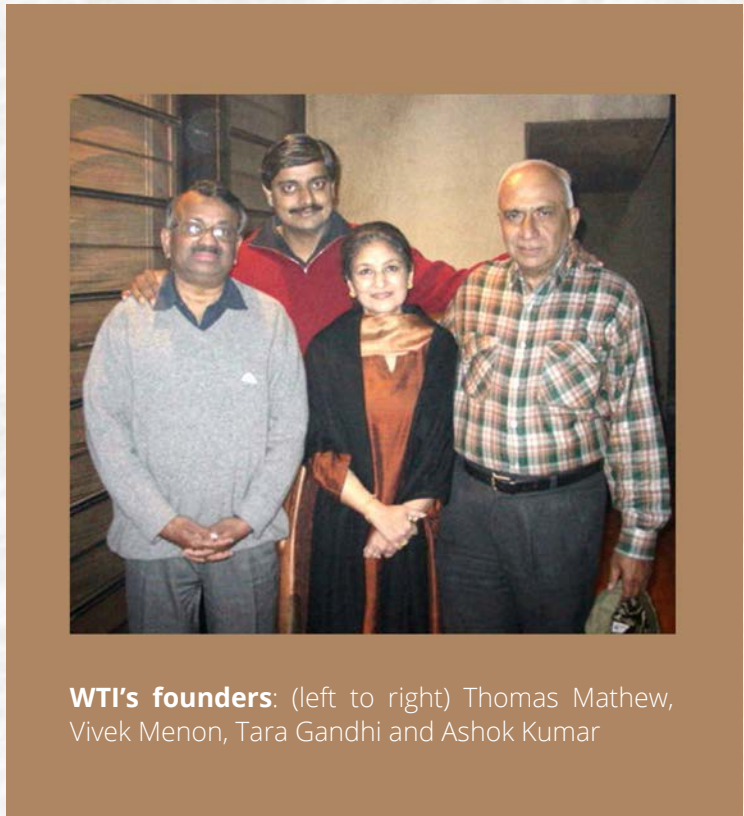
**The Wildlife Trust of India (WTI)** started small at an office in New Delhi with an initial capital of ₹15,000, but has since grown into one of India's leading wildlife conservation organisations.

It was founded at a time when there were very few organisations actively working on ground-level conservation in the country, creating a clear need for such an initiative. Four prominent conservationists came together to establish WTI: Late Ashok Kumar, Vivek Menon, Tara Gandhi, and Late Thomas Mathew.

Ashok Kumar was 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, had already collaborated with Kumar to establish TRAFFIC India and helped trace the global destinations of illegally traded elephant ivory and rhino horn. Tara Gandhi contributed her expertise as an ornithologist, working on conservation and community initiatives with WWF-India and the Commonwealth Secretariat. Thomas Mathew, formerly the Secretary General of WWF-India, brought leadership and governance experience.

Together, they formally established WTI on 16 November 1998 and served as its founding trustees for the first decade. Vivek Menon was appointed Executive Trustee from the outset, overseeing the organisation's daily operations.

Today, Vivek Menon and Tara Gandhi continue as WTI's Life Trustees, supported by a strong Board of Trustees that combines expertise in conservation, management, and governance.



**WTI's founders:** (left to right) Thomas Mathew, Vivek Menon, Tara Gandhi and Ashok Kumar

# OUR TRUSTEES

## BOARD – EMERITUS



**Late Ashok Kumar** *Founder and Emeritus member of the Board*

Ashok Kumar, Founder and Chairman Emeritus of the Wildlife Trust of India, passed away on August 18, 2016 at the age of 81. It is not often that the term can be used without hyperbole, but Ashok Kumar was a legend. He made several game-changing contributions, particularly in the battle against the illegal trade in wildlife and its derivatives, during the course of a conservation career spanning five decades. Along the way there were many milestones: organisations built and enriched, criminals apprehended and prosecuted, habitats protected, wild lives saved.



**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.



**Late 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).



**Dr 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 (BVIEER), Pune. His leadership as Director of the institute has led to the environment education course that is today taught to all graduate students.

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES



**G V Prasad** *Chairman*

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.



**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.



**Tara Gandhi** *Founder, Trustee & Vice Chair*

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.



**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 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.



**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 for the last 40 years. His areas of specialization include eco-floristic studies in the Himalayan region, Ecology and Management of Alpine rangelands, Status survey of medicinal plants, and Wildlife Habitat Wildlife Ecology.



**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.



**Dia Mirza** *Trustee*

Dia Mirza is an award-winning Actor, Green Entrepreneur, Founder of One India Stories, UN Environment Goodwill Ambassador, United Nations Secretary-General's Advocate for Sustainable Development Goals, and WTI Ambassador. Dia has tirelessly leveraged her global platform to address diverse issues, including pollution, climate change, wildlife conservation, and gender rights. Her name in the BBC's 100 Women List in 2023 highlights her dual impact in the realms of entertainment and activism. Her journey as a constantly evolving actor, human being, and a powerful voice for sustainability has made her a trailblazer and a role model for many.

# 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 an 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 and Trustee

Actor | Producer, One India Stories LLP

Advocate, United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Goodwill Ambassador, United Nations Environment Programme

## GOVERNMENT SUPPORT




We are grateful to all state forest departments for their support.


## 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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FOREVER WILD.

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