ZOOREACH AND WILD ACTIVITY REPORT 2019
Sally Walker is synonymous with zoo and wildlife conservation in South Asia. A citizen of the United States of America, she dedicated two-thirds of her life in India initially in studying Yoga and Sanskrit in the 1970s, and from 1980 in the cause of animal and zoo welfare, and conservation. Hers is a testament to nature’s influence of epiphanic proportions! A visit to the Mysore Zoo and one meeting with new born tiger cubs resulted in 40 years of dedicated service to zoos and conservation in South Asia.

She did the unimaginable in the country. A very outspoken (often hated for it), articulate, and charismatic personality, she made friends and foes with ease. Her no-nonsense attitude cut through a lot of bureaucracy; she was an influencer and pioneer. She set up the Friends of Mysore Zoo, won accolades for it and was asked by the highest authority in India to start a friend of all zoos in the country with a promise of support from the then Department of Environment. She set up the Zoo Outreach Organization (ZOO), an iconic NGO in 1985 and straight away got into the business of influencing the zoos in the country. After doing the research, gathering data and combing the country, she made the first comprehensive list of zoos in India, went straight to the central government with the plight of the animals in those zoos, and initiated the setting up of the Central Zoo Authority.

Sally advocated conservation science at ZOO and partnered with several organizations around the world to promote conservation welfare in zoos. Her enthusiasm and a go-getter attitude to resolving conservation crises impressed Ulie Seal who let Sally start the first regional network of Captive Breeding (now Conservation Planning) Specialist Group of SSC IUCN in 1991 in India.

Sally’s involvement with the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums and her dogged determination initiated the good zoo - bad zoo relationship, focus group and guidelines. She set up a Zoo Authority like organization for all South Asian zoos called SAZARC (South Asian Association of Zoos for Regional Cooperation) and ensured scientific, technical and management training to zoo personnel of the region for 10 years from 2000 to 2010.

Sally won several prestigious awards including The Heini Hediger Award for outstanding and dedicated service to Zoos, The U.S. Seal Award for Innovation and wildlife conservation efforts in South Asia, The Menon Award for Contribution to Welfare of Captive Wild Animals in India, and The Scientific Fellow of the North of England Zoological Society.

Sally Raulston Walker, a conservation hero. She has been a role model and a life changer to hundreds of conservationists, wildlife educators, naturalists, zoo personnel, foresters, and so many others in India, South Asia, and from around the world! Sally’s long-time team at ZOO will continue her legacy.
CONSERVATION
Title: Conserving the endangered and endemic Chamba Sacred Langur – native food plants preference study to devise crop-raiding mitigation strategies.

Objectives
1. Understand native vegetation composition in and around Khajjiar-Kalatop Wildlife Sanctuary
2. Understand langur dietary preferences

Activities
1. Surveys were conducted from February to November to collect and identify plants in and around study area.
2. The plant list was prepared for wild plants of Kalatop-Khajjiar Wildlife Sanctuary
3. Collected 483 plants and herbarium has been prepared for the same.
4. 247 plants belonging to 77 families have been identified
5. Data on Langur’s diet was collected based upon opportunistic observation and observed Langurs have been found feeding upon 20 plants species of 247 collected
4. Build a network of volunteers to help with raider data collection from the study area
5. Work extensively with selected villages on developing conflict mitigation strategies, and implement the strategies as pilot studies for emulation throughout the district.

Impacts
Developed healthy relationship with Wildlife Department Chamba and local communities living around the sanctuary. This will help us design a strategy to achieve conservation goals and build a participatory mechanism for ensuring sustainable restoration efforts throughout the Valley.

Partners: Wildlife Information Liaison Development Society

P.I: Vishal Ahuja
**Objectives**

1. To understand their current population status (abundance and health) as well as changes to their microhabitats.
2. To undertake a rapid biodiversity survey to understand the immediate impacts of the catastrophic floods on the habitats (changes to morphology and microhabitat structure and hydrological parameters) and populations (abundance) of thirteen AZE species in the Kerala part of Western Ghats Hotspot.

**Activities**

1. Comprehensive surveys were carried out to assess the impacts of extreme climatic events (i.e. catastrophic floods) on the habitats and populations of single location endemic and threatened species in the rivers of Kerala. Comprehensive field surveys are being carried out in four major river systems affected by floods, viz, Periyar, Chalakudy, Pampa, and Achankovil.
2. Micro-habitat-based surveys carried out in six critical freshwater fish habitats including Periyar Tiger Reserve, Valparai, Malakkapara, Santhampara, New Amarambalam, and Shenduruney Wildlife Sanctuary to determine the abundance, population status, and impacts to the habitats of the ‘single-location fish species’.
3. The survey is supplemented by unstructured interviews and focus group discussions with relevant stakeholders including local fishers, forest guards, local communities residing along the river banks, and researchers.
4. Surveys carried out in the Kallada River, particularly in three areas, (i) upstream of, (ii) downstream of, and (iii) actual range of D. exclamatio, an endemic species of the river indicated no changes to either the morphology of the stream habitats or to the populations of the species.

The floods, however had significant impacts on the riverine microhabitats located in the middle and lower reaches of the major river systems affected by floods. The morphology of many middle and lower reach fish habitats has been severely affected and many have been transformed beyond recognition. Serious depletion of in-stream and riparian cover in rivers such as Periyar, Chalakudy and Achankovil were observed. Shoreline vegetation and riparian cover has been significantly affected in the lower reaches of Periyar River.

**Partners:** Wildlife Information Liaison Development Society and Zoo Outreach Organisation

**PI:** Rajeev Raghavan

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Supported by The Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund.
Title: Prioritizing mitigation strategies for human-animal negative interactions in western Himalaya.

Objectives
1. Network with women’s self-help groups civic societies and schools (communities)
2. Build an education programme on the ills of habitat loss, introduction of problem animals, non-availability of food plants & natural feed and fragmentation
3. Initiate awareness programme to the communities
4. Initiate discussions with the forest department on unscientific and knee-jerk capture and release of animals.
5. Prioritise the mitigation method available until date.

Activities
1. Initiated network with civic societies and schools
2. Conducted various education awareness at Chmaba and nearby villages
3. Initiated discussion with the forest department

Partners: Wildlife Information Liaison Development Society

PI: Sanjay Molur and Vishal Ahuja
Objectives
1. To catalogue the Indian fish collection of Sir Francis Day at NHM – in particular poorly studied but commercially important and conservation-concern groups.
2. To create a database of digitized images of poorly-known Indian fish species
3. To develop local capacity (two Indian ichthyologists) in advanced techniques such as fish radiography and nano-CT scanning (which are unavailable in India) and create a database of digitized x-ray and scan images of prioritised Indian fish species housed at NHM.
4. To document the diversity and distribution of subterranean fish species of the Western Ghats through surveys of wells and other subterranean systems.

Progress
1. Planning two Ichthyologists (Dr. Anvar Ali and Dr. Unmesh Katwate) visit to Natural History Museum to gain valuable experience of world class museum practice.
2. Field surveys for subterranean fish documentation in Kerala were delayed due to Covid-19, and will resume in July 2020.

Outcomes
1. Information on Indian freshwater fishes will be gathered and made available for researchers worldwide.
2. Indian ichthyology benefits from trained researchers with skills and knowledge in curation, and advanced taxonomic skills including radiography and CT scanning. The NHM collection surely harbours several new species from India, and the visiting researchers will aim to describe them.

Impacts
1. Long-standing issues and problems in fish taxonomy can be resolved, and poorly known Indian freshwater fish diversity can be properly and more fully documented. The NHM maintains its position as internationally relevant in ichthyology, and is globally recognized for capacity building in taxonomy.
2. Field work on subterranean fishes and their ecosystems in Kerala will throw interesting insights into evolution, systematics, and adaptation, and will result in several new species descriptions.

Partners: Zoo Outreach Organisation

PI: Rajeev Raghavan & Sanjay Molur
Title: Study of maternal care and infant personality development in Bonnet Macaques in Kerala.

Objectives
1. Investigate the impact of becoming a mother on female personality in bonnet macaques.
2. Explore determinants of variation in maternal care in wild population of bonnet macaques.
3. Test for links between maternal behaviour and infant personality development.

Activities
1. Data collection on behaviour of 34 adult and subadult females in two habituated groups of bonnet macaques in Thenmala tourist site.
2. Data collection on behaviour of 7 infants born this year in two habituated groups of bonnet macaques in Thenmala tourist site. Behaviour of the infants was filmed.
3. Decoding of the videos of infants collected.

Plans
As soon the Thenmala tourist site will be open, the research assistants will come back to the field work and continue with data collection on females and their infants until the next birth season (February-May) in 2021.

Impacts
Our results will contribute to the current debate on the impact of maternal behavior vs. outside environment on personality development of infants during the early stages of infant life. Furthermore, by generating baseline information such as individual recognition, kinship, and demography, our work will open up opportunities to address a wide variety of other questions.

Partners: prof. Mewa Singh (Mysore University, India), Prof. Lynne Isbell (University of California Davis, US), Zoo Outreach Organisation

PI: Małgorzata Arlet, PhD

Supported by

Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań
The Journal of Threatened Taxa (JoTT) is an open access and print, peer reviewed monthly (not including special edition, supplementary and monographs), rapid, international journal for conservation and taxonomy. JoTT is a platform for quick and timely publication of research findings, reviews and other aspects of science related to conservation and taxonomy including subject areas like ecology, behavior, physiology, methodology, veterinary, diseases, management, and models among others. JoTT encourages professional and amateur upcoming scientists from around the world to publish. The journal provides assistance and mentors first time writers, or writers of non-native English language countries in presenting science to the world.
PLANNING
Title: IUCN South Asian Reptile Assessments

Objectives
1. Mainland South Asia Reptile Red List workshop
2. Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA)
3. Assessment 2 Planning (A2P) workshop

Progress
1. 631 Reptile species (Mainland South Asia 462 and Sri Lanka 169) were evaluated for the IUCN Red List status.
2. 201 Species threatened and 117 species Data Deficient (including Sri Lanka)
3. Key Biodiversity Areas were identified (45 threatened species in Mainland South Asia and 33 threatened species in Sri Lanka) in based on the assessments and some key action points based sites were defined for follow up under the Assessment to Planning section.
4. CPSG’s Assessment to Planning (A2P) session post the reptile assessments session made the bridge between assessments and action planning

Impact
Helped to prioritize where action is most urgently needed and also identified the major threats.
The Key Biodiversity Areas approach helps to identify and designate areas of international importance in terms of biodiversity conservation using globally standardised criteria.
Planning independent species assessment using assessments and action planning

Partners: Zoo Outreach Organisation, Conservation Planning Specialist Group, South Asia, IUCN, Conservation International’s Biodiversity Assessment Unit

PI: Sanjay Molur, Neil Cox
**Title:** IUCN South Asian Freshwater Fishes Assessments

**Objectives**
1. Organize and facilitate a review workshop for global IUCN Red List assessments of freshwater fishes
2. Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA)
3. Assessment 2 Planning (A2P) workshop

**Progress**
1. 221 Freshwater Fishes (59 Endemic and 162 Non-endemic) were evaluated for the IUCN Red List status.
2. Out of 59 endemic species so assessed, 3 were found to be Critically Endangered, 11 Endangered, 17 Vulnerable, 2 Near Threatened, 2 Data Deficient, 17 Least Concern species.
3. Key Biodiversity Areas were identified (xx threatened species in xx location) in based on the assessments and some key action points based sites were defined for follow up under the Assessment to Planning section.
4. CPSG’s Assessment to Planning (A2P) session post the reptile assessments session made the bridge between assessments and action planning

**Impact**
Helped to prioritize where action is most urgently needed and also identified the major threats.
The Key Biodiversity Areas approach helps to identify and designate areas of international importance in terms of biodiversity conservation using globally standardised criteria.
Planning independent species assessment using assessments and action planning

**Partners:** Zoo Outreach Organisation, Conservation Planning Specialist Group, South Asia, IUCN, Conservation International’s Biodiversity Assessment Unit

**PI:** Sanjay Molur

**Supported by**
Compilation on the SIS and completion of the Asian Primate Assessment

Compiled ~130 Asian primates data and entered as per the requirements of the SIS for a final listing in the IUCN Red List

**Donor:** Global Wildlife Conservation

**PI:** Sanjay Molur
Title: Prevention and Mitigation of Conflict between Humans and Pachyderms in Nepal through outreach programs

Objectives:
1. Towards zero casualty of man and animal in human-elephant conflict areas and a community that appreciate and co-exist with elephants’.
2. To reduce human-elephant conflict by conveying positive attitudes and effective preventative and practical behavior
3. To reach out to wider target groups in three HEC areas (children, students, adults, village community, administrators, media reporters) and to create awareness about co-existence
4. to evaluate the impacts of the project and to continue creating awareness even after project period.

Activities:
1. Developed and printed educational materials in English and Nepali -- teaching guide, poster, packets, etc.
2. Conduct three (5 days) training programme and 15 (1 day) awareness programmes using the trained educators.
3. Trained educators who live in HEC areas. Reached out all along the Therai region of Nepal where HEC is reported to be high.
4. Conducted post program evaluation and created a network of educators to promote HECx in Nepal

Impacts:
1. Reached out all along the Therai region of Nepal
2. 72 hours of training for 108+ educators in three locations.

Partners: Zoo Outreach Organisation, National Trust for Nature Conservation, Nepal Forest Department; Local governing bodies and NGOs.

PI: B.A. Daniel
Title: Safeguarding the Greater One-horned Rhino meta-population in North Bengal and Uttar Pradesh, India

Objectives:
1. Train the Educators through drama, games, maps, personalities, stories, debates, demonstrations, arts, mock conferences, etc., to change attitudes and enhance interest in Rhino conservation.
2. Educate educators and community members about the importance of rhinos and its conservation.
3. Reduce human-rhino conflict by conveying positive attitudes and effective preventative and practical behaviour.
4. Create a network of educators to help promote species conservation for rhino and other threatened species in this region.

Activities:
1. Developed Rhino educational materials to train the educators and provided 50 each to conduct their own programmes immediately after the training.
2. Conducted 3-days three trainers training workshops on Greater One-horned Rhino.
3. Conducted 2 one-day introductory programmes for forest department staff.
4. Conducted 6 awareness programmes for students and community using the trained educators.
5. Provide do’s and don’ts for the Target Group.
6. Conducted a evaluation workshop to follow up the training.

Impact:
Reached out to more than 35,000 people who live in the adjoining areas to Protected areas holding Rhino by the trainers and trained trainers at the workshops.


PI: B.A. Daniel
Objectives: raise awareness, build capacity of local people and contribute to conservation science

Activities:
• A year of field work at a local school (Yellow Train) to teach the students about Wild India, bio-mapping, Pollinator Conservation, etc.
• LivelyWaters! Citizen science initiative: Conducted bird surveys every month and collated the data for analyses.
• Zoo Outreach Organisation collaborated with Mango Education and organised various courses (Wildlife Photography, Science Conference, hands-on experience with various aquatic animals, launched wildlife online courses) for children.
• Conducted Vulture programme for 25 nature club members of BOSCH, Coimbatore
• Conducted Marine and freshwater education at a local college in Kerala
• Conducted one day Conservation Education Training for newly recruited Foresters & Guards of Erode Forest Division at Bannari

Impacts: Building local network of citizens interested in wildlife conservation and help them improve their knowledge base related to wildlife issues and conservation.

PI: Payal Molur, Sanjay Molur, B.A. Daniel, Priyanka Iyer
Title: Hoolock Gibbon Conservation in the Protected Areas of Tripura, Northeast India through Training and Education.

Objectives
1. To train forest frontline staff on hoolock-gibbon and its habitat protection
2. To train educators on Hoolock Gibbon Conservation
3. Evaluating the impact of the above training programs.

Activities planned for 2020
1. Two (2) three day Capacity building training and two (2) three days teaching trainers programme will be conducted.
2. Capacity training participants will be anti-poaching watcher, guards and other lower level staff and educators will be teachers, NGO’s, volunteers, Zoo and forest staff
3. Follow up program for the assessment for the forest frontline staff and teaching training program will be done three or six months after the training program.
4. Developing and preparing the education materials

PI: R. Marimuthu

Partner: Zoo Outreach Organisation, Tripura Forest Department
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Title: Developing an online conservation platform for citizen participation in crop-raiding mitigation by the Chamba Sacred Langur (*Seminopithecus ajax*) in India

Objectives:
1. To provide local people with information about the Chamba Sacred Langur and its habitat by developing an online educational platform that helps in building a database through the involvement of local citizens and students.
2. To make information easily accessible and people-friendly to use.
3. To develop positive attitudes towards conservation of the species by introducing the platform in schools.
4. To encourage environment-friendly behaviour towards the species to mitigate any human-animal conflict that is a potential danger due to possible crop raiding.

Progress:
1. Started Himalayan Langur Facebook page
2. Developed a brochure and printed 4000 copies for distribution
3. Himalayan Langur Project website work is going on

Partners: Wildlife Information Liaison Development Society

PI: Vidya Mary George

Activities
1. Established a citizen community interested in understanding the water bodies
2. Trained citizens in water bird identification
3. Trained citizens in point count method for monitoring the water bodies
4. Collected data on species richness, threats and habitat modifications for a year from specific water bodies from Coimbatore

Impacts
1. Empowered an urban community with data collection methods
2. Built a network of over 50 citizen scientists
3. Created a larger community interested in wildlife

PI: Sanjay Molur, Priyanka Iyer
COMMUNITY
Title: USFWS Project Kazhiru (Elephant): Targeting to achieve zero mortality in HEC areas in partnership with Tamil Nadu Forest department.

**Objectives**
1. Educate stakeholders to modify livelihood / lifestyle incompatible in HEC areas
2. Educate local bodies in developing safety protocols in conflict areas;
3. Conduct mass awareness programmes for the community in HECx in Coimbatore forest range.

**Progress**
1. Education materials for education programmes developed and printed.
2. 8 mass awareness programmes were conducted for schools on Human Elephant Coexistence HECx in schools around Coimbatore Forest Division.
3. The students were taught about elephants in general and human elephant conflict and need for coexist with them in detail by using educational materials such as booklet and masks.

**Impacts**
Around 5000 students, teachers and community people benefited

**Upcoming**
1. Stakeholder awareness programmes

**Partners:** Zoo Outreach Organisation, Nature Conservation Society, Tamil Nadu Forest Department, District Administration, School Education Department and Department of Environment.

**PI:** R. Marimuthu
Title: Advocating through awareness programmes in Tamil Nadu, India

Objectives
1. Reach out to schools near northern Western Ghats (Sathyamangalam and Erode forest divisions)
2. Impart safety education in elephant areas to save lives and live harmoniously with elephants.

Activities
3. Teacher training workshop.
4. School outreach programmes.
5. Street play programmes

Results
1. Conducted 5 school awareness programmes and planning to conduct 5 more in 2020
2. Conducted 8 street plays and educated the community living in and near elephant habitat of Erode district. Planning for more in 2020.
3. Teachers and students in elephant areas addressed regarding human-elephant coexistence.

Impacts
3000+ villagers, 1000+ students, 40 teachers, 25 schools, impacted by these programmes

Partners: School Education Department, District Administration, National Green Corps (NGC), Department of Environment, Nature Conservation Society, and Forest Department.

Pl: R. Marimuthu

Supported by
Sally’s journey can be simply classified into two main distinctive parts — her life in the USA and the life in India. While there’s not much to be told of her life in the USA, we bring to you in this section a photo collage of some of her activities in India. We can’t say it all in the few pictures, but sifting through the various collections of pictures, it’s a nostalgic journey for us in the office. Here we go —

**Friends of Mysore Zoo**

Mysore, the home to a legend: Sally moved from Yoga and Sanskrit to volunteering at Mysore Zoo before setting up Friends of Mysore Zoo in 1981 and Zoo Outreach Organization in 1985. Her journey of 40 years of dedicated voluntary work for Indian zoos and wildlife began in Mysore.

**Sally & Zoos**

Focus on zoos: Sally’s interest in zoos stemmed from a chance handling of tiger cubs. Volunteering at Mysore Zoo she developed a keen interest in their functioning and realized Indian zoos had a long way to go in terms of zoo and animal management. She strived all through her FoMZ and ZOO days to improve the condition of Indian and South Asian zoos. She constantly participated in meetings that brought zoo experts from different parts of the world, from well managed zoos, to India.

**Zoo History Research**

Sally’s hobby was also zoo related. She researched extensively, visited libraries, zoo and botanic institutes, museums and other facilities to work on the origins and history of zoos in the world and in India. She established that Barrackpore Zoo was older than the London Zoo, that the famous physician-botanist-zoologist Buchanan-Hamilton set up the natural history project in the late 18th century. She ‘discovered’ Hamilton’s compilation of artistic renditions of animals and plants in the India Office Library in London where it was ‘lost’ as a step in one of the rooms. Sally established an organization called the Society for the Promotion of History of Zoos and Natural History in Asia (SPHoZaNHiA).
Zoo Trainings

Zoo training: Sally’s vision for better zoo and animal management was evident from the number of training programs she organized solely through ZOO or in collaboration with CZA, WII, or other zoo associations. The training were varied including for keepers, veterinarians, genetics, animal handling, environmental enrichment, zoo architecture, crisis management, record keeping, animal tagging, zoo management, veterinary protocols, etc.

Zoo Association

One of Sally’s pet project, after helping set up the Central Zoo Authority in India and initiating several training workshops, was to establish a cooperative zoo program for South Asian countries. She established the South Asian Zoo Association for Regional Cooperation (SAZARC) in 2000 at the National Zoo in Kathmandu, Nepal. Ulle Seal graced the occasion. The event also saw the establishment of CBSG-South Asia and its first annual meeting. Sally envisaged SAZARC on the effective lines of the South East Asian Zoo Association (SEAZA) meetings she used to attend annually.

Educator Training

As the focus from zoos shifted to meta population management between ex situ and in situ with CBSG in 1991, Sally embraced the new science of conservation biology to its fullest, trained biologists in the field, interpreted the science in simple cartoons for the layman, and brought two iconic tools of CBSG to South Asia — multiple species assessments through the Conservation Assessment & Management Plan (CAMP) workshops, and single species assessments through the stakeholder-driven Population & Habitat Viability Analysis (PHVA). Through these she achieved a lot many ‘firsts’ in the region.
As the focus from zoos shifted to meta population management between ex situ and in situ with CBSG in 1991, Sally embraced the new science of conservation biology to its fullest, trained biologists in the field, interpreted the science in simple cartoons for the layman, and brought two iconic tools of CBSG to South Asia — multiple species assessments through the Conservation Assessment & Management Plan (CAMP) workshops, and single species assessments through the stakeholder-driven Population & Habitat Viability Analysis (PHVA). Through these she achieved a lot many ‘firsts’ in the region.

What was initially known as Human Elephant Conflict workshop, Sally realized that the name conflict was inappropriate. It was therefore changed to Human Elephant Co-eXistence & workshops to deal with the issue across India, South Asia and Southeast Asia have been conducted since 2000.
Hands-on Trainings

During the various conservation assessment and management plan workshops it became apparent that the country required young field biologists & taxonomists. As part of the conservation engineering strategy, Sally & Sanjay introduced a series of hands-on training workshops to build capacity.

SSC SG Activities

Sally represented CPSG & RSG in the region of South Asia. She cleverly combined South Asian Zoo Association for Regional Cooperation meeting with trainings in the reintroduction and conservation breeding as staple training modules to the zoo and wildlife staff & biologists.