

ZOO OUTREACH ORGANISATION

ANNUAL REPORT
2025-26

Melia azedarach fruits in Chamba @ Amrin Ansari

zooreach
Zoo Outreach Organisation

Himalayan Restoration Project: Ecologically restoring species, livelihoods, and landscape



Background

The Himalayan Restoration Project seeks to ecologically restore the long-neglected and largely unfamiliar, deteriorated broad-leaf oak and pine forest habitat nestled in the mid-elevations of the Himalaya, in Himachal Pradesh. The Chamba Valley is currently reduced to having one small wildlife sanctuary (Khajjiar-Kalatop) and several isolated small fragments of the lesser-known forests interspersed with ever-increasing terraced agriculture that occupies more than 90% of the landscape. The HRP collaborates with the communities and educates them on the importance of forests and the need to protect it. We have established a community-led nursery in 2022 and are currently growing 21 species of native Himalayan species.

In 2022, with an extensive outreach program during the pilot studies, the Rathiyar Village Panchayat, Chamba head has issued an undertaking on behalf of seven wards of the panchayat (including 28 villages with a population of 2,282 in 503 families owning nearly 860 hectares of farmland) to be our partners in the restoration program. We partner with local farming communities, empowering them with ecology-based adaptations & sustainable livelihood options, and collaboratively rewilding this degraded landscape using native plant species grown in a community

managed nursery. By actively involving the local communities as integral members of our team and fostering partnerships with key stakeholders such as the forest department and other NGOs, we holistically bring decision-making, ensuring scientific and ecological restoration of this precious ecosystem.

Active conservation is the need of the hour, and the Himalayan Restoration Project aims to do just that through stakeholder-run restoration and conflict mitigation programmes. The area of focus is around the Khajjiar-Kalatop Wildlife Sanctuary, western Himalaya and lies within the recently demarcated eco-sensitive zone of



HRP team arranging saplings in the nursery. © Lakshay Tyagi

HRP team deweeding the saplings. © Sachin Verma

the sanctuary. The project is trying to work towards conserving the fragile landscapes of western Himalaya, through an interconnected multi-pronged approach using science and traditional knowledge for holistic wellbeing of communities, livelihood, and species.

Activities conducted during the reporting period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026

- 🌱 Germination of native saplings of western Himalaya in the nursery.
- 🌱 Restoration of degraded patches of land across the project landscape.
- 🌱 Education outreach, upskilling, and training workshops for students, teachers, women, youth, and community members.
- 🌱 Roadkill surveys across the landscape area over 8+ months.
- 🌱 Perception and knowledge surveys with community members and other stakeholders.
- 🌱 Representation of the project at national and international conferences.



Shanti deweeding the saplings before they are transported to the restoration plots. © Sanjay Molur

Key achievements and outcomes

- 🌱 The community nursery germinated 20,000+ saplings of 21 native species.
- 🌱 3 ha of degraded land restored with 3,000+ native saplings. Additional 2 ha of land conserved.
- 🌱 500+ students and youth educated, 200+ women trained and upskilled, and 500+ community members sensitized in conservation, restoration, coexistence, and climate change.
- 🌱 Provided 25 livelihoods for local community members (5 permanent and 20 seasonal).
- 🌱 35+ days of roadkill surveys across a 35-km stretch since June 2025 to document the threats to wildlife species over seasons from vehicle movement.
- 🌱 50+ knowledge and perception surveys with the local stakeholders on their understanding of climate change, crop raiding, restoration, and eco-based livelihood opportunities.
- 🌱 Representation through posters, talks, and films in ERA India, 2025 GLF



The team transporting saplings from nursery to the restoration plot. © Sanjay Molur



The team stocks up nursery supplies to germinate saplings before winter sets in. © Amrin Ansari

functions.

Key partnerships and collaborations

The HRP is part of the Global Landscape Forum chapters and is called GLFx Himachal. HRP is a member of the Global Alliance for Rights of the Nature and Youth in Landscape initiative. In the past year the project has strengthened its existing relations with the Rathiya Gram panchayat,

Asia Community & Action Week, and Tropentag 2025.

- Collaborated with Green Hub India to produce a film on the Himalayan Restoration Project.

Challenges faced

The climate crisis remains one of Chamba's biggest challenges. This year, heavy rains and landslides left the team stranded at the field station without electricity, food supplies, or network connectivity. The situation became extremely challenging and even posed a serious risk to one of the community members working with the team. At the same time, shifting climate patterns are becoming visible through altered flowering and fruiting cycles, which are beginning to influence the success of the flora in the region.

Team members and locations

The project presently has 13 members working. Ten team members are based in Chamba of which six belong to the local and indigenous communities, while three members are based in Coimbatore coordinating the technical and administrative

Arpana Trust, and Himachal Pradesh Forest Department to collaborate and work in the area towards a climate positive future.

Acknowledgments

The team is thankful towards the partners, the community, students, women, and youth in the landscape for their support and encouragement. Thanks are to: Randoh Higher Secondary School for collaboration; the forest department and panchayat officials for the administrative support and help during on-field action; the Arpana Trust for providing the facilities for the field station; Mr. Shakthi for the nursery space; and Salesforce for funding the project.



The HRP teams signs MoU with Rathiya Panchayat pradhan. © Lakshya Rathore



Students from Randoh Higher Secondary School join HRP team in the restoration efforts. © Amrin Ansari



HRP team conducting education outreach session with government school students in the landscape. © Lakshya Rathore



HRP team conducting wildlife film screening for government schools as part of outreach activities. (Lakshya Rathore)



HRP team invites villagers from across the landscape, interested in restoration to sign MoUs for future conservation & restoration efforts. © Amrin Ansari



HRP team conduct a hand-on training program on native species restoration as part of the NSS program with Randoh Higher Secondary School. © Lakshya Rathore

Future plans/next steps

The Himalayan Restoration Project is a long term programme to restore the 800+ ha of degraded landscape with the communities. As part of the vision the 2026–27 target is to restore 10 ha of degraded land and reach out to many more schools and communities for a climate positive future.



Trisa Bhattacharjee*, Sachin Verma, Amrin Ansari, Lakshay Tyagi, Lakshya Raj Singh Rathore, Payal Chaman, Vishal Ahuja & Sanjay Molur
Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India. *trisa@zooreach.org

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Wetland Restoration at Nallusamy Checkdam



Background

Wetlands are increasingly threatened at an alarming rate by pollution, habitat degradation/loss, invasive species, and over exploitation. This is more so the case with urban and semi urban wetlands that are also threatened by increasing developmental projects that invariably release effluents into wetlands. Some of these threats can to be addressed through ecological restoration. As part of this vision, Zooreach has undertaken ecological restoration of Nallusamy Checkdam with support of Bosch Global Software Technologies.

Activities conducted during the reporting period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026

- 🐾 Foster multistakeholder collaboration to ensure holistic restoration and resilience.
- 🐾 Continue running the Coimbatore plains native plant nursery for on-ground restoration
- 🐾 Establish a native aquatic plant nursery to set up the plant polishing zone
- 🐾 Rapid biodiversity assessments at the study site for these taxonomic groups – birds, fishes, reptiles, amphibians, mammals, invertebrates, and plants.
- 🐾 Road kill surveys conducted at regular intervals.

Key achievements and outcomes

First-of-its-kind nursery of native terrestrial and aquatic plant of wetlands of the plains

Challenges faced

Delays in permissions from the authorities.

Location

Nallusamy Checkdam, Keeranatham, Coimbatore

Participants

Local community members are being networked with and the education programs will be held in the next financial year

Key partnerships and Collaborations

Kosika Neer Karangal; Keeranatham Panchayat office; Annur Taluka Tahsildar office; District Collectorate Office; Local communities; Local government schools

Measurable outcomes

- 🐾 Setting up of the first-of-its-kind 5,000 native terrestrial plants nursery and 3,000 native aquatic plants nursery for the plains and wetlands of open natural ecosystems of Tamil Nadu.
- 🐾 Educator training manual and flash cards of open natural ecosystems of Coimbatore with over 50 species (plants and animals) with information about the species including warnings about nonnative plant species.



Aquatic plant nursery with over 5 species. © Koshik V. Rao



© Koshik V. Rao

Colocasia esculenta - a beautiful aquatic plant in our nursery!

Sterculia foetida saplings grown in the nursery.

Indian Rain Tree *Albizia* lebbek seeds

build riparian vegetation, set up the plant polishing zone and promote native biodiversity.

- 🐾 Continue the rapid biodiversity assessments and the systematic roadkill surveys
- 🐾 Conduct surveys for the two endemic plant species *Caralluma diffusa* and *Cordia diffusa*.



Planting native seeds in grow trays. © Koshik V. Rao

- 🐾 Recorded over 130 individual roadkills over 25 surveys.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to all the subject experts who have tirelessly supported and helped with the biodiversity surveys, and collaborators, local community members and Bosch team for supporting this project.

Future plans/next steps

- 🐾 Outreach with local community members
- 🐾 Removal of invasive species at the study site around the wetland
- 🐾 Plantation of 2,500 native terrestrial and aquatic plants to strengthen the bunds,



Planting native lily plants!
© Kritika P.



Teamwork at the Coimbatore plains native nursery. by the Zooreach office. © Poojitha Dupati

Priyanka Iyer*, Sidharthan, P. Kritika, S. Sushanth, Koshik V Rao, B. Ravichandran, Rajeshkanna, Latha Ravikumar, Payal Molur & Sanjay Molur
Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India. *priyanka@zooreach.org

Citation: Iyer, P., Sidharthan, P. Kritika, S. Sushanth, K.V. Rao, B. Ravichandran, R. Rajeshkanna, L. Ravikumar, P. Molur & S. Molur (2026). Wetland Restoration at Nallusamy Checkdam. Zooreach Annual Report 2025–26. In: *Zoo's Print* 41(3): 05–06.

Conserving Denise & Friends



Background

Freshwater ecosystems require urgent attention owing to multiple threats such as habitat destruction, overexploitation, pollution and invasive species. With this growing concern, Zoo Outreach Organisation set out to conserve subterranean fish, and unsustainable harvest of threatened endemic species from the Western Ghats (Red-line Torpedo Barb *Sahyadria denisonii* and associated species). The two components of the project are carried out under the LivelyWaters! programme with the subterranean component led by Dr. Rajeev Raghavan and the Denise & Friends component led by Dr Sanjay Molur.



Sahyadria denisonii or Denise. © Koshik V. Rao

Activities conducted during the reporting period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026

- Literature review, perception surveys and species presence/absence surveys were conducted at different sites across Kerala and southern Karnataka.
- Habitat assessments during surveys (habitat types - riffles, cascades, eddies, pools, forests, villages, fields, riverine forests with *Terminalia arjuna*, *Ochlandra travancorica*, *Barringtonia acutangula*, *Homonium riparia*, tussock grasses, deeper in the moist forest giants like *Elaeocarpus tuberculatus*, *Vateria indica*, *Syzygium bourdillonii*, *Semecarpus travancoricus*, *Syzygium travancoricum*, *Myristica malabarica*, etc.)
- Assessing trade status and economics through community surveys
- Assessing threats such as sandmining, pollution (run off from pesticides, plastic),

invasive species, unsustainable fishing and destructive fishing practices, aquarium trade through field surveys

- Developed dual language education materials like a manual and education packets using the data collected to reach the public to activate participation in protecting the species.

Key achievements and outcomes

- These surveys provided clarity on stakeholder understanding and connection towards freshwater ecosystems and threatened species.
- Education materials in English and Malayalam (local language) that is based research, collated data, pedagogy including games and activities to teach using experiential learning techniques.



Exploring the riverbanks of Chaliyar with Local fishermen. © Koshik V. Rao

Challenges faced

Accessibility of the streams to study presence of *S. denisonii* owing to erratic monsoon, sand mining, destructive fishing practices, and other developmental projects.

Participant numbers and locations

Total participants-152 villagers from 59 locations in 56 villages in and around the banks of Iruvanjippuzha (Chalyar River), Periyar River, Bavali River, Veni River, Kanjirappuzha (Iritty River), Valapattanam River, Payaswini/ Chandragiri River.

Key partnerships and collaborations

Partnered with experts from Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS), and a few local conservation enthusiasts.

Measurable outcomes

- Four publications providing key report on survey findings
- Confirming locations with presence/absence of Red Line Torpedo Barb *Sahyadria denisonii* and other associated fish species
- Completion of initial perception and knowledge surveys to understand attitude towards Denise and the river systems, threats and possible interest towards conservation of the species/ecosystem.
- Selecting specific locations from existing network of stakeholders relevant for the workshops and outreach programs
- Preliminary mapping of threats in specific locations

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Mr. V. Jithin and Mr. Kashinathan for supporting us with the perception study design and selection of locations in the study sites for perception studies. Thanks to Beta Mahatvaraj for providing photographs and guidance to the education team.



Fishes struggling for survival in polluted water of Payaswini River. © Deepak



Ghost nets disposed at the sides of the Periyar River. © Koshik V. Rao



A local family catching fish at Chandragiri River. © Koshik V. Rao



Children fishing at the sides of Periyar River. © Koshik V. Rao



Fishermen catching fish using nets in Periyar River.
© Koshik V. Rao



Fishermen at Reservoir of Pazhassi Dam of Iritty River.
© Koshik V. Rao



Fishes the fishermen caught at Reservoir of Pazhassi Dam of Iritty River. © Koshik V. Rao



Rubber Latex factory effluent at sides of Payaswini River.
© Koshik V. Rao

Future plans/next steps

- 💧 Workshops for community elders, educators, and school teachers using the developed education materials such as the teacher training manual and education packets.
- 💧 Facilitation workshops focused on setting up behaviour change mechanisms towards sustainable harvest.
- 💧 Build local stewards to champion the cause of sustainable harvest to ensure species conservation and livelihood security.



Observing the Riverbanks of Periyar for Denise. © Sidharthan



Priyanka Iyer*, Koshik V. Rao, Sidharthan & Sanjay Molur
Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu,
India. *priyanka@zooreach.org

Citation: Iyer, P., K.V. Rao, Sidharthan & S. Molur (2026).
Conserving Denise & Friends. Zooreach Annual Report
2025–26. In: *Zoo's Print* 41(3): 07–09.

Conserving Subterranean fishes of Kerala

Background

Subterranean fishes are mysterious freshwater fishes that were discovered recently. They have extremely unique adaptations- some are blind, have translucent skin, barbels/feelers and/or chemoreceptors for finding and hunting their way in underground water channels.

These fantastic fishes are threatened by chlorination of wells, borewell digging, chemical pollution that go into ground water reserves and persecution cause of misunderstandings.

Activities conducted during the reporting period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026

- 🐟 Survey for subterranean fishes in Kerala
- 🐟 Community perception surveys to map attitudes and knowledge base of local communities towards these fishes
- 🐟 Development of education materials for communities and educators to build foundation for behaviour change
- 🐟 Engage with managers and policymakers to build new management strategies for conservation of these fishes



Searching for subterranean fishes in water tank. © Zooreach Team



Checking for subterranean fish in house well. © Zooreach Team



Presenting the local language education packet.
© Zooreach Team

Key achievements and outcomes

- 🐟 Developed educational materials such as posters and education packets that breaks down since to simplify the information in both English and local vernacular language
- 🐟 The key study sites were in 11 districts in Kerala – Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Pathanamthitta, Kottayam, Alappuzha, Thrissur, Ernakulam, Kozhikode, Malappuram, Kannur, Kasargod.
- 🐟 Genetic studies conducted for the following species *Rakthamichthys sp.* (4

samples), *Horaglanis sp.* (8 samples), *Ophichthys fossorius* (2 samples), *Pangio bhujia* (4 samples). All this genetic study generated 10 CO1 sequences for these subterranean fishes.

- 🐟 Conducted community surveys with 25 members including those who have subterranean fishes occurring in their home wells.
- 🐟 Conducted interactions with Panchayat



Remya sharing the education packet with a school student
© Zooreach Team



Local wells that houses suterranean fishes. © Zooreach Team

member from seven different districts (Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Alappuzha, Kottayam, Kozhikode, Kannur, Thrissur).

Challenges faced

Lack of adequate funding.

Key partnerships and collaborations

- 🐟 Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies
- 🐟 Local panchayats and managers in study sites in Kerala

Measurable outcomes

- 🐟 Designed and developed 1,000 education packets in English and local vernacular language for outreach to lay the foundation for behaviour change towards conservation of subterranean fishes.
- 🐟 Conducted surveys in 12 districts in Kerala and genetic studies in four unique subterranean fish species that is crucial to better understand these lesser known species
- 🐟 Conducted surveys of 25 community members and interacted with panchayat members from 7 districts in Kerala

Acknowledgments

We thank all the collaborators, partners, and local communities that have participated and supported this study.

Future plans

- 🐟 Conduct outreach programs with local community members in study sites in Kerala.



Priyanka Iyer*, Remya Sundar, Payal Molur, Latha Ravikumar & Sanjay Molur

Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India. *priyanka@zooreach.org







Citation: Iyer, P., R. Sundar, P. Molur, L. Ravikumar & S. Molur (2026). Conserving Subterranean fishes of Kerala. Zooreach Annual Report 2025–26. In: *Zoo's Print* 41(3): 10–11.

1OCEAN Magic of the Ocean 1OCEAN

Background





This sub-vertical focuses on teaching about marine biodiversity and the ocean more broadly, making marine conservation accessible, relatable, and curriculum-linked for schools (students & teachers) and communities, particularly in contexts where the ocean is rarely mentioned in the school curriculum.

Activities conducted during the reporting period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026

-  Mapping curriculum to UN Ocean Decade Ocean Literacy principles
-  Literature review and surveys of target audience
-  Developing content linked to the 7 Ocean Literacy Principles of the UN Ocean Decade and different subjects taught in the school curriculum
-  Website design and development including feedback loops to test for bugs and verification of all the content by experts
-  Networking and coordinating with website developers, designers, animators, subject experts, and researchers
-  Launch of the e-learning

platform and introducing the platform at 11 schools

Key achievements and outcomes

-  Network of schools, teachers, educators, subject experts, and volunteers for ocean biodiversity conservation.
-  Launch of 'Magic of the Ocean'
-  80+ educators registered on the website with 12 schools using the material in their classrooms.
-  Materials used as part of the Classrooms 4 Coexistence program.

Challenges faced

Expert validation considering the tight schedules of subject experts was challenging but was handled by determination and coordination.

Participant numbers and locations

We have had 295 participants including teachers, students and other users. The locations of the project are Rameswaram and Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu and Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala.

Key partnerships and collaborations

Twenty-one schools participated from various locations in and around Rameshwaram, Ramanathapuram, Coimbatore, and Thiruvananthapuram.

Experts

Dr. Biju kumar, Dr. Sanjay Molur, Dr. Amit Kumar, Dr. S.R Ganesh, Dr. Dipani Sutaria, Dr. Divya Panicker, Priyanka Iyer, and Usha Ravindra



1OCEAN team with the mascot Dr. Monta Ray. © Prema

Measurable outcomes

- 🐟 Developed an interactive website on Magic of the Ocean.
- 🐟 The initiative has trained over 45 teachers.
- 🐟 Engaged more than 100 students.
- 🐟 Registered 70 users on the platform.
- 🐟 Produced 27 open-access ocean literacy resources.

Acknowledgments

Thankful to all the experts, teachers, students, collaborators, developers, designers, and well-wishers for all their inputs and support during the content development, designing and launch of the e-learning platform.

Future plans/next steps

- 🐟 Training workshops with educators on popularizing the e-learning platform.
- 🐟 Upgrade the e-learning platform based on feedback and to add new chapters to make it more inclusive.

Priyanka Iyer*, Usha Ravindra, Tandrili Baruah, P. Kritika, Latha Ravikumar & Payal Molur
Zoo Outreach Organisation,
Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India.
*priyanka@zooreach.org

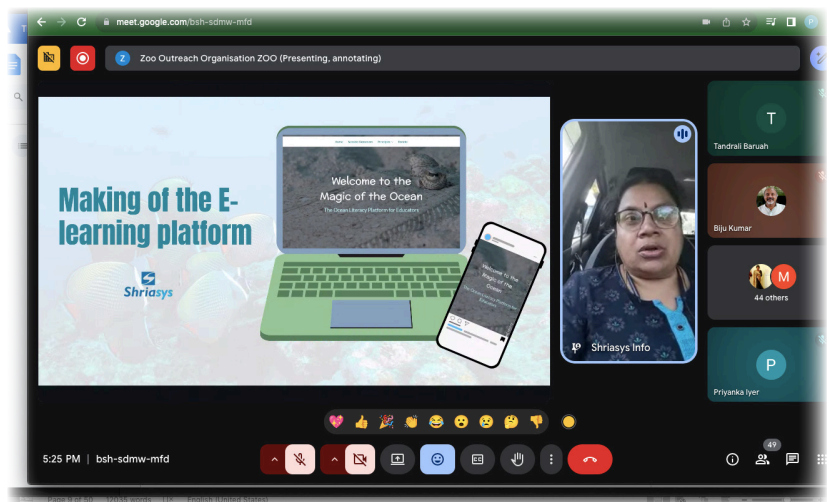
Citation: Iyer, P., U. Ravindra, T. Baruah, P. Kritika, L. Ravikumar & P. Molur (2026). 10CEAN Magic of the Ocean. Zooreach Annual Report 2025–26. In: *Zoo's Print* 41(3): 12–14.



Kerala University Launch- Co-creation for the platform Magic of the Ocean with University of Kerala. © Sidharthan



Launch in GPS School- Co-creation and implementation of the e-learning platform- Magic of the Ocean in GPS School in Coimbatore. © P. Kritika



Online launch- The platform was also launched with the teachers, designers, developers, and the 10CEAN community. © Tandrili Baruah

1OCEAN Miscellaneous

This year focused on analyzing the existing data sets that included species identification, advanced literature review, preliminary analyses of opportunistic survey data involving catch, gear usage, demography, knowledge, and perceptions. These analyses continue to build the foundation for all other initiatives of 1OCEAN including all the outreach and awareness that are based on solid science and on-ground information from Indian waters.

As next steps, this work advocates the need for dedicated campaigns at the local and national levels to raise awareness amongst the general public and the fisherfolk about the increasing decline in shark population in our waters, to encourage better informed consumers, to aid in reduction of destructive gear use and multi gear use per craft. Such campaigns can bring about changes in perceptions, foster a sense of community ownership, and give a foundation for science-based management strategies in the future. Addressing the lack of awareness of sharks at a local and national scale can be a vital step towards ensuring their long-term survival which will help keep the ecological balance of our ocean.



On the occasion of Manta Ray Day, 27 Sep 2025, the e-learning platform was launched in Vidya Vanam School, Coimbatore.
© B. Ravichandran.

IOCEAN programme: Citizen Science

Conservation of 'Critically Endangered' Hammerhead Sharks of India via Participatory Science



Background

The project aimed at empowering fisheries and marine science students from coastal colleges in southern India to actively participate in monitoring shark landings (focal species being hammerhead sharks) at local fish landing sites via structured citizen science & internship programs.

Activities conducted during the reporting period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026

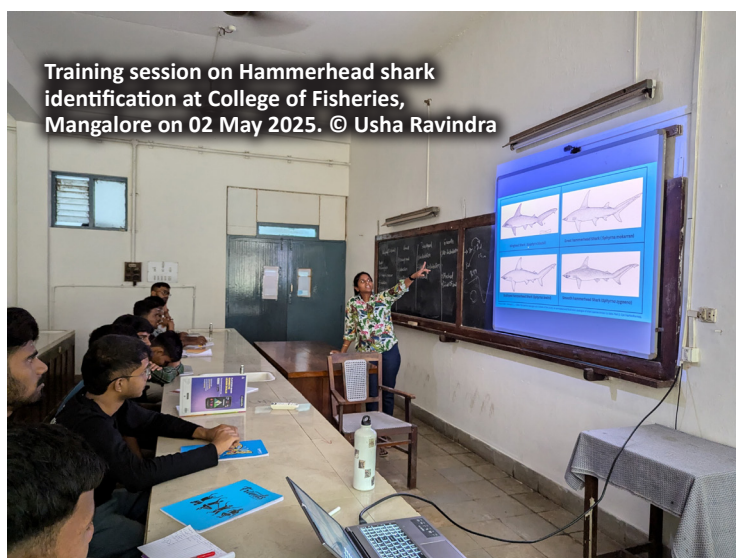
- 🐟 Conducted shark conservation training workshops across eight colleges in three states: Tamil Nadu (5), Kerala (1), and Karnataka (2). The workshops covered 11 fish landing sites in Tamil Nadu (8), Kerala (1), and Karnataka (1), covering diverse shark fisheries (target catch, bycatch, and occasional landings).
- 🐟 Students were introduced to: status of sharks in India and their identification; photographic guidelines to identify sharks for citizen science; identification of

hammerheads and data gaps to address their conservation; and how to use IOCEAN Citizen Science website to document fish landings.

- 🐟 Implemented internship program with four partner colleges involving 51 students documenting shark trade, bycatch, landings, fisheries mapping, and artisanal catch monitoring across 17 fish landing sites.
- 🐟 Created 'IOCEAN Youth Network' for continued engagement in marine conservation discussions and activities.
- 🐟 Developed citizen science educational materials (poster, foldout, website). Materials include photographic guidelines for shark identification, hammerhead identification basics, shark vulnerability concepts, bycatch issues, and QR-linked web resources (expandable to broader marine conservation topics).

Key achievements and outcomes

- 🐟 Hammerhead Watch: Internship survey reports recorded more than 80 juvenile hammerhead sharks landed at Dhakke market, Mangalore, during just six survey days in May.
- 🐟 The internship programme produced eight observational reports on shark/bycatch trade at regional level of which two are published in *Zoo's Print* and others are still under review.
- 🐟 Recorded ~1,700 observations on the IOCEAN Citizen Science Portal (1,300 internship entries;



Training session on Hammerhead shark identification at College of Fisheries, Mangalore on 02 May 2025. © Usha Ravindra



Hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna cf. zygaena*) recorded by students at Dhakke, Mangalore during their internship in May 2025. © St. Aloysius students



200 workshop training field visits; 200 literature-based; ~20 test entries).

- 🦈 Published three outreach articles covering workshop proceedings in regional media, including *The Hindu* and *Zoo's Print*.
- 🦈 Eight unchartered artisanal landings along Mangalore & Kapu coastline were mapped by interns. This information could help impede any developmental projects if proposed in these areas in future.

Challenges faced

Although all participating colleges expressed interest in the internship program, they requested stipends to financially support their students. Due to funding constraints, internships could not be extended to all institutions. Based on priority and available resources, the Zoo Outreach Organisation could support six students to undertake internships near prime shark and/or bycatch landing sites.

Participant numbers and locations

Total students trained: 307; Total internship students: 51; Total workshops conducted: 8; Total colleges covered for training workshops: 8; Total fish landing sites covered in shark/bycatch monitoring: 17.

Measurable outcomes

- 🦈 307 students introduced to shark conservation & monitoring
- 🦈 Network of eight coastal colleges across three states (Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala)
- 🦈 17 fish landing sites identified & monitored during internship
- 🦈 Two observation reports published on shark/bycatch landings
- 🦈 1,500 observations inputted in Citizen Science website
- 🦈 Conducted 30+ mentorship meetings (April-July) guiding 22 interns across 4 colleges in report writing, data collection, Excel, Google Drive, mapping basics, literature review, and morphometric analysis using JMicrovision
- 🦈 Three media articles published in *The Hindu* & *Zoo's Print* on project activities

Acknowledgments

We thank the WCT-BEES grant for funding the project; Dr. Biju Kumar from University of Kerala for guidance; father Churchill from South Asian Fishermen Fraternity for guiding students on fish & fisher welfare thinking;



Queen Mary college students documenting artisanal fish landings in citizen science website during their internship in May 2025. © Queen Mary college students

Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India
Block-6, Tamilnadu Slum Clearance Board-nochi Nagar, 119, Block-6, Tamilnadu Slum Clearance Board-nochi Nagar, 119, Kamaraj Salai, Nochi Nagar, Mylapore, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600004, India
Lat 13.038146° Long 80.28015°
12/05/2025 06:46 AM GMT +05:30



Field visit to Mudasalodai fishing harbor to train students on how to conduct community surveys with fishers, document landings, scientific photography, and data organisation on 04 April 2025.
© Usha Ravindra

Abisha C. from Dakshin foundation for being a resource person and Arjun Viswa for helping with translation & photography; the following college staff/representatives for their support with training workshops: Dr. Durariraja, Dr. Karappuswamy, and Dr. B. Ahilan from Fisheries College and Research Institute, Thoothukudi; Dr. Vijayanand from Annamalai University, Parangipettai; Vishnu H., and Arun C.R. from University of Kerala; Dr. Samuel, Dr. Prince, Naufal Nazium, and Dr. Immanuel from Centre for Marine Science and Technology (CMST), Rajakkamangalam, Kanyakumari; Glavin Thomas and Marvel lobo from St. Aloysius college, Mangalore, Karnataka; Dr. Kumar Naik, Mr. Sanjay, Dr. H.N. Anjanayappa from College of Fisheries, Mangalore; Ms. Malathi and Ms. Basheera from St. Mary's Queen College, Chennai; Noorul Samsoon and Ms. Ganishka from Thassim Beevi, Kilakarai, Ramanathapuram. Last but not the least, we are very grateful to and thank all the fisherfolk for their co-operation and participation.

Future plans/next steps

The project results on hammerheads sharks will be used to kickstart the Hammerhead Watch project, where more students will be

trained & supported to continue document hammerhead landings at prime sites identified from this project. More colleges will be networked to establish internship tie-ups while engaging the current ones. Currently, the Cit-Sci portal is undergoing an upgrade to improve the user interface, improve existing elements, and include some additional features. Going forward, this initiative will be expanded across the entire Indian coastline by establishing credit-based collaborations with coastal universities/colleges while further growing the IOCEAN Youth Network, empowering students to take long-term stewardship of marine conservation.



Usha Ravindra*, Latha Ravikumar, P. Kritika, Priyanka Iyer

Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India. *usha@zooreach.org

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Ram Hattikudur Advanced Training in Conservation 2025–26 (Batch 5)

A community of career conservationists to lead the world into restoring wildlife

Background

Global biodiversity is at a tipping point with species vanishing and ecosystems degrading, making it an urgent need to build conservation leaders.

The RHATC Program, a brainchild of Dr Sanjay Molur, stepped into its 5th year in 2025, is designed to provide young aspirants and early-career conservationists a unique platform to learn, engage with leaders, and exchange ideas in the field of conservation. The course provides a unique blend of contemporary conservation biology, science, philosophy, finance, policy, outreach along with equipping the participants with on-ground knowledge, tools, and perspectives needed to address real world conservation challenges while being inclusive, holistic, and scientific.

With an alumnus of 49 graduates from 13 states in India, the theme for the fifth Batch was Ecological Restoration where the Fellows underwent training on planning restoration models alongside conservation. RHATC is one of a kind course combining scientific expertise, grassroot engagement, and innovative thinking. The four-month inhouse immersive program is designed to equip conservation enthusiasts with on-field skills from experts across the globe.

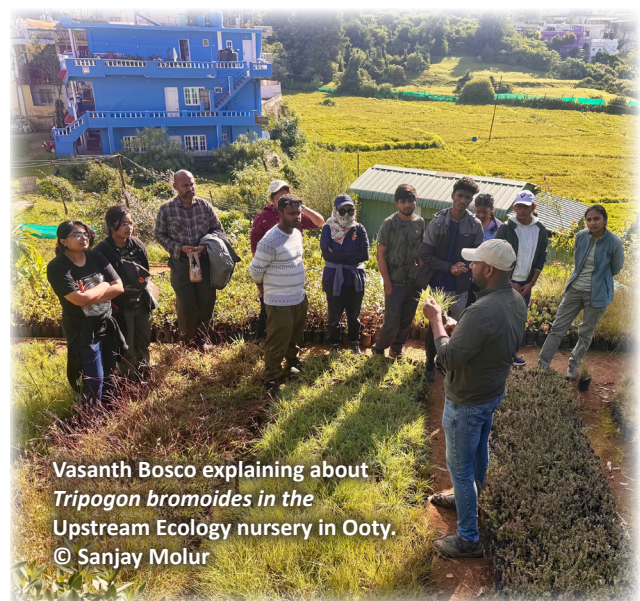
Activities conducted during the reporting period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026

- The RHATC team interviewed youth from different parts of India to select applicants that fit the fellowship.
- The team conducted sessions for the



Fellows on conservation biology, education & outreach, publication & research ethics, taxonomy, conservation assessment and planning, flora and fauna conservation, restoration, wildlife law & policy, scientific writing, fundraising, and other aspects of conservation.

- The Fellows were taken to field trips across the four months for hands-on training and field exposure to learn from experts.
- The Fellows were trained in scientific and popular writing for conservation and given the opportunity to publish.
- The team invited mentors, leaders, experts, and researchers from across India and abroad to train the Fellows in Conservation.



Vasanth Bosco explaining about *Tripogon bromoides* in the Upstream Ecology nursery in Ooty.
© Sanjay Molur



Examining a spiderweb on the crest trail in Coorg. © Sanjana V.K.

Challenges faced

- Making the younger generation understand the importance of responsibility and sticking to promises made during the selection process.

Participant numbers and locations

- The program supported nine Fellows from seven states during the 5th batch of RHATC.

Key partnerships and collaborations

- The program partnered and collaborated with 109 resource people, mentors, leaders, field contacts, experts, and funders from 37 organizations across the 4-months.

Key achievements and outcomes

- The program successfully ended the fifth batch with nine graduates from seven states.
- More than 60% of the graduates are already working in the field of conservation across different landscapes in India.
- The Fellows published a special edition for Zoo's Print, an international conservation magazine.
- The Fellows completed a 15-day mentorship challenge across three locations – lateritic plateaus at Kasargod, deciduous forests at Annamalai, and rocky outcrops at Tumkur; coming up with detailed project reports on restoring each of these landscapes.

Measurable outcomes

- The team organized 100+ sessions led by 109 resource people for the Fellows.
- The course organized 20 field trips across different landscapes and ecosystems in southern India.
- Five graduates are working in conservation and research positions with different government institutes and NGOs across India.
- Three detailed project reports for eco-



Exploring a hill stream at twilight in Coorg. © Sanjay Molur



Fireflies sparkling around Iyal farm in Pollachi. © Gokul K



Interaction with Srinivasan Kasinathan from NCF Annamalai restoration project in Valparai. © Trisa Bhattacharjee



Group photo with the Rainforest Retreat team in Coorg. © Sanjay Molur

restoration of three landscapes produced.

- 28 articles published in Zoo's Print magazine.

Acknowledgments

The RHATC team is grateful to: all the funders and supporters – Coromandel International (Murugappa Group), Mansukhani Family, Chandrakala and Satwady Govardhan Shetty, and Sanjay Manohar Family & Friends; all the research institutes, NGOs, and individual researchers who collaborated throughout the course for sessions, mentorship, and field trips; and the admin team back at Zooreach for all their efforts and support.



RHATC team after plantation in Ooty. © Sanjay Molur



Discussion with Joss Brooks at Pitchandikulam Library. © G. Pannagasri



RHATC Fellows with Zooreach Team at the office.

Future plans/next steps

After successfully completing five batches, the RHATC team is now working towards launching a one-year internship-cum-training program as an extended pathway of RHATC, designed to deepen learning and provide more immersive conservation experience. Stay tuned for what's coming next!

Trisa Bhattacharjee*, Payal Molur, Priyanka Iyer, Latha Ravikumar, P. Kritika, B. Ravichandran & Sanjay Molur
Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India.*trisa@zooreach.org

Citation: Bhattacharjee, T., P. Molur, P. Iyer, L. Ravikumar, P. Kritika, B. Ravichandran & S. Molur (2026). Ram Hattikudur Advanced Training in Conservation 2025–26 (Batch 5). Zooreach Annual Report 2025–26. In: *Zoo's Print* 41(3): 18–21.

Mansukhani family

Coromandel 
FUTURE POSITIVE


murugappa

Chandrakala and Satwady Goverdhan Shetty Fellowship

Sally Walker Conservation Fund

Sanjay Manohar family & friends

PhD programme at Zooreach



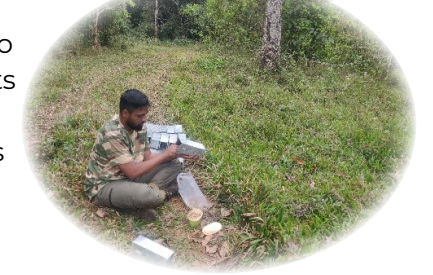
The Systematics, Ecology, and Conservation Lab at Zoo Outreach Organisation Trust started its PhD programme in Conservation Action, as a Research Institute affiliated with the Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE) in January 2024. There are two renowned scientists/conservationists guiding students/PhD Scholars – Dr. Sanjay Molur and Dr. Bhargavi Srinivasulu. Currently there are five PhD Scholars: Ms. Trisa Bhattacharjee, Mr. Sushanth S, and Ms. Amrin Ansari registered with Dr. Molur. Mr. Asad Gopi and Ms. Ananditha Pascal are with Dr. Srinivasulu. Also, we collaborate with professors from MIT (Manipal Institute of Technology), and Shristi for the work.

Trisa Bhattacharjee registered in April 2024, is studying the different threats to elephants in Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve, and whether it has varied in the past 50 years through documenting anthropogenic changes and people's perception. The study focuses on understanding the impact of humans on forest and elephant conservation, along with analysing the present state of human-elephant interaction in the landscape. The study will help create education outreach programs and stakeholder-led mitigation for human-elephant coexistence in the region.



S. Sushanth registered in October 2024, is working on patterns and underlying drivers of species composition changes of plants, herpetofauna, birds and mammals that occurs during the process of secondary succession in the southern Western Ghats, India. His

work examines biodiversity dynamics, shifts in community structure, functional diversity across successional gradients. The work also aims to generate insights into ecological recovery process and inform conservation planning and restoration strategies in human-modified plantation mosaic landscapes within this biodiversity hotspot of India.

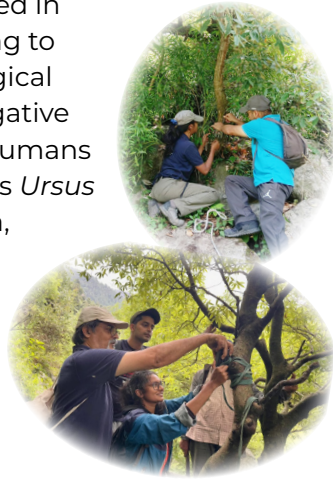


Asad Gopi registered in October 2024, is studying the distribution and movement ecology of the Indian Flying Fox *Pteropus medius* and investigates how land-use and land-cover changes influence their spatial ecology in Greater Hyderabad, Telangana, India. His work examines patterns of habitat use, roost selection, foraging movements, and connectivity across urban, peri-urban, and semi-natural landscapes. The study also aims to assess the impacts of human-modified environments on bat behaviour and population dynamics, generating insights for urban biodiversity conservation, mitigation of human-wildlife conflict, and evidence-



based management strategies for this ecologically important and human-reliant flying mammal in a rapidly urbanizing region of India.

Amrin Ansari registered in October 2025, is looking to understand the ecological drivers behind the negative interaction between humans and Asiatic Black Bears *Ursus thibetanus* in Chamba, Himachal Pradesh. The study aims on generating baseline data from the landscape to form the basis of evidence-based conservation planning for the species.



Ananditha Pascal registered in October 2025, is working on the macroecology of the Hemidactylus geckos and the role in rock outcrops in peninsular India. The work aims to incorporate ecological niche modelling to understand climate change and LULC impacts on hemidactyl geckos, determine the variation in their functional traits in association with eco-geography and also study the role and diversity patterns across rock outcrops, which are important ecosystems for species like the gekkonids. These seemingly divergent, but highly integrated studies, bridge data-driven macroecological approaches to conservation-evidence, bringing much-needed attention to the threatened, yet neglected Hemidactylus geckos and rock outcrops of peninsular India.



Coursework

The PhD programme is also incorporated with course work studies, wherein the students will choose either these or courses outside the

organisation for their mandatory credits. The courses are:

- ✍ IUCN Red List Assessment Training (5 credits): This is a 5-day hands on training workshop conducted to learn all about the IUCN Red List of Species and a mock species assessment from one of the developers of the present-day criteria and categories for assessments along with learning data-interpretation for conservation planning
- ✍ Conservation Translocation Training (4 credits): This is a 3-day hand-on learning workshop to understand the basis for reintroductions done scientifically and systematically to promote conservation, to learn principals of translocation, how to differentiate those that are not promoting conservation, and steps to consider while planning a conservation translocation exercise to increase the probability of success for species conservation.
- ✍ Publication and Research Ethics Course (2 credits): This is a 3-day workshop session with the Journal of Threatened Taxa team to learn how to maintain the integrity of scientific publication and research.
- ✍ Conservation Education and Outreach Course (4 credits): This is a 3-day hands on learning training workshop, where we will learn regarding the nuances of education, what kind of education works? Which audiences? What fails? How to bring about behavioural change to achieve our conservation goals
- ✍ Research Methodology: Conservation Implementation (4–6 credits): This is a course work to make scholars understand the various research methods used in for various studies and aspects. It helps to learn how different data collection methods are carried out, what all parameters should be considered.

S. Sushanth*, Trisa Bhattacharjee, Asad Gopi, Amrin Ansari, Ananditha Pascal, Bhargavi Srinivasulu & Sanjay Molur

Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India. *s-sushanth@zooreach.org

Citation: Sushanth, S., T. Bhattacharjee, A. Gopi, A. Ansari, A. Pascal, B. Srinivasulu & S. Molur (2026). PhD programme at Zooreach. Zooreach Annual Report 2025–26. In: *Zoo's Print* 41(3): 22–23.

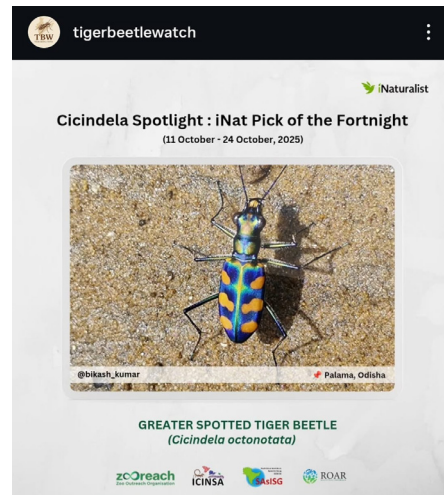
South Asian Invertebrate Specialist Group (SAsISG) & Invertebrate Conservation Information Network of South Asia (ICINSA)

Background

SAsISG and ICINSA focuses on conserving invertebrates in the South Asian region. The project targets on expanding membership and building networks with invertebrate experts across South Asia; completing global Red List assessments for more invertebrate groups; identifying important invertebrate habitats; identifying overlooked & exploited invertebrate groups; develop and implement conservation action plan model for invertebrate groups; promoting research on taxonomy & natural history; promoting conservation awareness among the public and wildlife enthusiasts; develop policy interventions; capacity building workshops to train conservationists in all aspects of invertebrate conservation; and supporting more invertebrate conservation works in the region.

Activities, key achievements, and outcomes during the reporting period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026

🌿 Five subnetwork groups under SAsISG have been formed: Marine Molluscs, Tiger Beetles, Tarantulas, Diplopoda. Five leaders have been nominated to lead the subnetwork groups for the South Asian region: R. Ravinesh (Marine Molluscs), J. Chaithra Shree (butterflies), V. Sharan (Tiger Beetles), (Gautam Kadam & A. Abinesh (tarantulas), and Aparna Kalawate (Diplopoda). They have been tasked to expand the network across South Asia and to take up activities to promote the



Observations from 'Tiger Beetle Quest' conducted by Tiger beetle watch group and Rhopalocera and Odonata Association of Rajapalayam (ROAR) © Bikash Kumar posted on Tigerbeetlewatch insta page

conservation of their respective invertebrate groups in the region.

🌿 More than 250 members (major representations being from India and fewer from Sri Lanka, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Abu Dhabi, Bangladesh, Maldives, and UK) joined ICINSA. Based on the commitment and actions of active members in the upcoming years, they will be appointed to SAsISG membership. Around 24 members have been added to the SAsISG given their contributions to invertebrate conservation.





'Spend time with butterflies', one day workshop to butterfly enthusiasts in collaboration with Nilgiri Biosphere Nature Park (NBNP) on 9 August 2025 at NBNP. © Usha Ravindra

🌿 The SASISG vision, activities, and invertebrate conservation topics were communicated in international conferences, regional talks, workshops, and social media posts. To name a few, SCB's International Conference for Conservation Biology Conference at Brisbane 15–20 June 2025; Butterfly workshop with Niligiri Biosphere Nature Park on 09 August 2025; A talk & field visit on firefly conservation by Sri Ram Murali & Chandrasekhar Ratnam



***Quedara basiflava*, a Western Ghat endemic. One of the 350+ species of butterflies of India that will be assessed in the future IUCN Red List workshop for butterflies. © Tarun Karmakar**

for Ram Hattikudur Advanced Training in Conservation fellows in December 2025; and seven SASISG social media posts.

- 🌿 The IUCN Red List Training workshop was conducted on 18–22 October 2025, training 12 people from across India in the Red Listing framework & methods.
- 🌿 11 November launched as World Tiger Beetle Day by SASISG during the Tiger Beetle Red List workshop in July 2024 was successfully celebrated the following year in 2025 by Graphic Era University, Wildlife Institute of India, Rhopalocera and Odonata Association of Rajapalayam (ROAR) organisations via international talk. The event was celebrated by ROAR & Tiger



New members, Sriram Murali & Chandrasekar Ratnam, added to the SASISG network by SASISG co-chair, Dr. Sanjay Molur. © Usha Ravindra

Beetle Watch group by conducting a 'Tiger Beetle quest' on iNaturalist from 28 June 2025 – 06 July 2025 which yielded good observations.

- 🌿 11 'Bugs r all' publications focused on invertebrates taxonomy, natural history, conservation published in Zoo's Print.
- 🌿 For Red List assessments for butterflies of India, a checklist of a total of 1,383 butterfly species found in India was listed from

literature, of which, 151 species are endemic and 190 species are near-endemic to the country. Data like distribution, habitat type, habitat threats, species threats, natural history, host plant data (including their distribution and threats) required for assessments from literature have been collated for all endemics from 420 papers and consulting more than 30 experts to keep the database updated. Partial funds needed for the Red List workshop have been raised from the MbZ Species Conservation Fund & IUCN.

Challenges faced

Lack of funds remains to be the core challenge given the humongous amount of work we are yet to do for invertebrate conservation. Being rich in invertebrate diversity, it is crucial we move fast and are able to support the network/s to carry on the tasks.

Key partnerships and collaborations

Partnerships were formed with Tigerbeetlewatch group, The Naturalist School, Rhopalocera and Odonata Association of Rajapalayam (ROAR), Nilgiri Biosphere Nature Park (NBNP), IUCN SSC Dragonfly Specialist Group, and Wild & Dark Earth for various SAsISG & ICINSA activities.

Acknowledgments

We thank IUCN, MBZ Conservation fund for supporting SAsISG network expansion project and Butterfly Red List assessment works.

Next steps

We will be maximizing the SAsISG & ICINSA networks in South Asian regions with the help of current members and leads; launch website for SAsISG; plan taxonomy & conservation training workshops; Conduct Red List assessment workshop for butterflies of India; plan Red List assessments for more invertebrate groups; and develop a first Conservation Action Plan model for invertebrates.



Usha Ravindra*, Latha Ravikumar & Sanjay Molur
Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India. *usha@zooreach.org

Citation: Ravindra, U., L. Ravikumar & S. Molur (2026). South Asian Invertebrate Specialist Group (SAsISG) & Invertebrate Conservation Information Network of South Asia (ICINSA). Zooreach Annual Report 2025–26. In: Zoo's Print 41(3): 24–26.

Conservation Planning Specialist Group – RRC South Asia



Background

Zooreach has been hosting the South Asian Conservation Planning Specialist Group (the then Conservation Breeding Specialist Group) since the 1990s. And as a regional centre, Zooreach conducts species conservation plans (single species and/or multispecies) in different part of India and/or other South Asian countries.

This year two conservation planning workshops were conducted. One conservation plan was developed on six species of small wild cats of Assam and one on the Assam Roofed Turtle. In addition, a facilitated workshop to develop a coalition of snake conservationists was organized.

Activities conducted during the reporting period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026

- ✦ Preplanning for the workshops through regular meetings with the host organization and guiding them on the data required for the planning process on the different species, relevant stakeholder lists, and introducing them to the planning process.
- ✦ Facilitating the conservation plans through workshops in Guwahati, Assam on the six species of small wild cats and the Assam Roofed Turtle.
- ✦ Guiding the host organization to write up

the reports and supporting them with the whole process.

- ✦ Developing the Monitoring and Evaluation model.
- ✦ Scoping Workshop to bring all stakeholders of snakes in the Western Ghats was conducted.
- ✦ Rescue Lab to discuss evidence-based approach to handling and rescuing snakes

Key achievements and outcomes

- ✦ A Species Management Plan developed for the lesser known and often neglected six species of small wild cats in Assam.
- ✦ A Species Management Plan developed for the lesser known and misunderstood Assam Roofed Turtle in Assam.
- ✦ Establishment of the Snake Conservation Coalition of the Western Ghats.

Challenges faced

Lack of understanding of the conservation planning and facilitation process by some stakeholders with no exposure to the SMART and process design techniques.

Participant numbers and locations

There were approximately 120 participants in all the four workshops put together. The conservation plan workshops were conducted in Guwahati, Assam and the snake workshops were conducted in Lonavala, Maharashtra and in Bangalore, Karnataka.



Participants of the small wild cats of Assam Species Management Plan Workshop.
© Zooreach team



Working group in discussion at the small wild cats workshop. © Priyanka Iyer

Key partnerships and collaborations

For the conservation planning workshops, the host organization was Aaranyak and the project was supported by the Assam Forest Department, French Agency for Development, and Assam Project on Forest and Biodiversity Conservation. Collaborators included forest department officials, researchers, scientists, students, and community members who participated in the conservation planning process. For the snake workshops, Zooreach was the host organization supported by Upadhyaya Foundation and the collaborators included more than 25 organizations from around the Western Ghats range states.

Measurable outcomes

Conservation plans for these seven species was an extremely inclusive process with a



Working group discussing the existing initiatives in different protected areas and non-protected areas in Assam. © Priyanka Iyer

one plan approach that considered all the myriad threats faced by the species and aims to develop solutions. These solutions were also mapped to the various stakeholders depending on their role, capacity, and type/ extent of interaction with the species and its habitats. This also included specific timelines. In summary, the plan is specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound, i.e., SMART goals and objectives assigned to the participating stakeholders.

The 25+ organizations supported Snake Conservation Coalition of the Western Ghats was established, several teams formed to tackle various focused topics, MoUs signed, Secretariat established, official website launched, preliminary funds raised for the Secretariat and workshops, and interviews to hire a coordinator underway.

Acknowledgments

Thanks are due to Aaranyak team and all the participants of the workshop for recognizing the need to develop conservation plans for these lesser known and undervalued species and ensuring that the required time and effort was accorded to the process. Also to Upadhyaya Foundation for financial support and to all the organizations and individuals who participated in the various snake workshops.

Future plans/next steps

Future plans are to develop conservation plans for other species such as snakes and invertebrates that are in dire need for conservation action in India.



Priyanka Iyer, Trisa Bhattacharjee & Sanjay Molur
Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India. *priyanka@zooreach.org

Citation: Iyer, P., T. Bhattacharjee & S. Molur (2026). Conservation Planning Specialist Group – RRC South Asia. Zooreach Annual Report 2025–26. In: *Zoo's Print* 41(3): 27–28.

Snake Conservation Coalition of the Western Ghats



Background

Snakes are one of the most misunderstood and persecuted animals in India. They are often killed at sight due to fear or misconception, negating the ecological role they play. With a rich diversity of snakes, Western Ghats is facing increasing human-snake interactions, unscientific protection measures like relocation, and stress from habitat loss & other anthropogenic pressures. This emphasizes on the need to develop a region specific, stakeholder-led conservation action plan for the region to ensure coexistence. The need of the hour is to bring together all the stakeholders to work with each other despite the differences and put away personal opinions and beliefs to forward scientific, evidence-based, systematic approach to conservation of snakes in the Western Ghats. This stakeholder initiative was the brainchild of Dr Sanjay Molur and the participants of 25+ organizations ratified the need for a coalition.

Activities conducted during the reporting period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026

🐍 18–19 April 2025 -- Zooreach conducted a 2-day Scoping Workshop on Snake Conservation in Western Ghats at Lonavala, Maharashtra. The program was funded by the Upadhyaya Foundation and supported by Naturefuture. The workshop was facilitated by Dr Sanjay Molur of the Conservation Planning Specialist Group South Asia & Zooreach, followed by sessions conducted by Gerry Martin, Dr Kartik Sunagar, Dr S.R. Ganesh, Dr Chelmala Srinivasulu, Nachiket Utpat, Lisa Gonsalves, Dr Navaz Sharif, Gnaneshwar Ch, Sumanth Bindumadhav, and Dr Freston Marc Sirur. There were several working groups set up throughout the





Working Group discussing on different solutions to conserve snakes.
© Payal Molur

workshop to discuss different related topics.

🐍 8–9 December 2025 -- 2nd workshop called the Snake Rescue Lab was organised in Bangalore, focusing on the development of effective rescue protocols for snake conservation. Again supported by Upadhyaya Foundation, Naturefuture, and Zooreach, the event was facilitated by Dr. Sanjay Molur, who began with an introduction about the objective and the need for the workshop. It was followed by an open conversation among the participants about the present issues and malpractices regarding snake handling.



SCC-WG members launching the Coalition at the India Animal Welfare Forum 2026

There were sessions on legal compliance, decision making, scientific challenges, snake handling, importance of understanding snake physiology for snake bite mitigation and more led by Subhra Sottie, Kedar Bhide, and Gerry Martin. Jose Louise engaged the participants further by explaining about the SARPA app and shared his experience of engaging with snake handlers/ rescuers in Kerala.

Key achievements and outcomes

🐍 At the end of the first workshop the Snake Conservation Coalition of the Western Ghats (SCC-WG) was set up with the vision to 'Ensure conservation of snakes of the



SCC-WG members at the Rescue Lab Workshop in Bangalore. © Sanjay Molur

Western Ghats through multi-stakeholder collaborations and science-based actions through a conservation planning workshop by 2026'.

- 2 The team finalized and launched the SCC-WG logo designed by Aaron Fernandes during the second workshop with all the stakeholders.
- 2 On 31 January 2026, the Snake Conservation Coalition of the Western Ghats website was officially launched with all the stakeholders at the Indian Animal Welfare Conference, Mumbai. The team at present is working towards organizing the Assess-to-Plan and Conservation Action Plan workshops for the snakes in the landscape.

Challenges faced

Fund raising has been the most challenging part. The Secretariat needs support for personnel, infrastructure, and logistics to follow through with various responsibilities and deadlines committed by the coalition members for activities committed.

Key partnerships and collaborations

The Snake Conservation Coalition of the Western Ghats was founded by the following



Working group at the Rescue Lab workshop discussing about the different rescue guidelines for snakes. © Amrin Ansari

organizations: Centre for Wilderness Medicine (Department of Emergency Medicine, Kasturba Medical College), Chameleon Wildlife Organization, Conservation Planning Specialist Group South Asia, Evolutionary Venomics Lab, Humane World For Animals India, India Snakes, Kalinga Foundation, Madras Crocodile Bank Trust, Malabar Awareness and Rescue Center for Wildlife, Mhadei Research Centre, MVR Snake Park & Zoo, Nature future, PfA Wildlife Rescue & Conservation Centre, RESQ Charitable Trust, South Asian Reptile Network, Spreading Awareness On Reptiles & Rehabilitation Programme, Thackeray Wildlife Foundation, The Green Cross, The Last Wilderness Foundation, The Liana Trust, Upadhyaya Foundation, Wildlife Information



Participants of the Rescue Lab Workshop after a successful wrap up. © Sanjay Molur



Participants at the end of Snake Scoping Workshop in Lonavala, Maharashtra.

and Liaison Development, Wildlife SOS, and Zoo Outreach Organisation.

Measurable outcomes

- 🐍 30+ stakeholders (experts, conservationists, researchers, rescuers, policy makers, and others) from 20+ organisations identified the need for three focused workshops and establishing SCC-WG to lay the groundwork for a comprehensive conservation action plan.
- 🐍 The Snake Rescue Lab with 24 participants from 19 organisations shared their knowledge, opinions, and ongoing works directed towards compiling a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for scientific snake rescue.
- 🐍 Seven major working groups formed, and deadlines finalised for their specific tasks.
- 🐍 Partial funds raised for the Assess-to-Plan workshop in June 2025.
- 🐍 SCC-WG Secretariat established at Zooreach.

Acknowledgments

The team is thankful towards all the partnering organizations, funders, collaborators, participants, and researchers who made the coalition and the events possible. Also, a special thanks to the admin team at Zooreach

and Upadhyaya Foundation for making sure that all travel, lodging, and project activities could be conducted smoothly.

Future plans/next steps

The Coalition is all set to conduct the Assess-to-Plan workshop in June and the Conservation Planning workshop in the coming months. The team is positive about the impact the planning will play towards snake conservation and human-snake coexistence in the Western Ghats.



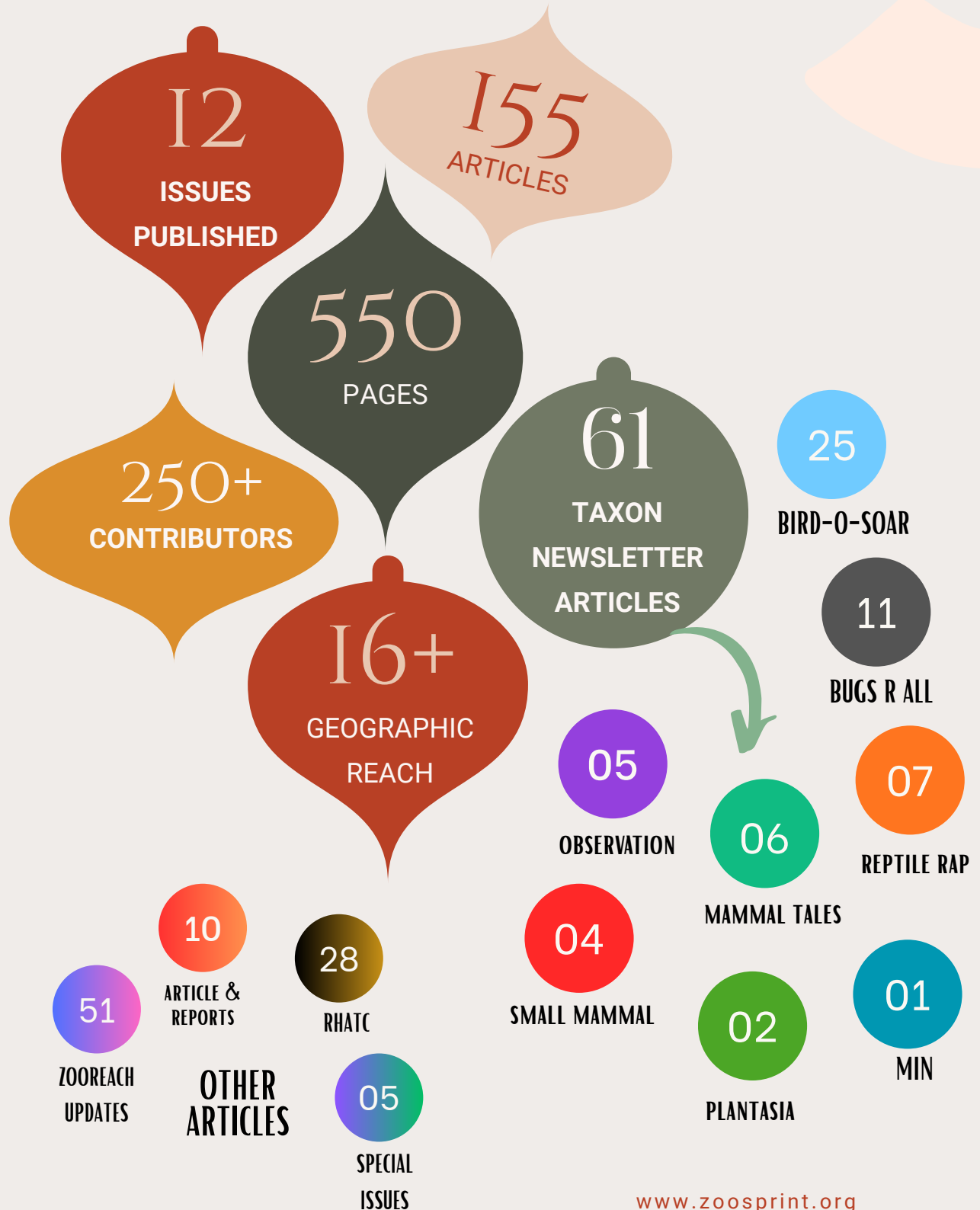
Trisa Bhattacharjee*, Amrin Ansari, Payal Molur & Sanjay Molur

Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India. *trisa@zooreach.org

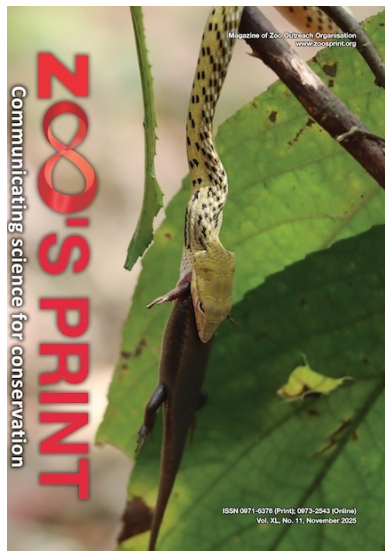
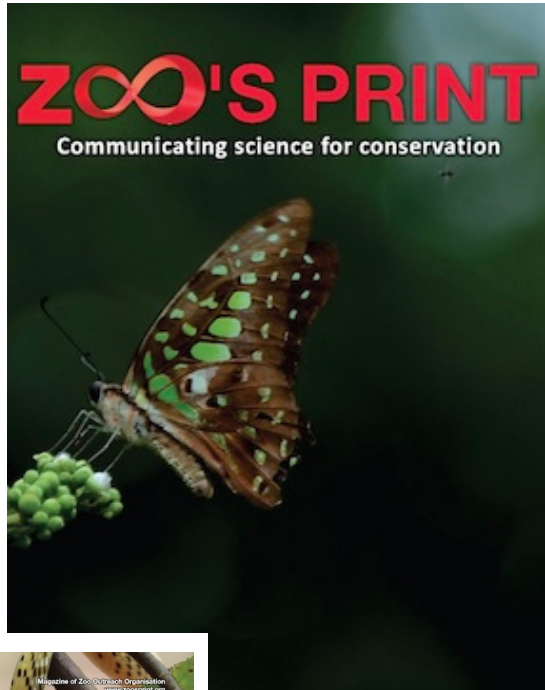
Citation: Bhattacharjee, T., A. Ansari, P. Molur & S. Molur (2026). Snake Conservation Coalition of the Western Ghats. Zooreach Annual Report 2025–26. In: *Zoo's Print* 41(3): 29–32.

ZOO'S PRINT

Communicating Science for Conservation



www.zoosprint.org



Zoo's Print (ISSN 0971-6378 Print; 0973-2543 Online) is the monthly open-access magazine of **Zoo Outreach Organisation** (ZOO), founded in 1985 by Ms. Sally Walker in Mysore. The first issue was published on 21 January 1986, making the magazine now over four decades old. In 2017, Zoo's Print was transformed from a zoo-focused publication into a broader conservation science communication magazine and today it serves as an ideal platform for biologists, amateurs, scientists, citizens, students, and anyone interested in natural history, with the tagline "Communicating Science for Conservation". Zoo's Print remains a key vehicle for this mission, connecting a diverse community of contributors from across India.

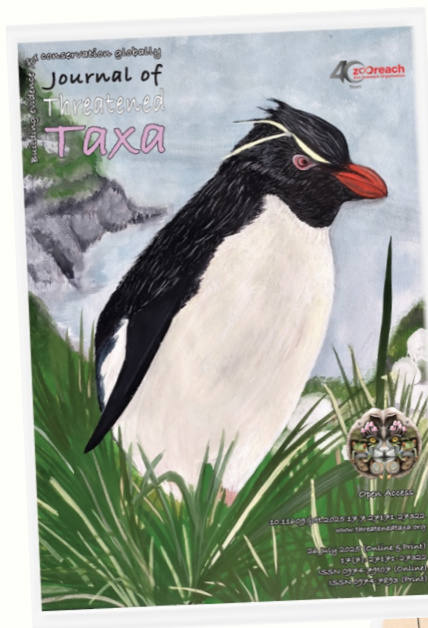
Latha Ravikumar*, R. Marimuthu, R. Rajeshkanna & Sanjay Molur
Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India. *latha@zooreach.org

Citation: Ravikumar, L., R. Marimuthu, R. Rajeshkanna (2026) & S. Molur. Zoo's Print. Zooreach Annual Report 2025-26. In: *Zoo's Print* 41(3): 33-34.

JOURNAL OF THREATENED TAXA

www.threatenedtaxa.org

The Journal of Threatened Taxa (JoTT) (ISSN 0974-7907 Print; 0974-7893 Online) is the monthly open-access, peer-reviewed journal of Zoo Outreach Organisation (ZOO), launched in 2009. JoTT publishes original research, short communications, and notes on the conservation, taxonomy, ecology, and natural history of threatened and poorly known species worldwide. With a mandate to make biodiversity science freely accessible, JoTT has grown into one of the most prolific conservation journals in the world.



753
AUTHORS

16
COUNTRIES

213
ARTICLES

~134
DISTINCT SPECIES

6
RESEARCH THEMES

12
ISSUES

1832
PAGES

**JoTT Monthly Overview: Pages, Publications & Authors
(April 2025 - March 2026)**

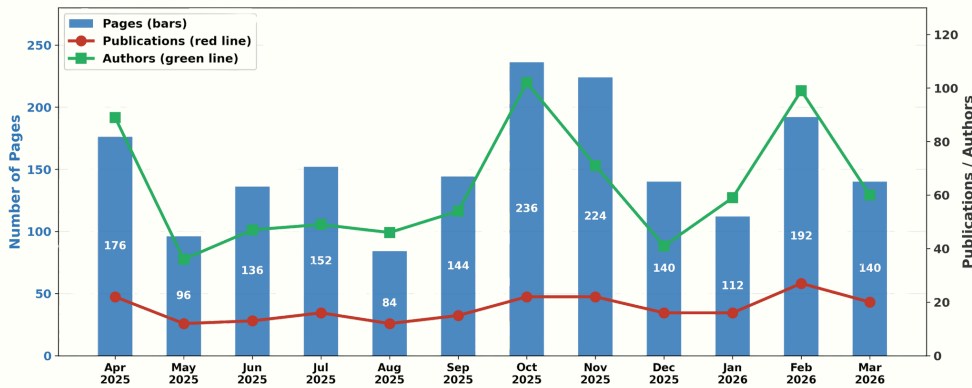


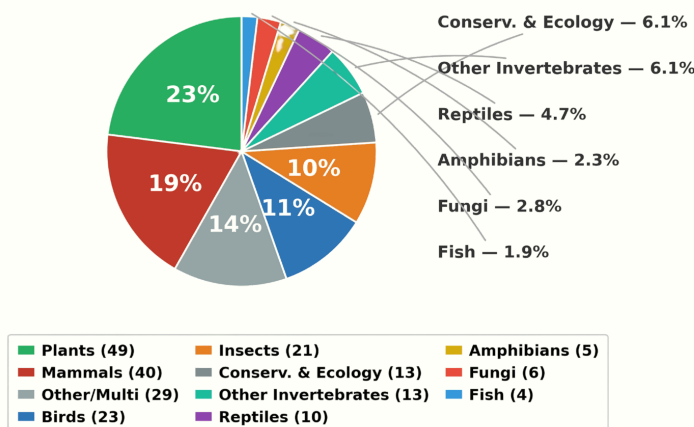
Figure 1. Month-wise data of number of pages, publications, and authors.

Taxonomic Coverage: Articles in JoTT during this period covered a wide spectrum of taxa. **Plants** were the most represented group with 49 articles (23.0%), followed by **Mammals** (40, 18.8%), **Birds** (23, 10.8%), **Insects** (21, 9.9%), **Other Invertebrates** (13, 6.1%), **Reptiles** (10, 4.7%), **Fungi** (6, 2.8%), **Amphibians** (5, 2.3%), and **Fish** (4, 1.9%). An estimated ~134 distinct species were mentioned by scientific name across the 213 publications.

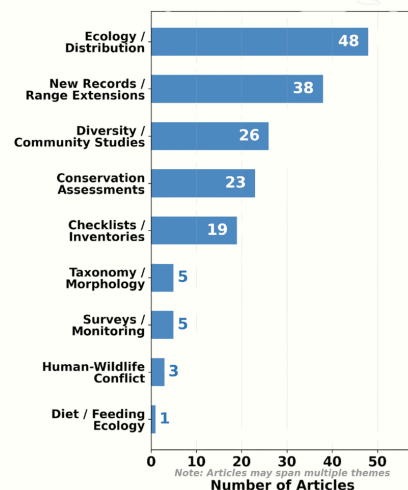
Research Themes: Ecology and distribution studies dominated (48 articles), followed by new records and range extensions (38), diversity and community studies (26), conservation assessments (23), and checklists/inventories (19). Taxonomy and morphology studies accounted for 5 articles.

Article Types: Of the 213 publications, 67 were full Articles, 47 Communications, 38 Short Communications, 32 Notes, 6 Reviews, 2 Book Reviews, 1 Response & Reply, and 20 in the March 2026 issue.

**Taxonomic Group Breakdown
213 Publications (Apr 2025 - Mar 2026)**



**Research Themes
213 Publications (Apr 2025 - Mar 2026)**



B. Ravichandran*, Latha Ravikumar, Chaithra Shree, Paloma Noronha & Sanjay Molur
Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India. *ravi@zooreach.org

Citation: Ravichandran, B. L. Ravikumar, S. Chaithra, P. Noronha & S. Molur (2026). Journal of Threatened Taxa. Zooreach Annual Report 2025–26. In: *Zoo's Print* 41(3): 35–36.

Human-Elephant Coexistence in Coorg & Erode



Background

The Human-Elephant Coexistence Project is one of the pioneer programs by Zooreach across India and southeastern Asia since 2000. As part of the initiative the team has conducted perception studies, education outreach, and training workshops for various stakeholders across the region.

In 2025, the team played a crucial role in understanding perceptions of people across Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve in Tamil Nadu and Coorg in Karnataka towards elephants, human-elephant interactions, casualties, habitat loss, and other factors affecting coexistence in the landscape. Throughout the fieldwork, in both the locations a wide range of emotions were encountered, including anger, frustration, sadness, fear, and surprise. While many community members recognise the underlying causes of the issue, fostering coexistence requires sustained engagement at the community level and careful consideration of diverse perspectives.

Activities conducted during the reporting period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026

Perception studies conducted focused on understanding human experiences related to elephants and other wildlife, with particular emphasis on identifying zones characterised by high, medium, and low levels of negative interactions. Additionally, we documented incidents involving human casualties and property damage attributed to elephants, along with details of compensation provided by the forest department for crop and plantation losses. The studies were conducted over a period of three months across Coorg (Ponnampet and Virajpet taluks were identified as the primary study areas) and Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve (villages in Germalam and Hasanur ranges).

Key achievements and outcomes

- 🐘 The team conducted 700+ perception studies across both the study areas.
- 🐘 50+ villages in Coorg and Sathyamangalam were reached out to.
- 🐘 The study was inclusive of all stakeholders including, local residents, plantation owners, labourers, panchayat members, farmers, daily wage labourers, school teachers, forest department officials, and students

Challenges faced

- 🐘 In Coorg, since the coffee estates are huge parcels or land, a lot of the field time goes in to travelling from one place to the other. Additionally, coffee is a labour-intensive industry, thus making it difficult to be able to talk to the workers other than lunch breaks.
- 🐘 In Sathyamangalam, majority of the people are daily wage labourers and are not in the village throughout the day, leaving the team with a very small window to conduct the studies.

Participant numbers and locations

The study team consisted of six members. Koshik, Sidharth, Sushanth, and Trisa took part





in the perception studies in Coorg; Sidharthan and Trisa conducted the surveys in STR, while Koshik, Nethra, and Yadu helped with translation of all the interviews. Additionally, in Coorg the team was supported by Sumanth Bindumadhav, Vinod Krishnan, Dr. Anupam Thammaiah Chekkera, and Kavan from Humane World for Animals.

Key partnerships and collaborations

The team collaborated with Humane World for Animals for the project activities and Manipal Institute of Technology for knowledge support. The team also worked in communication with Tamil Nadu Forest department.

Acknowledgments

The HECx team would like to thank Humane World for Animals team for their continued support and assistance throughout the project timeline and field work. Thanks to Dr Deepika Shetty from Manipal Institute for Technology for helping us structuring the questionnaire and arranging the data. Additionally, we would like to thank the team at Zooreach including, Mr R. Marimuthu for helping us

connect with the forest department, Dr Sanjay Molur for helping in project planning and implementation, and the admin team, Latha and Rajesh for their continued support.

Future plans/next steps

The team at present will continue the study across both the study areas and expand across other surrounding regions. The final goal of the project is to plan outreach in the regions with all the associated stakeholders, to build coexistence in the region and help build a stakeholder-led conservation action plan for elephants you in the region.



Humane World for Animals.

Koshik V. Rao*, Sidharthan & Trisa Bhattacharjee
Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India. *c-koshik@zooreach.org

Citation: Rao, K.V., Sidharthan & T. Bhattacharjee (2026). Human-Elephant Coexistence in Coorg and Erode. Zooreach Annual Report 2025–26. In: *Zoo's Print* 41(3): 37–38.

Human-Elephant Coexistence HECx awareness programmes



Background

Human-Wildlife negative interactions (HWNl) between humans and wild animals are a common issue worldwide as human populations continue to expand into areas that were originally occupied by wildlife. This expansion leads to habitat loss and fragmentation, forcing wildlife to live in closer proximity to human settlements. The consequences of such negative interactions include crop destruction, reduced agricultural productivity, competition for grazing lands and water resources, livestock predation, injury and loss of human lives, damage to infrastructure, and an increased risk of disease transmission between wildlife and livestock.

Although there is no permanent solution to human-wildlife negative interactions, their impacts can be significantly reduced through effective management and collaborative approaches. This involves understanding the underlying causes of negative interactions,

implementing integrated mitigation strategies, and engaging local communities as active participants in conservation efforts. By focusing on prevention, mitigation, and coexistence strategies, it is possible to promote a more harmonious relationship between humans and wildlife.

Activities conducted during the reporting period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026

As part of the awareness initiative, 33 Human-Wildlife Coexistence (HWCx) street plays, eight Human-Elephant Coexistence (HECx) street plays, and five school awareness programmes were conducted to educate local communities and students about safe practices and coexistence with wildlife.

Key achievements and outcomes

Through street plays and awareness programmes, community members and students were thoroughly informed about



Street play: Highlights the significance of Lord Vinayaga (Elephant God) in Hindu mythology as the remover of obstacles.



The villagers who enthusiastically watched and engaged with the street play



The Forest Range Officer formally inaugurating the HECx school awareness programme for students

Students engaging in the programme by posing with elephant masks and awareness booklets

HWNI and Human-Elephant negative interactions (HENI), including wildlife behaviour, causes of negative interactions, and the importance of coexistence. Participants were also introduced to a variety of practical “dos and don’ts” related to wildlife encounters from an individual safety perspective, helping them understand how to protect themselves and their families from potential risks

posed by wild animals. These programmes provided practical guidance and safety advice for people living in areas where wildlife interactions are common.

Challenges faced

The implementation of activities was occasionally delayed due to the time required



The street play effectively portrays how uncontrolled tourism disrupts wildlife and damages their habitats



Villagers and forest frontline staff participating as the audience of the street play



Highlights the harmonious coexistence between humans and wildlife in the past

to obtain permission from the relevant authorities.

interaction areas were distributed to villagers.

Participant numbers and locations

A total of 6,000 community members and 400 students benefited from the programmes. The activities were conducted in the Nilgiris, Coimbatore, Anamalai, Kodaikanal, and Dharmapuri Forest Divisions.

Acknowledgments

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Tamil Nadu Biodiversity and Greening Project for Climate Change Response (TBGPCCR, Tamil Nadu Forest Department), Asian Elephant Support, USA and SWORD Adhiaman Kazhaikuzhu, Krishnagiri.

Key partnerships and collaborations

Forest Department, local NGOs, village head & headmaster/headmistress of the schools.



Measurable outcomes

- 👤 Forty-one street plays and five school awareness programmes were successfully conducted.
- 👤 The programmes reached around 6,000 community members and 400 students.
- 👤 Awareness activities covered 41 villages and five schools across the target areas.
- 👤 Four-hundred elephant booklets in the vernacular/local language and 400 elephant masks were distributed to students as part of the awareness programme. Additionally, 6,000 notices containing important “dos and don’ts” for people living in human-wildlife negative



Rengasamy Marimuthu*

Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India. *marimuthu@zooreach.org

Citation: Marimuthu, R.(2026). Human-Elephant Coexistence HECx awareness programmes. Zooreach Annual Report 2025–26. Zooreach Annual Report 2025–26. In: *Zoo's Print* 41(3): 39–41.

Classrooms for Coexistence

Background

Children today are growing up increasingly disconnected from nature, with fewer opportunities to learn about wildlife in meaningful ways. At the same time, they are future decision-makers and community influencers who can help shape more positive attitudes toward the natural world. Building awareness and understanding at an early age is therefore essential for fostering responsible behaviour and promoting coexistence.

The Classrooms for Coexistence programme was developed by the Zoo Outreach Organisation, with support from Coromandel International Limited, to address this gap. The program introduces school children to the idea that wildlife is an integral part of our shared environment and that safe and respectful coexistence is possible. Through engaging educational materials, activities, and discussions, the initiative aims to replace fear with knowledge, encourage empathy for wildlife, and empower students to become ambassadors for coexistence in their communities.

Activities conducted during the reporting period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026

As part of the awareness initiative, 11 school awareness programmes were conducted in October 2025, with follow-up activities carried out in February 2026.

Key Achievements and Outcomes

Increased awareness among students about daily-life wildlife, including insects, amphibians, reptiles, and birds commonly found around homes and schools.

- 🐸 Students demonstrated improved observation skills, sharing real-life wildlife encounters and environmental observations.
- 🐸 Strong engagement from teachers and students, including student-led initiatives such as the ocean conservation drama.
- 🐸 Reinforcement of ecological concepts such as pollination, food chains, habitat loss, adaptation, and ecosystem balance.
- 🐸 Students showed improved understanding of the importance of biodiversity and coexistence with wildlife.

Challenges Faced

- 🐸 Large student numbers in some schools required sessions to be conducted in multiple batches.
- 🐸 Limited infrastructure in certain schools made logistics and classroom management challenging.



Using jenga blocks to demonstrate the interconnectedness of all life. © Tandrili Baruah



The sit and stand assessment method help the team understand the knowledge base of the children. © Payal Molur

- 🐼 Eklavya Residential School, Ooty – 80 students (Grades 6–8)
- 🐼 Government Tribal Residential School, Hasanur, Erode – 50 students
- 🐼 Government High School, Germalam, Erode – 50 students
- 🐼 Vidya Vanam School, Anaikatti, Coimbatore – 65 Kids
- 🐼 Northern Lights academy, Coimbatore – 50 kids

Locations covered:

Coimbatore, Chennai, Cuddalore, Erode, The Nilgiris, Ranipet, districts of Tamil Nadu.

- 🐼 In some cases, teacher participation during sessions was lower than expected.
- 🐼 Weather conditions occasionally forced programme modifications, such as shifting outdoor sessions indoors.

Participant Numbers and Locations

- 🐼 Through these awareness programmes, a total of 751 students from 11 schools were reached.
- 🐼 Panchayat Union Middle School, Thyagavalli, Cuddalore – 30 students
- 🐼 Panchayat Union Middle School, Manthoppu, Cuddalore – 55 students
- 🐼 Government Higher Secondary School, Periyakuppam, Cuddalore – 111 students
- 🐼 Government Higher Secondary School, Ranipet – 100 students
- 🐼 Government ADW Higher Secondary School, Karai, Ranipet – 45 students
- 🐼 Government Higher Secondary School, Kathivakkam, Chennai – 115 students

Key Partnerships and Collaborations

Zoo Outreach Organisation (programme implementation), Coromandel International Limited (programme support), Namma School Namma Ooru Palli (NSNOP), School Education Department, Tamil Nadu, Chief, District, and Block Education Officers, NGC District Coordinators, District Eco club Coordinator, and local education stakeholders Headmaster/ Headmistress and other teachers.





Students showcasing issues that plague the ocean and what should be done to save it through drama.
© Koshik Rao







murugappa




Coromandel 
FUTURE POSITIVE


ZEN
ZOO Educator Network

Measurable Outcomes

-  Over 750 students directly engaged through workshops and follow-up sessions.
-  Students demonstrated over 80% recall accuracy of ecological concepts in follow-up assessments in some schools.
-  Increased student participation in nature observation activities and wildlife documentation.
-  Several schools requested additional sessions and career guidance programmes related to conservation.

Future Plans / Next Steps

-  Conduct additional follow-up workshops and advanced sessions in participating schools.
-  Develop career guidance sessions on conservation and wildlife biology for interested students.
-  Expand the programme to more schools in rural and tribal regions of Tamil Nadu.

-  Introduce student-led biodiversity observation projects to further strengthen ecological awareness and engagement.

Acknowledgments

Zoo Outreach Organisation extends sincere thanks to Coromandel International Limited for supporting the programme and to the school administrations, teachers, and students who enthusiastically participated in the workshops. The contributions of programme facilitators and local coordinators were instrumental in the successful implementation of the sessions.

Payal Molur*, Priyanka Iyer, Sidharthan, P. Kritika, Tandrali Baruah & R. Marimuthu

Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India. *marimuthu@zooreach.org

Citation: Molur, P., P. Iyer, Sidharthan, P. Kritika, T. Baruah & R. Marimuthu (2026). Classrooms for Coexistence. Zooreach Annual Report 2025–26. In: *Zoo's Print* 41(3): 42–44.

Communicating with colors

What if you can think and talk in colors? Isn't it amazing that anyone in the world can understand you with just colors and lines even when you don't speak their language?

Poojitha was given this opportunity to express ideas and solutions through art when she joined Zooreach as an intern (now a happy member here) in June 2025.

The projects she was involved in were:

I. The Shoal Project

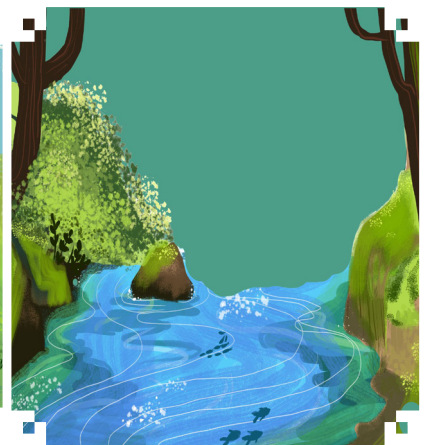
The Shoal project is about an endemic fish named 'Miss Kerala' *Sahyadria denisonii*, and she helped the team with collecting information and converting them into simplified and creative content.

Payal Molur developed the education materials and my role was to write and use colors to communicate. This led to the making of the cover page of the education packet and the tunnel book. Aakanksha Komanduri helped us with the illustrations in the Education Manual.

Kritika made this beautiful and huge map depicting the west flowing rivers of the Western Ghats. Animal and plant sticker were made by Kritika, Pannagasri, Elakshi, and Poojitha.

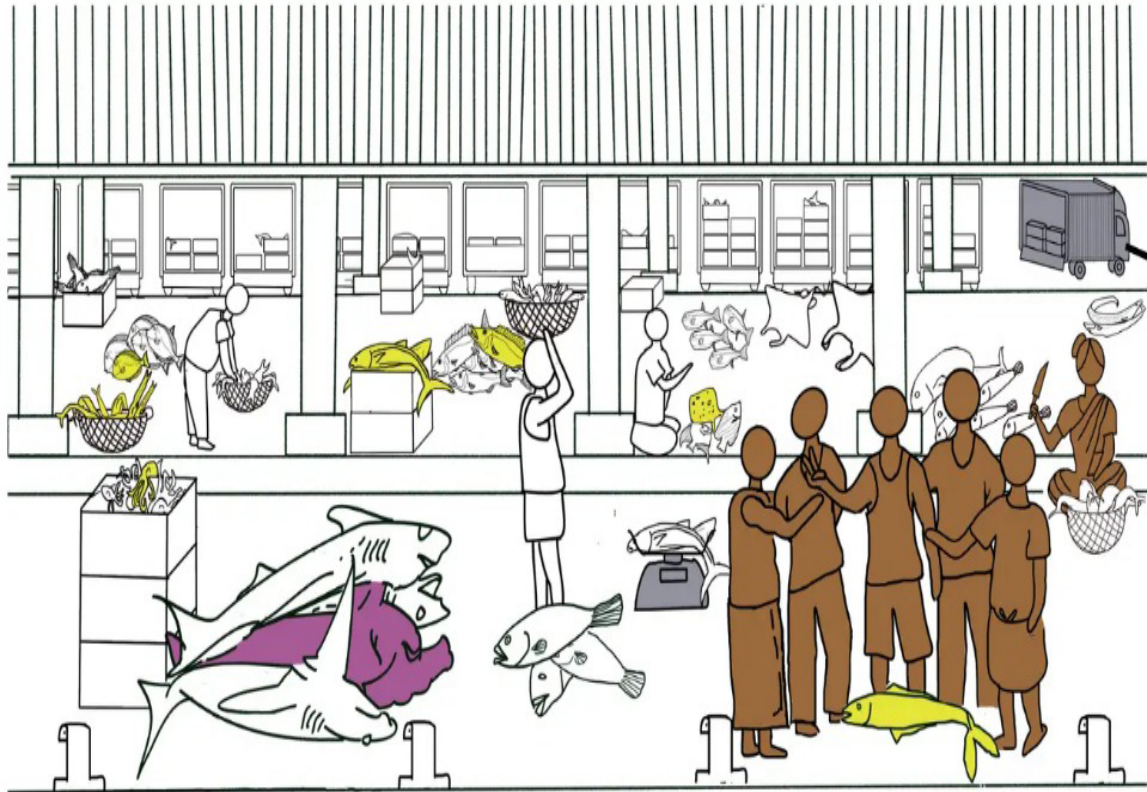
Through this, children learn about the elevations and where an animal lives along with the fish Miss Kerala in different ranges and also the threats.

Priyanka was involved in making the different and cute versions of our very own mascot – Denise.



IOcean

For IOcean, the team made illustrations which depicts the journey of a fish from the Ocean to our plates. This can be seen in Ayla's day out in the principle 6 in our 'Magic of the Ocean' website. One of the many interesting games from The Magic of the Ocean shows which rock personality you have! It is called 'Which Rockstar are you?' from principle 2. Take this and you will find cute rock characters with hands, legs and face! Kritika, Nethra, and Poojitha had a fun time making them.



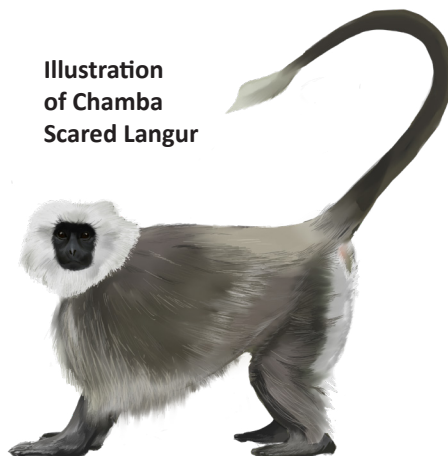
One of the Illustrations from Ayla's day out

II. The Chamba Project

Our team working in Chamba are involved in restoration of the Himalayan region and also in the conservation of the Chamba Scared Langur along with outreach programs.

Poojitha had the opportunity to make some stickers as a part of the outreach program to be distributed to children.

Illustration of Chamba Scared Langur



Logos

This was a tricky part. Logos for The Himalayan Restoration Project and the Himalayan Black Bear project were made. The instructions given were to make it look simple. After a few attempts, Poojitha was successful in making them look good and also simple.



Journal of Threatened Taxa & Zoo's Print Covers

Vol. 17 No. 3 (2025)

The illustration of a Bag Moth was made when Poojitha got so amazed by the amount and the number of things the bag worm carries on its back.

Vol. 17 No. 8 (2025)

The Little Andaman illustration by Priyanka conveys that the humans have power to either destroy or safeguard our land and biodiversity.

Vol. 17 No. 9 (2025)

The nine Indian vultures was made by Poojitha in the month when Vulture Day was celebrated.

Vol. 17 No. 10 (2025)

A Warty Hammer Orchid, a male thynnine, Flame Lily *Gloriosa superba* and a bag worm was drawn and painted by Pannagasri using color pencils and water colors.

Vol. 18 No. 1 (2026)

The Golden-headed Lion Tamarin was made by Kritika. She made this beautiful piece using watercolors and acrylics.

Vol. 18 No. 2 (2026)

Digital illustration of *Impatiens chamchumroonii* was one of the first whole plant illustrations Poojitha has done after the making of Chamba stickers and it turned out good!

Zoo's Print

Vol. XLI, No. 1, January 2026

Special edition of the Zoo's Print has all the reports and activities done by the RHATC batch of that year. It is made by all the artists in the group. This beautiful illustration of Lesser Florican *Sypheotides indicus* male in a lush grassland was made by Shreya Yadav, Srijita Pal and G. Pannagasri of RHATC batch 2025–26.



Posters

Posters are one of the best ways to reach people of any age and background through art! Kritika made these informative posters for the Chamba Project to educate people of the consequences of their actions and the dos & don'ts after planting native trees on their land.

All the illustrations which were made involved so many emotions flowing through us and reaching the paper in colors. We hope it touches every heart and gives enough information and inspiration to especially those whose language we might not be able to speak.



Poster made by Kritika

Acknowledgments

We really thank Sanjay Molur for giving us this opportunity to work towards conservation in our own way and Payal Molur for guiding us in the Shoal Project. We are also grateful to all our peers in Zooreach who have given us invaluable suggestions for the illustrations and to other team members – Aakanksha Koman-duri, Nethra Prem, Elakshi Molur, G. Pannagasri, Shreya Yadav, and Srijita Pal who speak the same colors for conservation!

Dupati Poojitha*, P. Kritika & Priyanka Iyer
Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore,
Tamil Nadu, India. *c-poojitha@zooreach.org

Citation: Poojitha, D., P. Kritika & P. Iyer (2026).
Communicating with colors. Zooreach Annual Report
2025–26. In: *Zoo's Print* 41(3): 45–48.

Learning Beyond the Office: How Zooreach Staff Bring Back Knowledge from the Field

Conservation work thrives not only in forests, oceans, or classrooms, but also in the spaces where people gather to exchange knowledge at conferences, workshops, and collaborative meetings. Over the past year, members of the Zoo Outreach Organisation (Zooreach) participated in a wide range of national and international gatherings. These engagements allowed staff to learn new skills, share field experiences, and bring fresh perspectives back into Zooreach programmes across India.

Conservation Planning Workshop for the Assam Roofed Turtle

Date: 02–05 April 2025

Location: Guwahati, Assam

Zooreach Representative: Dr. Sanjay Molur and Priyanka Iyer

Role: Workshop Facilitator

The workshop organised by Aaranyak brought together forest department officials, researchers, and conservation experts to develop a conservation strategy for the 'Critically Endangered' (CR) Assam Roofed Turtle *Pangshura sylhetensis*. Participants identified priority actions related to research, habitat management, and outreach to guide coordinated conservation efforts.

7th Field-Based Training on Advances in Wildlife Research with Special Emphasis on Sloth Bear Conservation in India

Date: 09–13 April 2025

Location: Mount Abu, Rajasthan

Zooreach Representative: Amrin Ansari

Role: Workshop Participant and Presenter

The training organized by the International Association for Bear Research and Management (IBA) and Wildlife and Conservation Biology Research Foundation



7th Field-Based Training on 'Advances in Wildlife Research' attended by Amrin Ansari. © WCB Team

(WCB Research Foundation) focused on field research techniques such as camera trapping, animal sign identification, vegetation studies, and wildlife health monitoring. Amrin also presented research on human–bear interactions in the Himalayan region.

Snake Conservation Scoping Workshop

Date: 16–17 April 2025

Location: Lonavala, Maharashtra

Zooreach Representatives: Dr. Sanjay Molur, Trisa Bhattacharjee, and Payal Molur

Role: Workshop Facilitator and Organizer

A 2-day scoping workshop for conservation of snakes in the Western Ghats was organized in Lonavala, Maharashtra to get all the stakeholders on a single platform to set aside opinions and differences and work towards a common goal of snake conservation. This led to the formation of the Snake Conservation Coalition of the Western Ghats with the unanimous decision by the participants to have to Secretariat at Zooreach propelled by Dr Sanjay Molur who was the brainchild of the scoping workshop.



Trisa Bhattacharjee attending the Biodiversity Working Group at the GLF Asia Community and Action Week 2025 and playing the game Solution Trees. © GLF Team

2025 GLF Asia Community and Action Week

Date: 21–24 April 2025

Location: Jakarta, Indonesia

Zooreach Representative: Trisa Bhattacharjee

Role: Speaker

Organised by the Youth in Landscapes initiative of the Global Landscape Forum, the event brought together young leaders and practitioners working on landscape restoration. Trisa presented the Himalayan Restoration Project, highlighting experiences in landscape restoration and community-based conservation.

Species Management Planning Workshop for Small Wild Cats in Assam

Date: 21–26 April 2025

Location: Assam

Zooreach Representative: Dr. Sanjay Molur and Priyanka Iyer

Role: Facilitator

The workshop organized by Aaranyak brought together forest department officials, researchers, and conservation practitioners to develop science-based strategies for conserving six small wild cat species in Assam. Using participatory planning tools developed by the IUCN SSC Conservation Planning Specialist Group, participants identified threats, research needs, and collaborative conservation actions.



Trisa and the team doing the biomapping activity in Mount Halimun Salak National Park. © Ana Yi Soto

Landscape Leadership Camp 2025

Date: 25–29 April 2025

Location: Mount Halimun Salak National Park, Indonesia

Zooreach Representative: Trisa Bhattacharjee

Role: Participant and Presenter

The programme explored community-based agroforestry models and landscape restoration approaches through field visits, mapping exercises, and discussions on education and community engagement in conservation.

International Congress for Conservation Biology (ICCB 2025)

Date: 15–19 June 2025

Location: Brisbane, Australia

Zooreach Representative: Dr. Sanjay Molur

Role: Award Recipient

Dr. Molur received the Society for Conservation Biology's Distinguished Service Award, recognizing his long-standing contributions to conservation science, including leadership in IUCN species assessments and biodiversity initiatives across South Asia.

3-Day Hands-on Training Workshop on Integrative Taxonomy of Marine Organisms

Date: 19–21 June 2025

Location: Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Zooreach Representative: P. Kritika

Role: Workshop Participant



3-days Hands of Training Workshop on Integrative Taxonomy of Marine Organisms attended by P. Kritika. © Sathyabama Team

The workshop organized by Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology introduced participants to integrative taxonomy methods combining morphological identification with molecular tools such as DNA analysis to better understand marine biodiversity.

1st Indian Seagrass Conference (ISC-2025)

Date: 20–22 August 2025

Location: Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Zooreach Representative: Tandrili Baruah

Role: Session Presenter

In the conference organized by Sathyabama



Tandrili Baruah presenting seagrass stories at the Indian Seagrass Conference. © Chinmaya Ghanekar

Institute of Science and Technology Tandrili shared experiences from community-based seagrass outreach along the Tamil Nadu coast, highlighting participatory learning tools such as the “Food Chain Jenga” game to demonstrate trophic relationships and ecosystem balance.

Tropentag 2025

Date: 10 September 2025

Format: Virtual (Hosted from Germany)

Zooreach Representative: Trisa Bhattacharjee

Role: Panelist

The discussion focused on tropical landscape multifunctionality and how landscapes can support biodiversity, livelihoods, and climate resilience simultaneously.

Trends and Challenges of Invasive Alien Species of Kerala

Date: 8–9 October 2025

Location: Aaralam Wildlife Sanctuary, Kerala

Zooreach Representative: Sidharthan

Role: Seminar Participant

Participants discussed the growing ecological impacts of invasive species in Kerala's ecosystems, including the spread of non-native fish species in freshwater habitats.

Alliance for Conserving Freshwater Ecosystems (ACFWE)

Date: 9–10 October 2025

Location: IISER, Kolkata

Zooreach Representative: Priyanka Iyer

Role: Participant

The meeting convened at IISER Kolkata brought together organizations working on freshwater conservation across India to discuss collaboration, data sharing, and strategies to address pollution, habitat degradation, and governance challenges affecting rivers and wetlands.

IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025

Date: 9–15 October 2025

Location: Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Zooreach Representative: Dr. Sanjay Molur

Role: Forum Member and Speaker

Dr. Molur contributed to discussions on conservation funding, philanthropy, and freshwater ecosystem resilience, drawing from decades of conservation planning experience. He also represented Zooreach, member of IUCN in policy decisions through the forum's meet.

Restoring Natural Ecologies Conference 2025

Date: 27–30 October 2025

Location: Guwahati, Assam

Zooreach Representative: Dr. Sanjay Molur and Trisa Bhattacharjee

Role: Speaker

The presentation highlighted youth partnerships and funding opportunities supporting restoration initiatives across India.

Namma School Namma Ooru Palli Regional Conclave

Date: 03 November 2025

Location: Salem, Tamil Nadu

Zooreach Representative: Rengasamy Marimuthu

Role: Participant

The conclave brought together government representatives, NGOs, and corporate partners to strengthen collaboration and support government schools across Tamil Nadu.

NSNOP School Engagement Workshop

Date: 17–18 November 2025

Location: Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Zooreach Representative: Rengasamy Marimuthu

Role: Participant

Discussions focused on strengthening collaboration with schools and improving programme planning and monitoring systems under the NSNOP initiative.

Snake Rescue Lab Workshop

Date: 8–9 December 2025

Location: Bengaluru, Karnataka

Zooreach Representative: Dr. Sanjay Molur and Amrin Ansari

Role: Facilitator



APAC Leadership attended by Tandrili Baruah in Hong Kong.
© Sonika Manandhar

The workshop brought together snake rescuers and conservation practitioners to discuss scientific rescue protocols, safe handling practices, and the development of standard operating procedures for snake rescue in India.

APAC Explorer Leadership Workshop

Date: 8-12 December 2025

Location: Hong Kong

Zooreach Representative: Tandrili Baruah

Role: Participant

The workshop, organized by the National Geographic Society, focused on collaborative leadership. Through group activities and exercises, participants explored communication, negotiation, and team-based project planning for conservation initiatives.

BioConserve Summit 26

Date: 30 January 2026

Location: Bengaluru

Zooreach Representative: Dr Sanjay Molur

Role: Participant

The one day conference on biodiversity in campuses was organized by Infosys and Indian Institute of Human Studies in Bangalore where several CSRs, institutes, organizations, NGOs, and individuals dealing with urban sustainability, biodiversity, and circulation were presented and discussed.



India Animal Welfare Forum 2026

Date: 31 January 2026

Location: Mumbai, Maharashtra

Zooreach Representative: Dr. Sanjay Molur

Role: Panelist

Hosted by the Upadhyaya Foundation, Dr. Molur participated in a panel session along with three other partners of the newly formed Snake Conservation Coalition of the Western Ghats on snake conservation, addressing myths about snakes and emphasizing science-based approaches for human–snake coexistence. The official website of the Coalition was also launched.

National Conference on Climate Change and Livelihood Scenario in Dryland

Date: 20–21 February 2026

Location: Bhuj, Gujarat

Zooreach Representative: Dr. Sanjay Molur

Role: Keynote Speaker and Panelist

The conference organized by Gujarat Institute of Desert Ecology highlighted the ecological and livelihood importance of India's dryland ecosystems. Dr Molur presented a keynote address on dryland ecosystems and the conundrum faced by this unique ecosystem due to various issues including climate change. He also was a panelist on the subject along with six other experts.

MAGSCON

Date: 24–26 March 2026

Location: MAHE, Manipal, Karnataka

Zooreach Representatives: Dr Sanjay Molur, Priyanka Iyer, Trisa Bhattacharjee, and Poojitha Dupati

Role: Panel Moderator, Presenter, and Exhibition Stall Manager

The Manipal Global SDG Convergence is a 3-day event organized by MAHE to showcase the best practices followed by all stakeholders in promoting sustainable development. Dr Molur will be moderating a panel of experts on Climate Action, Biodiversity & Conservation, and Food Security on 24 March 2026. In addition, Priyanka Iyer, Poojitha Dupati, Aakanksha Komanduri, and Trisa Bhattacharjee will man the exhibition stall promoting the organization's works as well as Trisa Bhattacharjee will be presenting two posters at the conference.

Conclusion

These conferences, workshops, and meetings demonstrate the diverse ways in which Zooreach staff engage with the wider conservation community. By participating in national and international platforms, team members gain new knowledge, share field experiences, and build collaborations that strengthen conservation initiatives. The insights gained from these gatherings continue to inform Zooreach's work across landscapes, species conservation, environmental education, and community engagement.

Tandrili Baruah*, Trisa Bhattacharjee, Amrin Ansari, Priyanka Iyer, P. Kritika, Sidharthan, Dupati Poojitha & Sanjay Molur

Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India. *tandrili@zooreach.org

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Interns and Volunteers Contributing to Conservation at Zooreach

Internships and volunteer engagements provide an important bridge between academic learning and real-world conservation practice. At the Zoo Outreach Organisation (Zooreach), interns and volunteers support ongoing conservation initiatives through research, outreach, documentation, and community engagement. Over the past months, several young contributors assisted in projects ranging from species conservation assessments to community-based conservation programme. The following interns contributed to different initiatives at Zooreach.

Nethra Prem

Duration: 17 May – 19 June (1 month) and 1–5 January (5 days)

Projects Associated With: Butterfly Red Listing; Human–Elephant Coexistence Project; Ocean Conservation Education and Action Network Initiative; Outreach Programme for Classrooms for Co-existence program, Ooty

During her internship, Nethra Prem contributed to multiple conservation programmes through research, content creation, outreach, and translation work. She assisted in research for the butterfly Red List assessments and prepared digital



Nethra Prem in the Classroom for Coexistence program at Ooty. © Payal Molur

illustrations for the “Magic of the Ocean” platform. She also translated perception data collected from communities for both the human–elephant coexistence project and the IOCEAN programme. In addition, she supported outreach activities by assisting in a two-day workshop conducted for students at the Ekalavya Tribal School in Ooty for the Classroom for Co-existence program.

Through this experience, she gained a deeper understanding of how to conduct systematic research and identify reliable sources of information. Working with community perception data also helped her appreciate the diversity of views within communities and the importance of carefully analysing information to extract meaningful insights. Reflecting on her experience, Nethra highlighted that effective conservation requires a combination of research, enforcement, and outreach. She noted that education plays a key role in addressing misconceptions and shaping environmentally responsible behaviour. She also observed that interactive methods such as games can be powerful communication tools, helping simplify complex environmental issues and making them engaging for communities.

Yadunandan Narendran

Duration: 1 week

Project Associated With: Human–Elephant Conflict Zone Transcriptions

Yadunandan Narendran contributed to the human–elephant coexistence project by translating audio recordings and perception data collected from communities living in conflict-prone areas. His work helped make local perspectives accessible for analysis and documentation.

Through this process, he gained insights into the complex relationships between



Yadunandan Narendran photographing wetland birds. © L.K. Shatrudhan

people and wildlife in regions affected by human–elephant conflict. Listening to firsthand experiences from local communities deepened his understanding of the challenges faced by people living alongside wildlife.

Reflecting on the experience, he emphasised the importance of involving local communities in conservation initiatives. Hearing community perspectives reinforced his belief that conservation efforts can be more effective when knowledge and action come directly from the people who coexist with wildlife on a daily basis.

Adarsh Jagadeeshwaran

Project Associated With: IUCN Red List Assessment for Endemic and Near-Endemic Butterflies of India

Adarsh Jagadeeshwaran supported the Red List assessment process for endemic and near-endemic butterflies of India. His work



Adarsh Jagadeeshwaran helping a local in setting up a plant protector in Chamba. © Amrin Ansari

involved collecting information from research publications and compiling data on species' habits, habitats, and distribution ranges, particularly for species belonging to the Papilionidae family and some Hesperidae. Through this work, he gained exposure to the research processes involved in butterfly conservation and learned how to identify relevant peer-reviewed scientific literature. He also observed the rigorous and detailed nature of Red List assessments, which require careful evaluation of available scientific evidence.

This experience highlighted for him the challenges of conducting species-level conservation research, especially for organisms that have limited habitat ranges or insufficient scientific documentation. He also noted that many butterfly species remain understudied, making it difficult to assess their conservation status accurately.

Akshaj Jayesh Gopal

Duration: 1 month

Programme Associated With: Biodiversity Surveys

As a volunteer, Akshaj Jayesh Gopal assisted in invertebrate surveys, supporting species identification and documentation efforts. His work involved observing and recording biodiversity while learning systematic methods for documenting wildlife. Through the survey process, he gained insights into the ecological impacts of



Akshaj Jayesh Gopal taking part in the invertebrate survey with Zooreach team. © Pannagasri G

invasive plant species and how they can outcompete native flora, subsequently affecting invertebrates and other wildlife. He also learned practical methods for species identification and discovered resources that could help deepen his understanding of local ecosystems.

Reflecting on the experience, he noted that the survey work provided a clearer understanding of ecological interconnectedness and human impacts on natural systems. The experience also highlighted the depth of research and careful analysis required even for basic biodiversity surveys. For him, volunteering helped reveal the role individuals can play in understanding and protecting the natural world.

Lakshya Raj Singh Rathore

Duration: 14 July 2025 – 13 July 2026

Project Associated With: Himalayan Restoration Project (HRP)

Lakshya Raj Singh Rathore supported the Himalayan Restoration Project by assisting with community coordination, restoration activities, and outreach initiatives. He worked closely with local communities, helping coordinate meetings, calls, and updates from daily wage workers and nursery staff involved in restoration efforts. He also contributed to seed collection, nursery management, and plantation activities as part of the project.



Lakshya Raj Singh Rathore taking part in the restoration activities in the HRP project.
© Amrin Ansari

In addition to field-related support, he assisted in preparing outreach materials, including educational presentations for schools and colleges and digital content such as Instagram posts. His contributions helped strengthen communication between the project team and local communities while also supporting awareness efforts around restoration work.

Through this experience, he gained practical knowledge about Himalayan terrain, native and non-native plant species, and the ecological challenges involved in restoration projects. He also learned about nursery management, seed treatment techniques, and the logistical aspects of plantation work. Reflecting on his experience, he noted that restoration projects involve complex challenges, including difficult terrain, limited resources, and the need for strong community engagement. He emphasised that respecting local customs and working closely with communities is essential for the long-term success of conservation initiative.

Encouraging the Next Generation of Conservationists

Interns and volunteers bring fresh perspectives, curiosity, and enthusiasm to conservation work. Their contributions from research and documentation to community engagement, play a meaningful role in supporting ongoing initiatives at Zooreach. Equally important, these experiences provide young participants with opportunities to understand the realities of conservation, appreciate the complexity of ecological challenges, and develop skills that will support future work in biodiversity conservation and environmental education.

Tandrali Baruah*, Nethra Prem, Yadunandan Narendran, Adarsh Jagadeeshwaran, Akshaj Jayesh Gopal, Lakshya Raj Singh Rathore

Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India. *tandrali@zooreach.org

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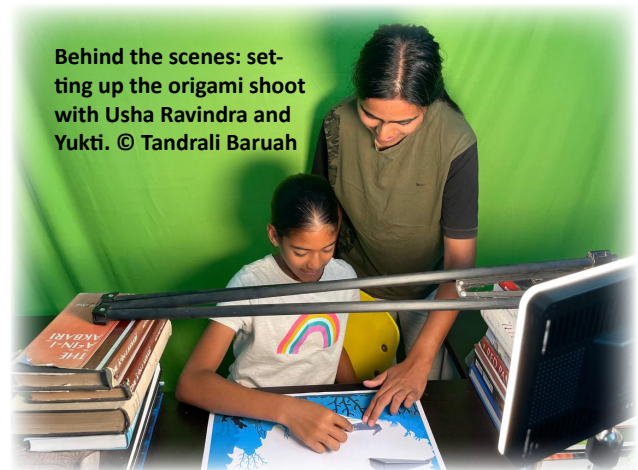
Kids Intern at Zooreach

Young Volunteers Contributing to Conservation

At Zooreach, young minds continue to inspire us with their creativity and enthusiasm for conservation. One such intern, Yukti Balakumar, stood out for her dedication and artistic talent during her internship from January to May 2025.

Yukti explored the world of marine life through origami, creating origami models of a manta ray, whale, turtle, crab, and fish. Her work beautifully combined art with awareness, helping make conservation more engaging and accessible for others.

What made this journey even more special was how it began. In the early days, we didn't have proper recording equipment. To film the origami tutorials, we improvised by stacking books on both sides and carefully placing a phone in between to create a makeshift stand. Despite these limitations, Yukti remained patient and committed.



As the days progressed, we were able to arrange a ring light with a tripod, which improved the quality of the recordings. Among all the creations, the manta ray proved to be the most challenging, requiring multiple attempts to capture each step clearly. Different colorful backgrounds were also used to make the videos more visually appealing and engaging.

Yukti's internship is a wonderful example of how creativity can come together to support conservation education. Zooreach is proud to nurture such young volunteers who contribute meaningfully to spreading awareness about wildlife.

Tandrili Baruah* & Yukti Balakumar

Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India. *tandrili@zooreach.org

Citation: Baruah, T. & Y. Balakumar (2026). Kids Intern at Zooreach (January 2025– May 2025). Zooreach Annual Report 2025–26. In: *Zoo's Print* 41(3): 57.

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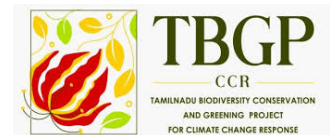
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A stylized illustration of a woman with long, wavy blonde hair and large black-rimmed glasses. She is wearing a green short-sleeved shirt with a palm tree pattern and dark pants. She is holding a small green object in her hands. The background is a vibrant jungle scene with green foliage, yellow flowers, and a blue sky with white clouds. A monkey is visible in the upper right background, hanging from a branch.

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In the first phase of the fundraiser for the **Sally Walker Conservation Fund**, we target three objectives.

- (i) **The Sally Walker Lifetime Award for Conservation**
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In case you wish to know more about the **Sally Walker Conservation Fund**, please contact Dr. Sanjay Molur by email <sanjay@zooreach.org> or by phone +91 9677822997.