

CENTRE FOR
WILDLIFE STUDIES



2021 ANNUAL REPORT







From Our Chief Conservation Scientist Dr. Krithi K. Karanth

Without a doubt, 2020 will be remembered by us all. It is a stark reminder of the interconnectedness of people and nature, one we have taken for granted and interfered with for far too long. Despite the many challenges we have endured as individuals and as an organisation, I am delighted to share with you CWS' terrific accomplishments in this tumultuous year.

We launched a new conservation program *Wild Surakshe* (*Surakshe* meaning safety) amidst the pandemic. This is a grass roots level public awareness and training program that engages with communities and empowers them to cope with zoonotic diseases and human-wildlife conflict. The program launched in September 2020 has engaged with 4000 participants from gram panchayats, frontline primary health department, forest department staff, as well as ASHA and Anganwadi staff through 136 workshops in nine wildlife reserves. We plan to expand the program to the entire Western Ghats to help build baseline information and create networks of people better equipped to deal with zoonotics and conflict.

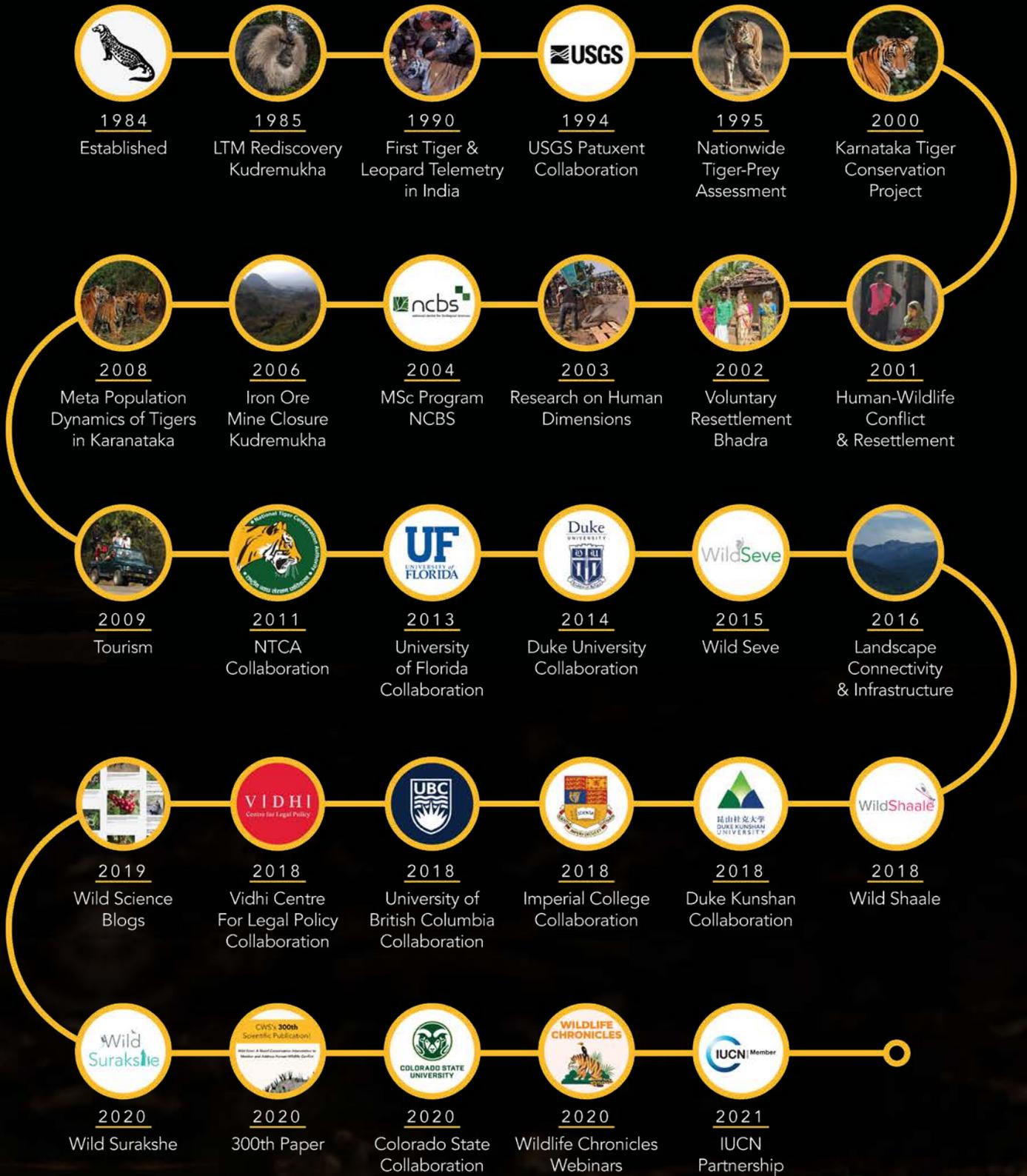
Science remains the foundation on which our conservation, education and policy efforts are based. We published 13 research papers including landmark papers on 40 years of tiger ecology and human-wildlife conflict, and one monograph. Storytelling and public outreach remains vital to our soul. We launched *CWS Wildlife Chronicles* and hosted 16 webinars with 33 speakers, wrote 24 *Wild Science Blogs* and published a new children's book *Packed Together*. Our work was featured in 123 media stories including the Washington Post and *Save This Rhino: India* film by Disney and National Geographic. Our documentary *Flying Elephants* won at Jackson Hole and Wild Screen, premier global wildlife film festivals!

We have emerged stronger, bolder and more resilient. We sharpened our scientific research and conservation interventions to focus more deeply on the human dimensions of conservation. We have 45 global partners including universities, NGOs, think tanks and government agencies. We have expanded the scope of donors from largely US based foundations to Indian foundations, Corporate Social Responsibility Funds and individual donors. Thus, additionally empowering our mission from within India.

We are determined to stay true to our mission of saving wildlife and wildlands, and optimistic that we will create a better world for wildlife and people.

CWS was able to accomplish all of this because of continued support from individuals and foundations as much of our CSR support remained suspended last year. We remain grateful for your engagement and support, and look forward to partnering with you in our 37th year.

TIMELINE



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ABOUT US

The Centre for Wildlife Studies is an internationally-recognized centre-of-excellence in the arenas of wildlife research, conservation, policy, and education. Founder-trustee Dr. K. Ullas Karanth established CWS in 1984. We believe that scientific knowledge is the foundation of effective conservation interventions and robust policies. We currently partner with 44 local, national and international academic research institutions, think tanks, universities, other civil society organisations and governments. We are recognized as a Scientific and Industrial Research Organization, and Centre for Excellence by the Government of India.

Originally, our research began with special emphasis on the ecology and conservation of the tiger. Gradually, our work extended to other mammals, amphibians, birds, butterflies etc. Importantly, over the past two decades, led by Dr. Krithi Karanth we now focus on the human dimensions of conservation. These research efforts have aided the development of several state and national policies on conservation issues in India. We have published 12 books and 311 peer-reviewed scientific publications in journals of repute.

We provide extensive support to families living in and around wildlife reserves, addressing conflict mitigation, education, healthcare, agriculture, finance and alternative livelihoods. In 2020, we launched *Wild Surakshe*, our public health and safety program in and around wildlife reserves in Karnataka. This program engages with frontline government health and forest department staff, grassroots community organisations and leaders to understand and cope with zoonotic diseases and human-wildlife conflict. Over the next two years, we plan to expand the program to 69 reserves in the Western Ghats. Till date, we have implemented more than 130 workshops and interacted with over 4,000 people from several organizations.

Primary Focus



Secondary Focus



We, at CWS, believe in inspiring and involving people in saving India's wildlife and wildlands. In collaboration with Manipal University, National Centre for Biological Sciences, Duke, Inland Norway University and others, we have formally educated and trained more than 200 undergraduates, master's and doctoral students, and engaged >7100 citizen scientists. In 2020, CWS and the Board of Governors of the Colorado State University System signed a Memorandum of Understanding to share the benefits of their respective institutional accomplishments, to discuss their different educational support frameworks and research interests, and to develop future areas of cooperation.

Uncompromisingly committed to wildlife conservation, we believe our science, conservation, policy and education activities have made valuable contributions to saving India's wildlife and serving its people.



Dr. K. Ullas Karanth

The year of the pandemic was a difficult one for CWS. Our staff and programs *Wild Surakshe* and *Wild Seve* continue to serve the forest-edge communities. On the scientific front, we had many achievements demonstrating that this vital piece of our wildlife conservation strategy remains as vibrant as ever.

This includes groundbreaking publications synthesizing economics with conservation, a 40-year review of our tiger work in the Western Ghats and a monograph on cutting edge developments in ungulate survey methodologies.





Our internationally published scientific research papers covered varied topics such as infrastructure impacts on connectivity and wildlife movement, forest fragmentation, human-wildlife interactions and conflict, novel conservation interventions, tiger and leopard ecology and distribution, dynamics of small carnivores and ungulates, innovative models for wildlife, political economy of coffee and impacts on biodiversity and evaluation tools for environmental education programs. We published **13 internationally peer-reviewed journal articles and one monograph** from April 1st 2020 to March 31st 2021.

List of Publications from April 2020 - March 2021

- Nayak, R., Karanth, K. K., Dutta, T., Defries, R., Karanth, K. U., Vaidyanathan, S.
Bits and pieces: Forest fragmentation by linear intrusions in India.
Land Use Policy, doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2020.104619 (June, 2020)
- Karanth, K. K., Vanamamalai, A.
Wild Seve: A novel conservation intervention to monitor and address human-wildlife conflict.
Frontiers in Ecology and Evolution, doi.org/10.3389/fevo.2020.00198 (July, 2020)
- Jayadevan, A., Nayak, R., Karanth, K. K., Krishnaswamy, J., DeFries, R., Karanth, K. U., Vaidyanathan, S.
Navigating paved paradise: Evaluating landscape permeability to movement for large mammals in two conservation priority landscapes in India.
Biological Conservation, doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2020.108613 (July, 2020)
- Li, B., Reardon, K., Satheesh, N., Liu, C, Karanth, K. K.
Effects of livestock loss and emerging livestock types on livelihood decisions around protected areas: Case studies from China and India.
Biological Conservation, doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2020.108645 (July, 2020)
- Kumar, V., A., Karanth, K. U., Jathanna, D.
Tigers and leopards coexist despite similarities in space use and habitat selection.
Cat News 71 Spring 2020 (20-22) (July, 2020)

- Puri, M., Srivathsa, A., Karanth, K. K., Patel, I., Kumar, N. S.
 Strawman arguments and flawed inferences: A response to Naha et al.
Ecological Indicators, doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolind.2020.106887 (January, 2021)
- Robbins, P., Tripuraneni, V., Karanth, K. K., Chhatre, A.
 Coffee, trees, and labor: Political economy of biodiversity in commodity agroforests.
Annals of the American Association of Geographers,
 doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2020.1803726 (September, 2020)
- Jathanna, D., Kumar, S. N., Karanth, K. U.
 Summary and highlights of small carnivore photo-captures during a field season in the
 central Western Ghats, India.
Small Carnivore Conservation, ISSN 1019-5041 (October 2020)
- Karanth, K. U., Kumar, S., Karanth, K. K.
 Tigers against the odds: Applying macro-ecology to species recovery in India.
Biological Conservation, doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2020.108846 (December, 2020)
- Kumar, N. S., Karanth, K. U., Nichols, D. J., Vaidhyathan, S., Gardner, B., Krishnaswamy, J.
 Spatial dynamics and ecology of large ungulate populations in tropical forests of India.
Springer Nature, doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-6934-0 (November, 2020)
- Vasudev, D., Goswami, R. V., Madan, K. O.
 Detecting dispersal: A spatial dynamic occupancy model to reliably quantify connectivity
 across heterogeneous conservation landscapes.
Biological Conservation, doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2020.108874 (January, 2021)
- Goswami, V., Vasudev, D., Joshi, B., Hait, P., Sharma, P.
 Coupled effects of climatic forcing and the human footprint on wildlife movement and
 space use in a dynamic floodplain landscape.
Science of the Total Environment, doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2020.144000 (March, 2021)
- Gulati, S., Karanth, K. K., Anh Le, N., Noack, F.
 Human casualties are the dominant cost of human–wildlife conflict in India.
Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America,
 doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1921338118 (February, 2021)
- Salazar, G., Ramakrishna, I., Satheesh, N., Mills, M., Monroe, C. N., Karanth, K. K.
 The challenge of measuring children’s attitudes toward wildlife in rural India.
International Research in Geographical and Environmental Education
 doi.org/10.1080/10382046.2021.1897339 (March, 2021)

With each passing year, CWS touches new milestones on the scientific front, and 2020 was no different. Our research publications in the last year covered multiple topics at the interface of ecology, social science, and economics. From children's education to the impact of roads on wildlife movement, our broad and interdisciplinary research takes a closer look at the myriad and complex issues at the heart of wildlife conservation. The findings have far-reaching implications for current conservation policies and practices. For instance, our data indicates that for farmers living near wildlife reserves, elephants cause 600 times more damage than wild pigs! In a milestone paper summarizing 31 years of tiger monitoring and research, experts provide unique insights into how conservation can occur alongside development. Read more below about some of our most notable scientific publications in the past year.



Tracking and Conserving Tigers in Malenad

India is home to 70% of the world's tiger populations, with massive efforts and investments made for their conservation over the last 50 years. In a landmark paper titled '*Tigers against the odds: Applying macro-ecology to species recovery*', published in the international journal *Biological Conservation*, authors Dr. K. Ullas Karanth, Dr. N. Samba Kumar and Dr. Krithi Karanth from the Centre for Wildlife Studies provide a review of their Malenad Tiger Program (MTP), arguably the longest and most sustained tiger conservation monitoring program implemented by a non-governmental entity.

Between 1986 and 2017, the scientists carried out a unique macro-ecology study across this extensive landscape, involving large elusive wildlife. They collected data on tiger ecology, predator-prey ecology, anthropogenic impacts on the populations, and existing and emergent conflicts.

This study proposes pragmatic, cost-effective strategies to recover wild tiger populations and other threatened carnivores in a social context characterized by increasing human aspirations and populations. The authors recommend that 'conservation' should be seen as distinct from 'development', but the two should be integrated through 'sustainable landscapes' under an 'eco-modernist' paradigm.



The Costs of Human-Wildlife Conflict

Human-wildlife conflict (HWC) is a significant and growing problem in India. The major losses due to HWC are in the form of agricultural crop losses, damage to property, livestock predation and injury or loss of human life. But how adequate is the government financial compensation for the losses suffered due to HWC? Scientists from the University of British Columbia, Centre for Wildlife Studies and Duke University used econometrics to estimate what the 'human cost' of conflict with wildlife should be and then compared it with state compensation payments. This innovative paper titled '*Human casualties are the dominant cost of human-wildlife conflict in India*' published in the reputed journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* is based on a rich data set collected by Dr. Krithi Karanth and analysed with economists Dr. Sumeet Gulati, Nguyet Anh Le and Frederik Noack from University of British Columbia.

They surveyed 5,000 households in a 10-km buffer zone around 11 protected areas in four Indian states — Karnataka, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. Out of the surveyed households, 73% said they had experienced conflict with an animal over the past year. Scientists find that farmers experiencing a negative interaction with an elephant over the last year incurred damages on average that are 600 to 900 times than those incurred by farmers with negative interactions with the next most costly herbivores — the pig and the nilgai. Similarly, farmers experiencing a negative interaction with a tiger over the last year incurred damage that is on average three times than that inflicted by a leopard, and a 100 times that from a wolf.

The study found that the compensation provided for the loss of crops and livestock is higher than the compensation for human lives. The study concluded that adequate compensation for aiding recovery from loss due to wild animals can help reduce conflict.



Conservation of Tropical Forest Ungulates

Anthropogenic pressures have led to declines in large ungulate populations, reducing them to low numbers in numerous remaining forests in India. A scientific monograph published by *Springer Nature* and authored by CWS scientists and collaborators generated methods on conservation of tropical forest ungulates.

The study aims to estimate the population ecology of five threatened ungulates: gaur, sambar, chital, muntjac, and wild pig in the Nagarahole-Bandipur protected landscape. Data generated were analyzed using spatially-explicit hierarchical distance sampling models, one of the first studies in the world employing these advanced methods. The study rigorously estimated population densities of these five ungulates at both local and landscape scales, and explored causal factors underlying the variations in their densities in terms of different ecological and management factors.

The authors generated rigorous and nuanced results useful for conservation, without involving any additional investment of resources compared to the standard line transect sampling. The study also highlighted the importance of strict anti-hunting measures and regulation of human impacts on habitats, which were extremely important for the recovery of these species.



Political Economy Of Biodiversity in Commodity Agroforests

What are the key factors in preserving the rich biodiversity of the Western Ghats? The study titled '*Coffee, trees, and labor: Political economy of biodiversity in commodity agroforests*' authored by scientists from the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison (USA), Centre for Wildlife Studies (CWS), and Indian School of Business, examined farming in coffee plantations that support biodiversity. However, it revealed the fragility of such large farms as they were labour- and pesticide-intensive. The maintenance of trees requires a heavy labour force which makes up 65% of input costs.

The study identifies that due to insufficient labor and rise in market fluctuations, small landholders in the Western Ghats are choosing simple methods of production. This, in turn, leads to maintaining fewer tree varieties as canopy cover for growing coffee. It also results in higher usage of pesticides and production of Robusta coffee, a variety which grows in open canopy systems. Notably, in this region, roughly 75% of the plantations are smaller than 10 hectares. Many are converting farms from Arabica to Robusta as the price difference between the two varieties is almost reaching parity.



Assessment of Infrastructure and Forest Fragmentation

Being one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, India is rapidly enhancing and expanding its infrastructure, but this is leading to a host of other problems for wildlife. A study titled '*Bits and pieces: Forest fragmentation by linear intrusions in India*' was conducted by scientists from Centre for Wildlife Studies, Foundation for Ecological Research, Advocacy, and Learning, University of Goettingen, and Columbia University. It highlights how infrastructure development projects in India have fragmented forests, thereby adversely affecting wildlife in these regions. This project was supported by a Science for Nature and People Partnership grant awarded to Dr. Krithi Karanth, Dr. Ruth Defries, and Dr. K. Ullas Karanth.

This is the first research study to quantify effects of linear-infrastructure development on forest structural-connectivity in India. The scientists analysed the movement of five wide-ranging mammals i.e. elephant, gaur, leopard, sambar, and sloth bear in the Western Ghats and gaur, leopard, sambar, and sloth bear in Central India. The results showed that the overall movement of all four species was reduced in both landscapes due to human land-use, human population, and linear infrastructure. The study's spatially explicit results help prioritize those areas where restoration or mitigation should be planned to improve permeability to movement for large mammals. This approach can also be used for other landscapes where data on large mammal movement is lacking.

The study pointed towards a 71.5% reduction in the number of large forest patches. Comparing two ecologically valuable regions of Central India and Western Ghats, they found that Central India has more large patches (> 1000km²) than the Western Ghats. However, patches in Central India are more isolated than patches in the Western Ghats. The results of this study highlight the need to minimize the effects of fragmentation in the future by considering re-routing of infrastructure



Assessing Children's Attitudes Towards Wildlife

There are many environmental education programs across the world aimed at nurturing children's attitudes toward wildlife and the environment. Scientists and education practitioners from the Centre for Wildlife Studies, University of Florida, and Imperial College London collaborated on designing educational tools that assess children's attitudes towards wildlife. The paper titled '*The challenge of measuring children's attitudes toward wildlife in rural India*' was authored by Gabby Salazar, Ishika Ramakrishna, Nitya Satheesh, Dr. Morena Mills, Dr. Martha C. Monroe, and Dr. Krithi K. Karanth.

In their paper, they compare and discuss the challenges they faced while developing a brand new program, its curriculum and evaluation tools to determine whether it had met its goals. These goals included understanding whether participation in *Wild Shaale* influenced children's attitudes towards wildlife and their environmental literacy. The study chronicles the learnings of each evaluation tool tested on 1772 students in 56 rural schools around Bandipur and Nagarhole National Parks in Karnataka.

Although four out of the five tools tested effectively captured children's attitudes, the scientists faced three recurring challenges that may have influenced the results of the study: children were hesitant to express their opinions, tended to mimic their peers, and struggled to read and write quickly. This could be attributed to the group-learning and collectivist pedagogy of the Indian education system, as compared to that of Western nations. Most environmental education resources are developed in the West, and their direct implementation in places like rural India fall short. The paper, however, reflects upon these learnings and leaves some fundamental recommendations for future practitioners, including:

- 1) Trying a mixed methods approach to evaluation
- 2) Thinking critically about local contexts and cultures while building a curriculum
- 3) Piloting all tools through an interview-based process.

WILD SCIENCE BLOGS

Our Wild Science blog summarizes the latest CWS research papers in jargon-free language to make them more accessible to our supporters, donors, collaborators and the general public. Since April last year, we have published 24 blogs about topics ranging from forest fragmentation to wildlife tourism. This year we introduced new forms of communication – podcasts, interviews, and illustrations.

Here are our blogs from April 2020 - March 2021:



Scientists find infrastructure has led to 71% reduction in forest patches

SPECIAL FEATURE

Our Latest Paper

APRIL 2020



Increased poaching under lockdown, not the virus, is the new threat to tigers

SPECIAL FEATURE

Article by Dr. K. Ullas Karanth

APRIL 2020



The balancing act: Leopard and wild prey populations could offer economic benefits to locals



An easy meal for a hungry leopard

Human-Leopard Interactions

APRIL 2020



A confluence of cats: Examining genetic connectivity of Indian tiger populations



Bits and pieces: The impact of infrastructure on forest fragmentation in India

Landscape Connectivity

MAY 2020



Rethinking land-use planning to accommodate wildlife movement

SPECIAL FEATURE

CWS' Latest Research

JUNE 2020



Human-wildlife conflict: A political animal geography of encounter



History, location and species matter: Insights for human-wildlife conflict mitigation from India

Human-Wildlife Interactions in India

JUNE 2020



Striking a balance between livestock rearing, loss and habitat degradation



Coexistence in regions of co-occurrence?

Human-Wildlife Interactions in India

AUGUST 2020

WILD SCIENCE BLOGS



Understanding local hunting:
Insights from Kudremukha and
Nagarahole National Parks



Impacts of hunting on
Indian wildlife

Wildlife Hunting

SEPTEMBER 2020



Finding a balance between
biodiversity and the political
economy of coffee farms



Exploring the diversity of birds
in coffee agroforests in India's
Western Ghats

Wildlife Friendly Production Landscapes

OCTOBER 2020



Striped hyena persistence in India:
Insights from Kumbhalgarh and
Esrana In Rajasthan



Utilization of landscape by
dholes in the Western Ghats
of Karnataka

Canids

NOVEMBER 2020



30 years of tracking and
conserving tigers in India

SPECIAL FEATURE

Our Latest Paper

DECEMBER 2020



Emergence of the modern Indian wildlife tourist



Protecting the core from wildlife tourism: Commentary

Ecotourism

JANUARY 2021



Tracing the disappearances of large mammals in India



Wide or restricted? Mapping the distribution of large Indian mammals

Wildlife Distributions and Extinctions

FEBRUARY 2021



Valuing the cost of human-wildlife conflict in India



Compensation for conflict: How are wildlife related losses valued in India?

Human-Wildlife Interactions in India

MARCH 2021

WILDLIFE CHRONICLES WEBINARS

In June 2020, we at CWS launched a webinar series called *Wildlife Chronicles* to engage in dialogue and discussions around wildlife research and conservation in India and globally. We invited scholars, practitioners, and activists from around the world to share their experiences. Our webinars have been conducted in English and Kannada. Topics covered include environmental education, wildlife tourism, wildlife law, wild carnivores, Asian elephant conservation, art for environmental education, etc. All of these webinars can be watched on our YouTube channel.

We kickstarted on World Environment Day, with our Founder and Emeritus Director, Dr. K. Ullas Karanth, with a webinar titled '*On the Trail of Wildlife*'.



List of Webinars from June 2020 - March 2021

- *On the Trail of Wildlife*
Guest: Dr. K. Ullas Karanth
Moderator: Sourabha Rao
- *Insights from Environmental Education Across The World*
Guests: Dr. Morena Mills, Dr. Martha Monroe, Amrutha Murali, and Ishika Ramakrishna
Moderator: Dr. Krithi K. Karanth
- *Wildlife Tourism: Prospects and Challenges*
Guests: Dr. Enrico Di Minin, Dr. G. V. Reddy, Julian Matthews, and Dr. K. Krithi Karanth
Moderator: Dincy Mariyam

- ***Wildlife Conservation Laws in India***
 Guest: Praveen Bhargav
 Moderator: Sourabha Rao
- ***Creating Art for Environmental Education***
 Guest: Nirupa Rao
 Moderator: Ishika Ramakrishna
- ***International Tiger Day: Tigers in the 21st Century***
 Guests: Dr. Dale Miquelle and Dr. K. Ullas Karanth
 Moderator: Dr. Krithi K. Karanth
- ***'Sci-telling' - Bridging the Gap Between Science and the Public***
 Guests: Sharon Guynup and Shoba Narayan
 Moderator: Vinni Jain
- ***Wildlife Conservation Laws in India***
 Guest: Praveen Bhargav
 Moderator: Sourabha Rao
- ***Beyond COVID-19: Understanding One Health in India***
 Guests: Dr. Abi Tamim Vanak, Dr. Farah Ishtiaq, and Dr. Prashanth NS
 Moderator: Anusha Chaudhary
- ***Asian Elephant Conservation***
 Guests: Dr. Ahimsa Campos-Arcieiz, Dr. Varun Goswami, and Sreedhar Vijaykrishnan
 Moderator: Nitya Satheesh
- ***Conservation Technology***
 Guest: Topher White
 Moderator: Anubhav Vanamamalai
- ***Intricacies of Human-Primate Interactions***
 Guests: Dr. Anindya Sinha, Dr. Catherine Hill, and Dr. Kimberley Hockings
 Moderator: Ishika Ramakrishna
- ***Science Behind Snakebites***
 Guest: Dr. Laly Lichtenfeld
 Moderator: Dr. Krithi K. Karanth
- ***Finding the Balance for Communities and Nature***
 Guests: Dr. Anita Malhotra and Gerry Martin
 Moderator: Abheeshta Rao
- ***Bioacoustics: What Stories Do Sounds Tell?***
 Guests: Dr. V. V. Robin and Dr. K. V. Gururaja
 Moderator: Sikha Hariharan



Shivraju's backyard serves as a wildlife walkway on most nights. But when elephants decided to visit his farm last monsoon, he and his family had a narrow escape from certain injury. The farmer had just fallen asleep with his grandson when he heard a loud crash. A lone tusker was feeding on a coconut tree, and had managed to topple it over. The falling tree was luckily blocked between the branches of a jackfruit tree, only damaging the roofing.

In India, thousands of people living around wildlife reserves bear the costs of living with wildlife. These losses include crop and property damage, livestock predation and occasionally human injury and death. Repeated losses can cause anger and resentment towards wildlife. This can threaten the survival of "problem" animals. Helping people cope with their losses goes a long way in changing their attitudes and fostering tolerance towards wildlife.



Chikkamadappa, Farmer, Yelchetti village

I didn't believe I could phone someone for assistance even in the middle of the night. Mahadevaswamy responded, and visited me the following morning to help file a claim. I am very happy to know that help is just a phone call away.



Based on decades of research on human-wildlife interactions led by Dr. Krithi Karanth, *Wild Seve* was designed to provide vulnerable communities with a simple solution to report and receive assistance during conflict incidents. Using a toll-free helpline, the *Wild Seve* team reaches people who have lost livelihoods within 48 hours, and provides them free assistance with filing ex-gratia payment claims. The program addresses issues of illiteracy, lack of awareness of compensation programs, inability to navigate the government process, and inherent transactional costs faced by the farmers.

Since 2015, *Wild Seve* has filed 17,596 claims on behalf of 8,218 people living in 600 village settlements around Bandipur and Nagarahole wildlife reserves. Through the Right to Information Act, the project has tracked over 9,046 cases. On average, each compensated case receives INR 3,318 (US \$45). The estimated compensation for all claims made with the aid of *Wild Seve* is about INR 5.9 crores (US \$855,018). Based on evidence from our human-wildlife conflict data, we have identified livestock predation hotspots within the program area, and helped construct 64 predation proof sheds in these locations.



A peer-reviewed scientific publication authored by Dr. Krithi Karanth and Anubhav Vanamamalai was published in the journal *Frontiers in Ecology and Evolution*. This paper provided an in-depth analysis of *Wild Seve's* operations and results for a period of four years starting from the inception of the program. This included the use of mobile technology for incident documentation, the type and frequency of human wild conflict in different administrative regions of the Bandipur-Nagarahole landscape, and the extent of ex-gratia compensation facilitated by the program. The publication also highlighted the need for improving the efficiency of government-sponsored welfare schemes, and for providing a scientific basis for mitigation strategies deployed in the landscape. The authors reiterate that the integration of conservation-focused interventions, education and awareness, and improved policy and legislation were crucial in promoting tolerance and ensuring coexistence between wildlife and rural communities in regions of co-occurrence.

WILD SHAALE



Dhonda Aakhar is a remote, hard-to-access village close to Melghat Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra. When the *Wild Shaale* program was implemented here, the school was run by two teachers and a headmaster. Students studying here mostly belonged to tribal families. After completing the program's first session in the school, the team as usual put out question boxes. These are boxes in which children are encouraged to put in any questions that they may have. The educators had observed that the children in this particular school could not read or write very well and did not expect there to be any questions in the box. However, the educators were very pleasantly surprised when the box was opened the following week. While there weren't any questions written on paper, in the box were many feathers that the children had collected and wanted to know more about! Our team identified the birds the feathers belonged to and also showed the curious children photographs of the birds. These children loved the program so much that they made an effort to ask their questions despite not knowing how to write. This was a deeply touching and motivating experience for the *Wild Shaale* team.



Ms. Margaret, Sategala Handpost Government School

All children are naturally curious about wild animals. Rural children especially need this sort of education and you have offered it. I request you to continue this. It gives me great joy that you have implemented this program in my school.



While children living close to wildlife reserves are aware of and recognize wildlife around them, they do not have relevant, context-specific knowledge about wildlife. This coupled with a lack of understanding of animal behaviour leads them to make uninformed or wrong decisions in the face of conflict.

In 2018, CWS launched *Wild Shaale*, our flagship conservation education program designed and created specifically for village children living around wildlife reserves and exposed to frequent human-wildlife conflict. Through *Wild Shaale* we attempt to fill the gap in environmental education by providing locally-relevant information to children. *Wild Shaale* aims to increase their environmental literacy, inculcate their interest in and foster tolerance towards wildlife and wild places. We bring wildlife and wild places into these classrooms through our unique and innovative curriculum.

The COVID-19 pandemic that brought the nation to a standstill and resulted in school closures across the country caused a temporary pause in our program. This however, gave us a very unique opportunity to re-imagine and reinvent our program. We are increasing the number of modules in our curriculum to include topics such as global environmental concerns, sustainability and zoonotic diseases among others. To help increase the quality of environmental education taught in rural schools we are creating and distributing an educator guidebook that will include 40 activities centred around environmental concepts. This will help sustain good environmental education beyond the *Wild Shaale* program. We are also working on creating a series of storybooks that will help children learn about various wildlife species, their significance and the important role they play in the environment. Our first book *Will you play with me?* was distributed to 5000 children in Karnataka completely free of cost as part of the program. In 2020, we released *Packed Together* a book which teaches the children about the lives of wolves in the wild, using a fun narrative and beautiful illustrations. In the upcoming year, we plan to distribute these two books to all the children our program reaches.



This year our first paper from the *Wild Shaale* program titled '*The Challenge of Measuring Children's Attitudes Toward Wildlife in Rural India*' was published in the journal *International Research in Geographical and Environmental Education*. This paper describes the different tools and approaches that the *Wild Shaale* program uses and what works in an Indian context.

WILD SURAKSHE



Just two days after attending our *Wild Surakshe* workshop in a village near Virajpet Taluk in October 2020, Shyamala T. C. was able to save a man's life. When her neighbour was bitten by a Russel's Viper, it was Shyamala who immediately identified the venomous snake and suggested the right treatment. She even stopped the people gathered from killing the snake. Elated, Shyamala credits the *Wild Surakshe* team for making her aware and says programs like these should reach more vulnerable communities like hers.

Wild Surakshe, a public awareness and training program was launched in September 2020. The program engages with communities and empowers them to cope with zoonotic diseases and human-wildlife conflict. This large-scale community outreach program connects with villages adjacent to 69 wildlife reserves in India's Western Ghats of Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu. *Wild Surakshe* directly engages with village panchayats, community co-operatives, civil society organisations, forest, and revenue departments to conduct public safety awareness and training workshops.



Sannama, ASHA Worker, Gumballi Village

For me, *Wild Surakshe* was an eye-opener. I engage with communities living close to wildlife reserves and for health workers like me, this workshop is the need of the hour considering the ongoing health crisis. Thanks to all the trainers, I can now make more people aware about zoonotic diseases, human-wildlife conflict and first aid.



The workshops have five sessions covering human-wildlife conflict and coexistence, zoonotic diseases and its prevention, first aid, and awareness. The program is conducted in the local languages (Kannada, Konkani, Marathi, Tamil and Malayalam) using visual and interactive tools. The training sessions aim to make participants aware of many wildlife-related diseases like *Rabies*, *Nipah*, *Coronavirus*, *Leptospirosis*, *Kyasanur Forest Disease*, and help them avoid accidental encounters with wildlife and stay safe.

*Wild Suraksh*e has so far engaged with more than 4,000 participants from 136 gram panchayats. Our committed teams have covered Nagarahole, Bandipur, MM Hills, Brahmagiri, Talacauvery, Bannerghatta, BRT, and Cauvery wildlife reserves in Karnataka as of March 2021. Over the next three years, we aim to conduct thousands of outreach and dissemination workshops in ~3000 villages in Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.





Eisenhower Fellowship

As a great impetus to the work we do at CWS, Dr. Krithi K. Karanth was chosen as a 2020 *Eisenhower Fellow*, representing India in the global cohort of 25 fellows.

Every year, *Eisenhower Fellowships* are given to leaders from around the world who make important contributions to their societies. Launched in 1953, they have recognized more than 2400 fellows around the world, including 82 fellows from India. *Eisenhower Fellowships* identifies, empowers and connects innovative leaders through a transformative fellowship experience and lifelong engagement in a global network of dynamic change agents committed to creating a world more peaceful, prosperous and just.

Dr. Karanth was part of the first cohort of *Eisenhower Fellows* that leveraged the organization's global network of trailblazing talent to help the Fellows pursue projects that better the world. For the first time in its history, *Eisenhower Fellowships* hosted the *Women's Leadership Program* as an all-virtual experience. Dr. Karanth connected with other fellows online and engaged with global thinkers including Robert Gates, Madeleine Albright, Thomas Friedman, Arianna Huffington and over 50 other individuals and organisations.



Women Achievers: 2021 Invest India feature

In March 2021, the *Government of India's Ministry of Women & Child Development* chose Dr. Krithi Karanth as one of 35 Indian Women Achievers. This is part of the Government's *Invest India* feature that was released on the occasion of International Women's Day. The Ministry's mission is to build pathways for country our to celebrate women leaders, and create opportunities for our young adolescent girls to become the leaders of tomorrow.

This feature encapsulated the stories of the unique lives of a cross-section of extraordinary women from sports, music, science, conservation, social service, health, economics, administration, defence, and so on. The special feature shares inspiring tales of grit, courage and passion.

Other notable women featured include Arunima Sinha, Chandrima Shaha, Dr. Priya Abraham, Mithali Raj, Dr. Sujatha Ramadorai, Justice Indu Malhotra, Jameeda Beevi, Dr. Sowmya Swaminathan and more. Each of the women featured stands for a certain can-do spirit of India, an entrepreneurial spirit that lies at the heart of our country's collective success.

MEDIA COVERAGE

Our voice in the media has grown consistently over the past few years. National and international media outlets regularly feature our path-breaking research, conservation efforts and education activities. With 123 media features, the year 2020 - 2021 was indeed special for us. We are honoured that our work was recognised by some of the most prestigious publications including the *Washington Post*, *Sunday Guardian*, *TIME Magazine*, *The Hindu* and more.

It is overwhelming that our social media reach continues to grow and has increased our visibility across key audiences in the conservation sector. Through innovative storytelling, our dedicated media team creates multimedia content to disseminate complex scientific research to diverse audiences. The team consists of passionate visual storytellers and illustrators who are committed to bringing stories of conservation to life.

Top 10 Media Stories

- *The New York Times*, April 2020
India Sees Coronavirus Threat to Fragile Population: Tigers
- *The Wire*, May 2020
How Birds Rescued Me From the Birders, and Other Stories
- *India Development Review*, June 2020
Human Well-Being Depends on that of the Planet

The New York Times

India Sees Coronavirus Threat to Fragile Population: Tigers

The country is home to most of the world's wild tigers, and wildlife authorities announced steps to protect them.



Science THE WIRE

ENVIRONMENT, URBAN

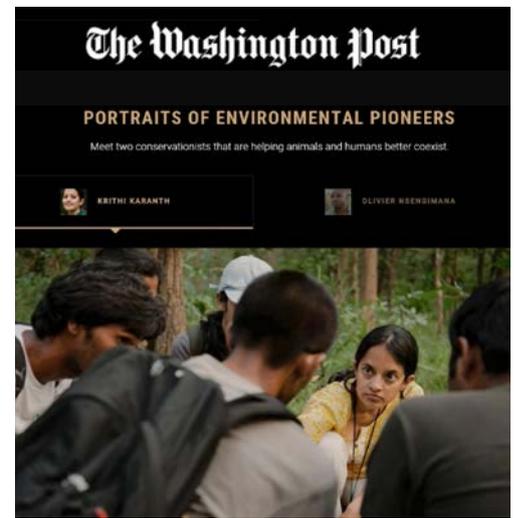
How Birds Rescued Me From the Birders, and Other Stories

Featured image: Spot-billed pelicans. Photo: Ishika Ramakrishna



ISHIKA RAMAKRISHNA





- ***The Scroll***, July 2020
In Central and Western India, Rails, Roads and Power Lines are Cutting Through Forest Tracts
- ***Round Glass Sustain***, July 2020
The Wild World of Krithi Karanth
- ***The Hindu***, August 2020
How the Tiger can Regain its Stripes
- ***South China Morning Post***, September 2020
Why Women Lead Conservationists' Fight to Protect Endangered Asian Elephants Under Threat From Mankind
- ***Down To Earth***, September 2020
Labour Scarcity Makes Coffee Plantation Ecosystem in Western Ghats Fragile
- ***Washington Post***, October 2020
Rolex's Perpetual Planet Initiative
- ***Sunday Guardian***, October 2020
Krithi Karanth: Polymath With a Mission
- ***Teacher Magazine Plus***, December 2020
Wild Shaale: Bringing Indian Biodiversity to Classrooms
- ***Planet Outlook***, February 2021
Human Death and Injury are the Dominant Cost of Human-Wildlife Conflict in India

EVENTS & TALKS

CWS staff were part of various prestigious talks, virtual seminars, and conferences hosted by esteemed organizations across the globe.



The Washington Post | LIVE Climate Solutions: Saving Our Living Planet

Tuesday, March 9 at 10:00am ET / 7:00am PT / 3:00pm GMT

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



Jeff Corwin
BIOLOGIST & WILDLIFE
CONSERVATIONIST



David Suzuki
CO-FOUNDER, DAVID SUZUKI
FOUNDATION



Krithi Karanth, PhD
CHIEF, CONSERVATION SCIENTIST &
DIRECTOR, CENTRE FOR WILDLIFE
STUDIES

Washington Post Live, March 2021

On March 9, 2021, Dr. Krithi Karanth was a part of the Washington Post Live session '*Climate Solutions: Saving Our Living Planet*'. World renowned biologist and wildlife conservationist Jeff Corwin and Co-founder of David Suzuki Foundation, David Suzuki, were also a part of this live session. They discussed the role humans have played in the reduction of wildlife species, whether we're in an extinction crisis and how humans should approach human-animal interactions. The live session was hosted in partnership with Rolex.



Thank you, SCCS-NY 2020 participants!

Student Conference on Conservation Science (SCCS), October 2020

On October 9th 2020, our Doctoral Fellow Ms. Dincy Mariyam gave a virtual talk titled '*Incentivizing land restoration around Bandipur and Nagarahole Tiger Reserves*' at the 11th Annual Student Conference on Conservation Science (SCCS), New York. She was one of 10 students from around the world selected to present at the conference.

All Events and Talks

APRIL 2020

- *Ego Monk*
Dr. Krithi Karanth
- *All India Primatologists Association*
Ishika Ramakrishna

MAY 2020

- *Human & Environment Alliance League*
Shwetha Shivakumar
- *Thicket Tales*
Ishika Ramakrishna

JUNE 2020

- *INK Talks*
Dr. Krithi Karanth
- *Sehreeti*
Ishika Ramakrishna
- *SIES College*
Ishika Ramakrishna
- *UNESCO*
Dr. Ullas Karanth
- *Vidhi Legal Policy*
Dr. Krithi Karanth

JULY 2020

- *Anvesha IISER TVM*
Dr. K. Ullas Karanth
- *Art of Living*
Dr. Krithi Karanth, Nitya Satheesh,
and Ishika Ramakrishna

AUGUST 2020

- *Planet Outlook*
Dr. Krithi Karanth
- *Big Cats: The Inside Story*
Dr. Krithi Karanth

SEPTEMBER 2020

- *Tokyo University*
Shwetha Shivakumar
- *CitSci 2020*
Ishika Ramakrishna

OCTOBER 2020

- *University of British Columbia*
Dr. Krithi Karanth
- *AnanthKumar Pratishtan*
Dr. K. Ullas Karanth
- *TED x IIM Bangalore*
Dr. K. Ullas Karanth

NOVEMBER 2020

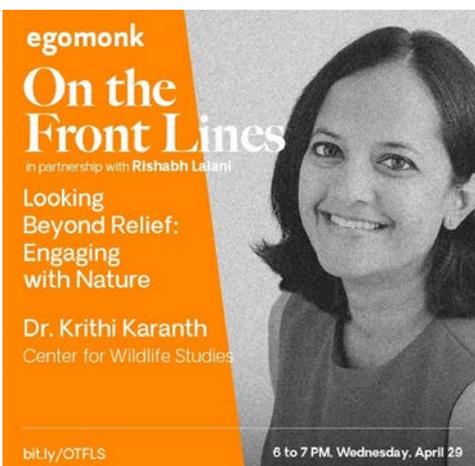
- *National Geographic Society*
Dr. Krithi Karanth

MARCH 2021

- *ACT Summit*
Dr. Krithi Karanth

FEBRUARY 2021

- *Prometheus High School*
Ishika Ramakrishna





FLYING ELEPHANTS

— A MOTHER'S HOPE —

A FILM BY
PRAKASH MATADA

Flying Elephants – A Mother's Hope

We were very honored that our film, *Flying Elephants – A Mother's Hope*, a short film narrated in the Betta Kuruba tribal language was chosen as the winner in the Global Voices category of the 2020 Jackson Wild Media Awards. The six-minute film directed by Prakash Matada and executive-produced by Dr. Krithi Karanth, was commissioned by Saving Nature and the Centre for Wildlife Studies.

The film, which took about two years to make, poignantly depicts how forest fragmentation and wildlife trade have disrupted the movement and lives of elephants, who, like us, are rightful inheritors of the earth. The film ends on an optimistic note – to move the audience and mobilise efforts towards the conservation of elephants and their remaining natural habitats.

The award was announced during the 2020 Jackson Wild Media Awards held virtually for the first time in its history on October 1st, 2020. The film was also shortlisted at the Wildscreen Film Festival and Ireland Wildlife Film Festival.

We are deeply grateful to all the collaborators involved in the making of this film including Pramod Jois, Aditi Rajagopal, Sourabha Rao, Bharat R. Mirle, Prashanth Nayak, Ananya Bhat, Tom C. Jose, Goutham Shankar, Shwetang Shankar, Vyas Bhargav, Deepak Doraiswamy and Ganesh H. Shankar.



Save This Rhino: India

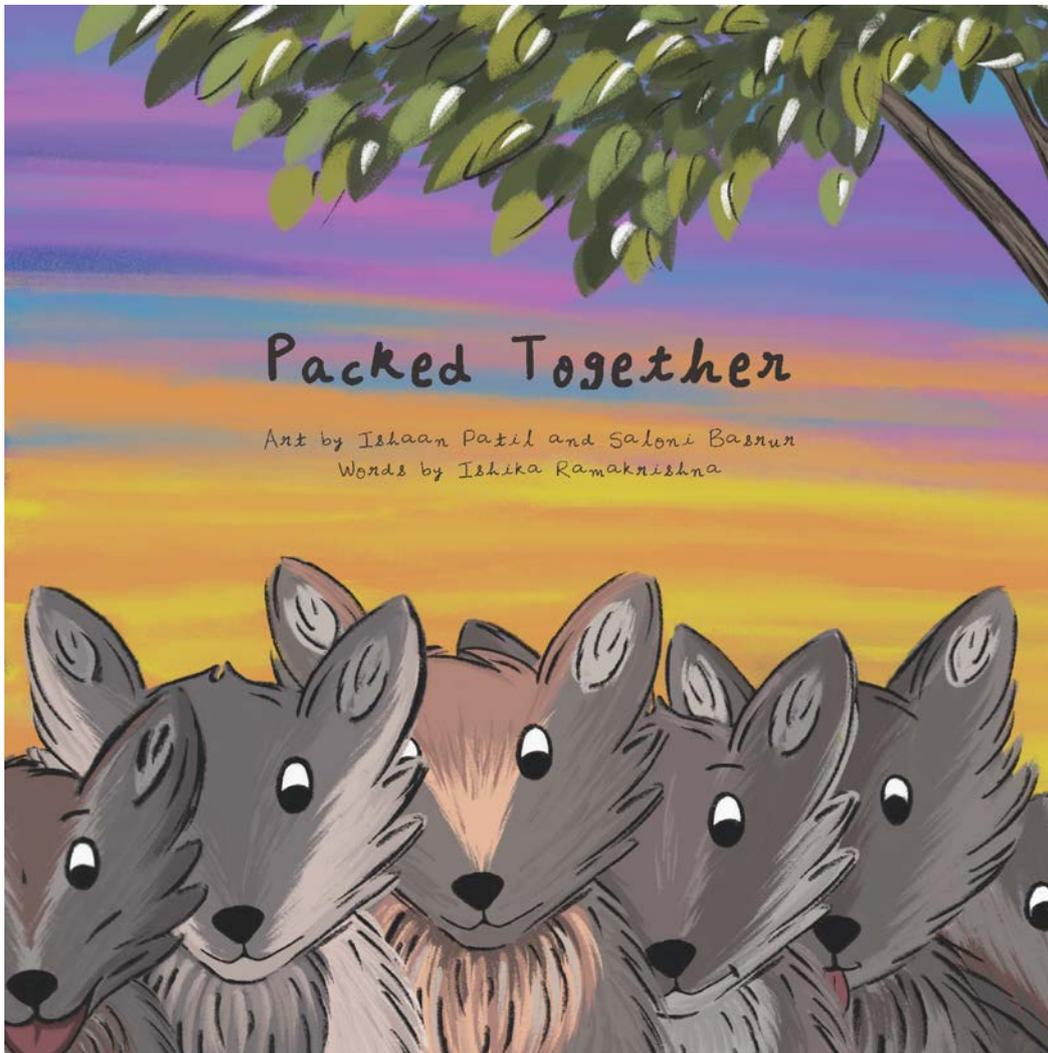
Save This Rhino: India is a film showcasing the commendable efforts of conservationists, organisations, and the Government of Assam that are working relentlessly to save these majestic creatures. In this film, cricketer-turned-conservationist Kevin Pietersen teams up with our Chief Conservation Scientist and National Geographic explorer Dr Krithi Karanth on a journey to Kaziranga National Park to find out exactly what's going on and the ways they can help. The film is made by This Film Studio; Directed, Produced and Written by Michael Lawrence; Produced by Nicholas Cook and Sarah Hatzon; Produced and directed by Anna Trichet-Laurier.



Will You Play With Me?

Will You Play With Me? is a bilingual illustrated children’s storybook by two National Geographic explorers – renowned artist, Raghava KK and Dr. Krithi K. Karanth. The book, written in English has been translated in Kannada by Dr. K. Ullas Karanth. This collaborative effort brings art and science together in the form of storytelling, to capture the imagination of children.

This charming illustrated children’s book adds a new dimension to conservation education in India, through its simple and effective storytelling. We have distributed over 5,000 copies of the book to the children we have taught through our award-winning conservation education program, *Wild Shaale*.



Packed Together

Packed Together is an illustrated children's book about a family of Indian grey wolves who wake up one morning to discover their alpha female is missing! The story weaves through the lives of these wolves, and is paired with gorgeous illustrations that bring the animals and grasslands to life. This book was created by CWS fellows Ishika Ramakrishna, Saloni Basrur and Ishaan Patil, for the *Wild Shaale* program. These stories, while fictional and funny, are true to the animals' behavior, aiming to excite children about how interesting they are in the real world!



Purchase *Packed Together*
bit.ly/PackedTogether

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The ones that help us soar high!

With much appreciation and gratitude, we would like to thank all our donors for their unwavering support that has allowed us to make a tangible impact on saving wildlife and wild places.



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ZERODHA

Despite a difficult year, more than 348 individuals came together to support us in our efforts. We would like to specifically thank the below mentioned donors for their commitment towards our mission.



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Darshan Markandaiah

Roopa & G. V. Ravi Shankar

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To execute our work, we forge long-term partnerships with state governments, esteemed research institutions, universities, corporates, and other non-profit organisations engaged in wildlife conservation and community development across the globe.



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CWS brings together a diverse group of exceptional individuals who are highly passionate and committed towards wildlife and conservation.

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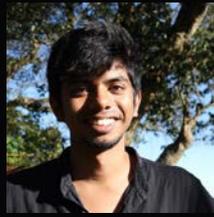
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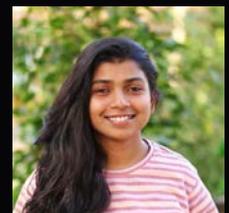
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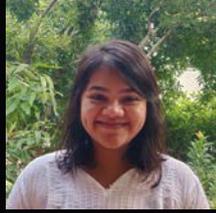


Wallambor K.

MEDIA & OUTREACH



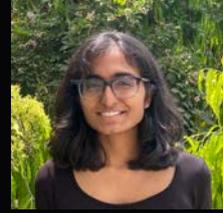
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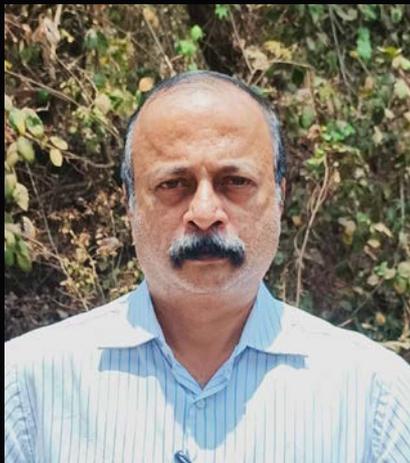


Sanjana Nagesh

ADMINISTRATION



Phaniraj K. V.



Vinay Kumar, Associate Director

A lover of nature and the outdoors, Mr. Vinay Kumar has always led an active lifestyle. He pursued several sports including hockey and table tennis, when he was not trekking around the country. In his mid-thirties, well-established as a customs officer, he was curious to know if he could experience nature in a more meaningful way. He wrote an innocent letter to Dr. Ullas Karanth - whose work in tiger conservation had gained momentum by then - asking if there was any way he could contribute to CWS' efforts.

Hearing back positively despite his lack of experience in the field of conservation or ecology, he found himself in the forests of Nagarahole and Bandipur as a volunteer. After receiving basic training in field methods, he walked line transects in these wild spaces and had the opportunity of watching some of India's most striking wild animals at close quarters.

He recounts an incident that made his passion burn brighter. Early one morning, as he was off to check on camera-traps, he turned a corner and came across an elephant. As he watched the gentle giant in awe, he noticed something astonishing – the elephant looked like it was smoking! The elephant was using her trunk to pick up ash from the forest floor and blowing it into her mouth. He took a video of this interesting behaviour and shared it, baffling scientists across the world. Some scientists believe that the ash was being used for medicinal purposes. This 'smoking elephant' deepened Mr. Vinay's curiosity about the amazing wild animals that surround him, making him more eager and excited about contributing to their conservation. After that, there was no going back!

While he continued working as a customs officer for some years following those unforgettable days in the field, he gradually cut back on his time outside of nature. He grew increasingly conscious of how the field of conservation could benefit from someone with his skill set. Leveraging his people skills, bureaucratic know-how, and well-established connections with individuals who could make a difference in favour of the wildlife of India, he continued to offer his time to CWS and its projects. In 2019, his passion for wildlife overtook entirely and he joined the Centre for Wildlife Studies as an Associate Director. Vinay works closely with all the conservation teams at CWS and plays a key role in liaising with a diversity of partners. He is now devoted to advocating for wildlife at both the grassroots and policy level across the Western Ghats. Everyday success stories of having helped people in need - whether through compensation and resettlement programs, or education and outreach - keep him going and ever-committed. His hope and optimism for the future of conservation are a constant source of inspiration for the teams he leads!



Nitya Satheesh, Program Manager

An engineer by training, Nitya gained her first experience in conservation when she was given an opportunity to work at FERAL. Following a volunteering stint in North Karnataka where she interviewed farmers who often lost livestock to carnivores such as wolves, she gained experience in the human dimensions of conservation. People's attitudes towards wildlife surprised her because they believed the wolves had equal rights to the land. These field experiences helped nurture her passion and helped Nitya find her niche.

Nitya started working with CWS in 2016 and was part of multiple research projects ranging from landscape connectivity for wildlife to human-wildlife interactions. Working on a collaborative project with Duke-Kunshun university she gained a deeper understanding of the lives of communities living next to wildlife reserves. She came to understand that conservation is more than just the ecology of wildlife, and that it brings together people from various backgrounds and skills to work towards a common goal.

Growing up, Nitya was always passionate about education and volunteered to teach at children's shelters. In 2018, Dr. Karanth gave her an opportunity to work on *Wild Shaale*. This was a one-of-its kind program, the likes of which had not been implemented before in the Indian conservation space. Nitya was the first Project Coordinator and implemented the program in schools around Nagarhole and Bandipur in 2018 - 2019. She says that *Wild Shaale* is closest to her heart as it beautifully and holistically combined her love for both education and conservation. Talk to her about the *Wild Shaale* schools, and she recounts how much joy it gave her to see the children respond to the unique teaching approaches, beautiful presentations, and the activities that are a part of the program. She describes the first twenty minutes of every session as 'beautifully chaotic'. Children would surround the *Wild Shaale* team, helping them set up, eagerly looking forward to the day's sessions and talking nineteen to the dozen about everything under the sun! Nitya says she still gets calls from children asking her when the team would go back to do the program once again in schools.

Being part of the *Wild Shaale* program helped Nitya find her calling in conservation and there is no looking back. Today, she is Program Manager of this award-winning conservation education program. In 2021, she co-authored *Wild Shaale's* first scientific paper titled '*The challenge of measuring children's attitudes toward wildlife in rural India*'. Nitya firmly believes that conservation in India cannot overlook the people and that environmental education is a critical tool that will help connect future generations to the natural world.

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Manju Ancharya

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