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Natural Heritage Bulletin

Information and Updates from World Natural Heritage Sites in Asia and the Pacific Region

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



The UNESCO Category 2 Centre (C2C) at Wildlife Institute of India continued to work on its mandate of strengthening implementation of World Heritage Convention through dossier preparation, proposals for nomination, foundational training courses, onsite instruction for field staff, outreach through popular writing and educational programmes and representation of India at international conferences on World Heritage Global Strategy. As detailed in the following pages of this quarter's news bulletin, UNESCO C2C has engaged in a wide cross-section of undertakings to further the overall objective of focusing on natural heritage conservation issues.

Updates in this issue include the progress made on the tentative listing of Kailash Sacred Landscape as a World Heritage Site and the dossier preparation for Garo Hills Conservation Area; the survey of Central India's protected areas for their potential as a World Heritage Site dedicated to the tiger landscape; the structure of the upcoming 2019-2021 Masters in Heritage Conservation and Management to be run by UNESCO C2C; and the anthology "Wild Treasures: Reflections on Natural World Heritage Sites in Asia" to be published by the Centre. Also in this issue, sample some noteworthy news stories from the heritage conservation world about the themed celebrations of the 2019 World Wetlands Day and World Wildlife Day, and the impact of over-tourism on Indonesia's famed Komodo National Park.

**UNESCO Category 2 Centre for World Natural Heritage
Management and Training for Asia and the Pacific Region,
Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun. India**

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Highlights of World Wetlands Day under the theme, “Wetlands and Climate Change”

World Wetlands Day, celebrated on 2 February 2019 with the theme “Wetlands and Climate Change”, raised awareness of the importance of wetlands, such as swamps, marshes, mangroves or peatlands, to help us cope with and mitigate global warming. Threatened by anthropogenic activities, these critical habitats are protected by instruments such as the World Heritage Convention and the Ramsar Convention which contribute to achieving global climate change mitigation goals as per the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Both Conventions work closely together in the framework of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions, a key mechanism for interaction among the Secretariats of the seven key biodiversity-related conventions.



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Source: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1929>

World Wildlife Day celebrated under the theme, “Life below water”.

On 3 March 2019, on the occasion of World Wildlife Day, Mechtild Rössler, Director of UNESCO World Heritage Centre, pointed out that the World Heritage marine sites, which are home to some of the most exceptional species, have been threatened by unsustainable human activities and also produced great successes. Giving examples of some success stories, like that of Aldabra Atoll (Seychelles), where the green turtle population rose from near extinction to one of the largest on earth. She further reiterated that the 1972 World Heritage Convention unites nations behind a shared commitment to preserve the world’s most outstanding heritage for the benefit of present and future generations. She vowed that the Convention will continue to protect the irreplaceable sites in order to ensure conservation of our natural heritage, including wildlife ‘below water’.



A lions mane jellyfish in village bay St Kilda © Scottish Natural Heritage George Stoyle

Source: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1937>

Kolkata Recommendation adopted for Global Strategy in South Asia

UNESCO New Delhi and the Ministry of Tourism, West Bengal Government, with support from the Archaeological Survey of India, organized a sub-regional conference on World Heritage Global Strategy in the context of South Asia on 21 and 22 February 2019 in Kolkata. The Conference went through the current World Heritage List of the State Parties viz. Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka, and identified the gap while exploring the potential of the Region and what the Region can offer in the context of World Heritage Global Strategy. In the two-day conference there was an opportunity for the State Parties of South Asia to interact directly with World Heritage experts and a debate on four themes, viz., Cultural Landscape, Historic Town, Heritage Routes, and Industrial Heritage. Finally, the conference adopted the Kolkata Recommendation as a strategy paper for future implementation of the World Heritage Convention in the Sub-region.



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Source: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1945>

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE NEWS

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Over-tourism and rise in poaching drive authorities to think of Komodo National Park closure - 25 January 2019



Credit: Sergey Uryadnikov/Shutterstock

Indonesia is seriously considering closing Komodo National Park for a year to help save its Komodo dragons, as the South-East Asian nation steps up the battle against over-tourism. According to the provincial governor, the endangered animals need a break from the surge of tourists and to recover from the impact of poaching. The environment ministry clarified that any major protection measures to preserve the UNESCO World Heritage site must only be made with the agreement of the tourism ministry and the local community.

Source: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/01/25/indonesia-mulls-komodo-dragon-ban-bali-tax-fight-overtourism/>

New Year greetings from the UNESCO World Heritage Centre – 4 January 2019



Mount Kenya National Park/Natural Forest © Radu Vatcu

In his message, Dr. Mechtild Rössler, Director of UNESCO World Heritage Centre, expressed her gratefulness to the myriad people whose efforts helped in the protection of the World Heritage sites. Acknowledging the challenging past year with threats to the sites globally, she also emphasized the success stories from the sites which were removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger. She raised an important issue of the growing number of nominations and the increasing pressures on the system and said that the global list of sites with recognized Outstanding Universal Value must be effectively managed and ready to be handed on to generations to come.

Source: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1918s://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1918>

East Rennell oil spill, Solomon Islands



Oil spill from the Solomon Trader after running aground in Rennell, Solomon Islands
© Australian High Commission Solomon Islands

An oil spill occurred near East Rennell, the southern portion of Rennell Island in the Solomon Islands (a World Heritage site in danger) in February 2019. The grounding and following oil spill occurred just outside the World Heritage property and no oil has been reported inside the property to date, however, there might be possible impacts on the site and the livelihoods of the local communities. The World Heritage Centre will support the Solomon Islands and Australia in holding the responsible company, owners and insurers to account. The Director of the World Heritage Centre wrote to both the shipping and charter firm South Express Ltd, the owner of the MV Solomon Trader, and the insurance firm Korea Protection and Indemnity Club (Korea P&I Club), highlighting the important role these companies have to play pending the conclusions of the liability investigations.

Source: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1948>

UNESCO C2C INDIA: CURRENT ACTIVITIES

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Proposal for nomination of tentative listing of Kailash Sacred Landscape as World Heritage Site

The UNESCO C2C, India has been associated with the process for nomination of the Kailash Sacred Landscape (KSL) as a World Heritage Site since 2016. The Centre participated in the Brainstorming cum Policy Forum on “Transboundary Landscapes – Making a Difference” organised by GBPNIHESD at Almora on 11 September, 2018. It included discussions and analysis on the Kailash landscape, especially from a transboundary perspective, and was attended by key stakeholders of the area. On 17 October, 2018, UNESCO C2C India organised an “Expert Consultation on Kailash Sacred Landscape (KSL) as a UNESCO World Heritage Site” in Dehradun with the objective of taking the nomination process forward by discussing on the area, criteria and heritage routes of the proposed World Heritage Site.

A letter from the Sh. Sadhguru Isha Foundation to the Prime Minister’s Office, Government of India on the ‘Kailash Sacred Landscape and Pilgrimage Routes’ was referred to the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and subsequently forwarded to UNESCO C2C India in January, 2019. The letter stated the urgent need for inclusion of Kailash in India’s Tentative List and final inclusion on the List of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The Centre subsequently prepared a draft document for this site named ‘Sacred Mountain Landscape and Heritage Routes’ as a Mixed (Cultural and Natural) Site based on Annex 2A – Tentative List Submission Format as per Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention. This document was submitted for the “Meeting of Advisory Committee on World Heritage Matters (ACWHM)” convened by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) at New Delhi on 18 January, 2019. As a follow-up to the ASI meeting, UNESCO C2C-India organised a “Consultation Meeting on nomination document of Kailash landscape as a proposed World Heritage Site” at Dehradun on 4 February, 2019. The primary objective was to solicit comments/suggestions/additional information on the draft Tentative List document from stakeholders and experts from Uttarakhand. A presentation was further made at the next “Meeting of Advisory Committee on World Heritage Matters (ACWHM)” convened by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) at New Delhi on 14 March, 2019 for the inclusion of the Kailash landscape on the Tentative List of World Heritage Sites in India.



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Training Programme on Monitoring of Outstanding Universal Values of Natural World Heritage Sites at Kaziranga National Park (25-26 February, 2019)

UNESCO C2C India organized a “Training Programme on Monitoring of Outstanding Universal Values of Natural World Heritage Sites” at Kaziranga National Park, Assam on 25-26 February, 2019. The purpose of this workshop was to build capacity and sensitize world heritage site frontline staff and other stakeholders with the best OUV monitoring techniques. The training provided valuable information on the OUVs for natural World Heritage Sites, Monitoring & Reporting, and SWOT analysis for the site. 42 participants including DFO, ACF, RFO, and Forest Guards attended the training.



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Foundation Training Course on Wildlife Management for Frontline Staff of Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area (GHNPCA) at WII Dehradun and GHNP, Himachal Pradesh (February, 2019)

UNESCO C2C India organized 2-week foundation training course on Wildlife Management for Frontline Staff of Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area (GHNPCA) from 07-27 Feb, 2019 at WII, Dehradun and GHNP, Himachal Pradesh. A total of 42 participants including, DFO, ACF, RFO (Forest Rangers) and Forest Guards attended the training.



© Ayan Sadhu

Identification and prioritization of potential WHS for tentative listing and preparation of Nomination Dossier for Satpura-Kanha-Pench-Bandhavgarh-Sanjay protected areas as “Central Indian Tiger Landscape” and Bhedaghat (Jabalpur) in the list of Geo Park, Madhya Pradesh.

M.P. Tourism Board has approached WII, Dehradun for submission of proposal to nominate Satpura-Kanha-Pench-Bandhavgarh-Sanjay protected areas in the tentative list of UNESCO Natural World Heritage as “Central Indian Tiger Landscape” and Bhedaghat (Jabalpur) in the list of Geo Park. This activity will be taken up in 2019-20. Necessary funds will be provided by M.P. Tourism Board.



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Students visit from Hiroshima University for onsite training in India

A group of students and faculty from the Hiroshima University, Japan visited WII, Dehradun during March 2019 as a part of their onsite training in India on Nature Conservation and Forest Dweller's Livelihoods. This graduate course is offered through the Taoyaka Program of the Graduate School for International Development and Cooperation (IDEC) of Hiroshima University (HU), Japan and the Wildlife Institute of India of Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India, in cooperation with the LBJ School of Public Affairs (LBJ School) and the Institute for Innovation, Creativity and Capital (IC2) of The University of Texas at Austin (UT).



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Master's Degree Course in Heritage Conservation and Management (2019-21)

The UNESCO C2C India is introducing a 2-year residential Master's Degree Course in Heritage Conservation and Management beginning 01 July, 2019. The course is presently affiliated with Saurashtra University, Rajkot (Gujarat) which has been Accredited 'Grade A' by NAAC. The details of the University can be found at <http://bit.ly/2iFVFQZ>. The course is interdisciplinary in nature and advances sustainability studies through the prism of heritage. This includes theoretical and methodological integration of ecological sciences, social sciences and humanities, and heritage studies. It entails taught courses, internship, dissertation and direct engagement with UNESCO World Heritage sites. The pedagogy will be largely participatory and interactive involving a combination of self-study using Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) resources. With a maximum intake of 10 candidates for the course, the Centre invites applications for this prestigious course for the year 2019-2021 from eligible Indian and foreign candidates with a passion for heritage conservation and management. For more information please see: http://wii.gov.in/adv_masters_course_heritage_conservation_management_2019

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Reflection Meeting on reforming the World Heritage Nomination Process

Dr. V. B. Mathur, Director, UNESCO C2C India, attended a “Reflection Meeting” organised by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre to examine different possibilities for reforming the World Heritage nomination and evaluation process in Tunis, Tunisia from 23-25 January 2019. In this meeting it was agreed that it would be worth exploring a modified nomination process, designed in such a way as to help States Parties to avoid investing expertise, money and time in developing nominations of sites with no potential for Outstanding Universal Value. Furthermore, the group considered that such an approach would contribute to enhancing the credibility of the Convention and the World Heritage List and to reducing the number of nominations, which experience significant problems during the whole nomination process, including the decision-making by the Committee. The expected result of the ongoing reflection in 2018-2019 will be a sound set of recommendations for the reform of the nomination process by the 43rd session of the Committee (Baku, Azerbaijan, July 2019) that will guide the Committee in its deliberations and decisions concerning the scope and main lines of the reform, as well as respective timeline and activities to be undertaken in preparing the reform in further detail (including revision of the Operational Guidelines as well as developing other measures that may have been decided).



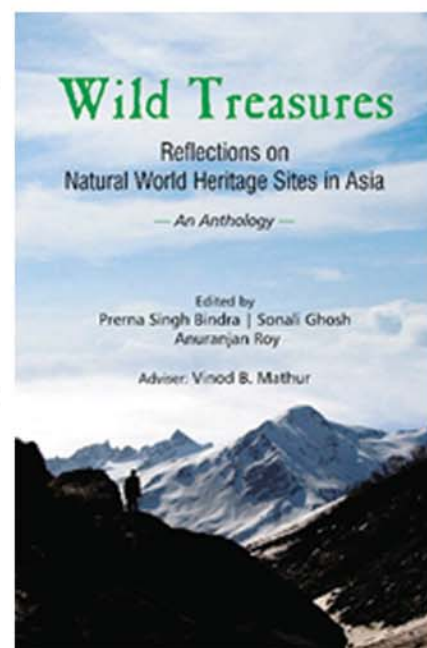
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Wild Treasures – A Nature Writing Anthology

On 18th April 2019, World Heritage Day, our anthology of nature writing “*Wild Treasures: Reflections on Natural World Heritage Sites in Asia*” will be released. The idea of creating the anthology was an extension of the 2017 “Celebrating Natural Heritage: In Literature, Arts and Culture” literary festival organized by UNESCO C2C with conservation stalwarts like Dr. George Schaller, Dr. A.J.T Johnsingh and Dr. Asad Rahmani gracing the occasion along with noted nature writers like Ranjit Lal and Stephen Alter.

Through the sage advice and unwavering support of Dr. V. B. Mathur, Director – UNESCO C2C at WII, this selection of 45 articles on 14 NWHS across Asia became a reality. Articles from Salim Ali, Peter Jackson, Frank S Smythe, Alan Rabinowitz, K. UllasKaranth, and Amitav Ghosh, besides many others, cover NWHS ranging from Iran to Myanmar. Edited by Perna Singh Bindra, Dr. Sonali Ghosh and Anuranjan Roy, the book aims to take the readers on a journey of discovery, inspiring them to know and visit these natural wonderlands. The creative artwork used in the book, samples of which can be seen alongside this article, are by UNESCO C2C’s Vivek Sarkar.

The book launch function is to be held in the UNESCO-C2C auditorium on 10:00 AM, 18th April 2019. Dr. Sanjeev Chopra, IAS, Director, Lal Bahadur Shastri Academy of Administration, Mussoorie, has kindly consented to be the Chief Guest at the function. Dr. Asad Rahmani, Former Director, Bombay Natural History Society, Mumbai will be the Guest of Honour.



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UNESCO Sub-regional Conference on World Heritage Global Strategy in the context of South Asia, Kolkata, West Bengal (21-22 February, 2019)



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UNESCO Category II Centre for World Natural Heritage Management and Training for the Asia and Pacific Region, has been playing a pivotal role in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention in the region. UNESCO New Delhi, therefore, considers crucial that the UNESCO Category 2 Centre not only takes part in the aforementioned conference to represent India, but also plays an important role by bringing expertise and experience in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention in particular for natural heritage.

UNESCO C2C India was represented by Mr. Niraj Kakati, Technical Officer and key involvement of Dr. Sonali Ghosh and Dr. Shikha Jain. The Centre actively contributed as resource persons to support the UNESCO Delhi Office in conducting the Conference. The Centre's involvement included facilitation and presentations in several sessions including on (i) Gaps in India's TL/WHL; (ii) Culture-Nature Journey; (iii) Heritage Routes and (iv) Know Your World Heritage. Nearly 50 participants included representatives of Indian State Governments and South Asian countries. The Kolkata Declaration includes mention of UNESCO C2C India as a key partner in contributing to World Heritage capacity-building in the region.



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World Heritage Nomination Dossier Preparation for Garo Hills Conservation Area, Meghalaya

Documentation for tentative listing of Garo Hills Conservation Area (GHCA), Meghalaya has been submitted by the Government of India to UNESCO World Heritage Centre, with technical support from UNESCO C2C India. An MoU was also signed between the Chief Wildlife Warden, Government of Meghalaya and the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun in December 2018 for preparation of detailed proposals for inscription of Garo Hills Conservation Area as a World Heritage. In this context, an initial biodiversity and geological exploration was made on the following sites: Tura Peak, Nokrek, Imangrae, Siju, Baghmara and Balpakram. The documented photographs of landscape, flora & faunal species, caves and fossil remains will be incorporated in the nomination dossier of GHCA. From the field visit it was felt that there is a need of biodiversity documentation of selected caves (e.g., Seju, Chimitap and Tetengkhol) within the property boundary which will be done in remaining months of 2019.



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Collaborations

Archaeological Survey of India (ASI): Advisory Committee on World Heritage Matters for Tentative Listing of Kailash Landscape as a proposed World Heritage Site (January/March, 2019).

Forest Department of Meghalaya: Preparation of detailed proposal for inscription of Garo Hills Conservation Area as a World Heritage Site and Notification of Narpuh-Saipung landscape as Biosphere Reserve (January/March, 2019).

Forest Department of Assam: Training programme for frontline staff on Monitoring of Outstanding Universal Values of Natural World Heritage Sites in India, Kaziranga National Park (24-26 February, 2018).

Forest Department of Himachal Pradesh: Foundation Training Course on Wildlife Management for Frontline Staff of Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area (March, 2019).

UNESCO New Delhi Cluster Office: UNESCO Sub-regional Conference on World Heritage Global Strategy in the context of South Asia, Kolkata, West Bengal (21-22 February, 2019).

UNESCO World Heritage Centre: Reflection Meeting on reforming the World Heritage Nomination Process, Tunisia (23-25 January, 2019).

Hiroshima University, Japan and University of Texas, Austin: Onsite training in India on Nature Conservation and Forest Dweller's Livelihoods (March, 2019)



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