

# ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17





**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.

« Hatchlings discovered by our Gandak Gharial Conservation Project team confirmed a hitherto unknown breeding population of the critically endangered crocodilian (see *Species Recovery*, pg 17)

ON THE COVER: Rhino calves orphaned in the monsoon floods in Kaziranga are now being hand-raised at our flagship wildlife rescue and rehabilitation centre (see *Wild Rescue*, pg 21)

# WTI'S SEVEN BIG IDEAS // CONTENTS

## **WA** WILD AID

To provide at least 500 short term, focused and innovative aid at times of emergencies and conservation issues so as to nip problems in the bud and provide game changing solutions to age old problems.

*pg 06*

## **SR** SPECIES RECOVERY

To recover populations of at least six threatened species or sub-species by lowering their national or global status of threat through direct conservation action.

*pg 17*

## **E&L** ENFORCEMENT & LAW

To combat key wildlife crime using trade control, litigation and capacity building techniques that demonstrably reduce poaching or trade in at least a dozen species or habitats.

*pg 11*

## **CC** COMMUNITIES for CONSERVATION

Reduce the dependence of at least a dozen local communities on wildlife or their habitats through ecologically appropriate livelihoods and people's participation in conservation.

*pg 14*

## **WR** WILD RESCUE

To increase the welfare of individual displaced animals while enhancing conservation and pioneering science based rehabilitation, conflict mitigation and wildlife health across India and in doing so to save at least 5000 lives in the decade.

*pg 21*

## **W** WILD LANDS

To secure critical habitats outside the traditional Protected Area system, especially habitat linkages, wetlands, grasslands, community reserves, Important Bird Areas and sacred groves, thereby increasing the effective protected area of India by 1%.

*pg 29*

## **AC** AWARENESS for CONSERVATION

Create a positive and measurable change in people's perceptions to improve the conservation and welfare of wildlife in India with at least a dozen planned campaigns.

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### Rapid Action Projects (RAPs)

Distributing schoolbags to children to raise conservation awareness about Amur falcons (*Falco amurensis*) in Pangti, Nagaland; installing information boards to educate and sensitise tourists to avoid disturbing reptiles in a rivulet outside Dudhwa National Park, Uttar Pradesh; rescuing and rehabilitating eastern hoolock gibbons (*Hoolock leuconedys*) stranded in the agricultural fields of Wakro, Arunachal Pradesh – several Rapid Action Projects were continued or sanctioned in 2016–17 in response to wildlife emergencies across the country.

In July, WTI initiated Project Pardus Conservation, an RAP conducted in partnership with Hope & Beyond and supported by the David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation (DSWF), to address issues of human-carnivore conflict and the attendant fall in leopard numbers in Jaipur, Rajasthan. Some 79 villages around the Jhalana Forest Division and Nahargarh Wildlife Sanctuary were surveyed, with 34 villages emerging as areas of high conflict. Primary Response Teams (PRTs) comprising individuals called ‘Hope Troopers’, drawn from among the local communities, were formed in strategic locations to provide

information about leopard attacks and illegal activities such as hunting and poaching to the forest department and the project team. Towards the end of December, in a leopard conflict situation in Nagorian village, the project team and Hope Troopers created safe passage for the leopard involved, sensitised the villagers about the need for its conservation, and helped file a case with the local forest police station so that a farmer whose cow had been killed would receive compensation. A 24x7 telephone helpline was also set up to receive early intimations about emergency conflict situations, proving useful in two cases in December.

In August and September, in a bid to engage with, educate and sensitise local communities affected by human-bear conflict in the Nilagiri district of Odisha, WTI concomitantly organised street plays, mock drills and a media workshop across several high conflict villages in the region. Broad guidelines were also passed on to the villagers to help prevent conflict with bears.

WTI’s efforts to protect Amur falcons in the town of Umrangso in the North Cachar Hills of Assam also received



### 2016-17 HIGHLIGHTS

Conflict mitigation RAPs launched to address human-carnivore conflict in Rajasthan, Odisha and West Bengal >> Amur falcon project in Umrangso reaches out to more villages >> Capacity building workshops for veterinarians held to address rising human-wildlife conflict in Tamil Nadu

a fillip this year. The Kupli Reservoir, which hosts the raptors in their hundreds of thousands during their annual migrations, had previously been found to be a major hunting site; an RAP initiated in 2014 in partnership with the Haflong-based Blue Hills Society, the Dima Hasao Autonomous Council and the Assam Forest Department, and supported by Charities Aid Foundation (CAF - India), had proved very successful in bringing down the hunting of Amur falcons in the area. With additional support from individual donor Kannan Jayaram in 2016, the project team was able to reach out to more villages around the reservoir through a 'Save Kalengmaha, Save Dao Pana' (local names for the Amur falcon) campaign. Local clubs like the Falcon Youth Club were formed and assisted the forest department in patrolling Amur falcon roosting sites round the clock.

Starting November, WTI conducted a number of sensitisation programmes aimed at conflict mitigation in the Gurguria Bhubaneswari Gram Panchayat in Sundarban National Park. Conflict between tigers and humans is a regular occurrence in this landscape; the big cats here are known to prey on livestock and attack people who venture into the forests to fish or collect fuelwood. Sensitisation programmes were conducted in high-conflict villages and meetings held with local stakeholders, from village heads to fishermen and

farmer groups, Block Development Officers and forest department officials. These interactions led to the formation of ten PRTs comprising local representatives whose primary responsibility is to assist forest department personnel in driving errant tigers away from human habitations, while managing conflict situations in a manner that keeps the safety of both people and animals paramount. On December 15, a tiger was reported to have strayed into Kultali village, located near one of the villages covered under the project. The local PRT helped forest staff track the tiger, also helping in crowd management while the forest department captured and transported the tiger.

In February 2017, a capacity-building training programme aimed at increasing the number of veterinarians in Tamil Nadu capable of capturing and/or treating wild animals, particularly during human-animal conflict scenarios, was organised at Mudumalai Tiger Reserve. The programme targeted veterinarians working near Protected Areas in the Western and Eastern Ghats and was organised by OSAI (an environmental organisation based in Coimbatore) in association with the Tamil Nadu Forest Department, the Department of Animal Husbandry and WTI, with support from DSWF.

### Special Projects

Ten conservation guides from Rajaji National Park, Sultanpur National Park and Corbett Tiger Reserve successfully completed a WTI-ONGC training programme on wildlife and tourist management conducted between July and September at the Bharati Vidyapeeth Institute of Environmental Education and Research (BVIEER) in Pune, Maharashtra, and Asian Adventures Pvt Ltd's Jungle Lore Camp in Pangot, Uttarakhand. The training programme aimed to help the guides develop as nature tourism entrepreneurs, assisting them in generating more income while furthering conservation awareness and action among the tourists they interact with.

### Emergency Relief Network (ERN)

ERN field teams worked through the monsoon months in flood-affected

districts of Bihar, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, providing veterinary care to distressed animals, particularly livestock. Veterinary camps across the Maner and Patna Sadar blocks of the Patna district in Bihar and the Chirang district of Assam provided treatment to over 3000 animals.

In December, an ERN field team partnered with People for Cattle in India (PFCI) to provide veterinary support to distressed animals affected by Cyclone Vardha in Chennai and neighbouring areas.

Mobile medical treatment and rescue camps were organised to rescue stranded and displaced animals, treat affected animals for injuries and/or illness, administer vaccinations as a preventive measure, and provide food. As many as 200 animals (cattle and dogs) and birds were fed, treated and

◀ Our RAP in support of Amur falcon conservation in Umrangso, Assam, has succeeded in curbing mass hunting in the region

▼ A mock drill aimed at engaging with local communities about aspects of human-bear conflict in the Nilagiri district of Odisha



rescued by the team, which included a veterinary doctor. Carcasses of animals and birds found in cyclone affected areas were also buried to prevent the outbreak of disease.

In January 2017, ERN team members carried out relief work for injured birds during and after Makar Sankranti, the kite flying festival in western India. Veterinary camps were set up to provide first-aid to rescued birds; some 1100 calls were received from concerned citizens through the designated helpline number and 90% (over 1235) of the birds that were brought to the camps were successfully treated

and released. A 'manjha' (kite thread) removal programme was also organised, which led to the collection of over 900 metres of kite string.

An awareness campaign was also carried out in Jaipur to sensitise the masses against the use of Chinese glass-coated manjha. Over 1350 students from prominent schools signed pledge sheets. A media workshop was also organised at the Pink City Press Club, and a training workshop on avian first-aid was conducted for 200 students of the Malaviya National Institute of Technology.

▼ Project Pardus Conservation set in motion sensitisation and mitigation mechanisms to address conflict with leopards in Jaipur



## E&L ENFORCEMENT & LAW

WTI's longstanding commitment to combating wildlife crime and the illegal trade in wildlife and its parts and derivatives was furthered through its several Trade Control, Training and Litigation Support initiatives in 2016-17.

### Trade Control

Two undercover operations headlined WTI's trade control accomplishments for the year.

In June, a poacher was arrested with four leopard skins at Chandi Mandir, Haryana, on following a unique joint operation led by the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) and Central Bureau of Investigation, and supported by WTI and the Wildlife Protection Society of India. Mani Ram Bawariya, age 52, had been suspected of hunting four leopards from an area near Bhagwanpur in Uttarakhand. During his interrogation, Mani Ram admitted to having hunted animals with jaw traps near his home town, and revealed additional points of activity and locations in which other illegal wildlife items had been secreted. A case was registered under various sections of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

Then, in October, officials of the Kerala Forest Department near Kumili Forest Checkpost, Periyar Tiger Reserve, seized 14 jackal skins and arrested Vijaya Kumar, a trader and smuggler of wildlife articles. WTI's Enforcement & Law division had provided the forest department with crucial intelligence inputs for this operation, gathered during a study sanctioned by WTI's Wild Aid division investigate and address the hunting and trade of Indian foxes (*Vulpes bengalensis*). The study provided photographic and video evidence of a flourishing trade in fox parts, and unearthed a larger trade in Indian jackal (*Canis aureus indicus*) parts.

### Litigation Support

In pursuance of a multi-pronged to tackling wildlife and forest related offences, WTI has been providing legal assistance to Pench and Kanha Tiger Reserves (TRs) on a monthly basis since 2013. Legal Assistance review meetings were held in the tiger reserves in September and November 2016. In the six-month period leading up to the second of these meetings, WTI provided legal assistance in as many as 52 cases in Kanha TR and 29 cases in Pench TR.

WTI also partnered with the Uttarakhand



▲ In October, the Kerala Forest Department arrested a poacher and wildlife trader as he was transporting jackal skins out of Periyar Tiger Reserve. WTI provided crucial intelligence inputs for the operation

▲ Wildlife Crime Prevention trainings, such as this one in Udanti-Sitanadi Tiger Reserve, were conducted across India and in Bhutan under the Van Rakshak (Guardians of the Wild) Project

## 2016-17 HIGHLIGHTS

**Flourishing trade in jackal parts** uncovered in Periyar Tiger Reserve ►► **First-ever sensitisation workshop on wildlife offences held for judges and prosecuting officers in Uttarakhand** ►► **First-ever technical workshop on use of CDR Analysis for wildlife crime held in Bhutan**

Animal Welfare Board, organising a joint workshop to sensitise judges and prosecuting officers about animal protection laws and in particular, the Wild Life (Protection) Act of 1972. The workshop, the first of its kind in Uttarakhand, was held in December at the Uttarakhand Judicial and Legal Academy (UJALA), Nainital. Twenty-eight trial court judges and 30 prosecuting officers from across the state participated.

### Trainings

As part of the continuing efforts under its Van Rakshak Project to train, equip and boost the morale of forest department personnel across the country, WTI, in partnership with the Periyar Tiger Conservation Foundation and Mumbai-based Ketan Computers, conducted a two-day technical workshop on Call Data Records (CDR) analysis for a select group of Kerala Forest Department officers in December. The use of CDR – which involves the analysis of cellular tower data in a specified set of locations to shrink/expand a suspect pool as needed, or track a suspect's movements – as an investigative tool is fairly recent in India, and even more nascent in the investigation of wildlife crime.

Wildlife Crime Prevention Trainings were also held under the Van Rakshak Project: for 40 frontline staff of Udanti-Sitanadi Tiger Reserve in August, and for 18 frontline personnel of the Haltugaon,

Chirang and Kachugaon forest divisions of Manas National Park in November. A refresher workshop for 74 frontline personnel from across twelve divisions of Indravati Tiger Reserve and Barnawapara Wildlife Sanctuary was also held in September.

Wildlife Crime Prevention Training workshops were conducted for 27 field personnel of the Jigme Khesar Strict Nature Reserve and Haa Territorial Range in January, in partnership with Bhutan's Department of Forests and Park Services (DoFPS). A two-day technical workshop on Call Data Records (CDR) analysis – the first such training exercise in Bhutan – was also conducted for a select group of enforcement officials in February.

The Van Rakshak Project's Supplemental Accident Assurance Scheme continued to provide vital ex-gratia support to forest staff and their families in the event of injury or death in the line of duty. Payments made under this scheme in 2016-17 included Rs 50,000 for the late Milai Das, a constable with the Assam Forest Protection Force who died of injuries sustained in a rhino attack in the Eastern Forest Range of Kaziranga National Park; Rs 1 lakh for the late Mr Basavan, a forest watcher believed to have been killed by a tiger in Tholpetty Wildlife Sanctuary, Wayanad; and Rs 1 lakh for the late Murigeppa Tammangol, a forest guard killed while trying to douse a forest fire that had broken out in Bandipur Tiger Reserve.

Training workshops to encourage the adoption of green livelihoods, the installation of Improved Cook Stoves (ICS) to reduce fuelwood consumption in forest areas, sensitisation programs on human-wildlife conflict and wildlife conservation – WTI engages with grassroots communities through a range of activities across several of its projects.

In May, under our Central India Tiger Habitat Securement Project, we teamed up with the Gopal Bahu Udheshiya Shikshan Sansthan and the Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs) of Gondia district, Maharashtra, commemorating the UN’s International Day for Biological Diversity with a workshop on the importance of biodiversity as well as the roles and responsibilities of the newly formed BMCs.

Eight BMCs from Gram Panchayats in the Nagzira-Navegaon Wildlife Corridor – Dawwa, Dalli, Chirchadi, Malpuri, Jhambadi, Murdholi (Maramjob), Telankhedi and Murdholi, from the tehsils of Goregaon, Sadak Arjuni and Deori – participated in the workshop, which was held at the Dawwa Gram Panchayat of the Sadak Arjuni tehsil. Participants were briefed on biodiversity

and its importance, the Biological Diversity Act of 2002, the Maharashtra Biological Diversity Act of 2008, and the formation of BMCs at different administrative levels, their roles and responsibilities. They were also given a demonstration of the ICS model, which reduces fuelwood consumption by 40 percent, and shown how even the traditional cook stove could be modified to consume less fuelwood at minimal cost.

In October, with a view to encouraging ecologically appropriate livelihoods that reduce the dependence of local communities on wild habitats, WTI and IFAW, in association with the Bodoland Territorial Council and the Assam Forest Department, commenced a handloom textiles skill development training for Bodo women under the Ministry of Women & Child Development’s Support to Training and Employment Programme (STEP). The workshop was conducted at Kahibari on the fringes of Manas National Park.

In January 2017, WTI and IFAW, in association with the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) and Assam Forest Department, inaugurated the ‘Manas Kanamakra Weaving Centre’,





a community managed learning and weaving centre for Bodo women weavers at village of Rangijhora, which lies adjacent to the First Addition to Manas National Park. “We must have patience to wait for results; our handloom will bring us dignity and earnings, and generate a widespread respect for our traditional skill and culture”, said Ms Nandini Muchahary, a trainer from Aagor Daagra Afad, a women weavers’ organisation set up by the Action Northeast Trust (ANT) in Assam.

Towards the end of January WTI and the Japan Tiger and Elephant Fund (JTEF) organised an awareness camp on improved livestock management practices for the villagers of New Ram Terang in the Karbi Anglong Hills. Experts from the Assam State Veterinary Department and WTI-JTEF conducted the camp. The villagers, who had voluntarily relocated from their previous homes within the Kalapahar-Daigrung Elephant

Corridor in March 2016, have largely depended on slash-and-burn cultivation to make a living. Introducing them to higher yield agricultural practices that are less harmful to the environment, and livestock rearing techniques that can improve economic returns, is an important component of their lives in the relocated village.

Through 2016-17 WTI also, in association with IIT - Kanpur and the Bihar State Forest Department, conducted training workshops for women from Done Valley, Valmiki Tiger Reserve, in the weaving of handicrafts made from locally available *moonj* and *kharai* grasses. Funded under the Government of India’s Support to Training & Employment Programme for Women (STEP) scheme, the trainings covered 201 women participants from 53 self-help groups constituted under WTI’s Valmiki Conservation Project.



From wild water buffalo in Chhattisgarh to whale sharks, the world’s largest fish, off the coast of Saurashtra; from sarus cranes in eastern UP to gharials in the Gandak River – WTI has a number of projects designed to bring threatened species and subspecies back from the brink.

The Gandak River in Bihar had a special gift for the conservation fraternity on World Environment Day 2016 – hatchlings of the critically endangered gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*), which hatched on June 5 and were noticed the next morning. There has been no record of the Gandak being a breeding ground for these crocodilians over the last three to four decades, but having seen signs of a breeding population, the field team of WTI’s Gharial Conservation Project rigorously monitored possible nesting sites along a 150km stretch of the river. In the first week of April the team located six nests, which were protected through the incubation period with the active support of local farmers.

Gharials were once common in the Indus, Ganga and Mahanadi river systems but their range has shrunk significantly. The Gandak was never

regarded as a gharial stronghold; a 2010 study had recorded 15 gharials, but a comprehensive river survey conducted by WTI in 2015 found a minimum of 54 gharials, of which 26 were adults. “Discovering a breeding population in the Gandak River, the third-largest among the four in India, is great news for the future of gharial conservation in the country”, said BC Choudhury, renowned crocodilian expert and Senior Advisor, WTI.

Also in June, in an effort to utilise and properly channel the forest craft of local youth belonging to traditional hunting communities based near Udanti and Sitanadi Wildlife Sanctuaries, WTI organised a one-day programme to train 15 selected tribesmen as wild buffalo trackers as part of its Central Indian Wild Buffalo Conservation Project. Skilled trackers are a pressing requirement for the project, since the five male wild buffaloes (*Bubalus arnee*) ranging in the wilds of Sitanadi and Udanti – among a gravely endangered local population of just about 50 individuals (as estimated by a WTI survey conducted in 2010) – must be constantly monitored and protected from unnatural harm or mortality. The

## 2016-17 HIGHLIGHTS

Installation of fuelwood-saving Improved Cook Stoves continues across four projects >> Launch of the community managed ‘Manas Kanamakra Weaving Centre’ for Bodo women >> Training in handicrafts manufacture for women SHGs in Done Valley, Valmiki Tiger Reserve

<< Inaugurated in January 2017, the Manas Kanamakra Weaving Centre aims to provide Bodo women resident on the fringes of Manas National Park a sustainable alternate livelihood

<< Training workshops on the weaving of handicrafts made from locally available *moonj* and *kharai* grasses were organised in Done Valley, Valmiki Tiger Reserve, in 2016-17.



## 2016-17 HIGHLIGHTS

**Hatchlings in Gandak River** confirm hitherto unknown breeding population of gharials >> **Two whale sharks satellite-tagged**, self-documented rescues reach 670 >> **Second batch of eastern swamp deer** translocated from Kaziranga to pre-release boma in Manas

selected trackers, hailing from the Gond, Yadav, Kamar and Bhunjia communities, were well versed in field craft but lacked the formal knowledge to observe and record things systematically. The one-day training aimed to address this issue.

In August, the villagers and Sarus Protection Committee (SPC) members of Bali village, Uttarauli Panchayat, in the Maharajganj district of eastern Uttar Pradesh, set an example in community bird protection by capturing two poachers from their own village and handing them over to the forest department. The poachers had trapped and killed seven cattle egret chicks. WTI has constituted 20 SPCs in villages adjoining important sarus crane wetlands across 10 districts of eastern UP as part of its Sarus Crane Conservation Project, which is supported by Tata Trusts.

It was also reported that the project, working through Sarus Mitras, local farmers and SPC members, had identified, monitored and provided

protection to over 350 sarus crane (*Antigone antigone*) nests across eastern UP from 2013 to September 2016.

In our Whale Shark Conservation Project in Gujarat, a change of protocol bore fruit with two whale sharks (*Rhincodon typus*) being satellite-tagged (the sixth and seventh overall under the project) in quick succession in the last week of December. These satellite taggings were especially important since no whale sharks had been tagged in the preceding 15 months.

In February, a neonatal whale shark was rescued by a local fisherman in the coastal waters off the fishing village of Sutrapada. This self-documented rescue was the fifth encounter with whale shark pups recorded off the Gujarat coast; the recorded presence of neonatal whale sharks (ranging in size from 50-100 cm) in the Gujarat coastal waters is significant in that it supports the proposition that the Arabian Sea may be a breeding territory for whale sharks.

◀◀ Satellite-collars will help the Chhattisgarh Forest Department and our project team keep track of free-ranging wild water buffaloes, which have proven increasingly difficult to monitor

>>> A pup rescue in February 2017 bolstered the proposition that Gujarat coastal waters may be whale shark breeding grounds



In March, working in collaboration with the Chhattisgarh Forest Department, WTI's Central India Wild Buffalo Conservation Project team successfully deployed satellite collars on two wild buffaloes and one gaur (*Bos gaurus*). The need to deploy the satellite collars was an urgent one; the free-ranging wild buffaloes had proven difficult to properly monitor, moving about as they were between Udanti WLS, Sitanadi WLS and the adjoining forests of Odisha. Even the trained and experienced trackers associated with the project had found monitoring them a difficult exercise, especially during the monsoons.

Also in March, news came in from the field that one of the female eastern swamp deer (*Rucervus duvaucelii ranjitsinhi*) translocated from Kaziranga National Park to Manas National Park in late February had given birth. This was the first fawn born in the pre-

release boma at Manas to the second batch of deer translocated under our Eastern Swamp Deer Conservation Project, run in partnership with IFAW and the Assam Forest Department and supported by the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC). The first batch of 19 eastern swamp deer had been translocated from Kaziranga to Manas in December 2014. News of the newborn fawn suggested that this second batch of 17 deer could help establish a viable population in Manas, improving the subspecies' genetic heterogeneity and augmenting its numbers in the long-term.

Earlier, in December, in a ceremony held at the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), ONGC was awarded the prestigious FICCI Corporate Social Responsibility Award for its support to the Eastern Swamp Deer Conservation Project.



◀◀ A second batch of translocated eastern swamp deer was translocated from Kaziranga National Park to a pre-release boma in Manas National Park



An abandoned elephant calf treated in situ in the Omkar Range of Bandipur Tiger Reserve; a Burmese python and its eggs rescued from an ashram near the Brahmaputra, eventually leading to the saving of 29 wild lives; a sub-adult tiger that had strayed out of Pilibhit Tiger Reserve rescued from a village and returned to the wild; a softshell turtle treated for severe injuries and released into a stream in Kaziranga National Park; an elephant calf reunited with its mother in North Lakhimpur – WTI's Mobile Veterinary Service (MVS) units and Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) worked in cooperation with State Forest Departments and local communities across the country to rescue displaced, orphaned and/or injured animals and, wherever possible, rehabilitate them into the wild.

In April, the RRT established under our UP Big Cat Conflict Mitigation Project assisted the forest department in tranquilising and capturing a sub-adult male leopard that had made its way into the cantonment area of Meerut city. A physical examination conducted after the animal was tranquilised revealed that all the claws on its hind limbs were shattered and it had lost two digits on

one of its forelimbs as well – probably due to jaw traps commonly deployed in the agricultural landscape of the region. Sadly, this permanent disability meant that it could not be released into the wild; it would spend its lifetime in captivity.

Our flagship wildlife care facility, the Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation [CWRC; located near Kaziranga and run by WTI in partnership with the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) and the Assam Forest Department] is used to a bit of attention. This year was special by far though, with Their Royal Highnesses William and Kate, Duke and Duchess of Cambridge visiting the centre in April (see 'Other Highlights', pg 36).

In May, a female Asiatic black bear cub found by villagers near the Biological Park in Itanagar, the capital city of Arunachal Pradesh, was admitted to IFAW-WTI's Centre for Bear Rehabilitation and Conservation (CBRC) in Pakke Tiger Reserve. In June, a female leopard cat cub rescued at the village of Chutu Metikhola in Karbi Anglong was admitted to WTI



and Japan Tiger and Elephant Fund's (JTEF) Wildlife Rescue Centre in Diphu. In August, a CWRC MVS team rescued a conflict tigress from the North Eastern Regional Institute of Water and Land Management (NERIWALM) campus in Dolabari; the tigress was transported to the Bogijuli Forest Camp of Nameri National Park and released.

during the floods. The sudden influx of rescued animals – and especially the eight orphaned rhino calves brought to the centre for hand-raising – stretched CWRC's resources to the limit. Veterinarians and animal keepers worked round the clock to ensure that rescued animals received the required treatment and care.

The team at CWRC more than rose to the occasion when the worst floods in over a decade hit Kaziranga in July. Working in conjunction with the Kaziranga Forest Authority and Assam Forest Department, MVS teams attended 107 rescue cases in the space of a week. They released 62 hog deer out of 92 rescue cases attended in this period; they also attended three eastern swamp deer rescue cases and ten Asian one-horned rhinoceros rescue cases, of which one rhino died before it could be brought to the centre and another was treated and released in situ. Eight rhinos, all calves separated from their mothers, were brought to the Large Animal Nursery at CWRC. A jungle owlet and a fishing cat were also admitted to the centre for treatment

The plight of flood-affected animals led to an outpour of public interest and empathy. The Chief Minister of Assam paid the centre a visit. And in one of the most touching displays of support, students of a remote school in Golaghat, Assam, decided to sacrifice one mid-day meal in order to buy milk formula for the orphaned rhino calves.

In August, our UP Big Cat RRT helped the forest department in tranquilising a young male tiger that had attacked and killed three people, partially eating the last of these, in the Mailani Range of South Kheri Forest Division. The tiger was found to be maimed, with one broken upper canine and a severe cataract in his right eye, necessitating



## 2016-17 HIGHLIGHTS

CWRC MVS units attend over **100 wildlife emergency cases during Assam floods** » Rapid Response Team in UP involved in multiple conflict mitigation operations » **Western hoolock gibbons** at CWRC shifted to pre-release site in Panbari Reserve Forest

▲ As the most devastating floods in a decade hit Kaziranga, our MVS teams attended 107 wildlife emergencies in the space of a week

◀◀ An orphaned male elephant calf rescued in November 2016 from a construction trench at the Assam Industrial Development Complex

lifetime captivity in Lucknow Zoo.

In September, the MVS unit located in Bandipur assisted the Karnataka Forest Department in releasing a conflict leopard trapped by the department into the Moolehole Range of the tiger reserve. In October, a wild tusker was successfully treated for suspected poisoning – either from primary or secondary sources – by a CWRC MVS team in the Nagaon district of Assam. In November, a male elephant calf, about three to four months old, was rescued by an MVS team after it and its mother had fallen into a construction trench dug for the Patanjali Herbal & Mega Food Park in Ghoramari-Balipara. While the mother succumbed to her injuries, the calf was admitted to CWRC for long-term care.

Also in November, a CWRC MVS team was called in to the site of a tiger attack at Dolabari on the outskirts of Tezpur. The tiger, a large adult male, had killed a woman and a decision was made to drive it back into the wild. Following a hectic operation that stretched into the night, its pugmarks were seen near the Brahmaputra River at Maithan, suggesting that it had moved towards Bura Chapori Wildlife Sanctuary.

Crowd control is sometimes the most difficult element in a conflict mitigation operation, with RRTs, MVS teams and forest department personnel often having to worry more irate mobs or overeager onlookers than the conflict animal itself. In January 2017, however, MVS Bandipur personnel were called in to a case involving a tiger trapped in a

wire snare in the middle of agricultural field on the outskirts of Nagarhole Tiger Reserve. Unusually, they found no ill-spirited crowds cornering the animal, no political pressure, not the even slightest interference from the village headman. The villagers sought permission to view the tiger once it had been sedated, and later helped to lift the cage into the truck that was waiting to transport the animal to the rescue centre!

In another big cat conflict incident in February, our RRT assisted the Uttar Pradesh Forest Department in tranquilising a tiger that had been declared a man-eater after having killed multiple people in the fringe areas of Pilibhit Tiger Reserve. Shoot orders had been issued against the tiger, which meant there was a limited opportunity to

resolve the situation without killing it, but it was captured and transported to Lucknow Zoo.

Towards the end of February, a pair of western hoolock gibbons under long-term care at CWRC was shifted to a pre-selected acclimatisation site in the adjoining Panbari Reserve Forest. This was the first step in the gibbons' soft release protocol, which, it was hoped, would eventually see them rehabilitated back into the wild in the Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong landscape.

Finally, in March, a WTI-JTEF MVS team helped the Assam Forest Department resolve a conflict situation in Jorhat by assisting a leopard that had strayed into a human settlement return safely to the wild.



« A young conflict tiger that our UP Rapid Response Team (RRT) helped tranquilise and capture in the Mailani Range of South Kheri Forest Division

» In March 2017 the UP RRT received a commendation from the forest department for its assistance with a man-eater related conflict mitigation operation in Pilibhit Tiger Reserve



Through events, publications and multimedia, WTI and its partners continued to engage with project stakeholders, students, teachers and the public at large in a bid to enhance knowledge and improve perceptions about conservation, the environment, and the need to ensure the welfare of wild animals.

To mark the UNESCO-mandated International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem on July 26, a Mangrove Interpretation Centre (MIC) was inaugurated at the site of the Kannur Kandal Project (Mangrove Conservation Project), launched earlier in the year by WTI and Apollo Tyres. Botany and Zoology students of Payyanur College, as well as scientists, academicians, conservationists and members of the general public attended the event. The centre will promote awareness of the mangrove ecosystem and its ecological importance.

In January 2017, WTI launched a Conservation Action Series (CAS) publication titled 'A Dance to Forget: The Story of the Eradication of Sloth Bear Dancing from India', at the 17th International Wildlife Law Conference at

the Bharati Vidyapeeth Institute of Environment Education & Research (BVIEER), Pune. The publication was launched at the opening plenary Ashok Kumar Memorial Lecture, organised to commemorate the eponymous Indian conservation legend (and WTI's chairman emeritus) who passed away in 2016. Other publications launched in 2016-17 included 'Tiger Country: Helping Save Bhutan's Natural Heritage' and 'Conflict to Co-existence: A dozen cost effective human interventions for co-existence with wildlife'.

Also in January, in order to build awareness about the importance of coral reef ecosystems and create a sense of involvement in coral reef conservation among local fishing communities, WTI, Tata Chemicals Ltd (TCL) and the Gujarat Forest Department organised a community awareness programme at the fishing village of Bhimrana under the Mithapur Coral Reef Recovery Project.

Our interface with children across several projects was one of the high points of 2016-17. Whether



## 2016-17 HIGHLIGHTS

WTI generates global media coverage worth Rs 44.9 million, a rise in worth of Rs 11 million from 2015-16 figures >> **'A Dance to Forget'**, a report detailing the eradication of sloth bear dancing from India, launched >> Animal Action Education continues to widen its footprint across the country

▲ To spread the message of tiger conservation, the first-ever Nazgira Kho Kho Sports Event for village schools located in the Nazgira-Navegaon wildlife corridor was organised in September 2016



on International Tiger Day, or during Wildlife Week; through the holding of a kho-kho tournament in Gondia, Maharashtra or the setting up of a scholarship in Wokha, Nagaland – from Kunhimangalam to Kashmir, Gujarat to the Garo Hills, WTI celebrated wildlife with young ‘uns.

We also continued our content partnership with the prestigious Sanctuary Asia and Sanctuary Cub magazines, providing the two magazines a mix of advertising and editorial content on its projects and activities, on an alternating bimonthly basis.

Projects featured in Sanctuary Asia in 2016-17 included the Mobile Veterinary Service unit in Bandipur and a Van Rakshak training in Nagarhole, the UP Big Cat Conflict Mitigation Project, the

Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation in Assam, the Sarus Crane Conservation Project in eastern UP, the Kalapahar-Daigrung Elephant Corridor and the relocation of Ram Terang in Karbi Anglong, and our wildlife trade control work in tackling poachers from traditional hunting communities. In addition, our work on wild water buffalo in Chhattisgarh, eastern swamp deer in Manas, pangolin poachers in Madhya Pradesh and elephant corridors across the country under our Right of Passage project, had appeared in Sanctuary Cub by the close of the financial year.

Across all media WTI generated an estimated global readership of 12.70 million, worth approximately Rs 33.4 million.



In April, as 2016-17 kicked off, signs of elephant movement were seen on recently vacated lands in the Kalapahar-Daigrung Elephant Corridor in Karbi Anglong, Assam. It will be remembered that the villagers of Ram Terang, a hamlet previously located within the corridor, had shifted into their new homes in a nearby location in March. Elephant footprints and dung at the village’s earlier location provided a resounding endorsement of the process of voluntary relocation – executed by WTI, Elephant Family, the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, the Assam Forest Department and IUCN Netherlands – showing that elephants had reclaimed the area where Ram Terang once stood.

Also in April, WTI began work on securing the Chamrajanagar-Talamalai at Mudahalli Elephant Corridor. The corridor is a critical link for wildlife movement between Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve and Biligiri Ranganathawamy Temple (BRT) Tiger Reserve. It is about 1.5 km long and ranges in width from 200 to 300 metres, which is not sufficient for the free movement of elephants. Securing right of passage for elephants through elephant corridors in the larger

Brahmagiri - Nilgiris - Eastern Ghats landscape, of which the corridor at Mudahalli is a part, has the potential to provide unhindered habitat connectivity for one of the largest Asian elephant populations in the world.

Towards the end of May, a kick-off of a different sort provided another reason to cheer. That a football match was played in Bibrage, a village in the West Garo Hills in Meghalaya, was hardly unusual given the sport’s popularity in the region. But Bibrage is a village of critical importance in the Garo Green Spine Conservation Project, and when WTI and World Land Trust had visited the Nokma, the village chief, in the hope of convincing villagers to set aside community forest lands to be notified as a Village Reserve Forest (VRF), he had identified the renovation of the abandoned football ground as a key confidence building activity. The ground’s renovation had an immediate effect – the villagers set aside six hectares of community land which was duly registered as the Bibrage VRF with the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council.



« In November, we launched our annual Coastal Children Participation Programme with a Whale Shark Sand Art competition and a Beach Clean-up event in the coastal town of Sutrapada, Gujarat

Community outreach activities continued across villages in the Garo Hills as well, with a free medical health camp being conducted towards the end of June at Chandigre (for the residents of Chandigre, Khalagre, Baladingre, Daribokgre and Sasat Sakal Aduma), another health camp being conducted in October at Mesimagre (for the residents of Mesimagre, Bibragre, Tosekgre and Selbal Misak), and a first-of-its kind training workshop on settled cultivation being held in August at Chandigre (for the villagers of Chandigre and Daribokgre).

Also in May, to coincide with the International Day for Biological Diversity, WTI partnered with Apollo Tyres to launch a critical mangrove restoration project in the Kannur district of Kerala. The Kannur Kandal (Mangrove Restoration) Project – ‘kandal’ being the Malayalam word for mangroves – aims to ensure the survival of existing mangroves and increase the acreage of such habitats across Kannur, potentially making it a

prototype for other coastal districts in Kerala and the rest of the country.

The WTI-Apollo Tyres project is based in Kunhimangalam village, which is one of the largest mangrove villages in the state. Land earlier secured with the support of World Land Trust was used to establish a hub, located in the natural ecosystem, for mangrove-based research and education, and the promotion of mangrove restoration through community and government participation. A mangrove nursery was also established during the course of the year and several community-based initiatives launched to enhance public awareness and reduce threats to mangroves.

In August, the signing and formal issuance of a historic Final Gazette Notification by the Government of Assam led to an area of 350 sq km from the eastern part of the Manas Reserve Forest being officially declared as the First Addition to Manas National Park. The event was a significant milestone in

## 2016-17 HIGHLIGHTS

Chilla-Motichur elephant corridor declared free of human habitation >> Work begins on securement of Chamrajanagar-Talamalai at Mudahalli elephant corridor >> Launch of the Kannur Kandal (Mangrove Restoration) Project in Kunhimangalam, Kerala

<< An area of 18.65 acres of species-rich mangrove habitat has become the hub for the WTI-Apollo Tyres Kannur Kandal (Mangrove Conservation) Project, launched in May 2016 in Kunhimangalam, Kerala



ongoing conservation efforts, led since 2003 by WTI, the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) and the Assam Forest Department, to 'Bring Back Manas', a UNESCO World Heritage Site whose flora and fauna were ravaged by militancy through the late 1980s and 1990s.

This land, along with a larger area encompassing the Ripu and Chirang Reserve Forests to the west, had been announced as a protected area in 2008, in a significant political declaration by the BTC. The formal inclusion of this 350 sq km area into the National Park goes a step further, giving it enhanced protection under the Wild Life (Protection) Act of 1972. "At a time when the denotification of Protected

Areas has become the norm, this decision by the Government of Assam is momentous", said WTI CEO Vivek Menon.

Another major conservation milestone was reached in January 2017, as WTI announced that the **Chilla-Motichur Elephant Corridor, a vital habitat linkage between the Chilla and Motichur Ranges of Rajaji Tiger Reserve and in the larger Rajaji-Corbett landscape, was free of human habitation.** This marked the culmination of a 12-year process during which the Uttarakhand Forest Department and Government of Uttarakhand worked with us to build a consensus for voluntary relocation among the inhabitants of Khand Gaon III, a village based within the corridor. The villagers were all relocated to

new homes in Lalpani, Rishikesh. Major artefacts remain in the corridor, however, including a railway line, an ammunition dump, a hydropower canal and the busy National Highway 58.

WTI had, during the course of 2016-17, been setting up a network of Green Corridor Champions (GCC) in key corridor areas across India, thereby institutionalising the involvement of community-based organisations (CBOs) in protecting elephant corridors. The GCCs are to work in partnership with WTI to sensitise local communities about the importance of corridors and, with the judicious and appropriate use of social, economic and technical interventions, and the vital support of local governments, help in protecting and monitoring these corridors. In

February, Duarbagori Cooperative Society Ltd, a GCC looking after vital corridors in the Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong landscape, organised a 'Right of Passage' awareness programme at Kuthori Higher Secondary School, Kaliabor, for students from fringe areas of three elephant corridors in coordination with WTI and Elephant Family. About a hundred students from Class 1 to Class 10 attended the programme. A planning and review meeting that included other GCCs in the region was also held in March.

Also in March, **an additional area of 245 hectares was added to the Jadegindam Village Reserve Forest, providing more area for elephant movement through the Rewak-Emangre Corridor in Meghalaya.**



« Elephant movement through the Kalapahar-Daigrung elephant corridor in Karbi Anglong, Assam

» Manas became 'Greater Manas' in August 2016 with the signing and formal issuance of a historic Final Gazette Notification by the Government of Assam, adding an area of 350 sq km as the First Addition to the national park (file photo)



## Other Highlights

on April 13, **Their Royal Highnesses William and Catherine, Duke and Duchess of Cambridge**, visited IFAW-WTI's Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation (CWRC) near Kaziranga National Park, Assam. They arrived at the Centre at half past noon and were accompanied around the grounds by WTI Executive Director Vivek Menon and IFAW President & CEO Azzedine Downes, as well as the lead veterinarian Panjit Basumatary and the centre-in-charge Rathin Barman. The Royal couple interacted with the animal keepers and even hand fed some of the orphaned animals being reared at CWRC – elephant calves Buree and Murphuli, just a few months old when they were rescued last October, now being raised on milk formula under the watchful eyes of their keepers; and Dunga, a male rhino, the youngest and newest resident at CWRC and the best of friends with the two female elephant calves.

Their Royal Highnesses were then escorted to the site of the upcoming Kaziranga Discovery Park, a clinic for (and learning centre on) Asian elephants being developed by the UK-based NGO Elephant Family in collaboration with WTI. They were introduced to

villagers from Ram Terang who, once bedevilled by conflict with elephants, had voluntarily relocated from their homes in the Kalapahar-Daigrung elephant corridor just a month prior. The villagers, including children, spoke with the Royal couple about their experiences before and after the relocation to the better equipped and safer village built for them by WTI, Elephant Family and the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council.

Finally, Their Royal Highnesses were taken to be introduced to renowned Indian artist Bulbul Sharma, 15 schoolchildren from the nearby village of Panbari, and a large painted model elephant named Aana: a collaborative creation depicting the joy of children celebrating elephants in the vibrant colours of India, and the myriad flora and fauna that are protected by conserving the elephant as a keystone species. Their Royal Highnesses were handed paintbrushes to put the finishing touches to Aana.

»» TRHs the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge feeding orphaned elephants at CWRC



**Executive Director's Discretionary Grant (EDDG)**

In June, an EDDG helped WTI support the National Tiger Conservation Authority's (NTCA) Global Tiger Day event in New Delhi. We invited over a thousand schoolchildren from 20 schools to participate in a tiger conservation awareness rally at India Gate. The grant helped in funding t-shirts, tiger masks and tiger mascots at the venue. The rally was flagged off by the late Shri Anil Madhav Dave, the then Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

In September, an EDDG helped us support the Student Conference on Conservation Science (SCCS) held in Bengaluru. WTI's contribution to

the conference, with which we have partnered for three years, was recognised by the committee and our support was acknowledged on the conference website and social media.

In January 2017 an EDDG was used to support the Pakke Paga Festival in Arunachal Pradesh. Collaterals such as tiger and bear masks were prepared and stage preparations at the venue supported under the grant. We also designed collaterals on our own projects in Pakke and presented these at a stall at the event. Faux furs created under an RAP initiated in 2015 were put on display and around 50 artificial hornbill beaks were handed out to Nyishi tribesfolk in exchange for original beaks.



« Faux furs created under an RAP initiated in 2015 were put on sale the 2017 Pakke Paga festival



**IN MEMORIAM**

A memorial service was held on August 22 at the India International Centre, New Delhi to celebrate the life of Ashok Kumar, conservation legend and WTI's Founder and Chairman Emeritus, who had passed away on August 18 at the age of 81.

Speakers at the service spoke of his warmth and humour; his utter fearlessness; his unflinching precision on matters of wildlife policy and procedure, unusual for a man so impatient with paperwork and bureaucracy; his "almost quixotic tilting at the windmills of seemingly lost causes", as Dr MK Ranjitsinh, long time colleague and co-Chairman Emeritus of WTI put it. Members of his family spoke of his unerring instinct in providing comfort and guidance in times of need. But

the word most used, most echoed in the tributes that poured in following his passing, was 'mentor'. One such protégé, WTI CEO Vivek Menon, described him as "my karmic guru for over 30 years."

Indeed, while he was a man much feted, beyond any award or accolade Ashokji perhaps would have been most proud of the impact he had as friend and mentor to the many young people he inspired to become torchbearers for conservation. Knowing that his battle was one for the generations, that legacy would probably have given him the most satisfaction.

For the WTI family, as individuals and as a team, the loss of Ashokji, his wisdom, his guidance and friendship, is immeasurable.

# Balance Sheet

## 2016-17

WILDLIFE TRUST OF INDIA				
BALANCE SHEET AS ON MARCH 31, 2017				
AS AT 31.3.16 AMOUNT (Rs.)	FUNDS & LIABILITIES	AS AT 31.3.17 AMOUNT (Rs.)	ASSETS ( Schedule " C " )	AS AT 31.3.17 AMOUNT (Rs.)
909,541.80	<b>CORPUS FUND</b>	1,909,541.80	<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>	97,597,145.76
1,000,000.00	Opening Balance	1,000,000.00		
1,909,541.80	Add : Addition during the year			
85,412,393.91	<b>CAPITAL FUND</b>	95,741,728.92	<b>CURRENT ASSETS, LOANS &amp; ADVANCES</b>	240,095.35
2,559,786.03	Opening Balance	4,723,411.05	<b>CURRENT ASSETS:</b>	490,610.85
20,500,312.00	Add : Addition during the year (Schedule C)	250,954.00	Cash in hand	14,129,963.96
108,472,491.94	Add : Transfer from General Reserve	100,716,093.97	Closing Stock (Social Enterprise)	176,550,392.63
10,200,854.02	Less : Sale/ Loss during the year	-	Bank balance	5,368,805.70
2,529,909.00	Less : Depreciation	3,118,948.21	Fixed Deposits	10,221.00
95,741,728.92			Accrued Interest	
			TCS Receivable	
50,397,429.81	<b>GENERAL RESERVE ( Schedule " B " )</b>	49,228,476.10		
12,285,266.32	Opening Balance	3,812,235.23		
7,053,051.97	Add : Excess of income over Expenditure	1,758,192.00		
65,728,789.10	Add : Net Addition (as per Schedule B)	54,798,903.33		
20,500,312.00	Less : Amount Transferred to Capital Fund	250,954.00		
49,228,476.10	(As per Schedule C)			
121,837,163.24	<b>UNUTILISED FUNDS ( Schedule " B " )</b>	152,091,394.43	<b>LOANS &amp; ADVANCES</b>	2,264,120.00
-3,692,652.59	Project Fund	-3,728,863.36	Security Deposits	4,562,662.24
	Social Enterprise Fund		Advances	
1,937,810.41	<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES &amp; PROVISIONS</b>	2,686,749.60		
	Sundry Amounts Payable			
266,962,072.88	<b>TOTAL</b>	306,103,917.56	Tax Deducted at Source	4,889,900.07
			<b>TOTAL</b>	306,103,917.56

Significant Accounting Policies and Notes to Accounts - Schedule "E"  
In terms of our report of even date attached

FOR KOSHI & GEORGE  
Chartered Accountants  
(Reg. No. 003926)

GEORGE KOSHI  
Partner

M.No.82961

New Delhi  
5th Sep 2017

(EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR)

FOR WILDLIFE TRUST OF INDIA

(TREASURER)



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(as on March 31, 2017)

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## **Wildlife Trust of India**

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