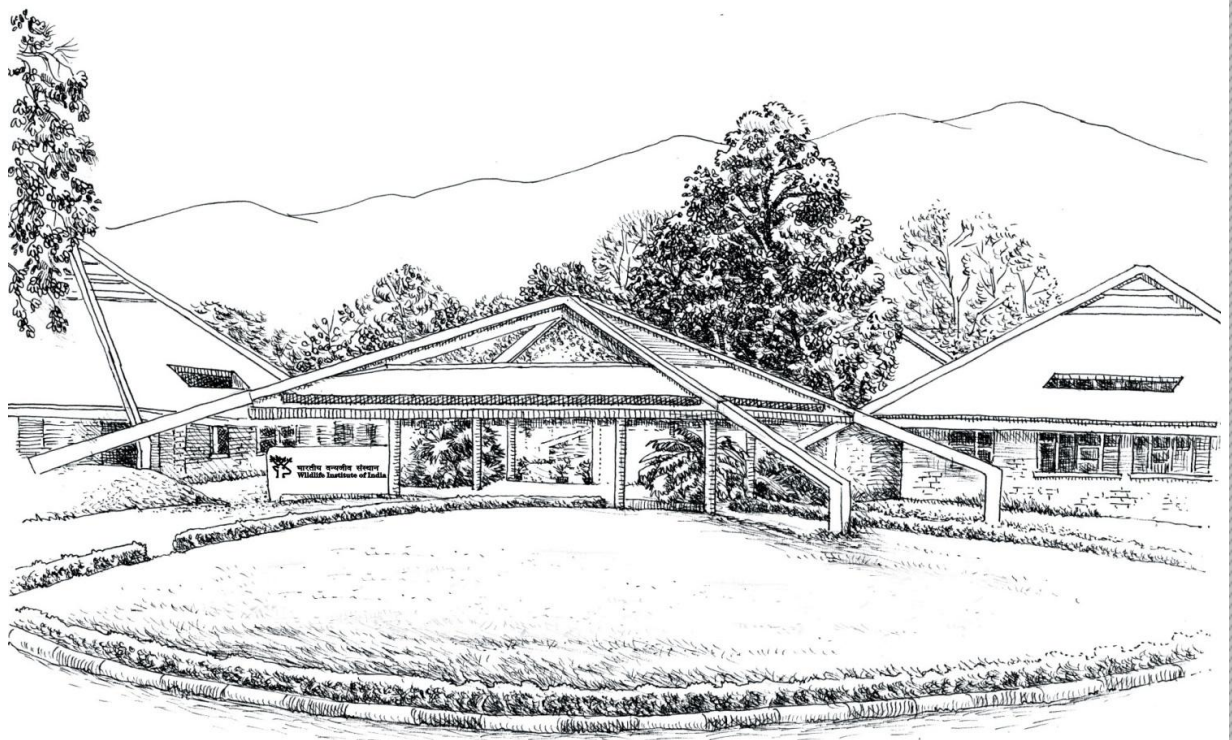


WII Alumni Meet

21-22 August, 2014



भारतीय वन्यजीव संस्थान
Wildlife Institute of India

21 August 2014

Programme

1900 - 1910:	Welcome address : Dr. V. B. Mathur, Director, Wildlife Institute of India
1910 - 1915:	Opening remarks : Dr. N. V. K. Ashraf, Senior Director, Wildlife Trust of India (representative of M.Sc. Alumni)
1915 - 1920:	Opening remarks : Dr. H. S. Pabla, Former PCCF & CWLW, (representative of Ph.D. Alumni, FRI University)
1920 - 1925:	Opening remarks : Dr. Ravi Chellam, Program Director, Foundation for Ecological Security (representative for Ph.D. Alumni, Saurashtra University)
1925 - 1930:	Opening remarks : Dr. G. C. Bhimani, Dean, Saurashtra University
1930 - 1935:	Opening remarks : Dr. A. J. T. Johnsingh, Former Dean, Wildlife Institute of India
1935 - 1940:	Address by Dr. M. K. Padalia, Vice Chancellor, Saurashtra University
1940 - 1950:	Address by Shri H. S. Panwar, Founder Director, Wildlife Institute of India
1950- 2000:	Release of the WII M.Sc. & Ph.D. Alumni profiles
2000 - 2010:	Presentation of Mementoes
2010 - 2015:	Vote of Thanks : Dr. P. K. Mathur, Dean, Wildlife Institute of India
2015 - 2030:	Alumni Group Photo Session
2030:	Departure to Softel Plaza for dinner hosted by Saurashtra University

22 August 2014

Programme

0930 – 1100: Brainstorming on WII Alumni Association

1100 – 1130: Tea break

Conservation Talks

(Chair: Dr. H S Panwar, Co-chair: Dr. A J T Johnsingh, Dr. G C Bhimani, Dr. P. K. Mathur)

1130 – 1200: Science to conservation some personal insights – **Yashveer Bhatnagar**

1200 – 1230: Leonine tales and other stories - **Ravi Chellam**

1230 – 1300: Beyond gaja and yānai: 100 names for the elephant in Sanskrit and Tamil
– **N V K Ashraf**

1300 – 1330: Animal behaviour in a changing world - **Kavita Ishwaran**

1330 – 1430: Lunch

1430 – 1500: A decade with remote cameras in Tigerland - **Bivash Pandav**

1500 – 1530: Embracing dilemmas: lessons from elephant conservation in Karnataka
– **M.D. Madhusudan**

1530 – 1600: Protected Forests*Conditions Apply - Dealing with the Fine Print - **Prachi Mehta**

1600 – 1615: Tea break

1615 – 1645: Web of intricacies, possibilities and challenges - **Shazia Quasin**

1645 – 1715: Rekindling children-nature link to strengthen conservation in the Indian Himalaya
– **Pranav Trivedi**

1715 – 1745: Public Participation in Ecological Research and Monitoring – **Suhel Quader**

1745 – 1810: Closing remarks by the Chair and the Co-chairs

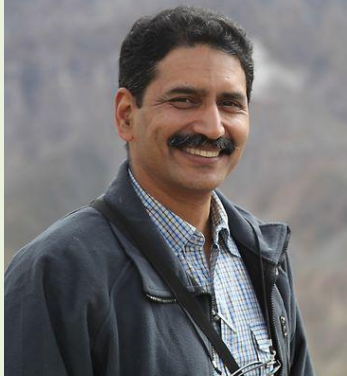
1810 – 1815: Vote of Thanks – Dr. S. Sathyakumar, Scientist – G, Wildlife Institute of India

1815 – 1900: Tea break

1900 – 2030: Cultural Program by WII students and researchers

2030: Dinner

Conservation Talks...



Yash Veer Bhatnagar
Scientist, High Altitudes
Nature Conservation Foundation

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Science to Conservation: Some Personal Insights

Curiosity about Nature and love of the outdoors is what probably draws us towards professional wildlife biology. In my case, over half of the 25 year journey was primarily driven by this passion, with 'conservation' not really in the picture. During this journey however, there were many milestones that helped in my evolution - key experiences in the field, living with local communities, people I met, and institutions I interacted with, which helped change my outlook and took me towards conservation and widening impacts over larger areas. My group's approach has been largely to explore new areas (lot of such areas in the Himalaya), understand species ecology, species interactions and threats to wildlife. These often lead to ideas for conservation and apart from providing recommendations to implementing agencies; we began experimenting with conservation models. I hope to share some of these insights gained during this, on-going and evolving journey.



Ravi Chellam
Program Director
Foundation for Ecological Security

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Leonine tales and other stories

Leonine tales and other stories is about the challenges that have been faced by the efforts to translocate lions from Gir to Kuno. Starting with my field research in the 1980s; the survey to locate a suitable site; the framework plan for translocation; the preparations at Kuno; the political and legal challenges; the key elements of the Supreme Court judgement of April 2013 and the actions initiated based on this judgement. Based on my experience with several research and conservation organisations, I will also present a brief overview of these organisations in India and articulate a few key issues for all of us to discuss and think about.



NVK Ashraf

Senior Director &
Chief Veterinarian
Wildlife Trust of India

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Beyond gaja and yānai: 100 names for the elephant in Sanskrit and Tamil

No animal has appealed to the human psyche as the elephant in Indian culture, religion, mythology, folklore and more importantly in written literature spanning over 3,000 years. Mammoth and yet tamable, gentle and yet unpredictable, terrestrial and yet aquatic, quadrupedal and yet 'hands-free', the elephant is indeed a fascinating animal. If there is one animal that can be called or named with various attributes and combinations of words, it is the elephant and elephant alone. Languages, especially classical ones of great antiquity and literary diversity, invariably have more than one word to mean an animal. The greater a language's antiquity and literary diversity, the greater seem to be the number of words employed to mean one animal, and also the multiple meanings the very names can convey. In this presentation, we look at how and what transpired the speakers, bards, sages and poets to coin over 100 names for the Asian elephant in Sanskrit and Tamil, the first two languages to be declared classical in India. The objective here is to share with the audience the bliss I received while looking at the etymological basis of coining these different words for the elephant.



Kavita Ishwaran

Assistant Professor
Centre for Ecological Sciences
Indian Institute of Science

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Animal behaviour in a changing world

We humans find animal-watching fascinating. Understanding and predicting the behaviour of animals has been crucial to our survival. There is a marvellous diversity in behaviour – we are yet to understand fully why such diversity exists. I focus on some rare and spectacular social behaviour and discuss how one can puzzle out why animals do what they do and how ecology shapes the evolution of behaviour. I also discuss some applications of animal behaviour, specifically how understanding behaviour from first principles can help predict how animal populations may respond to environmental change.



Bivash Pandav

Scientist
Wildlife Institute of India

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A decade with remote cameras in Tigerland

An ever-expanding human population has resulted in massive land-use change across most of tiger's once extensive range, leading to an impending range collapse for tiger. Tigers now occupy only 7% of their historic range. This over all gloomy trend often masks positive results in the recovery of tiger populations in a few selected landscapes. Through a decade long systematic research and monitoring program our team reports one such effort from the foothill forests of Himalayas. While creation of inviolate space has been widely recognized as a conservation tool to recover wild tiger population across its range, we provide empirical evidence for this important conservation intervention. Using remote cameras in tigerland over a decade, we have documented a successful recovery of habitat, wild ungulate and tiger in an area that was once subjected to intense human interference.



M. D. Madhusudan

Scientist, Western Ghats
Nature Conservation Foundation

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Embracing dilemmas: lessons from elephant conservation in Karnataka

In the inevitably political process of elephant conservation, scientific knowledge, social values and management practice converge. Each needs to be considered, and yet, none can prevail. In my talk, I will attempt to describe how, in the search for conservation solutions in the real world, this dilemma plays out from forests and fields, to committees and court houses.



Prachi Mehta

Scientist
Wildlife Research &
Conservation Society

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***Protected Forests*Conditions Apply - Dealing
with the Fine Print***

Our forests are protected under various categories such as National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Tiger Reserves and Reserve Forests. These are all government owned forests and their use in any form is restricted unless specifically permitted. In Maharashtra, there are extensive privately owned forests known as *Malki* Forests that are not government owned yet support fairly good forest cover and wildlife, and also serve as crucial corridors for wildlife to disperse or move. However, many of these private forests are undergoing change due to timber harvesting and planting commercial or exotic crops. This had resulted in a change in the ecology and economy of the area. Further, many of these forests are being converted to resorts, farm houses and plantations. The resultant damage is irreversible but like the fine print under an attractive offer, it is a fact that one does not realize till it actually happens. In this talk I present an overview of the status of the forests in Northern-Western Ghats and Central India, and discuss some of the conservation efforts being implemented.



Shazia Quasin

DST – Young Scientist
Wildlife Institute of India

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***Web of intricacies, possibilities and
challenges***

Invertebrates although most diverse and abundant in most natural ecosystems, playing important regulating roles, have been largely ignored in biodiversity conservation. Thus for any conservation plan to be developed and implemented and sustainable use of any biological diversity, comprehensive inventories are extremely crucial. Insects and other invertebrate groups are sensitive to disruption to their environments as well as specific to their altitudinal gradients. Using contemporary systematics approaches and traditional morphological methods species can be identified and described. Greater taxonomic knowledge of the species will enable more scientifically informed bio monitoring that requires increased accuracy and species level identification to detect the more subtle environmental changes associated with human impact, consumption and climate change.



Pranav Trivedi

Scientist, High Altitudes
Nature Conservation Foundation

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***Back to Nature: rekindling children-nature
link to strengthen conservation***

Deep, organic contact with the natural world in childhood has been identified as a major influence in shaping a positive and empathetic relationship with nature among adult humans. Outdoors not only provide a place with myriads of natural stimuli, but also the space needed for reflection and deeper contact with the self. Apart from a healthy bond with nature, several byproducts of such outdoor exposure include increased self-confidence/self-worth, better communication, healing/restoration, improved teamwork and so on. I share the insights and experiences gained from over 250 Nature Education Camps (NECs) conducted during 1998 to 2014, which were attended by more than 5,000 children and 300 teachers from government and private schools (rural and urban) from three states of India. These thematic, structured, cumulative and outdoor-experiential modules have not only created enthusiasm, understanding and awareness of nature among children, teachers and local youth; but also seem to be contributing to positive changes in their values and attitudes towards nature; which are regarded as precursors to behavioural change vital for strengthening conservation.



Suhel Quader

Scientist, Education & Public
Engagement
Nature Conservation Foundation
suhelq@ncf-india.org

***Public Participation in Ecological Research
and Monitoring***

Interested amateurs have always been a vital part of scientific research, but in the last couple of decades the scale of citizen involvement in research has increased tremendously. These sorts of "Citizen Science" projects have been a great success in a diversity of scientific fields, with arguably the greatest impact in the study of ecology. I will give a brief overview ecology/wildlife-related citizen science projects running the world over, and then focus on some of our efforts in India.

