

## E- Monthly Newsletter

### Mangrove Revival: Anitha K. T. Strengthens Kerala's Coastal Defenses

We are pleased to share an update on the project being implemented by Anitha K. T., the Quarter 2 awardee, who has joined us and is actively working on the ground. Through her ongoing efforts, we are collectively moving toward creating meaningful and lasting environmental impact.

Accompanied by her support team, Anitha has successfully planted 300 *Bruguiera gymnorhiza* saplings along the Edavanakkad Beach shoreline. Beyond physical planting, the project emphasizes ecological education and community involvement:

*Student Engagement:* Anitha mentored 15 Student Police Cadet (SPC) students, providing hands-on planting experience and field-based lessons in ecology.

*Community Awareness:* She actively engages with local residents to explain how mangroves act as essential storm-surge barriers and shoreline stabilizers. These efforts do more than just protect the coast; they support local wildlife, combat erosion, and store significant carbon. Through her dedication, Anitha K. T. is driving meaningful climate action and fostering a deeper connection between the community and their natural environment.

Our 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter [WNE Startup Grant](#) fund enables real, on-ground action. It supports continued restoration, builds community participation and inspires others to take climate-positive action. Anitha's work shows how targeted support can create lasting environmental impact.



*Bruguiera gymnorhiza* saplings plantation along the Edavanakkad Beach shoreline

### Towards a Sustainable Future: Economics and the Natural World

On 4th December, WNE-India successfully organized a thought-provoking webinar on "Economic Tradeoffs in the Natural World." We were honored to have Subrato Banerjee, Faculty member from the Department of Economics, IIT Bombay, as the distinguished speaker.

The session explored the complex relationship between economic development and environmental conservation, offering insightful real-world examples and analytical perspectives. The webinar saw the participation of nearly 72 students, along with researchers and nature enthusiasts. Notably, the session was highly interactive, with around 50% of the student participants actively engaging through questions and discussions. This strong level of involvement led to meaningful exchanges and encouraged informed thinking around sustainability and responsible decision-making.



Webinar on Economic Tradeoffs in the Natural World

# Editorial

*One-year milestone of our journey reflect on a year defined by deep passion and a shared purpose to protect our planet Blue. What began as a vision has grown into a vibrant community, connected through our newsletters, grants and the inspiring energy of our interns. Together, we have poured our hearts into wildlife conservation, ecosystem restoration and the urgent fight against climate change.*

Our mission involves restoring habitats and protecting vulnerable, scheduled species across the nation. By addressing human-wildlife conflicts with scientific rigor and empathy, we strive to heal the bond between our communities and the natural world.

We invite you to join us in this mission. Your involvement—whether through your expertise, your time or a kind Contribution—is the lifeblood of our work. Your financial support directly empowers our nationwide expansion, ensuring we leave behind a thriving world. Together, let's protect the legacy of our earth for generations to come

## WNE-India Unveils Its Quarter (3) Grant Shortlisted candidates

The WNE-India Quarter (3) Startup Grant received an overwhelming response, with numerous high-quality conservation proposals submitted from across the country. After a careful and rigorous review process, we shortlisted four outstanding projects that stood out for their scientific strength, innovation and strong community involvement. These initiatives span diverse ecosystems and address urgent conservation challenges, reflecting the passion and commitment of emerging conservation leaders.

In the dry landscapes of Tamil Nadu, D. Sangavi is shedding light on the elusive Salem ornamental Tarantula, a rare and little-understood species whose survival hinges on informed conservation action.

Across the rugged Aravalli range in Gujarat, Tarun Jethava is harnessing spatial mapping tools to better understand and reduce human-leopard conflict, fostering coexistence in a shared landscape.



Journeying north to Uttarakhand, Sipu Kumar is working hand-in-hand with local communities to safeguard the fragile breeding habitats of the majestic Pallas's Fish Eagle.

Meanwhile, Nandan Vijayakumar is working in Kerala to safeguard the critical breeding grounds of the Cantor's Giant Softshell Turtle.



Our distinguished jury is currently evaluating these four exceptional projects to select the premier entry. We anticipate announcing the final recipient of the WNE Startup Grant for the third quarter shortly.

## The Success Story of T11 aka KAMLI

*- A Story by Pratik Mahapatra*

People are mostly acquainted with Dubri, frequently considering it to be the entire tiger reserve. There are actually four more zones here – Koilari, Giddha, Bastua and Machmahua — all these are less known for having the sighting of tigers. Although, these are the areas that represent the rich biodiversity of the landscape which is equivalent to that of Dubri. As speculators, we are fortunate enough to witness the success story of Kamli in the rich domain. It is quite a paradoxical gesture for some of us to commemorate the iconic day like the International Tigers Day, and to have an emphasis on the species only, unwittingly having no regard for the ecosystem or the habitat that is eventually beholding the tigers. There lies an innately proper-hoc connection between the big cats and their habitats, having which oblivious may lead to a partial success of the notion of commemoration. It is indeed time to keep aside the photogenicity of the felines.

Only venturing out on the trail of a newly estimating province like Sanjay-Dubri, we may actually understand the ratio of the pressure on lands from our part and the acquirability of the big predators. There are a number of villages still inhabiting there in the adjacent area of the park failing to rehabilitate which would eventually lead to a massive confrontation. The sincere statistical observations of 2017-2018 seasonal visits prove that the revenue of tourism happens to increase after the relocation of Kamli in Sanjay-Dubri. Whereas the number of safaris in late 2017 happened to be confined within thirty-two, the subsequent seasons of early and late 2018 (pre-monsoonal and post-monsoonal) turned out to be the increased figure of one hundred and seventy-two and four hundred. It all happened due to the magnificent presence of Kamli. Recently, after getting shifted from Bandhavgarh, one of her daughters from the second litter has been released in Mohan Range alongside a young male from Katni.



A click by Manan Mukherjee

People are eventually drawn towards these massive predators and, of course, in a wider spectrum, they are keeping the thread of the reciprocation of tourism quite substantially. As we always use to recall in our discussions and commemorations, our fundamental initiation of watching an animal gradually turns out to be an integration with the individual. Kamli's story is something that pronouncedly justifies the notion.

Kamli's story is not merely the chronicle of a tigress — it is the quiet testament of resilience, adaptation, and the intricate dance between chance and destiny in the wild.

From a cub who lost everything before she could learn to hunt, to a matriarch shaping the destiny of an entire landscape, she has been both the heir to a storied lineage and the founder of her own.

Her journey reminds us that the survival of a single tiger is never an isolated triumph; it is an echo of the health of her forests, the patience of her protectors, and the delicate equilibrium of nature itself. As her third litter takes its first tentative steps into the heart of Sanjay-Dubri, the story has not ended — it has only shifted to new paws, new eyes, and new stripes that will one day carry her legacy forward.

In a world that so often measures worth in fleeting numbers and headlines, Kamli stands as a living argument for long memories, sustained effort, and the quiet victories that unfold far from the public gaze. Her presence will fade from sight in time, but her bloodline, and the hope it symbolises, will continue to roam these sal and bamboo forests — perhaps unseen, but never unfelt.

## Conflict to Coexistence - Rethinking Human Elephant Conflict Mitigation

- Prachi Upadhyay's Story

Elephants, are among the most awe-inspiring animals on Earth. As the largest land mammals, they command respect not only for their size but also for their intelligence, memory, and deep social bonds. In a country like India, where dense human populations overlap with elephant habitats, human–elephant conflict has become a daily reality, especially for communities living close to forests. Elephants move across vast landscapes in search of food and water, often entering farmlands and villages along the way.

The state of Chhattisgarh reflects this reality vividly. With around 500 elephants and a predominantly tribal population, the state is both resource-rich and ecologically significant. For many families, farming is not just an occupation—it is a way of life. Paddy cultivation, in particular, holds deep cultural and economic importance, earning Chhattisgarh the title of the *"Rice Bowl of Central India"*. But living alongside elephants comes at a high cost - frequent crop damage has become a persistent struggle for farmers, while compensation schemes exist, they often fall short of covering rising agricultural costs. Beyond financial loss, the constant fear of elephants entering fields forces farmers to spend sleepless nights guarding their crops, increasing both physical and emotional strain. Over time, repeated losses have weakened people's tolerance, making coexistence increasingly difficult but conflict is not inevitable.

A year ago, WNE started to intervene the state to address this long-standing conflict criss issue of the State and Prachi Upadhyay's role started to play an important role as she gradually got involved at the organization's long-term project [GENTLE GIANTS](#) from a year earlier.

Apart from belonging to the state and having a bright academic career being the awardee of the *Gold Medal for Academic Excellence* from FRI Dehradun, Prachi has been actively working in the region, interacting with the local inhabitants, the forest departmental staff trying to understand the ground level situation about the elephants' behaviour, migration route, conflict pattern & intensity, identifying the vulnerable villages, the socio-economic background of the forest adjoining villages, the mindset of the villagers regarding the particular animal's presence etc. Her years' of continued effort and experience on the field is taking a way forward to work together with the forest department, agricultural agencies and local communities collaborating to create solutions that protect both livelihood and wildlife. Supporting alternative income opportunities, strengthening traditional practices like forest produce collection and improving access to stable livelihoods are some of the progressive conflict mitigation measures that can reduce dependence on a single crop and build resilience among communities.

At the same time through Prachi's intervention at the project GENTLE GIANTS is looking forward to conservation efforts that must prioritize improving elephant habitats through effective corridor management, restoration of forest resources, and development of water bodies, ensuring that elephants can meet their ecological needs within forests. Only through such integrated, people-centric strategies can true coexistence be achieved.



Prachi conducts interviews to understand their perspective on human-elephant interactions

## Craig's Legacy: What the Loss of a Giant Means for Elephant Conservation

Craig, one of Africa's most iconic elephants, was more than just a magnificent super tusker—he was a living symbol of hope for elephant conservation. Roaming the plains of Amboseli National Park in Kenya, Craig was known for his enormous tusks, calm demeanor, and remarkable survival in a continent where elephants have long faced the threat of poaching.

Craig's death from natural causes marked a rare conservation success. At a time when elephants with large tusks are often targeted, his long-life reflected decades of dedicated protection, strong anti-poaching efforts and growing community support for wildlife conservation. As a mature breeding bull, Craig also played an important role in passing on rare genetic traits, helping preserve diversity that has been severely reduced by years of selective ivory hunting.

Yet, his passing is also a reminder of what is at stake. Today, only a handful of super tuskers remain in Africa. Habitat loss, climate change, and human pressures continue to threaten elephant populations.

Craig's legacy lives on—not just through his offspring, but as a powerful reminder that when people choose to protect wildlife, conservation can succeed.



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**Craig, East Africa's last great tuskers**

## Sultanpur National Park Records Its Highest Bird Diversity in Four Years

Sultanpur National Park in Haryana has recorded its highest bird species diversity in the last four years, offering a hopeful sign for wetland conservation in the region. According to the latest Asian Waterbird Census, the park hosted over 120 bird species, including both resident and migratory birds, during the recent winter survey.

Birdwatchers and forest officials noted the presence of several migratory species arriving from Central Asia and Europe, underscoring Sultanpur's importance as a critical stopover and wintering ground along the Central Asian Flyway. Improved water availability, better habitat management, and reduced disturbance are believed to have contributed to this encouraging rise in diversity.

Once threatened by shrinking wetlands and urban pressure, Sultanpur's revival highlights how sustained conservation efforts can restore fragile ecosystems. The increase in bird numbers not only reflects healthier wetland conditions but also strengthens the park's role as a vital refuge for migratory birds.



**Migratory and resident waterbirds**