ANNUAL REPORT
FY 2024-25

Prepared by

WINGS

WILDLIFE INFORMATION & NATURE GUIDE SOCIETY

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Wildlife Information and Nature Guide Society

WINGS

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ABOUT WINGS

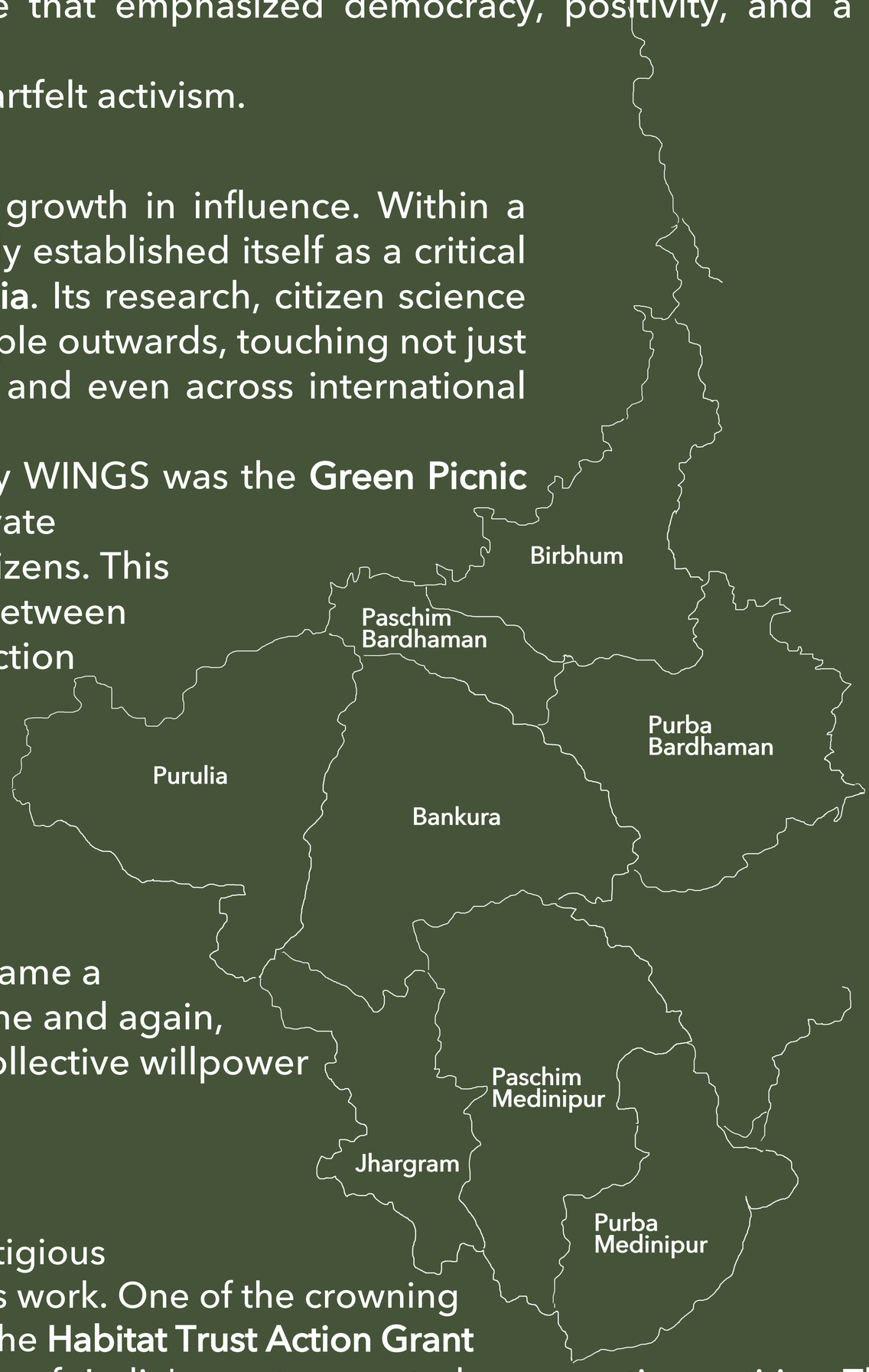
In the heart of Eastern India, a quiet yet powerful movement took flight—a movement driven not by institutional mandates or large-scale governmental interventions, but by the simple, profound passion of a few individuals who dared to believe that even the smallest acts of conservation could reshape the world around them. This movement would eventually take the form of the Wildlife Information and Nature Guide Society, affectionately known to many as **WINGS** (https://wildwingsindia.in/).

The formal foundation of WINGS was laid on **April 12th, 2018**, a date etched in the memory of its founding members as the beginning of a new era of biodiversity stewardship for **Durgapur** and its surrounding landscapes. Official recognition came a year later, on **July 17th, 2019**, reinforcing the organization's place among India's vibrant tapestry of conservation efforts. But to understand the soul of WINGS is to journey back even further—to the early, tentative steps taken years before the society had a name or official standing, the
philosophical backbone for WINGS—a structure that emphasized democracy, positivity, and a grassroots
enthusiasm for scientific rigor combined with heartfelt activism.

Growth, Impact, and Recognition

WINGS' early years were marked by explosive growth in influence. Within a year of its formal registration, WINGS had already established itself as a critical player in **biodiversity conservation in Eastern India**. Its research, citizen science initiatives, and conservation models began to ripple outwards, touching not just **West Bengal** but also some parts of **Jharkhand**, and even across international borders into **Bangladesh**.

One of the most visionary initiatives launched by WINGS was the **Green Picnic Mission**—a statewide campaign designed to cultivate
environmental responsibility among everyday citizens. This mission sought to bridge the often-wide chasm between environmental theory and practical, on-ground action . It encouraged people to not only enjoy nature but to actively participate in its preservation, thereby turning passive nature lovers into proactive stewards. Throughout its journey, WINGS has demonstrated remarkable resilience. The challenges—be they logistical, financial, or societal—there were many, but each obstacle became a stepping stone rather than a stumbling block. Time and again, WINGS has showcased that determination and collective willpower can overcome the most daunting of barriers.



New Frontiers: Recent Achievements

As WINGS continued to soar, it also gathered prestigious accolades that testified to the tangible impact of its work. One of the crowning achievements in recent years was being awarded the **Habitat Trust Action Grant** —a recognition that placed WINGS alongside some of India's most respected conservation entities. This grant provided vital resources to bolster their on-ground efforts and opened up new avenues for habitat restoration and species protection.

Another landmark project in WINGS' evolving portfolio has been its **Hyena Conservation Project**. Often overlooked and misunderstood, hyenas in India face significant threats from habitat loss, human conflict, and poaching. WINGS has taken up the mantle of protecting these enigmatic creatures, focusing on scientific surveys, community sensitization programs, and habitat preservation efforts specifically tailored to the needs of hyenas. Through this project, WINGS not only seeks to safeguard an important apex scavenger but also to highlight the intricate, often invisible threads that bind ecosystems together

ABOUT WINGS

Looking Ahead

As WINGS moves forward, its vision remains clear and unwavering: to deepen the connection between people and nature, to foster a culture of conservation rooted in science and compassion, and to continue expanding the frontiers of citizen-led biodiversity protection. The spirit that animated its founding members at Chaturanga Maidan still burns brightly, illuminating a path forward filled with hope, perseverance, and ever-broadening horizons.

There is little doubt that in the years to come, WINGS will not just continue to be a guardian of biodiversity but will inspire countless others to spread their wings in the service of the natural world.

The Architects of WINGS

No story of WINGS would be complete without recognizing the mentors and stalwarts whose guidance transformed it from a fledgling idea into a formidable force for conservation. Among them were luminaries like Dr. Utpal Singha Roy (Assistant Professor, Durgapur Government College), Mr. Milan Kanti Mandal (Former Divisional Forest Officer, Durgapur Forest Division), the late Mr. Subhra Lahiri (Former Head of Department, HR, NHIT), Mr. Ashit Kumar Ghosh (President, NHIT), Mr. Abhijeet Sett (Lecturer, KG Engineering Institute, Bishnupur), Dr. Sudipta Das (Associate Professor, Durgapur Government College), Dr. Moitreyee Chakraborty (Assistant Professor, Durgapur Government College), and Amar Nayak (Assistant Teacher). Their steadfast support and mentorship became the scaffolding on which WINGS would grow.

Particularly poignant is the influence of late Shubhra Lahiri, whose early guidance provided the philosophical backbone for WINGS—a structure that emphasized democracy, positivity, and a grassroots enthusiasm for scientific rigor combined with heartfelt activism.

OUR AREAS OF WORK

- **Wildlife Management and Soil Moisture Conservation Plan**
- **Biodiversity Survey and Monitoring**
- **Community Engagement**
- **Scientific Research on Ecology and Environment**
- **Collaborative Wildlife Conservation Works**
- **Modern Agricultural Techniques**

PATRON'S MESSAGE

I am delighted to learn that the Wildlife Information & Nature Guide Society (WINGS) will soon publish its annual book. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to everyone involved in its planning and production, and I sincerely hope that this publication will fulfill its important objectives.

We live in an era where human advancement and material comforts have reached unprecedented heights. However, this progress has come at a grave cost to our natural environment. In India, too, rising consumerism and unchecked exploitation of natural resources have significantly increased our ecological footprint. Forest degradation, water scarcity, pollution, and loss of biodiversity are pressing concerns that threaten the very fabric of life.

West Bengal, blessed with a rich natural heritage from the Sundarbans to the Himalayan foothills, is no exception. We are witnessing growing pressures on our forests, rivers, and wildlife. Species that once thrived across our landscapes are now dwindling at alarming rates, largely due to human interference. If current trends continue, the disruption to nature will lead to consequences too severe to ignore.

Unfortunately, many still choose to remain unaware or indifferent to these issues, and existing conservation and management efforts, though earnest, are yet to meet the scale of the challenge. The time to act decisively is fast running out.

We must collectively rethink and redefine our relationship with nature. Though we are born from dust and shall return to it, a life lived with empathy and responsibility can transform not only our future but that of every life form sharing this planet. Let us come together to envision a greener, cleaner India – and a West Bengal where our natural resources continue to sustain generations to come.

WINGS is making remarkable strides toward this vision. The dedication of its volunteers is truly inspiring, and their work sets a powerful example for all of us. Support and encouragement from every sector of society will strengthen the resolve of WINGS' young minds and help their efforts flourish for the greater good of the community and the environment.

With sincere regards,
Dr. Anupam Khan
Divisional Forest Officer
Durgapur Forest Division, WBFD

Message from the Secretary

Life on Earth has evolved over billions of years, surviving five mass extinction events. Today, a potential sixth extinction looms, driven by human activities. In this critical moment, the role of conservation has never been more vital. India, one of the twenty megadiverse nations, stands proudly with four biodiversity hotspots, showcasing the rich tapestry of life that must be protected.

Industrialization and economic development are essential to human progress, yet they often come at the cost of forests, grasslands, wetlands, and countless species that call these ecosystems home. As habitats disappear, so too do the countless lives that weave into the fabric of nature. Without urgent and sustained action, we risk losing irreplaceable parts of our planet forever.

The need for conservation awareness is paramount. Protecting nature is not merely an act of charity–it is an investment in the future of all life, including our own. Forests cleanse our air, rivers nourish our fields, pollinators sustain our food supply, and healthy ecosystems shield us from natural disasters. No human-made system can replicate the intricate and balanced services that nature offers freely.

The Wildlife Information and Nature Guide Society (WINGS), based in Rarh Bengal–a region once draped in lush forests–is at the forefront of this essential work. Recognizing the urgency of the crisis, we have emphasized two critical pillars: spreading conservation awareness and implementing action-oriented projects for ecosystem and wildlife protection.

Through awareness programs in schools, colleges, and local communities, WINGS seeks to instill a deep respect and understanding of nature in young minds. We organize workshops, educational camps, field visits, and interactive sessions to bridge the gap between people and the wild spaces that sustain them. Awareness is the first step toward action; only when people understand the importance of nature will they be willing to defend it.

Alongside education, WINGS is actively engaged in hands-on conservation initiatives. Our projects focus on restoring degraded habitats, protecting local species, reducing human-wildlife conflicts, and promoting sustainable coexistence. We have embarked on efforts to reforest native species, conserve wetlands, and safeguard critical wildlife corridors. Each project is a commitment to heal the wounds inflicted on our natural world.

Our members–many under thirty–carry forward this mission with remarkable energy and devotion. Though they may not have witnessed the ancient forests of the past, they are determined to restore what they can and protect what remains. Their efforts, supported by our governmental and non-governmental partners, are sowing the seeds of a greener, more sustainable future.

Today, the call to conserve nature and protect our fellow creatures is louder than ever. Let us recognize the silent services that the natural world renders every day. Let us support initiatives that protect life in all its forms. By working together, through awareness and action, we can ensure that our planet continues to thrive for generations yet unborn.

With heartfelt thanks and regards,
Dr. Arkajyoti Mukherjee

Dr. Arkajyoti Mukherjee
Secretary, WINGS

CONSERVING THE INDIAN GREY WOLVES

IN PASCHIM BARDHAMAN DISTRICT

Conservation of the Indian Grey Wolf (*Canis lupus pallipes*) in Paschim Bardhaman, West Bengal

Funded by WWF-India under Conservation Catalyst Programme

The Indian Grey Wolf (*Canis lupus pallipes*) is a vital apex predator of dry deciduous forests and open grassland ecosystems in India. In West Bengal, particularly across the district of Paschim Bardhaman, these wolves inhabit predominantly non-protected areas near human settlements. Increasing habitat fragmentation, declining natural prey, and growing dependence on domestic livestock have led to escalating instances of human-wolf conflict. Addressing this situation requires a science-based, community-inclusive conservation approach.

Key Objectives and Progress:

Baseline Data Collection:
Surveys were conducted across 14 forest patches using line transects (~710 km) and camera traps. At least 3 wolf packs were identified (15–24 individuals). Data from scat and sign surveys helped in estimating relative abundance and understanding wolf presence.

Identifying Priority Conservation Areas:
Conflict hotspots like Madhaiganj, Kantaberiya, Bistupur, and others were marked as priority zones. These areas face significant threats due to industrialization and mining, demanding urgent conservation action.

Mapping Movement Corridors:
Camera trap data helped identify two vital movement corridors that connect fragmented forest patches.

Prey Base Assessment:
Ongoing scat analysis with support from Durgapur Govt. College revealed a diet consisting mainly of livestock (goat, sheep, cow) and small mammals and birds, highlighting the need for ecological balance and secure natural prey.

Testing Non-lethal Deterrents (Fladry):
Installation of fladry (visual deterrent barriers) is being piloted in wolf conflict zones like Madhaiganj and Jamgram to reduce livestock depredation and promote coexistence.

Community Awareness & Education:
Pre-awareness surveys showed that 94% of villagers experienced livestock loss, yet only two respondents were aware of wolves' ecological role. This underlines the critical need for awareness programs. WINGS conducted sensitization sessions in over 20 schools and villages, engaging more than 1,000 participants.

CONSERVING THE INDIAN GREY WOLVES

IN PASCHIM BARDHAMAN DISTRICT

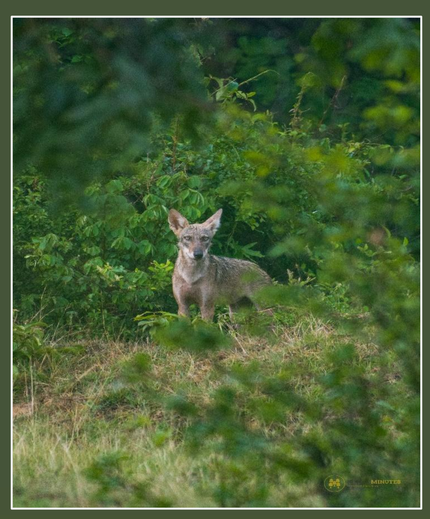
Conservation of the Indian Grey Wolf (*Canis lupus pallipes*) in Paschim Bardhaman, West Bengal
Funded by WWF-India under Conservation Catalyst Programme

Conservation Challenges

The wolves of Paschim Bardhaman face critical threats:
•Conversion of forest and grassland into industrial zones and agricultural fields
•Retaliatory attitudes due to livestock depredation
•Lack of awareness about the ecological value of predators
•Genetic isolation and inbreeding due to habitat fragmentation
Although no recent retaliatory killings were reported, the potential remains high without proactive intervention.

Recommendations and Future Directions

•Expand scat-based dietary studies across seasons and landscapes to track prey dependence and seasonal shifts.
•Implement non-invasive genetic monitoring to estimate population size and relatedness among packs.
•Use GPS collars or advanced camera-trap grid systems to study movement ecology and identify high-risk zones.
•Strengthen educational outreach, especially targeting school children and livestock owners.
•Preserve and restore identified wildlife corridors to ensure connectivity and reduce inbreeding.
•Promote coexistence models integrating fladry, night shelters, and compensation frameworks.



CONSERVING THE INDIAN STRIPED HYENAS

IN PASCHIM BARDHAMAN DISTRICT

Conservation of the Indian Striped Hyena in Paschim Bardhaman, West Bengal

Funded by Wildlife Trust of India(WTI) under Rapid Action Project(RAP)

Our current research on striped hyenas (Hyaena hyaena) in Paschim Bardhaman has identified four key habitats where the species is thriving—Churulia, Jamgram, Ukhra (Sonepur Bazari), and Pandabeswar. These areas are primarily active mining zones, making conservation efforts both urgent and unique.

In Churulia, field surveys within the Tara coal mines have confirmed hyena presence through camera trap evidence, highlighting critical movement corridors. To reduce the risk of roadkill, four soil-based speed breakers have been installed, with proposals underway to make them permanent.

A significant carcass-dumping site has also been identified in Churulia, which may serve as a key foraging point for the species. In parallel, a district-wide foraging ground map is currently being developed to understand their ecological patterns better.

Efforts are ongoing to:

a. Identify human-hyena conflict hotspots
b. Draft localized conservation policies
c. Increase awareness and promote coexistence

Multiple awareness camps have been completed to educate truck drivers and laborers in mining areas on the importance of wildlife protection and safe driving practices in ecologically sensitive areas.

Permission has been formally sought from WBPDCL authorities to:

a. Install awareness signage across critical corridors
b. Upgrade existing speed breakers to standard designs

These collective measures aim to strengthen conservation strategies and foster peaceful coexistence between humans and striped hyenas in this dynamic landscape.

Eco-awareness across Platforms

Collaborative Dialogue on Indian Grey Wolf Conservation

Date: 23rd August 2024
Venue: Glenburn Penthouse, Kolkata
Organized by: Wild Earth Foundation
In collaboration with: WWF-India, Zoological Survey of India, Rotary Club of Kolkata Benevolence, WINGS and the West Bengal Forest Department

WINGS proudly marked its **first official participation in Kolkata** by attending a high-level seminar organized by the **Wild Earth Foundation** on **23rd August 2024** at **Glenburn Penthouse.** The event was a collaborative endeavor supported by the **WWF-India**, **Zoological Survey of India**, **Rotary Club of Kolkata Benevolence**, and conducted under the guidance of the **West Bengal Forest Department.**

This landmark event brought together several **key institutions and individuals** to deliberate on the **conservation of the Indian Grey Wolf (*Canis lupus pallipes*)**, a species that remains critically understudied and underprotected in India. **WINGS was honored to be the only NGO present actively working on the ecology and conservation of the Indian Grey Wolf.**

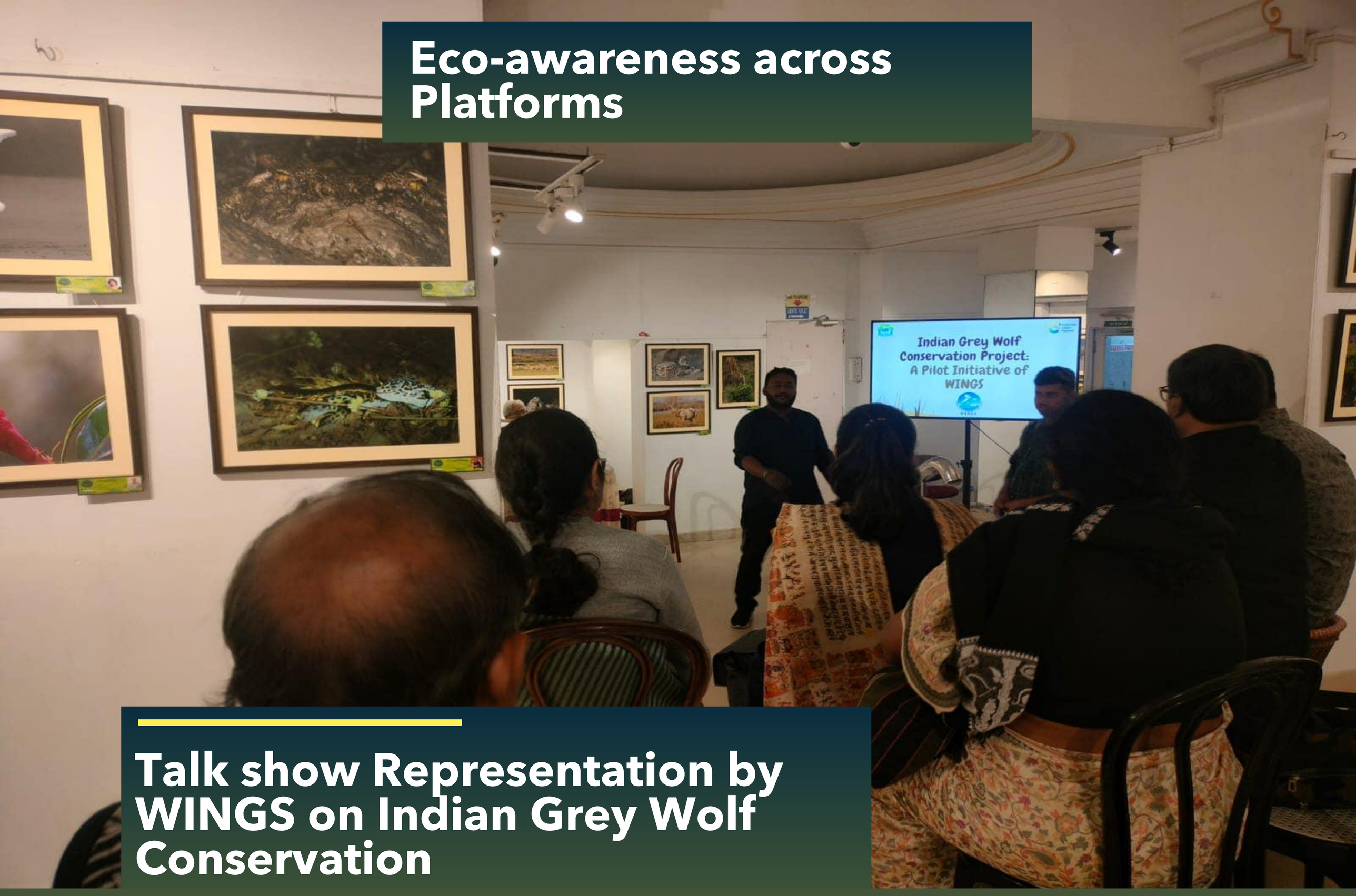
Key Topics Discussed:

- Current population trends and distribution of Indian Grey Wolves
- Habitat loss and degradation due to expanding human activity
- Regional threats including **poaching, climate change, and land-use conflicts**
- Strategies for wolf conservation, including policy, habitat protection, and community-led efforts
- Human-wildlife conflict with a focus on **livestock predation** and mitigation tools
- Importance of **local community involvement** and grassroots conservation models
- Application of modern technologies such as **GPS tracking, drones, and camera traps**
- Role of **public awareness**, environmental education, and the involvement of schools and volunteers in shifting attitudes toward wolves

Outcomes and Resolutions:

The seminar concluded with a shared commitment from all participating organizations to foster **inter-institutional collaboration** aimed at preserving the Indian Grey Wolf in its natural habitat. WINGS reaffirmed its dedication to field-based research, local outreach, and policy advocacy and expressed readiness to support a unified conservation roadmap moving forward.

Eco-awareness across Platforms



Talk show Representation by WINGS on Indian Grey Wolf Conservation

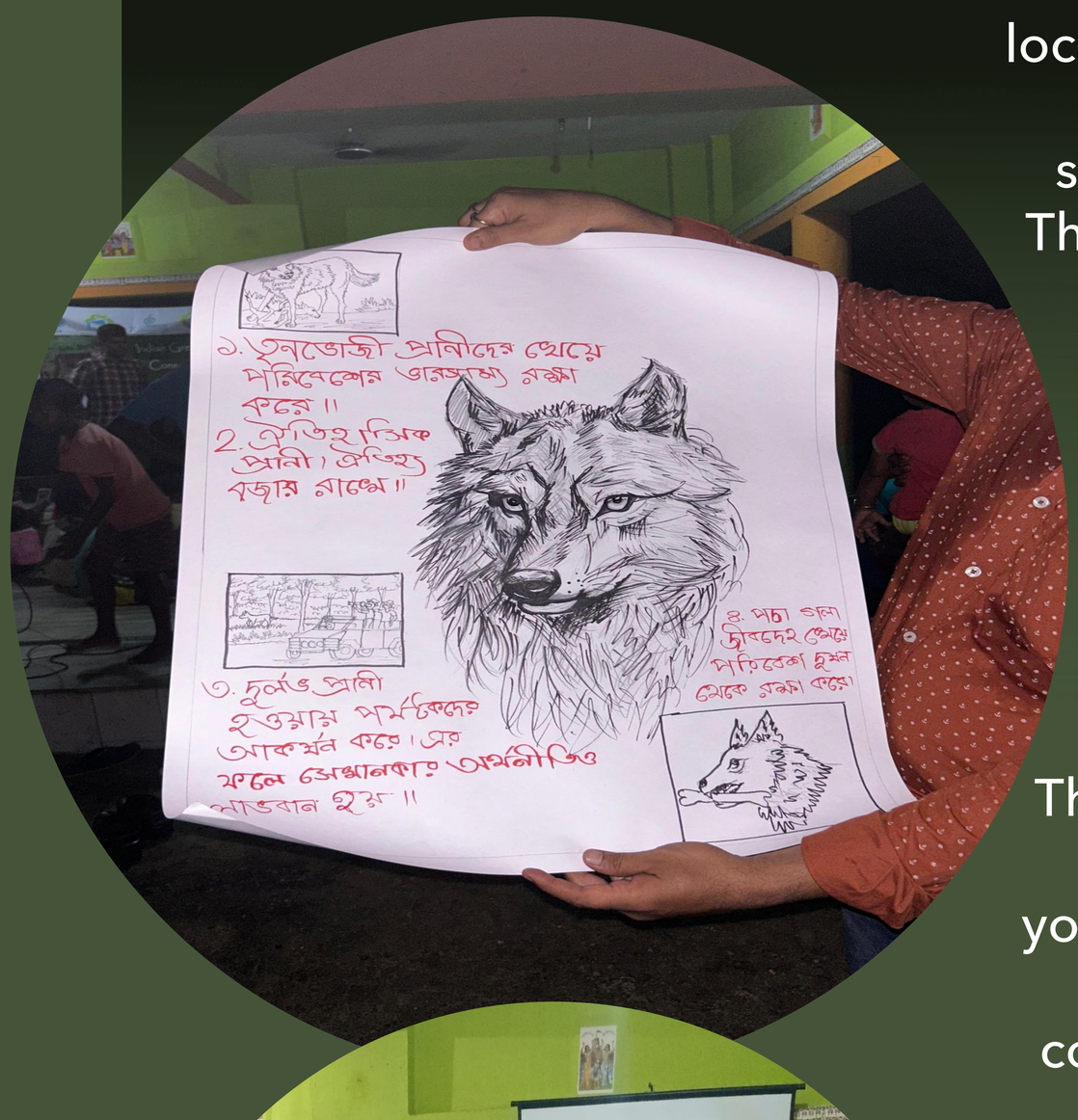
Date: 1st December 2024
Platform: *Ekhon Aranyak – এখন আরণ্যক*
Topic: *"Conserving the Indian Grey Wolf: Strategies for Protection in Human-Dominated Landscapes"*

On **1st December 2024**, WINGS was proudly represented by **Arkajyoti Mukherjee** and **Manish** leadership in advocating for the protection of **this lesser-known but ecologically vital species. Kumar Chattopadhyay** on the esteemed talk show platform **Ekhon Aranyak – এখন আরণ্যক**.
The discussion focused on the critical theme:
"Conserving the Indian Grey Wolf: Strategies for Protection in Human-Dominated Landscapes."
Both speakers passionately addressed the **pressing conservation challenges** faced by Indian Grey Wolves, particularly in fragmented habitats increasingly shaped by human activity. Their discussion highlighted:
The **ecological importance** of the Indian Grey Wolf as an apex predator.
Rising instances of **human-wolf conflict**, especially with pastoral communities.
The need for **community-led conservation models** and grassroots awareness.
Use of **modern tracking tools** and data collection to inform policy and protection measures.
The importance of **educating local populations** and promoting coexistence through mutual understanding.

CONSERVATIVE EFFORTS THROUGH
Awareness Campaigns

Event Report: Awareness Program on the Conservation of Indian Grey Wolves
Date: 17th August 2024
Location: Saraswati Ganj Village, Garh Jungle, Paschim Bardhaman
Organized by: WINGS – Wildlife Information and Nature Guide Society

On **17th August 2024**, our organization conducted an impactful **awareness program focused on the conservation of the Indian Grey Wolf (*Canis lupus pallipes*)** at **Saraswati Ganj village**, situated within the Garh Jungle area of Paschim Bardhaman.



The program aimed to educate and sensitize the local community about the ecological importance of the Indian Grey Wolf, current threats to its survival, and the need for peaceful coexistence. Through interactive discussions, storytelling, and visual aids, we highlighted:

The ecological role of wolves in maintaining healthy ecosystems

The challenges of human-wolf conflict, particularly in pastoral landscapes

Community-based solutions to promote coexistence and reduce conflict

Community Engagement:

The event was marked by **active and enthusiastic participation from villagers**, including herders, youth, and elders. Their interest and openness to learning reflect a promising foundation for community-supported conservation initiatives in the region.

Acknowledgements:

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the residents of Saraswati Ganj for their hospitality and engagement. Their commitment to protecting native wildlife is crucial to ensuring the long-term survival of the Indian Grey Wolf in this landscape.

This program is part of our larger effort to build **community-led conservation awareness** and promote **wildlife stewardship** at the grassroots level. We believe that informed and empowered local communities are key to protecting India's wild heritage.

CONSERVATIVE EFFORTS THROUGH Awareness Campaigns

Event Report: Engaging Communities After Conflict: Awareness Outreach in East Bardhaman in Gobindapur Village
Date: 31st December,2024
Location: Gobindapur Village, East Bardhaman
Organized by: WINGS – Wildlife Information and Nature Guide Society

On December 31st, 2024, a team from WINGS – Wildlife Information and Nature Guide Society – conducted a critical community outreach program in Gobindapur village, East Bardhaman, in response to a recent and deeply distressing incident involving the killing of an Indian Grey Wolf. The animal, believed to be suffering from rabies, had attacked at least 20 individuals, prompting fear and unrest in the local population.

The WINGS team, represented by Mr. Arkajyoti Mukherjee and Mr. Subhadeep Saha, was accompanied by officials from the Forest Department. Together, they addressed over 50 community members, listening to their concerns and providing clarity on the situation. The discussion aimed to dispel fear and reinforce that such rabid attacks are rare and isolated incidents. It was also stressed that retaliatory killings could further endanger the species, which is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act.

Over the course of two hours of intensive dialogue, the villagers gradually responded with empathy and understanding. The team highlighted the importance of maintaining vigilance, especially in areas prone to human-wildlife interactions, and proposed the adoption of precautionary measures supported by the forest authorities.

This engagement marks the beginning of a series of awareness campaigns WINGS plans to conduct in the region, with continued support from the Forest Department. The goal is to build trust, promote accurate knowledge, and reduce conflict through consistent dialogue and community collaboration.

This event stands as a testament to the power of communication and education in fostering peaceful coexistence between humans and wildlife, particularly for misunderstood species like the Indian Grey Wolf.

CONSERVATIVE EFFORTS THROUGH
Awareness Campaigns

Event Report: Microscale Awareness Campaign on Indian Grey Wolf Conservation
Date: 6th January, 2025
Location: Srikrishnapur Adibasipara, Paschim Bardhaman
Organized by: WINGS – Wildlife Information and Nature Guide Society

WINGS conducted a focused microscale awareness campaign at Srikrishnapur Adivasipara to address concerns and raise awareness about the Indian Grey Wolf (Canis lupus pallipes), a Schedule I species under the Wildlife Protection Act. This initiative was part of our ongoing community-based conservation efforts in human-wildlife interface areas.

During the visit, our team engaged in interactive sessions with local tribal residents, discussing the ecological role of wolves, the threats they face, and the importance of their protection. Misconceptions were addressed through open dialogue, and the locals were encouraged to report any wolf activity to forest officials rather than react with fear or aggression.

The community, though initially apprehensive, gradually opened up, and many expressed their willingness to support conservation activities in the region. These small but meaningful interactions help us build trust and foster local guardianship of wildlife.

WINGS remains dedicated to working at the grassroots level to create coexistence frameworks that empower communities and safeguard species like the Indian Grey Wolf.

CONSERVATIVE EFFORTS THROUGH
Awareness Campaigns

Event Report: Awareness outreach on Indian Grey Wolf Conservation
Date: 21st February 2025
Location: Labnapara Avaitanik Prathamik Vidyalaya
No of Students: 86
Organized by: WINGS – Wildlife Information and Nature Guide Society

WINGS visited Labnapara Avaitanik Prathamik Vidyalaya to conduct an awareness program under the Indian Grey Wolf Conservation Project. With the enthusiastic participation of students and teachers, the event was a resounding success.

Our team used engaging visual presentations and interactive discussions to highlight the significance of the Indian Grey Wolf, its habitat, threats, and the importance of coexistence. Students asked thoughtful questions and expressed a strong willingness to be part of wildlife protection efforts.

By involving schools, WINGS aims to nurture a generation of conservation-conscious citizens ready to protect India's natural heritage.

CONSERVATIVE EFFORTS THROUGH
Awareness Campaigns

Event Report: Awareness outreach on Indian Grey Wolf Conservation
Date: 13th March,2025
Location: Adibasi Para,Jamgora
Organized by: WINGS – Wildlife Information and Nature Guide Society

As part of the Indian Grey Wolf Conservation Project, WINGS conducted a focused awareness session at Adibasi Para in Jamgora, Paschim Bardhaman. The session aimed to educate local tribal communities on the ecological importance of Indian Grey Wolves and foster positive attitudes toward their conservation.

Our team engaged in meaningful discussions with residents, addressing prevalent fears and misconceptions while emphasizing the critical role wolves play in the ecosystem. The community showed great interest, and many pledged to be vigilant and supportive of future conservation efforts.

This outreach forms a crucial step in building local support and reducing human-wolf conflict in wolf-inhabited regions.

CONSERVATIVE EFFORTS THROUGH
Awareness Campaigns

Event Report: Awareness outreach on Indian Grey Wolf Conservation
Date: 14th March , 2025
Location: Rangamati Junior High School
No of Students: 60
Organized by: WINGS – Wildlife Information and Nature Guide Society

WINGS visited Rangamati Jr. High School to conduct an awareness program under the Indian Grey Wolf Conservation Project. With the enthusiastic participation of students and teachers, the event was a resounding success.

Our team used engaging visual presentations and interactive discussions to highlight the significance of the Indian Grey Wolf, its habitat, threats, and the importance of coexistence. Students asked thoughtful questions and expressed a strong willingness to be part of wildlife protection efforts.

By involving schools, WINGS aims to nurture a generation of conservation-conscious citizens ready to protect India's natural heritage.

CONSERVATIVE EFFORTS THROUGH
Awareness Campaigns

Event Report: Awareness outreach on Indian Grey Wolf Conservation
Date: 30th March,2025
Location: Deul Shibpur Beat
No of Villagers: 42
Organized by: WINGS – Wildlife Information and Nature Guide Society

Under the Indian Grey Wolf Conservation Project, WINGS organized an impactful awareness campaign at Deul, located within the Shibpur Beat area of Paschim Bardhaman. The program aimed to engage with local residents and stakeholders about the presence of Indian Grey Wolves in nearby habitats and the importance of conserving this elusive apex predator.

Our team interacted with villagers, discussing wolf ecology, common myths, and the root causes of human-wolf conflict. The conversation emphasized peaceful coexistence and encouraged community-based vigilance to prevent retaliatory actions. The villagers expressed interest and curiosity, many sharing local sightings and stories, which also helped enrich our understanding of the area.

This awareness initiative has laid the groundwork for future collaborations with the local community in protecting this Schedule I species and promoting sustainable coexistence.

Events

World Environment Day-2024

Event Report: World Environment Day Celebration at Bandhob Somiti, Jhanjra Gram
Date: 5th June 2024
Location: Bandhob Somiti, Jhanjra Gram, West Bengal

On the occasion of *World Environment Day* (5th June 2024), our NGO successfully conducted an awareness campaign at Bandhob Somiti, Jhanjra Gram, West Bengal. The event witnessed active participation from local residents, particularly students, who showed great enthusiasm in learning about environmental protection and sustainability.

The highlight of the program was an engaging and motivating session delivered by our dedicated member, Ms. Snigdha Mukherjee. Her talk focused on the significance of World Environment Day and the pressing need for environmental conservation. She emphasized individual and collective responsibility in adopting eco-friendly lifestyles and sustainable practices to mitigate environmental degradation.

The event served as both an educational session and a call to action, inspiring attendees to take meaningful steps in their daily lives to support a healthier planet.

We extend our sincere gratitude to Mr. Debdulal Banerjee for his efforts in organizing the event and ensuring its success. We also thank all the students and community members who actively participated, making the event both impactful and memorable.

Through continued collaboration and awareness, we aim to nurture a more sustainable and environmentally conscious community. Events like these reinforce the importance of grassroots engagement in protecting our natural world.

Camera Trap Workshop

Workshop Report: Camera Trap and CCTV for Wildlife Monitoring
Date: 13th July 2024
Location: Durgapur Government College, West Bengal
Organized by: WINGS
Supported by: Conservation Catalyst Programme, WWF-India

On 13th July 2024, WINGS successfully organized a specialized workshop on *"Camera Trap and CCTV for Wildlife Monitoring"* at Durgapur Government College. This initiative, held under the **Conservation Catalyst Programme** by WWF-India, brought together nearly **50 enthusiastic participants,** including students, researchers, and conservationists from the region.

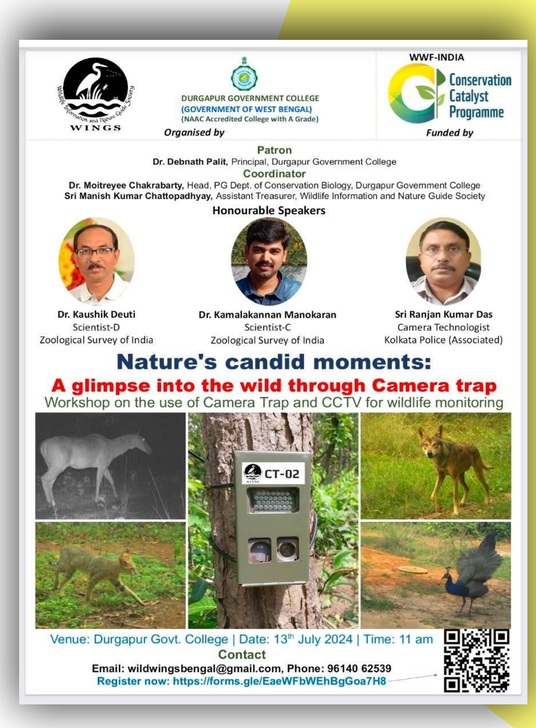
Key Speakers:
Dr. Kaushik Deuti, Zoological Survey of India
Dr. Kamalakannan Manokaran, Zoological Survey of India
Shri Ranjan Kumar Das, Associate of Kolkata Police
Each speaker brought a wealth of experience and expertise to the session. Their presentations covered:
Scientific approaches and safety protocols for deploying **camera traps** in wildlife research
Application of **CCTV systems** for monitoring animal behavior and movements
Integration of **mobile-monitored equipment** for real-time wildlife tracking
Critical analysis of **infrared technologies** in nocturnal wildlife documentation
Hands-On Demonstration:
Participants were allowed to experience field-level applications through:
A **live field demonstration** on camera trap installation and positioning
Practical interaction with **Zeiss camera traps**, allowing attendees to familiarize themselves with the equipment

Special Acknowledgement:
We were honored by the presence of **Mr. Anupam Khan**, Divisional Forest Officer, who lauded WINGS' continued dedication to conservation and awareness. His encouraging words further strengthened our resolve to carry forward impactful initiatives in the region.

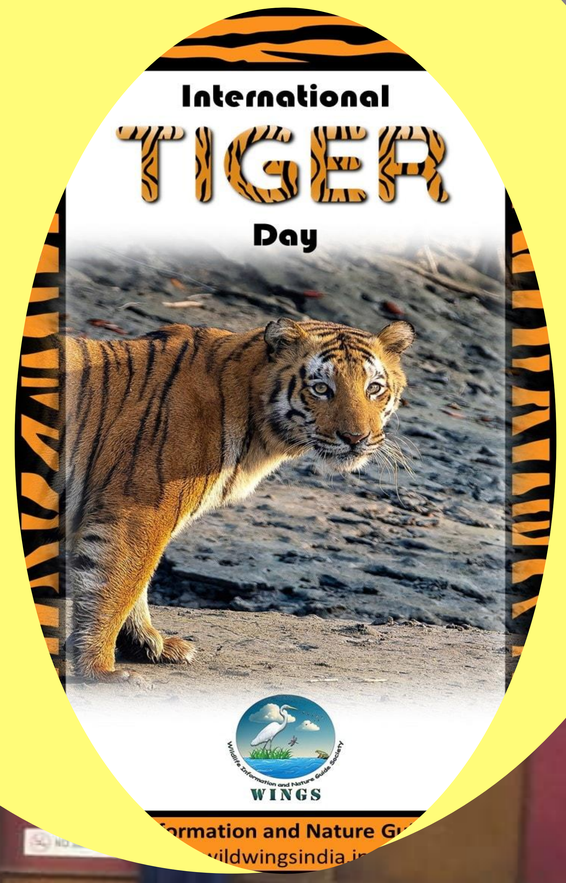
Acknowledgements:
WINGS extends heartfelt thanks to **WWF-India** for their support through the Conservation Catalyst Programme. Special appreciation goes to all the participants whose active involvement and curiosity made the workshop a grand success.
This workshop served as a dynamic platform for learning, collaboration, and skill-building in the field of wildlife monitoring. It was a perfect blend of theoretical knowledge and practical exposure, setting a benchmark for similar future programs.

On Field

During the Keynote Speaker's Lecture

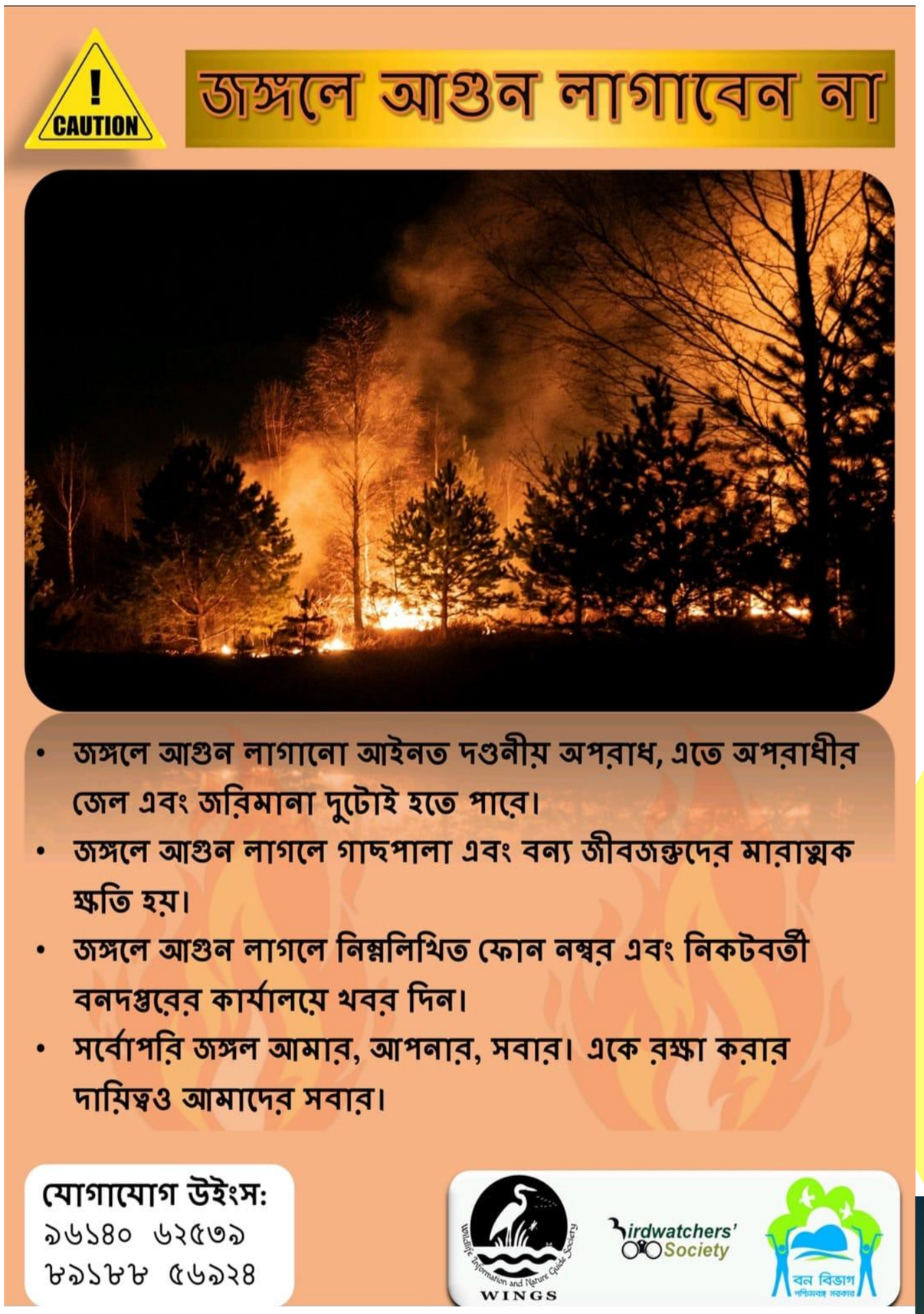


International Tiger Day -2024



Event Report: International Tiger Day Celebration 2024
Date: 30th July 2024
Location: District Science Center, Purulia
Organized by: WINGS – Wildlife Information and Nature Guide Society

On **30th July 2024**, in observance of *International Tiger Day*, our organization hosted a vibrant awareness program at the **District Science Center, Purulia**. The event saw an enthusiastic participation of approximately **100 school students;** all gathered with a shared purpose — to learn about and advocate for tiger conservation.
Key Highlights:
Mr. Diptesh Goswami, one of our dedicated members, delivered an engaging and informative presentation on the critical importance of tiger conservation. His talk covered current threats to tiger populations, their role in ecosystem balance, and actionable steps that individuals and communities can take to support ongoing conservation efforts.
The session not only provided scientific insights but also inspired students to become active voices for wildlife protection.
Interactive discussions, Q&A sessions, and educational materials further enriched the experience for participants.
Outcome:
The event successfully fostered environmental consciousness among young minds and reinforced the urgent need to protect our planet's remaining wild tiger populations. The students left with a deeper understanding of wildlife conservation and a renewed sense of responsibility toward nature.
Acknowledgement:
We extend our sincere thanks to the **District Science Center, Purulia**, for their cooperation and venue support, and to all the schools and students who made the event a meaningful celebration.
Together, we roar louder for tigers and nature.



Display Board installation for spreading awareness against Forest Fire

Awareness Update: Forest Fire Prevention Campaign by WINGS
Location: Durgapur (Balijuri, Benebandhi, Laudoha, Madhaigunj)

In collaboration with: Forest Department, Government of West Bengal & Birdwatchers' Society

WINGS, in collaboration with the Forest Department, Government of West Bengal, and the Birdwatchers' Society, has recently undertaken an extensive **forest fire awareness campaign** across various forest fringe areas surrounding Durgapur. Over the past few months, the team has installed more than a **dozen educational posters** in key forested regions.These posters are designed to **sensitize local communities** about the dangers and legal consequences of starting forest fires. Forest fires not only endanger **flora, fauna, and human life**, but also cause long-term ecological damage. The initiative emphasizes that **starting a forest fire is a serious legal offense**, often resulting in uncontrolled blazes and irreversible loss.

Call to Action:

Our forests are a shared responsibility. WINGS encourages **community participation** in safeguarding natural habitats through vigilance and prompt reporting. Every act of awareness and prevention helps ensure a safer and greener tomorrow.

Together, through education and cooperation, we can prevent forest fires and protect our environment.

“Building Trust, Protecting Lives – Empowering Nomadic Shepherds for Coexistence and Conservation."

As part of our ongoing efforts to promote human-wildlife coexistence and support marginalized communities, our organization distributed **10 mosquito nets** among **nomadic shepherds** residing in areas frequently affected by wildlife-livestock conflict.

These communities often face significant challenges, the most critical being **predation of livestock by wolves**. Such incidents lead to severe economic losses for the shepherds and frequently escalate tensions between humans and wildlife, resulting in retaliatory behavior that undermines conservation efforts.

Recognizing their unique position, our organization views nomadic shepherds not merely as vulnerable stakeholders but as **valuable allies in wildlife conservation**. Their intimate knowledge of local landscapes, animal behavior, and movement patterns offers critical insights that can enhance monitoring and protection strategies.

By providing mosquito nets, we aimed to:

- Address an **immediate health concern**, particularly the risk of vector-borne diseases.
- Strengthen our **relationship with local shepherds** by acknowledging and supporting their needs.
- Foster a sense of **trust and partnership**, essential for building sustainable conservation models.

This small but meaningful gesture is a step toward **building inclusive conservation frameworks** that consider both ecological and human dimensions. We believe that empowering local communities is key to protecting biodiversity and ensuring the long-term success of wildlife conservation initiatives.

" Indian Grey Wolf Tracking and Site Assessment Roshna Field Survey "

Date: 5th September 2024
Location: Roshna Area, under Gourandi Beat
Organized by: WINGS – Wildlife Information and Nature Guide Society
In collaboration with: Gourandi Beat Staff
Project: Indian Grey Wolves Conservation Project

WINGS, in collaboration with the **Gourandi Beat staff**, successfully conducted a **field survey** on **5th September 2024** in the **Roshna Area** as part of the **Indian Grey Wolves Conservation Project**.

The survey aimed to:

Identify **evidence of Indian Grey Wolf presence** such as scat, tracks, and dens

Analyze **habitat conditions** and landscape features critical for wolf movement and survival

Select **strategic locations** for installing **camera traps** to monitor wolf activity and population behavior

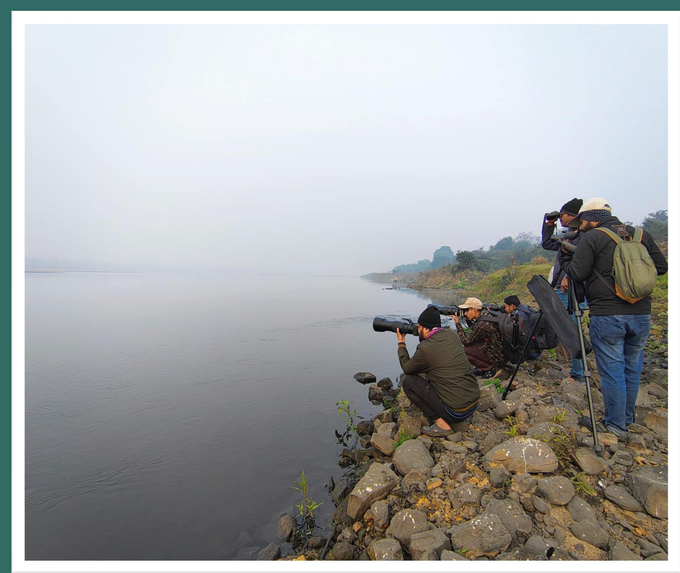
This field exercise is a vital component of ongoing efforts to **understand the spatial ecology** of the Indian Grey Wolf and to implement **effective conservation measures** based on field evidence.

The collaboration with forest personnel ensured detailed area coverage and enhanced local coordination. Such efforts also strengthen the foundation for **community-supported conservation actions** in wolf-prone landscapes.

Mid-winter Waterbird Survey in Wetlands under Durgapur Forest Division, Paschim Bardhaman

Waterbird diversity was assessed from December 2024 to January 2025 across 11 wetlands under the Durgapur Forest Division in Paschim Bardhaman district. The study sites included:

1. Site 1: Durgapur Barrage
1. Site 2: Chittaranjan Wetland Complex
1. Site 3: Vaska (Mango Garden)
1. Site 4: Gunjan Ecological Park
1. Site 5: Maithon Dam
1. Site 6: IISCO Ash Pond, Burnpur
1. Site 7: Burnpur Riverside
1. Site 8: Choti Raniganj
1. Site 9: Mudir Bandh
1. Site 10: Suko Bandh
1. Site 11: Nachan Dam



A total of 54 species of waterbirds and wetland-associated birds, representing 19 families, were recorded across these sites. The Anatidae family had the highest species richness and abundance.

Of the 54 species, 23 were winter migrants to this region of the Indian Subcontinent. Notably, the Common Merganser was recorded for the first time in southern Bengal.

Table 1. Site-wise abundance of waterbirds and wetland-associated birds in 11 study sites (Site 1: Durgapur barrage, Site 2: Chittaranjan wetland complex, Site 3: Vaska (Mango Garden), Site 4: Gunjan ecological park, Site 5: Maithon dam, Site 6: IISCO Ash pond, Burnpur, Site 7: Burnpur riverside, Site 8: Choti Raniganj, Site 9: Mudir Bandh, Site 10: Suko Bandh, Site 11: Nachan Dam) (Migration Status: R- Resident, WM-Winter migrant) (NR- Not Recorded)

Sl. No.	Common Name	Scientific Name	Migration Status	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Site 4	Site 5	Site 6	Site 7	Site 8	Site 9	Site 10	Site 11
						Anatidae								
1	Lesser Whistling-duck	*Dendrocygna javanica*	R	NR	3958	NR	NR	NR	R	11	33	780	960	9
2	Ruddy Shelduck	*Tadorna ferruginea*	WM	2	10	NR	NR	NR	NR	35	NR	NR	NR	NR
3	Gadwall	*Mareca strepera*	WM	NR	56	32	NR	NR	39	NR	6	NR	NR	NR
4	Eurasian Wigeon	*Mareca penelope*	WM	NR	3	NR	NR	NR	5	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
5	Northern Pintail	*Anas acuta*	WM	NR	11	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
6	Red-crested Pochard	*Netta rufina*	WM	NR	4	NR	NR	NR	76	4	156	25	4	NR
7	Common Pochard	*Aythya ferina*	WM	NR	6	NR	NR	29	1	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
8	Tufted Duck	*Aythya fuligula*	WM	NR	7	NR	NR	82	1	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
9	Ferruginous Duck	*Aythya nyroca*	WM	NR	NR	2	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
10	Common Merganser	*Mergus merganser*	WM	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	1	NR	NR	NR	NR
11	Cotton-pygmy Goose	*Nettapus coromandelianus*	R	NR	NR	41	5	NR	NR	NR	14	22	NR	14
						Podicipedidae								
12	Great-crested Grebe	*Podiceps cristatus*	WM	NR	NR	NR	NR	7	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
13	Little Grebe	*Tachybaptus ruficollis*	R	NR	9	2	2	NR	3	2	4	2	NR	7
						Rallidae								
14	Eurasian	*Gallinula*	R	NR	13	9	1	NR	NR	NR	2	NR	NR	2

Mid-winter Waterbird Survey in Wetlands under Durgapur Forest Division, Paschim Bardhaman

	Moorhen	*chloropus*											
15	Eurasian Coot	*Fulica atra*	R	NR	6	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	2	NR	NR	NR
16	Grey-headed Swamphen	*Porphyrio poliocephalus*	R	2	6	NR	NR	NR	NR	8	NR	NR	NR	NR
17	White-breasted Waterhen	*Amaurornis phoenicurus*	R	NR	1	NR	1	NR	1	2	NR	2	NR	NR
						Ciconiidae								
18	Asian Openbill	*Anastomus oscitans*	R	1	21	NR	2	3	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
						Threskiornithidae								
19	Black-headed Ibis	*Threskiornis melanocephalus*	R	NR	29	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
						Ardeidae								
20	Indian Pond Heron	*Ardeola grayii*	R	6	16	NR	6	NR	3	8	2	2	2	5
21	Black-crowned Night Heron	*Nycticorax nycticorax*	R	NR	11	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
22	Little Egret	*Egretta garzetta*	R	1	4	4	1	NR	NR	3	NR	3	4	NR
23	Eastern Cattle-egret	*Ardea coromanda*	R	3	42	NR	NR	5	NR	10	6	NR	4	NR
24	Medium Egret	*Ardea intermedia*	R	NR	2	4	1	1	NR	1	3	NR	NR	NR
25	Great Egret	*Ardea alba*	R	NR	6	NR	NR	NR	NR	3	NR	NR	NR	NR
26	Grey Heron	*Ardea cinerea*	R	3	10	NR	NR	NR	NR	2	NR	NR	4	NR
27	Purple Heron	*Ardea purpurea*	R	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	1	NR	NR
						Phalacrocoracidae								
28	Little Cormorant	*Microcarbo niger*	R	15	5	NR	5	13	NR	13	4	2	6	4
29	Great Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax carbo*	WM	NR	54	NR	NR	1	NR	6	NR	NR	NR	NR
						Jacanidae								
30	Bronze-winged Jacana	*Metopidius indicus*	R	1	6	NR	7	NR	NR	NR	3	NR	NR	8
31	Pheasant-tailed Jacana	*Hydrophasianus chirurgus*	R	3	NR	NR	1	NR	NR	NR	6	1	NR	6
						Scolopacidae								
32	Common Sandpiper	*Acitis hypoleucos*	R	NR	1	NR	NR	NR	NR	2	NR	NR	NR	NR
33	Common Greenshank	*Tringa nebularia*	R	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	4	NR	NR	NR	NR
						Recurvirostridae								
34	Black-winged Stilt	*Himantopus himantopus*	R	NR	20	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
						Hirundinidae								
35	Barn Swallow	*Hirundo rustica*	WM	11	22	NR	1	NR	NR	10	5	NR	NR	7
36	Wire-tailed Swallow	*Hirundo smithii*	WM	16	9	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
						Charadriidae								
37	Little Ringed Plover	*Thinornis dubius*	R	1	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	14	NR	NR	NR	NR
38	Kentish Plover	*Anarhynchys alexandrinus*	WM	2	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	20	NR	NR	NR	NR
39	Grey-headed Lapwing	*Vanellus cinereus*	WM	NR	98	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
						Alcedinidae								
40	Stork-billed Kingfisher	*Pelargopsis capensis*	R	NR	1	NR	1	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
41	White-throated Kingfisher	*Halcyon smyrnensis*	R	NR	3	1	2	NR	NR	2	1	1	NR	NR
42	Pied Kingfisher	*Ceryle rudis*	R	1	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	2	NR	NR	NR	NR
43	Common Kingfisher	*Alcedo atthis*	R	2	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	2	1	NR	NR	NR
						Motacillidae								
44	White Wagtail	*Motacilla alba*	WM	8	3	NR	5	NR	NR	12	NR	NR	NR	NR
45	White-browed Wagtail	*Motacilla maderaspatensis*	R	NR	1	NR	NR	1	NR	4	NR	NR	NR	NR
46	Citrine Wagtail	*Motacilla citreola*	WM	3	3	NR	1	NR	NR	11	NR	NR	NR	NR
47	Eastern Yellow Wagtail	*Motacilla tschutschensis*	WM	NR	2	NR	3	NR	NR	2	NR	NR	NR	NR
48	Grey Wagtail	*Motacilla cinerea*	WM	NR	1	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
						Sturnidae								
49	Bank Myna	*Acridotheres ginginianus*	R	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	5	NR	NR
						Pandionidae								
50	Osprey	*Pandion haliaetus*	WM	1	NR	NR	NR	NR	1	1	NR	NR	NR	NR
						Accipitridae								
51	Booted Eagle	*Hieraaetus pennatus*	WM	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	1	NR	NR	NR	NR
						Glareolidae								
52	Small Pratincole	*Glareola lactea*	R	3	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	10	NR	NR	NR	NR
						Acrocephalidae								
53	Clamorous Reed Warbler	*Acrocephalus stentoreus*	WM	1	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	2	NR	NR	NR	NR
54	Blyth's Reed Warbler	*Acrocephalus dumetorum*	WM	1	NR	NR	1	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR

Winter Waterbird Survey at Harisinghpur, Ghatal, Paschim Medinipur under Kharagpur Forest Division

Date: 15.01.2025

Survey Team: Two members from WINGS (Dr. Arkajyoti Mukherjee, Mr. Diptesh Goswami) and four members from WBFD.

Survey Method: Total Count (The **total count method** for waterbird surveys involves systematically counting all individual birds of each species present in a defined area, such as a wetland or waterbody, during a specific time. We used binoculars, cameras, and field guides to identify and record species accurately. The survey was conducted in the early morning when bird activity was highest and visibility was optimal.)

Waterbird Checklist: A total of twelve species belonged to seven families recorded during the survey. Only one winter migrant (Garganey) was recorded during the study.

Sl. No.	Common Name	Scientific Name	Abundance
		ANATIDAE	
1	Lesser Whistling-duck	*Dendrocygna javanica*	65
2	Garganey	*Spatula querquedula*	1
		RALLIDAE	
3	Common Moorhen	*Gallinula chloropus*	1
4	White-breasted Waterhen	*Amaurornis phoenicurus*	16
5	Grey-headed Swamphen	*Porphyrio poliocephalus*	39
		JACANIDAE	
6	Bronze-winged Jacana	*Metopidius indicus*	82
		CICONIIDAE	
7	Asian Openbill	*Anastomus oscitans*	105
		ARDEIDAE	
8	Indian Pond Heron	*Ardeola grayii*	9
9	Little Egret	*Egretta garzetta*	3
		PHALACROCORACIDAE	
10	Indian Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*	1
11	Little Cormorant	*Microcarbo niger*	6
		ALCEDINIDAE	
12	White-breasted Kingfisher	*Halcyon smyrnensis*	2

Major Threats: Water hyacinth blooms and kite flying pose significant threats to waterbirds. Dense water hyacinth infestations degrade aquatic habitats by reducing open water surfaces, depleting oxygen levels, and obstructing access to feeding grounds, leading to habitat unsuitability for many waterbird species. Kite flying, particularly with strings coated in abrasive materials like glass (manjha), endangers birds by causing injuries or fatalities when they collide with or become entangled in the strings. These activities disrupt waterbird populations by impacting their foraging, nesting, and roosting behaviors, underscoring the need for habitat management and community awareness to mitigate these threats.

Winter Waterbird Survey 2025 (Jhargram Forest Division)

Study sites: Jhilli Pakhiralay, Hatibari Range (Site 1), Khandarani Dam, Belpahari Range (Site 2), Ketki Jharna, Bhulabheda Range (Site 3), and Rajbandh Wetlands, Jhargram Range (Site 4).

Date of Survey: 13.01.2025-15.01.2015
Survey Team: Durgapur WINGS (Dr. Arkajyoti Mukherjee, Shipra Ganguly)

Table 1 : Checklist of the waterbirds (R: Resident, WM: Winter Migrant)

Sl. No.	Common Name	Scientific Name	Migration Status	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Site 4
		ANATIDAE					
1	Lesser Whistling-duck	Dendrocygna javanica	R	5520	324	-	6
2	Fulvous Whistling-duck	Dendrocygna bicolor	R	2	-	-	-
3	Gadwall	Mareca strepera	WM	105	21	-	-
4	Northern Pintail	Anas acuta	WM	42	-	-	-
5	Common Teal	Anas crecca	WM	12	-	-	-
6	Eurasian Wigeon	Mareca penelope	WM	3	-	-	-
7	Knob-billed Duck	Sarkidiornis melanotos	R	1	-	-	-
8	Cotton Pygmy Goose	Nettapus coromandelianus	R	8	13	2	6
		PODICIPEDIDAE					
9	Little Grebe	Tachybaptus ruficollis	R	35	12	4	11
10	Great-crested Grebe	Podiceps cristatus	WM	-	2	-	-
		RALLIDAE					
11	Eurasian Coot	Fulica atra	R	2	-	-	-
12	Common Moorhen	Gallinula chloropus	R	15	7	-	2
13	White-breasted Waterhen	Amaurornis phoenicurus	R	3	2	4	1
14	Grey-headed Swamphen	Porphyrio poliocephalus	R	4	1	-	-
		JACANIDAE					
15	Bronze-winged Jacana	Metopedius indicus	R	12	2	1	2
16	Pheasant-tailed Jacana	Hydrophasianus chirurgus	R	10	3	-	-
		ARDEIDAE					
17	Indian Pond Heron	Ardeola grayii	R	4	2	2	5
18	Grey Heron	Ardea cinerea	R	1	1	-	-
19	Purple Heron	Ardea purpurea	R	1	2	-	-
20	Little Egret	Egretta garzetta	R	50	12	2	9
21	Eastern Cattle Egret	Bubulcus coromandus	R	12	1	2	1
22	Intermediate Egret	Ardea intermedia	R	2	-	-	-
		PHALACROCORACIDAE					
23	Little Cormorant	Microcarbo niger	R	8	3	3	3
24	Great Cormorant	Phalacrocorax carbo	WM	-	2	-	-
		ALCEDINIDAE					
25	Stork-billed Kingfisher	Pelargopsis capensis	R	1	-	-	1
26	White-breasted Kingfisher	Halcyon smyrnensis	R	2	3	2	2
27	Common Kingfisher	Alcedo atthis	R	1	2	-	-
		CICONIIDAE					
28	Asian Openbill	Anastomus oscitans	R	12	7	-	-
		SCOLOPACIDAE					
29	Common Sandpiper	Actitis hypoleucos	WM	-	2	-	-
30	Common Snipe	Gallinago gallinago	R	11	-	-	-
		CHARADRIIDAE					
31	Grey-headed Lapwing	Vanellus cinereus	WM	-	2	-	389
		HIRUNDINIDAE					
32	Barn Swallow	Hirundo rustica	WM	2	3	-	-

Winter Bird Count Census under Kangsabati South Division

Organized by: WINGS – Wildlife Information and Nature Guide Society
In collaboration with: Forest Department, Government of West Bengal

WINGS is pleased to share the successful completion of two **Winter Bird Count Census** events held at **Bhalo Dam** and **Ghoratika Dam**, conducted in collaboration with the **Forest Department, Government of West Bengal**.
On **9th January 2025**, a bird count was conducted at **Bhalo Dam(Site 1), Bandwan**, led by WINGS members **Diptesh Goswami** and **Antara Pal**. The survey aimed to document wintering waterbirds and resident species across the dam's wetlands and surrounding landscapes. A range of migratory species were recorded, and the event highlighted the ecological importance of Bhalo Dam as a seasonal refuge for avifauna.
On the following day, **10th January 2025**, the team continued their efforts at **Ghoratika Dam(Site 2)**, where a full-day census was carried out to monitor bird diversity and habitat conditions. This field exercise provided valuable data that will support ongoing conservation initiatives and help track population trends of key species.

PURULIA		
Species name	Species Abundance	
	Site 1	Site 2
Asian Green Bee-Eater	8	
Asian Koel	3	
Bank Myna	5	
Barn Swallow		3
Black Drongo	7	
Bronze Winged Jacana		6
Common Kingfisher	1	2
Common Myna	2	
Coppersmith Barbet	1	
Cotton Pygmy Goose		10
Eurasian Collared Dove	6	
Eurasian Coot		1
Eurasian Moorhen	4	
Gray Francolin		2
Great Crested Grebe		2
Indian Pied Starling	8	
Indian Pond Heron	4	12
Jungle Babbler	14	26
Lesser Whistling Teal	160	113
Liitle Grebe		10
Little Cormorant	1	
Little Ringed Plover		2
Osprey		1
Pheasant-tailed jacana		6
Pin tailed snipe		1
Purple Heron		1
Purple Rumped Sunbird		2
Red Crested Pochard		9
Red Vented Bulbul	6	14
Red Whiskered Bulbul	8	13
Richard's Pipit		1
Rose Ringed Parakeet	9	2
Rufous Treepie	9	3
White-breasted Waterhen		1
White-throated Kingfisher		2
Yellow throated Sparrow		1
Yellow Wattled Lapwing		7
Zitting Cisticola		3

School of Birds

Date: 5th January to 27th February 2025

Location: Across 18 Schools in Various Districts of West Bengal

WINGS, in collaboration with the **Birdwatchers' Society**, successfully conducted the **"School of Birds"** program – a state-wide awareness and education initiative aimed at introducing students to the world of birds and the importance of avian conservation. The program reached **18 schools across different districts of West Bengal**, making it one of the largest grassroots-level school outreach efforts undertaken by both organizations.

From **interactive presentations and bird identification workshops** to **guided nature walks and hands-on citizen science activities**, students were given a unique opportunity to engage directly with their local biodiversity. Special focus was placed on sparking curiosity about common birds, migratory species, and the role of birds in ecosystems.

Teachers, school authorities, and local stakeholders played an active role in making the initiative a grand success. The enthusiasm of the students – many of whom were experiencing birdwatching for the first time – was truly inspiring.

This program not only nurtured a love for nature among young minds but also planted seeds of conservation consciousness that will grow in the years to come.

List of schools

Sl.	Venue	Date	Time	Number of participants
1	Ajoypur High School	05.01.2025	08:30AM - 11:30PM	22
2	Heavy Engineering Unit-II FP School	07.01.2025	02:00PM - 03:30PM	40
3	Ukhra 2 No. FP School	10.01.2025	02:00PM - 03:30PM	40
4	Birbhum Zilla School	11.01.2025	11:30AM - 02:30PM	78
5	Sarpi FP School	13.01.2025	02:00PM - 03:30PM	40
6	Ukhra KB Institution	16.01.2025	02:00PM - 03:30PM	40
7	Kenduadihi Madhyamik Institution	31.01.2025	02:00PM - 04:00PM	55
8	Deshbandhu Vidyalaya (Boys') HM	06.02.2025	08:00AM - 11:30AM	40
9	Deshbandhu Mahavidyalaya	06.02.2025	12.30PM - 02:00PM	75
10	Bansgora Sishu Shiksha Kendra	18.02.2025	02:00PM - 03:30PM	35
11	Mahasole Primary School	18.02.2025	10.00AM - 02:00PM	100
12	Labna Para FP School	20.02.2025	02:00PM - 03:30PM	50
13	AIMS Generate Public School	21.02.2025	08:00AM - 11:30AM	50
14	Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith Purulia	21.02.2025	07:00AM - 12:00PM	44
15	Khatgoria FP School	24.02.2025	02:00PM - 03:30PM	30
16	Baliapur Tarapada Bidyapith High School	24.02.2025	11:00AM - 02:30PM	46
17	DVC Higher Secondary School	25.02.2025	11:00AM - 02:30PM	35
18	Gourangdi R. K. S. Institution	27.02.2025	11:00AM - 02:30PM	47

Glimpses
School of Birds

11th Barrage Bird Count

11th Barrage Bird Count at Durgapur Barrage

🗓️ **Date:** 15th February | 🐦 **Birds Spotted:** 47 Species

Organized annually by **WINGS (Wildlife Information and Nature Guide Society)** since 2015, the *Durgapur Barrage Bird Walk* takes place every **3rd Sunday of February** as part of the global **Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC)**. This citizen science initiative aims to:

1. Document bird diversity and abundance through consistent yearly snapshots
2. Introduce new enthusiasts to birdwatching
3. Raise awareness about birds and the need to conserve their habitats

🔍 Key Observations from 2025

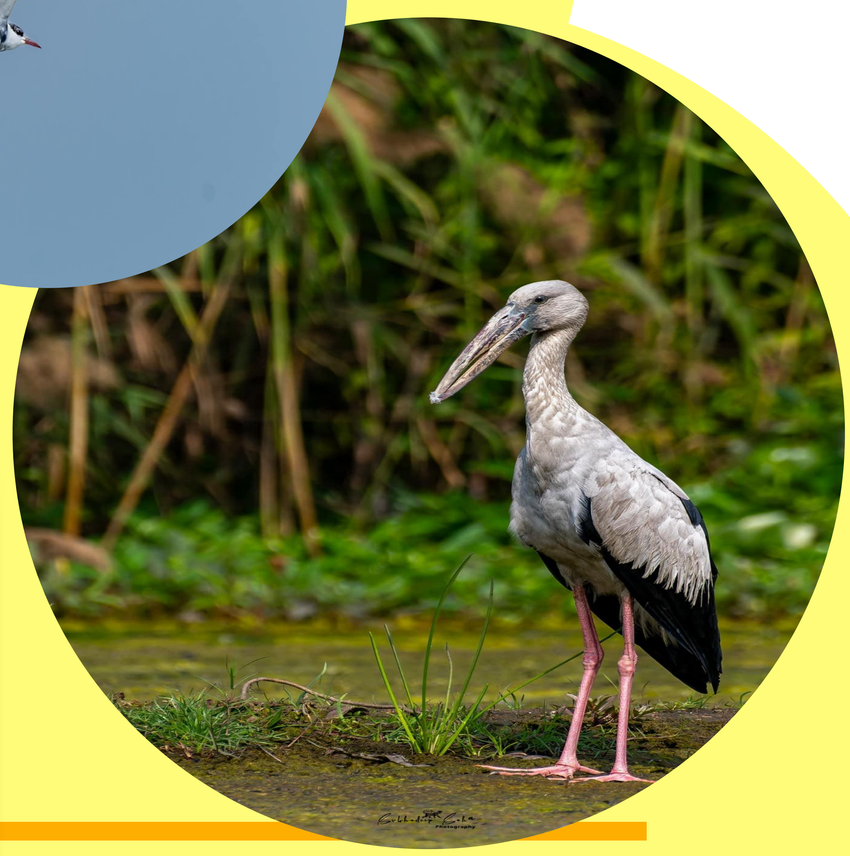
This year's bird count revealed a **significant decline** in the population of **sandpipers and ducks**. Several once-common species—such as **Ruddy Shelduck**, **Common Coot**, **Common Moorhen**, **Gadwall**, and **Kentish Plover**—were **absent**. Notably, **Little Stint** and **Wood Sandpiper** haven't been sighted in the past **five years**.

On a brighter note, **Temminck's Stint**, which had vanished over the last two years, has reappeared—marking a small but positive development.

🌱 Habitat Loss & Human Impact

The **habitat around Durgapur Barrage** has changed dramatically in recent years. Construction, particularly on the **Bankura side** where a park was developed, has altered the landscape and **contributed to the decline** in bird populations on that side of the barrage.

On Field Snaps



An Openbill Stork

NATURE WALKS FOR SPECIES DOCUMENTATION

Date: 29th September 2024
Location: Charra Airstrip, Purulia

Organized by: WINGS – Wildlife Information and Nature Guide Society

On 29th September 2024, WINGS organized a nature walk at the Charra Airstrip in Purulia, offering participants a refreshing and educational experience in the heart of nature. The walk aimed to connect people with the local ecosystem, promote environmental awareness, and foster appreciation for native flora and fauna.

Participants explored the biodiversity of the area, observed wildlife behavior, and engaged in meaningful discussions about the role of citizen science in conservation. The event also highlighted the importance of data collection and responsible exploration for better ecological understanding.
The walk proved to be a great platform for both nature enthusiasts and budding naturalists to engage with the environment and contribute to conservation efforts through observation and documentation.

NATURE WALKS FOR SPECIES DOCUMENTATION

Date: 17th November 2024
Location: Susunia Pahar, Bankura
Organized by: WINGS – Wildlife Information and Nature Guide Society

On 17th November 2024, WINGS conducted a nature walk at Susunia Pahar, a region rich in biodiversity and geological significance. The event welcomed nature lovers, birdwatchers, and citizen scientists eager to explore the natural beauty and ecological richness of the area. Participants enjoyed trekking through forest trails, observing native flora and fauna, and engaging in insightful discussions on local wildlife behavior, conservation challenges, and the importance of preserving natural habitats. The walk offered an excellent opportunity for participants to record sightings and contribute valuable data to citizen science platforms.
The experience not only deepened participants' connection to the natural world but also emphasized the importance of responsible nature exploration and community involvement in conservation efforts.

NATURE WALKS FOR SPECIES DOCUMENTATION

Date: 4th November 2024
Location: Indian Army Panagarh Camp, West Bengal
Organized by: WINGS – Wildlife Information and Nature Guide Society

On the morning of **4th November 2024**, WINGS had the privilege of organizing a **bird-watching and nature walk** event at the **Indian Army Panagarh Camp**, in the esteemed presence of **Major General Rajesh Arun Moghe**, Army General of Bengal Sub Area, and **Commandant Col. Vishal Chopra**. The event was also graced by the presence of their families and several other Army officers.

The walk offered a unique opportunity to connect with nature within the serene surroundings of the army camp. Participants had the chance to observe a variety of local and migratory bird species in their natural habitat, fostering appreciation for biodiversity and environmental awareness.

Thanks to **Mr. Sagar Adhurya** and **Mr. Subhadeep Saha** of the WINGS team for their coordination and guidance throughout the event. Their dedication was instrumental in ensuring the success of this enriching nature experience.

🌿 **Purpose and Impact:**

This nature walk served not only as a recreational activity but also as a reminder of the importance of **preserving natural ecosystems**, even within managed or secured environments. Events like these highlight the vital role that every individual, including our armed forces, can play in **conservation awareness and environmental stewardship**.

OUR
ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR

CCP Awardees for 2024-25

Sustainably Managing the Bugyals of Kedarnath, Uttarakhand

Gramya Sikshan Paryavaran Sanstha

Mitigating human-wolf conflict, West Bengal

Sagar Adhurya

Communities for carnivore conservation, West Bengal

Human & Environment Alliance League (HEAL)

Phayre's langur conservation, Tripura

Mitrajit Deb

Panchayats for forests, Andhra Pradesh

Jana Jagruti

Restoring community forests in Changlangshu, Nagaland

Wanmei Konyak

Awarded the CCP Project on Indian Grey Wolf in Paschim Bardhaman District, funded by WWF-India

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR

WINGS awarded the THT-Action Grant 2024 for the Conservation of Indian Grey Wolves in Human-Dominated Landscapes of Paschim Bardhaman and Bankura District

OUR
ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR

WTI
wti.org.in

To,
Dr. Arkajyoti Mukherjee
Gitanjali, Chandmaridanga, Bankura,
West Bengal - 722101

Ref: WTI/WA/RAP/2024-25/PA/A/51 Date: 23/01/2025

Sub: Professional Assignment for conservation of striped hyenas in Paschim Bardhaman district of West Bengal

Dear Dr. Mukherjee,

We are pleased to issue a Professional Assignment to you to in West Bengal (**"Assigned area"**). As per this professional assignment, you will be working towards the conservation of striped hyenas in Paschim Bardhaman district (**"Professional Assignment"**).

The Wildlife Trust of India is pleased to offer a professional assignment to you for this Rapid Action Project.

Awarded the Rapid Action Project in Striped hyena conservation in Paschim Bardhaman District, funded by the Wildlife Trust of India

OUR
ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR

We were honored by the Durgapur Forest Division during Banamahotsav for our dedicated conservative efforts.

On-field Action

Laudoha village

RESCUE OPERATIONS

Incident Report: Anti-Poaching Operation at Laudoha Forest, Durgapur
Date: 7th May 2024
Location: Laudoha Forest, Durgapur, Paschim Bardhaman

On 7th May 2024, during a routine wildlife survey, our team collaborated with the Forest Department to successfully intercept poachers operating in the Laudoha Forest region of Durgapur, Paschim Bardhaman.
During the survey, two of our members – Manish Kumar Chattopadhyay and Subhadeep Saha – observed suspicious activity involving a group of individuals engaged in illegal hunting. They promptly alerted senior team member Arnish Bose, who took swift action by informing the local Forest Department authorities.
Following a coordinated response, a joint team investigated the area and recovered multiple nets and hunting tools from the suspects. The individuals were educated on the significance of wildlife conservation, relevant legal frameworks, and the penalties associated with wildlife crimes.
We urge continued cooperation and timely communication regarding such incidents in the future. Our ongoing collaboration with the Forest Department remains crucial in addressing the various threats facing biodiversity and in ensuring the protection of our forest ecosystems.

On-field Action

Mamra Bazar
Main Road

RESCUE OPERATIONS

Rescue Report: Injured Blue Rock Pigeon from Mamra Bazar, Durgapur
Date: 1st June 2024
Location: Mamra Bazar Main Road, Durgapur, West Bengal

On 1st June 2024, our NGO successfully rescued an injured Blue Rock Pigeon (Columba livia) from a residence located on Mamra Bazar Main Road, Durgapur. The bird had sustained multiple injuries—first inflicted by hunters and later worsened by an attack from crows. Fortunately, concerned residents found the pigeon in distress and provided temporary shelter before contacting our team.
Our president, Mr. Saptarshi Mukherjee, received a call regarding the injured bird. He immediately notified our local representative, Mr. Subhadeep Saha, who coordinated and led the rescue operation. Mr. Saha promptly contacted the resident who had discovered the pigeon and proceeded to the location with necessary first-aid equipment and a transport cage.
Upon arrival, Mr. Saha carefully examined the bird and identified several injuries, including a broken wing and multiple deep cuts. After initial assessment and stabilization, the injured pigeon was handed over to the Forest Department for continued care and rehabilitation. The Forest Department has since taken responsibility for the bird's recovery and has assured us that it will be released back into its natural habitat once fully healed.
This incident sheds light on the persisting issues of illegal hunting and animal cruelty in the region. Our organization has urged local authorities to implement stricter monitoring and enforce penalties against individuals involved in wildlife crimes.
The residents of Mamra Bazar have expressed their appreciation for the swift response and dedication shown by our team. One resident commented, "It's heartwarming to see people care so much about animals. We need more initiatives like this to protect our wildlife."
Our NGO continues its commitment to raising awareness on animal welfare and wildlife conservation. We encourage the public to report any incidents involving injured or distressed wildlife. With active community participation and timely action, we can work together to protect and preserve the biodiversity of our region.

Durgapur

RESCUE OPERATIONS

Rescue Report of Critically Injured Golden Jackal – A Collaborative Effort

Date: 26th December 2024
Location: Paschim Bardhaman, West Bengal

On 26th December 2024, WINGS – Wildlife Information and Nature Guide Society – played a crucial role in the rescue of a critically injured Golden Jackal (Canis aureus) in collaboration with the Forest Department, Government of West Bengal. The rescue effort was led by our dedicated member, Mr. Manish Kumar Chattopadhyay, whose quick thinking and compassion ensured the animal received immediate care.

The jackal, found in a severely injured state, required urgent attention. With no time to lose, Mr. Chattopadhyay, along with the forest team, used a personal blanket to safely contain and comfort the distressed animal. This thoughtful act minimized further trauma during the rescue process. Once stabilized, the jackal was handed over to the forest department officials and promptly transported to Burdwan for necessary medical treatment.

This incident reflects WINGS' unwavering commitment to wildlife protection. While golden jackals are relatively widespread, incidents such as these remind us of the increasing threats faced by even the most resilient wild species due to habitat disturbance, human conflict, and road accidents. Every successful rescue is not only a life saved but also a step forward in building awareness and fostering coexistence between humans and wildlife.

We sincerely thank the Forest Department for their continued cooperation, and we applaud the bravery and presence of mind shown by Mr. Manish Kumar Chattopadhyay. WINGS remains dedicated to its mission of wildlife conservation, and this rescue is yet another testament to the impact of timely, coordinated action and deep-rooted compassion for all living beings.

WINGS IN MEDIA

Cameras to go wolf-spotting in grasslands near Durgapur

KrishnenduMukherjee@timesgroup.com

Kolkata: Camera traps will soon start scanning forest patches near Durgapur town to shed light one of the most elusive grassland species in south Bengal — the Indian wolf.

Following studies in Bankura, Purulia and West Midnapore, a new study — also including field research and awareness campaigns — in West Burdwan, particularly in grasslands within a radius of 20-25km from Durgapur town, will decipher the relative abundance of these apex grassland predators, identify their probable migration routes and pinpoint zones most prone to conflict.

STUDY ON MOVEMENT PATTERN, PACK SIZE

- Study on wolves near Durgapur town
- 10 camera traps to be placed
- Focus on relative abundance of the species in the locations, movement pattern and man-animal conflict
- Project by WINGS and WWF-India
- A WII study in 2022 revealed India is home to around 3,000+ wolves

A wolf earlier captured in a trap camera at Madhaiganj near Durgapur

FOCUS ON CONFLICT

The study will be undertaken by a local NGO, Wildlife Information and Nature Guide Society (WINGS), with funding from WWF-India's Conservation Catalyst Programme (CCP), which supports grassroots conservationists and organizations in their efforts to conserve wildlife and habitats.

Initially, the study will focus on the relative abundance of this Schedule I species, which measures how common or rare a species is compared to other species in a specific location.

"Absolute abundance data can be obtained through non-invasive DNA analysis of scat samples. We have already applied to WWF for support in DNA analysis. There is limited data on abundance of wolves in West Burdwan," said Arkajyoti Mukherjee of WINGS, who will lead the project with Sagar Adhurya.

The methodology involves placing at least 10 camera traps in strategic positions across four to five pockets with wolf packs in the district. The aim is to identify pack sizes. The cameras will also help identify their movement paths.

But, the primary focus will be on identifying areas of human-wolf conflict through data from forest dept and questionnaire surveys. Sensitization camps will also be conducted at villages.

WINGS earlier conducted a study on wolves in Madhaiganj village of West Burdwan. The study funded by WTI had identified nine individuals in the pack.

Zoological Survey of India had earlier conducted a study on wolf abundance in south Bengal, covering Purulia, Bankura and West Midnapore. A scientific population estimate in India by Wildlife Institute of India in 2022 said only 3,100 Indian wolves now remain in the wild.

LED strips are being used for the beautification project. —Mohammad As

Cop-scientist tips on monitoring wildlife through camera traps

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kolkata: A workshop elaborating use of camera traps and CCTVs in monitoring wildlife was orgnaised by local NGO WINGS at Durgapur Government College.

It was held under the Conservation Catalyst Programme of the WWF-India.

Major highlights of the event were presentations and inputs of Kaushik Deuti and Kamalakannan Manokaran of the Zoological Survey of India.

"Their expertise and wealth of experience in the field of wildlife monitoring using camera traps and CCTV technologies added depth and credibility to the event. Ranjan Kumar Das (associate-Kolkata Police) also contributed to the event with his expertise, providing a comprehensive understanding of CCTV techniques for monitoring wildlife," said Arkajyoti Mukherjee of WINGS.

> More than 50 participated in the event, that was also attended by divisional forest officer of Durgapur division Anupam Khan

WWF-INDIA

"We are grateful to Debnath Palit (principal, Durgapur Government College) for his support," he added. Faculty members and students from the conservation biology department of the college were also present. More than 50 participated in the event, that was also attended by DFO, Durgapur division,, Anupam Khan.

SUNDAY TIMES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI
SEPTEMBER 8, 2024

TIMES *Special* | *On Sunday*

Can Indians learn to live with the 'big bad wolf'?

Bahraich has reignited old fears and hysteria, but a bunch of dedicated conservationists are trying to help save this misunderstood species

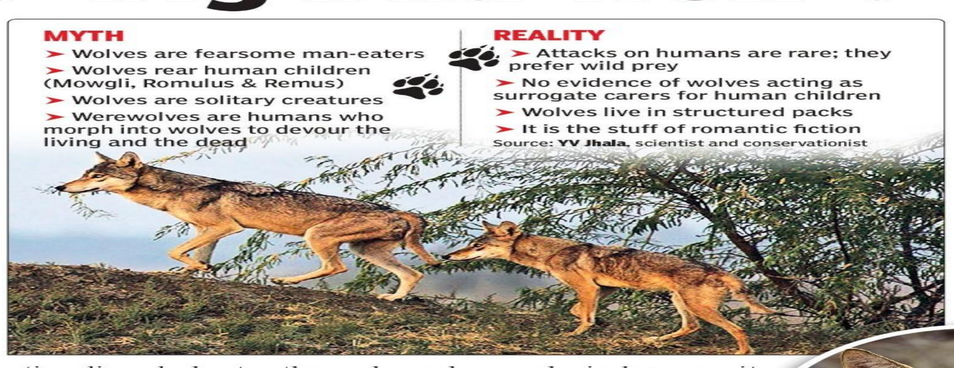
Sneha.Bhura@timesofindia.com

Photos: Vinit Arora, Mihir Godbole & WINGS

In fairy tales, it's the sly predator feasting on innocent grannies and children. In movies, it torments characters like Liam Neeson in the frozen environs of Alaska. In real life too, the wolf has been demonised as a creature of guile and aggression, creating primal fear among the masses. The repeated wolf attacks that killed several children in Uttar Pradesh's Bahraich over the past two months have further reinforced this view, leading to the launch of Operation Bhediya and shoot-at-sight orders.

But not everyone's gunning for this endangered species. Some worry that the hysteria could lead to wolves becoming extinct in India. For Vinit Arora, a wildlife photographer, the Indian grey wolf is one of his favourite species. He first saw a 'bottled wolf' near a lake in Umred, Nagpur district in 2014. The Indian wolf, part of a pack of five, had got his head stuck inside a plastic jar. Arora tracked the wolf for two days, watching how the animal survived on water pouring in through the holes of the jar. As part of an NGO dealing with nature and wildlife conservation, Arora and his team extricated the wolf and released it into the wild. But the incident led to a lifetime fascination with this species of canids. He started following its pack out of curiosity to understand its behaviour and ecology. He later started a photo series on social media called 'The Highway Wolves' which documented the meanderings of the pack as they came to scavenge waste by the edge of a village called Khawasa on the border between Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. One image showed a 'toothbrushing wolf', where the adult animal was seen efficiently cleaning his teeth with a babul spine.

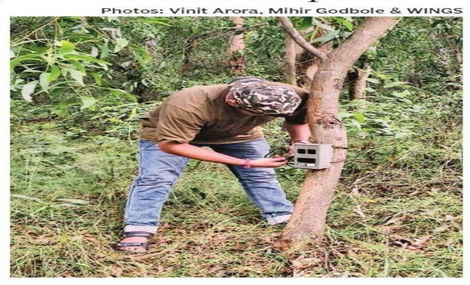
By capturing such unguarded moments, Arora hopes to create a better understanding of the elusive species. "I want people to understand that the Indian wolf is as majestic and important as a tiger, lion, elephant or the one-horned rhinoceros. Wildlifers are known to catch sight of 100 tigers in five years, but they may not find a single wolf in that time. Wolves are intelligent; they don't reveal themselves easily. Their hunts are calculated decisions. Pure-breed wolves don't go near humans," says Arora, who now follows three packs around MP and Maharashtra.



MYTH
- Wolves are fearsome man-eaters
- Wolves rear human children (Mowgli, Romulus & Remus)
- Wolves are solitary creatures
- Werewolves are humans who morph into wolves to devour the living and the dead

REALITY
- Attacks on humans are rare; they prefer wild prey
- No evidence of wolves acting as surrogate carers for human children
- Wolves live in structured packs
- It is the stuff of romantic fiction

Source: **YV Jhala**, scientist and conservationist



GUARDIANS OF GRASSLAND: Camera traps are a common tool for wolf surveys. (Left) 'Toothbrushing wolf' captured by wildlife photographer Vinit Arora

MIHIR GODBOLE, FOUNDER OF THE GRASSLANDS TRUST

In Pune district, they are not even attacking livestock like they used to. They have shifted around 50% of their diet to scavenging. This makes them quite timid towards humans, contrary to what is happening in UP right now

Many conservationists blame the current spate of attacks on the hybrid 'wolf-dog', the result of wolves mating with feral dogs. This hybrid is a mystery for researchers as they don't have much genetic data.

While conflicts between humans and wolves are on the rise as their grassland habitats shrink, there are some communities that continue to live in harmony, and even worship wolves. Shepherding communities from the Deccan Plateau believe they protect their flocks from disease as they take away their sick animals. They also hold burials for wolves when they die to honour their role in preventing epidemics. Sougata Sadhukhan, a Pune-based ecologist and academic, says other pastoral communities like the Dhangars consider wolves lucky too.

VILLAIN IMAGE A HURDLE

But the wolf's big, bad image is still a big hurdle in conservation efforts. "All our childhood stories, cartoons and folklore depict the wolf as a villain. Animal conservation efforts require public money, so the opinion of the public matters. One of the reasons why the WWF logo has a panda is because it looks so adorable. It helps to get conservation money. Unfortunately, it's hard to get the same kind of research money for wolves as it must compete with other more heroic-looking predators like tigers, lions, and elephants," says Sadhukhan.

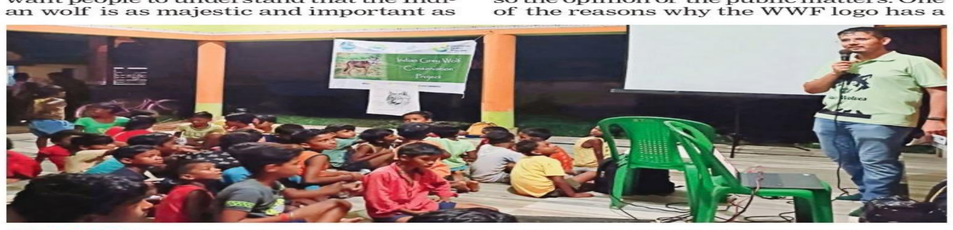
CONFLICT DECLINES

The number of wolves in India is fast dwindling. A 2021 national study by scientist and conservationist YV Jhala pegged the population of adult Indian wolves at 3,100 which makes them almost as endangered as tigers. But in a few states, there are attempts to bring the species back from the brink. Last month, Gujarat's latest wolf census conducted by the state forest department revealed their numbers had gone up from 150 in 2023 to 222. The survey highlighted that Kutch has the highest wolf population, followed by the rolling vidis (grasslands) of Velavadar, famed for its Blackbuck National Park where wolves have natural access to prey. The state also has two new wolf breeding centres to grow their numbers and gradually release them into the wild. "Agriculturalists here are concerned about the growing population of nilgais (blue bulls) which extensively damage crops. If any carnivore can stop them, it is the wolves. In the wild, the zoo-bred wolves will have enough prey base in wild rabbits, offspring of nilgais and blackbucks etc," says Nityanand Srivastava, Gujarat's principal chief conservator of forest (wildlife), whose department is also looking into compensation schemes to address economic losses of farmers if their livestock is attacked. "We have never had conflicts with wolves, so people are neutral about them here," he says.

Mihir Godbole, founder of The Grasslands Trust which has dedicated itself to wolf conservation in the Pune district for over a decade, has a similar observation on conflicts. "One of our studies showed that wolves in the Pune district are not even attacking livestock like they used to. Their food preferences have changed. They have shifted around 50% of their diet to scavenging due to availability of easier food sources such as poultry waste and cattle carcasses. This makes them quite timid towards humans, contrary to incidents happening in UP right now," says Godbole. With scientists from the Wildlife Institute of India, the organisation has installed GPS-based location transmitting collars on wolves for a project to monitor their movement patterns remotely. "The health of our grasslands and the livelihood of pastoralists is dependent on wolf conservation. The Indian wolf is a vital link in the evolution of the old-world wolf to a dog. If we lose the Indian wolf, we lose a piece of evolutionary history," says Godbole, whose organisation's efforts have impacted policy-level changes in Maharashtra. "In the last four years, we have taken multiple land parcels for grassland restoration in the Pune district, apart from Solapur and Ahmednagar. These pilot initiatives will eventually be scaled up across the state," he says.

While the Pune trust attempts to save their habitat, one non-profit in West Bengal is trying simpler ways to reduce human-animal conflict. One of them, says Saptarshi Mukherjee, president of the Durgapur-based non-profit Wildlife Information and Nature Guide Society (WINGS), is using brightly coloured flags to hang around the perimeter of pasture areas to distract the carnivores. "We have seen a 40% success rate with this method. And we have more ideas which will not harm anyone."

WINGS has also set up village committees to create awareness on the importance of wolves. "The same villagers who would cry wolf every time their goats or chickens were snatched offer regular updates on their movement and conflict hotspots without ever attacking them. And, we don't even have to visit these villages. They understand the importance of wolves who feed on crop-destroying pests. They now know the wolf is not the enemy," says Mukherjee.



WILD STORY: Children are part of awareness drives in villages of West Bengal

WINGS IN MEDIA

INITIATIVE PART OF PROJECT TO IDENTIFY HUMAN-ANIMAL CONFLICT HOTSPOTS

Trap cameras to click Indian wolves in West Burdwan

DEBRAJ MITRA

Calcutta: A six-month survey in 2023 pointed to a pack of around 10 Indian wolves (Canis lupus pallipes) in a pocket of West Burdwan.

Now, a larger project is underway to assess the relative abundance of the predator and identify the human-wolf conflict hotspots in the district.

Camera traps are being installed at strategic locations in Garjangal, near the Ajay river and around 20km from Durgapur.

"It is one of the five wolf pockets we have identified in the district, based on feedback from the forest department and local residents. Ten camera traps will be placed at strategic locations in each of the five pockets in a phased manner," said Arkajyoti Mukherjee, secretary of Wildlife Information and Nature Guide Society (WINGS), the NGO behind the project.

Between April and November 2023, the same NGO had conducted a study in Laudaha forest near Madhaiganj village, around 25km from Durgapur.

The study recorded a pack of "nine to 10" wolves. The leader of the pack was an alpha male with a damaged right eye. Two other adult males, two adult females, two sub-adults (one male and one female), and three juveniles were recorded.

"The previous study was just for a small pocket. The new one is for the entire district. There are three main objectives—estimate the relative abundance of these apex predators of the grasslands in West Burdwan, identify their migration routes and mitigate conflict with humans," said Mukherjee, a wildlife researcher at IIT Kharagpur, who is leading the study with Sagar Adhurya, another researcher.

The one-eyed alpha male wolf near Laudaha forest is West Burdwan. He was the leader of the pack when clicked last year. But he has not been spotted in the past few months, said Arkajyoti Mukherjee, who is leading the study.

One of the trap cameras

Wolves are known to maintain large territories. The study will help shed light on the corridors used by the wolves to go to or come from other districts. The animals prey on grass birds, Indian hare and rodents but also kill goats out for grazing and lift poultry from the nearby villages, stoking the risk of conflict.

Protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, Indian wolves or Indian Grey wolves are found across peninsular India in scrub forests, grasslands and arid areas.

A bulk of the population remains outside reserve forests and national parks—areas outside the ambit of census and similar exercises that focus on tigers, elephants and rhinos. Lack of surveys means their exact numbers are unknown. A forest official said they favoured semi-arid regions and ravine-like places, where it is easier to hide their puppies.

The habitat and distribution of wolves, hyenas and some other wild animals, said to be found in the forests of south Bengal was, till recently, largely undocumented.

But the situation has been changing over the past few years.

A study, commissioned by the state forest department and done by the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), has "gathered ecological data on the distribution and population assessment" of small mammals like hyena (Hyaena hyaena), Indian wolf (Canis lupus pallipes), golden jackal (Canis aureus) and wild boar (Sus scrofa) in the forests of south Bengal, except the Sunderbans.

Its report was tabled in 2022.

Apart from the forest department, some wildlife agencies have also started supporting projects to study smaller carnivores in different pockets of the state.

The West Burdwan project is part of WWF-India's flagship Conservation Catalyst Programme (CCP), which "supports grassroot conservationists and organisations to conserve wildlife and habitat, and helps awardees become more effective, structured and empowered".

The 2023 study in a pocket of the district was supported by the Wildlife Trust of India.

"Apart from the pack in and around Laudaha forest (venue of the 2023 study), we don't have recorded documentation of wolves in the district. But anecdotal records suggest more wolves in the district. We are looking forward to the new report so that we can take adequate steps for conservation," said Anupam Khan, the divisional forest officer of Durgapur division.

Call of the wild: 10 camera traps capture 'urban' wolves of Durgapur in 3 packs

KrishnenduMukherjee
@timesofindia.com

Kolkata: A comprehensive study on the elusive Indian wolf population in south Bengal has unearthed the presence of approximately 15-24 of the animals near the industrial town of Durgapur, less than 200km from Kolkata, in West Burdwan.

These wolves, distributed across three packs of approximately five to eight members each, have been documented through camera traps positioned in forests within a 5km-20km radius of the town.

The Indian wolf (Canis lupus pallipes) is a subspecies of the grey wolf. They naturally range in southwest Asia and the Indian subcontinent, and are considered endangered on the IUCN Red List.

The study is a part of the Indian grey wolf conservation project in West Burdwan, which received funding from WWF-India under the Conservation Catalyst Programme and executed by local NGO Wildlife Information and Nature Guide Society (WINGS).

Arkajyoti Mukherjee, a principal investigator, said, "In our earlier work, we recorded a pack of wolves in the Madhaiganj area (with eight wolves). Now, we have found the presence of wolves in Kantaberia, Bijra and Garh Jungle and nearby forest patches." He especially mentioned their observations of two wolves together in camera traps, occasionally spotting three during direct sightings.

Sagar Adhurya, another principal investigator, emphasised that wolves serve as apex predators in these ecosystems. Their presence in human-dominated landscapes demonstrate their adaptability. "However, their dependency on livestock makes them more prone to retaliatory killing," Adhurya said.

Manish Kumar Chattopadhyay, lead field expert, discussed conducting preliminary awareness campaigns across 14 areas to assess local knowledge about wolves. Several small-scale awareness initiatives were implemented in Madhaiganj and Saraswatiganj villages.

Pic courtesy: WINGS

AROUND 20 ANIMALS

One of the camera trap images captured during the study

- 3 wolf packs spotted in forests near Durgapur
- The forests are located within 5-20km of Durgapur town
- Each pack approximately has 5-8 members
- Wolves' presence found in Kantaberia, Bijra and Garh Jungle
- Earlier, they were recorded in Madhaiganj
- Considered endangered on IUCN Red List

"From Jan (next year), we will focus more on the campaigns. We have established village committees to conserve this Schedule I species. Until Jan, we have concentrated on gathering 'relative abundance' data throughout the West Burdwan district and identifying areas of maximum conflict," Chattopadhyay said.

'Relative abundance' measures how rare or common a species is compared to other species in a specific location, Mukherjee indicated. This data would be ready for presentation by Jan, he said.

"For absolute abundance (total number of the species in a given area), DNA analysis is necessary, for which we have requested WWF support. Relative abundance assessments rely on camera-trap images and direct sightings providing morphological characteristics," he said, adding that Kalyan Das, ex-IFS and officer on special duty, has been serving as project adviser.

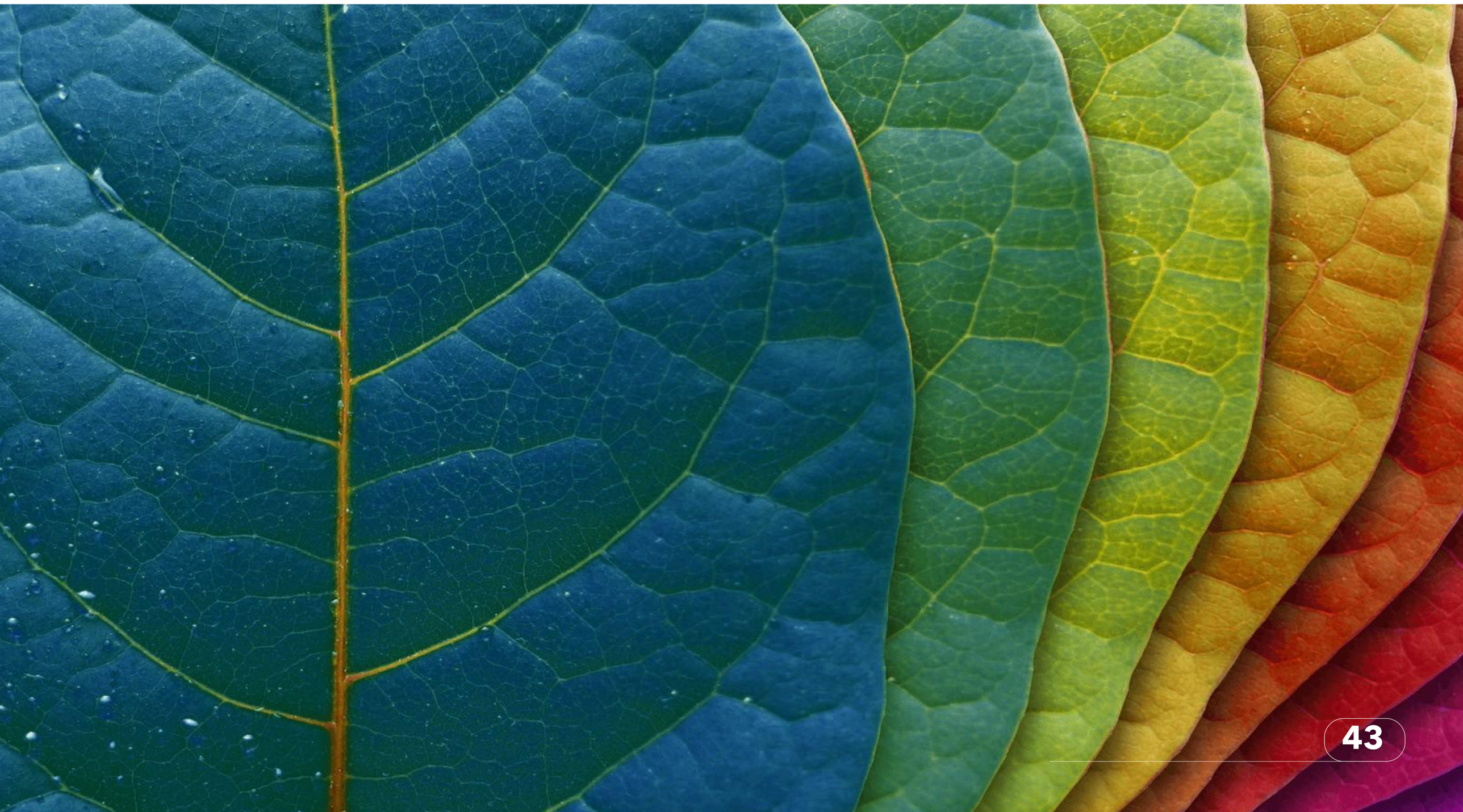
Regarding methodology, Mukherjee described deploying a minimum of 10 trap cameras at strategic locations across four-five pockets with wolf packs. "Our objective is determining pack sizes and identifying movement patterns," Adhurya explained.

Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) had previously conducted wolf abundance research in Purulia, Bankura and West Midnapore. A recent Wildlife Institute of India (WII) study estimated around 3,000 Indian wolves remaining in the wild.

Internships

1.Interns: Neha Dey & Rima Mandal
Internship Type: Paid
Duration: 8th October 2024 – 30th October 2024
Project: Pre-awareness Survey on Indian Grey Wolf Conservation Project
Details: Conducted field-level survey and community interaction to assess baseline awareness and perceptions related to Indian Grey Wolf conservation in project areas.

2.Intern: Shajay B
Internship Type: Non-Paid
Duration: 15th June 2024 – 14th December 2024
Project: Development of the Biodiversity Database of West Bengal
Details: Assisted in compiling, digitizing, and organizing species-level biodiversity data across various ecosystems in West Bengal under the WINGS conservation and documentation initiative.

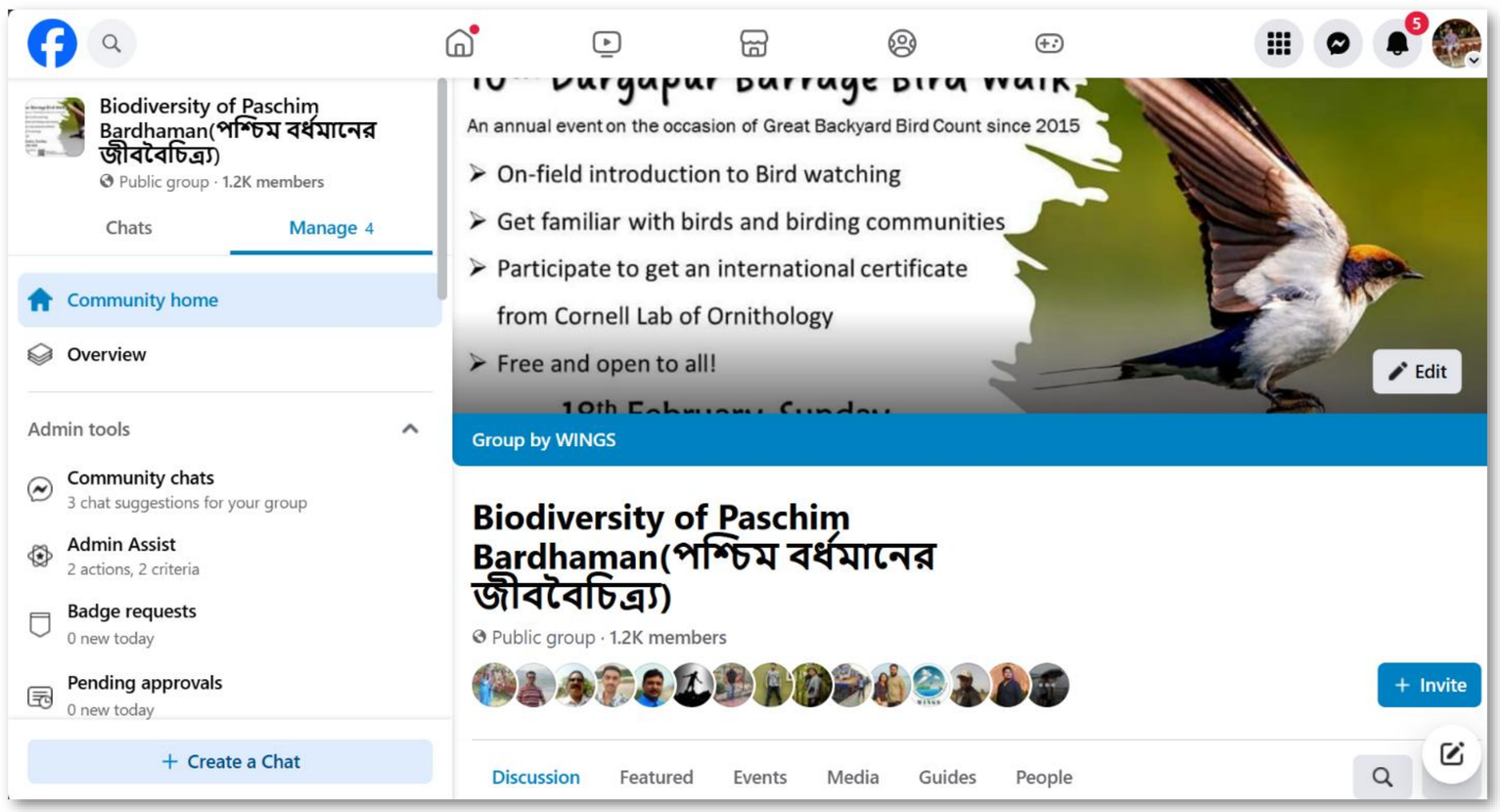


Citizen Science with Social Media

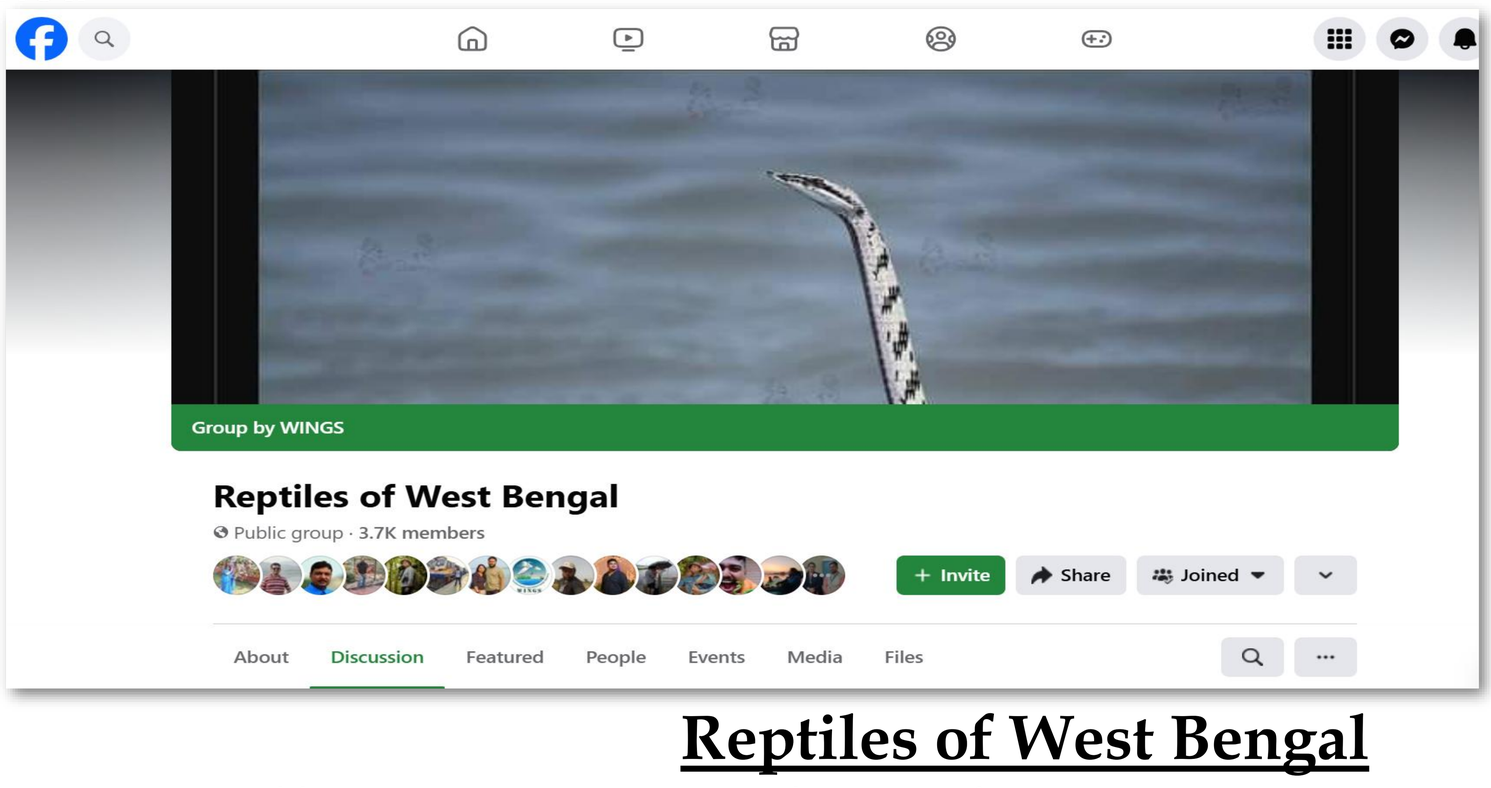
Facebook groups

Biodiversity of Paschim Bardhaman

https://www.facebook.com/groups/wildwestbardhaman



Originally created to document the birds of Durgapur with a citizen science effort with the name ‘Birding Durgapur’ in 2013. Later, the name of this group changed to the present name in 2017, intending to document all kinds of living organisms found in Paschim Bardhaman district.



Reptiles of West Bengal

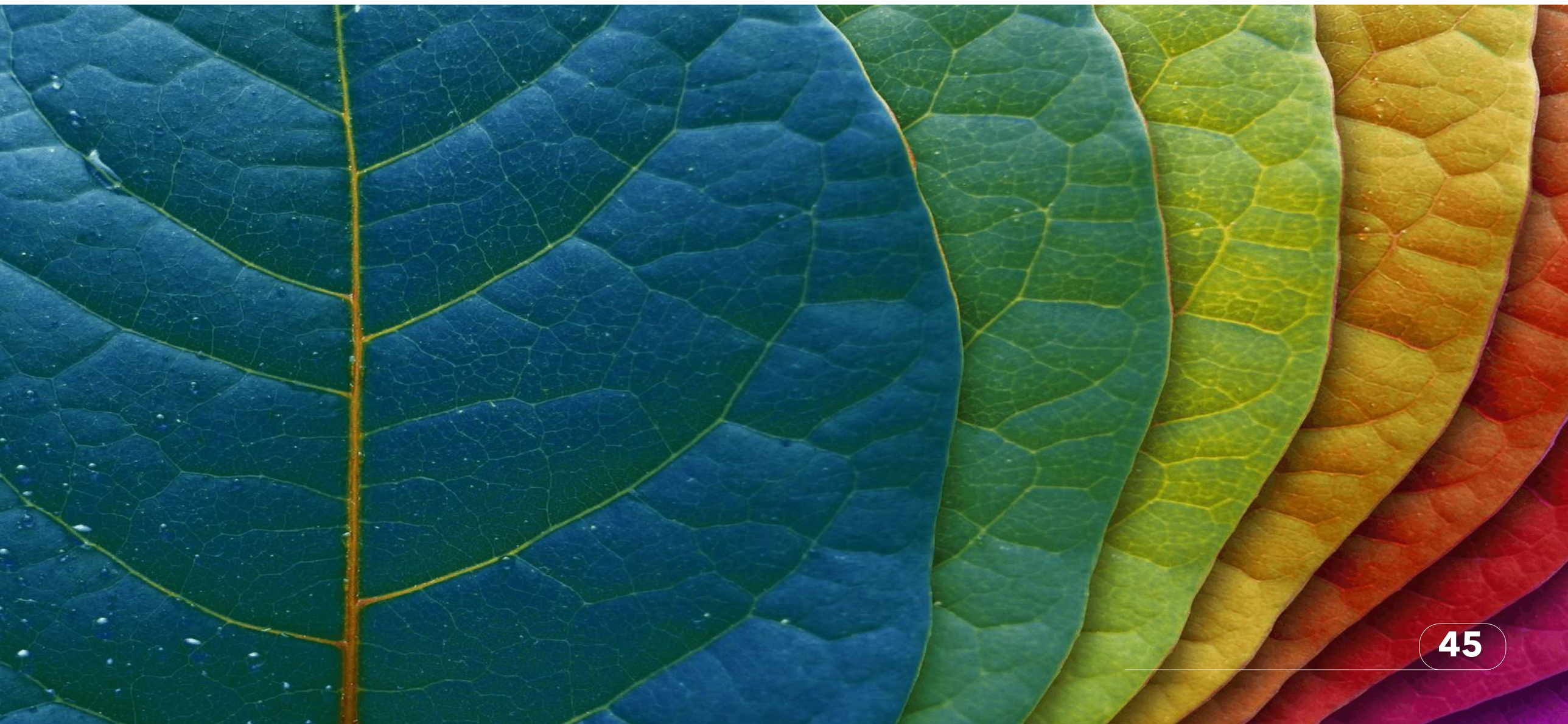
https://www.facebook.com/groups/169683851040605

The "Reptiles of West Bengal" Facebook group is dedicated to exploring, understanding, and conserving the diverse reptilian species in West Bengal. Our community brings together enthusiasts, experts, and nature lovers to share knowledge and promote reptile conservation.

The group's primary goal is to document and raise awareness about the reptiles of West Bengal. Through active engagement, educational posts, and field observations, we aim to higlight the importance of these species and their roles in our ecosystems.

Newly Elected Governing Body

NAME	DESIGNATION
Arnish Bose	President
Subhadeep Saha	Vice President and Logistics Head
Sankha Misra	Vice President
Dr. Arkajyoti Mukherjee	Secretary
Diptesh Goswami	Joint Secretary
Manish Kumar Chattopadhyay	Joint Secretary
Saikat Adhurya	Treasurer
Antara Pal	Assistant Treasurer
Rajasi Roy	Assistant Treasurer and Public Relations Head

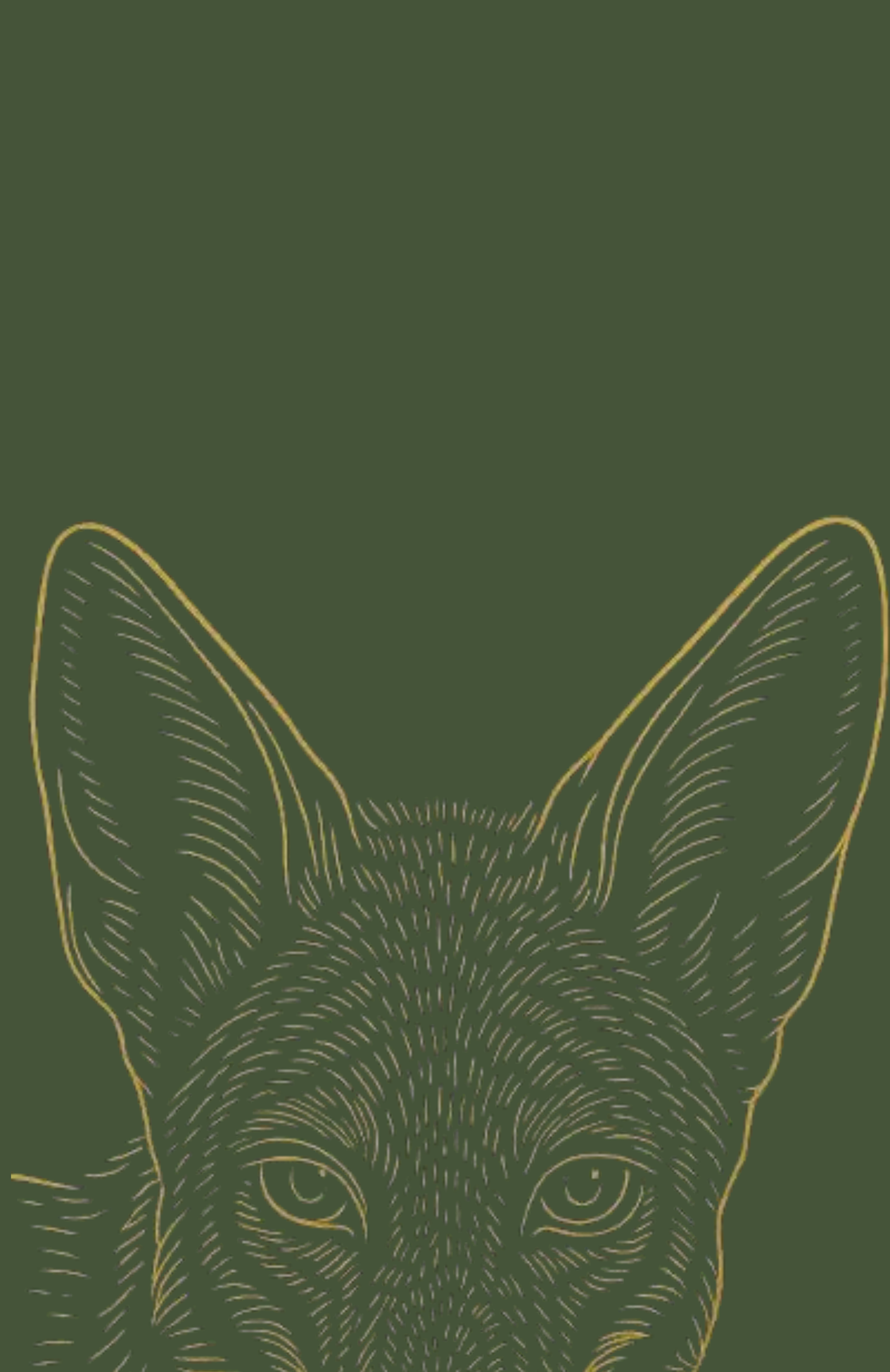


WINGS MEMBERSHIP

Membership Benefits

- Opportunity to protect the future of nature.
- Opportunity to participate in Conservation Work with field training.
- Quarterly Nature walks with experts from different fields of wildlife.
- Free entries in events conducted by WINGS.
- Opportunity to attend Webinars by experts
- Opportunity to participate in our online portal Biodiversity of West Bengal events.
- Opportunity to perform project and research work.
- Enhances creativity.

CATEGORY	FOR 12 MONTHS
EARNING MEMBER	~~Rs. 1200~~ Rs. 1100
COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY STUDENT (UPTO POST-GRADUATE)	~~Rs. 360~~ Rs. 330
SCHOOL STUDENT	Rs. 20



Wildlife Information and Nature Guide Society

WINGS

ENGAGE WITH US

to Save the Biodiversity

BUILD YOUR CONSERVATIVE MIND

CONTACT US

Wildlife Information and Nature Guide Society
(Registration No. S0005627 OF 2019-2020)
Office Address:S-28, Bethun Bhavan, Dr. Narman Bethun Sarani, Bidhannagar, Sector-2(A), Durgapur-713123
Registered Address:House no. M/6, Bidhan Park, sec-1, Durgapur-713206, Paschim Bardhaman, West Bengal

Design by Diptesh Goswami, Joint Secretary (WINGS)