WILDLIFE TRUST OF INDIA

OUR WORK

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

MILESTONES

Pioneering Themes
1 Pioneered the concept of private land purchase and securement as a model for conserving endangered habitat by working on elephant corridors as a test case. Along with the Asian Elephant Research and Conservation Centre (AERCC), Project Elephant and elephant-bearing states concerned worked out the most important corridors for elephant movement and drew a green-print to secure them. Purchased the first ever Asian elephant corridor and handed it over to a protected area.

2  Pioneered systematic wildlife rehabilitation and wildlife health monitoring as tools for conservation in India. Built the first two super-speciality centres for wildlife rehabilitation in India: the Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation (CWRC) in Assam and Centre for Bear Rehabilitation and Conservation (CBRC) in Arunachal Pradesh and started operating six Mobile Veterinary Services (MVSs) that have saved more than 1500 individual animal lives, vaccinated over 12,000 cattle, attended to 1,000 captive elephants and provided them with health support at the protected areas near where they are located. As a result, protocols for the rehabilitation of  eight species of endangered wildlife have been formulated and field-tested, and 230 vets given hands-on exposure to wildlife veterinary science and rehabilitation, creating a new cadre of “green vets” in the country.

3  Built on Founder-Trustees Ashok Kumar and Vivek Menon’s work to build a network of wildlife enforcers and litigators in the fight against wildlife crime. This has led to more than 100 seizures of illicit contraband, busting of  major trade gangs and networks, training of more than 10,000 staff of 100 protected areas in Level 1 of anti-poaching training and insuring the lives of over 18,0000 of the nation’s wildlife staff. This has, in turn, led to the creation of the first ever national database on wildlife protected area staff status.

Species and Habitat Conservation

4  Was instrumental in getting the whale shark put on  CITES Appendix II, lobbied with the government for inclusion in the Wildlife Protection Act (the first fish ever) and ran a landmark campaign in Gujarat to raise it to a conservation icon. The Whale Shark Day and six cities adopting it as a city mascot are symbols of the pride of Gujarat and along with over 350 whale sharks freed by fishermen in whose nets they were caught off the coast of the state since the launch of the campaign, speaks volumes for its success.

5Undertook the first ever comprehensive survey for the markhor in Jammu and Kashmir, found that there were at least 350 of the species still present in Indian territory and assisted the Jammu and Kashmir government to declare a new national park, Kazinag National Park, and expand a sanctuary, Hirpura Wildlife Sanctuary, for its conservation.

6  Was responsible for the lobbying and creation of six village reserves in the Garo Hills to secure 1500 hectares of area which is today community-conserved for the hoolock gibbon and the elephant.

7 Set in place, in collaboration with the Bihar Forest Department, a long-term recovery plan for the tiger in a neglected and forgotten tiger reserve -- Valmiki Tiger Reserve. Demonstrated through science that tigers were still present in viable numbers; through litigation that the staff who protect species must also be looked after; and through community work that there is hope in recovering even a highly beleaguered tiger habitat with ground level work.

8  Brought back the rhino to Manas after years of poaching by putting back three orphaned calves  into the National Park after rehabilitation, one of which recently gave birth after living six years in the wild.

9 Put eight Asian elephant calves back by reuniting them with wild herds within a few days of abandonment or capture, thereby strengthening the principle of rehabilitation.

10  In partnership with the Chhattisgarh Forest Department started a long-term project to save the highly endangered Central Indian wild buffalo of which (WTI research showed) there were only seven left in Udanti Sanctuary and none in three of four other protected areas where they were supposed to be found (Pamed, Bhairmgarh and Sitanadi). Is leading a holistic recovery plan for the remaining specimens through *ex situ*and *in situ*measures.

11Established the presence of the endangered Phayre’s leaf monkey from four new localities in the northeast.

12  Entered Rajaji National Park in 2001 (passing trains had killed 11 elephants in 14 years) and launched a joint project with the Uttarakhand Forest Department and the Northern Railways to halt the killing of elephants due to rail hits. Not a single elephant has been killed in a decade.

13 Fought and won public interest litigations that included stopping the draining of the largest breeding grounds of the Sarus crane for a land reclamation project in Etawah and Mainpuri of Uttar Pradesh and removing encroachments in Bannerghata, Wayanad, Corbett, and Achanakmar protected areas.

14Combined a very public fashion campaign against Shahtoosh with strategic legal, enforcement and policy work, and a pioneering alternative livelihoods project for women spinners and weavers in Kashmir to give a new lease of life for the endangered chiru. As a result, shahtoosh is formally banned in Jammu and Kashmir, awareness levels among consumers is high, and international attention has been drawn to this regional issue.

15 Showed innovative rapid action models of conservation including fibreglass hornbill beak alternatives for the Nyishi tribe in Arunachal Pradesh (four threatened hornbill species around Pakke Tiger Reserve in Arunachal got some reprieve), circus safety-nets for wind-blown  endangered (global population less than 1,000) greater adjutant stork chicks (in one year nearly two dozen chicks were rescued and a larger project was spawned as a result), popularising fish oil alternatives for dolphin oil bait in the Ganga among others.

16  Exposed the illegal mongoose hairbrush trade, lobbied and got the mongoose species protection under the Wildlife Protection Act and through an awardwinning documentary and several school programmes, launched a campaign that reduced their use as children’s paintbrushes.

17With the blessing of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, launched a massive Tibetan Awareness Campaign in Indian Tibetan settlements upon hearing news of the wanton use of tiger and leopard skins in Tibet. Was part of an international outcry that made the overt use of endangered skins in Tibet vanish and laid the grounds for a basal change in the attitudes of the community in India for the conservation of species.

18 Schaller Conservation Surveys established the wild chiru and wild yak populations of Ladakh and showed that the endangered Ladakh urial was only half the previous enumerations.

Setting a National and Global Pro-wildlife Agenda

19 WTI and its international partner, International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) have played a consistent supportive role to the Indian government in its fight against reopening the ivory trade at CITES. Since its inception, WTI has attended all Standing Committee meetings and Conference of Parties of CITES and Critical Animals Committee Meeting. As a result, from 1998 to 2007, no ivory was sanctioned to be traded internationally. In 2007 a nine-year moratorium was won despite a concessional one-off sale in ivory.

20 WTI and IFAW have revived the Global Tiger Forum, the only inter-governmental forum on tigers, by sponsoring Cambodia to join the forum, seconding a technical officer into the secretariat and by bringing out the national action plans for tigers in a single volume. The forum is now widely participatory and international interest in it has been revived.

21 WTI has been part of several state and national wildlife advisory boards and committees and strengthened the government’s pro-wildlife measures by contributing actively in them.