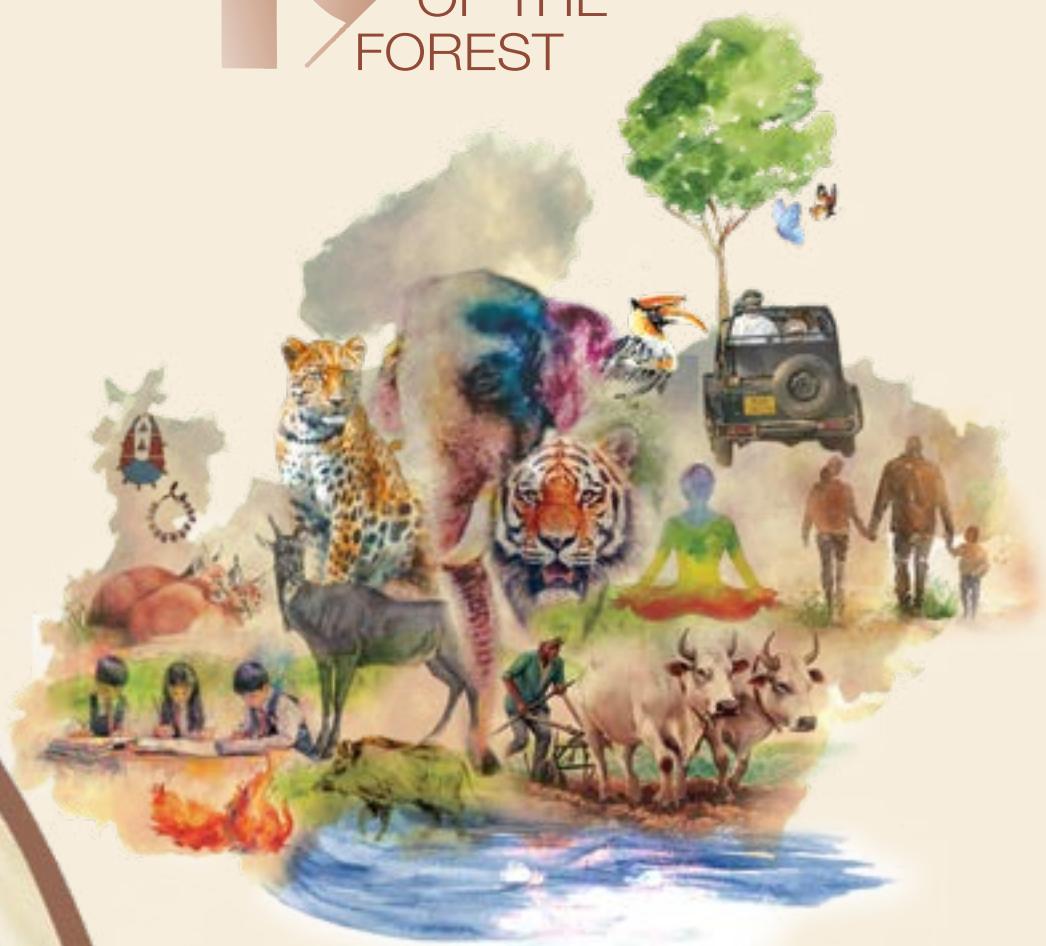


15 YEARS  
IN SERVICE  
OF THE  
FOREST



**ANNUAL  
REPORT**  

---

**2024-25**

# GRATITUDE TO **DONORS**

## With gratitude to the roots that have kept us grounded!

Every forest needs deep roots to grow strong. Ours come in the form of visionaries and believers — those who may not walk the field every day, but whose steady support makes every fire line, school visit, and rescued life possible.

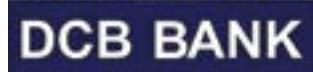
### A heartfelt shout-out to our core allies:



For believing in both people and place, and enabling hands-on conservation where it matters most.



For walking beside us from the beginning, and helping us listen deeper to the forest.



For investing in long-term community empowerment, ensuring water security and forest restoration.



For your trust in our grassroots vision and your role in bringing education to the forest's edge.

Every fire prevented, every child who stayed in school, every villager who chose coexistence over conflict... echoes your support.

As the saying goes,

“**Jo sunta hai jungle ki baat,  
wahi badal sakta hai kal**”



# WELCOME MESSAGE

ABHISHEK SINGH / LWF PHOTO LIBRARY



# THE FOUNDER & DIRECTOR

## To Supporters and Friends

Another year has passed, and with it comes a chance to pause, reflect, and celebrate the quiet but steady work of Last Wilderness Foundation. Each year brings new challenges, but also new stories of resilience of forests that continue to breathe, of communities that stand stronger, and of people who choose to walk alongside us in this journey of conservation.

When we began, our dream was simple yet profound: to bridge the gap between wildlife and people. Today, that dream has taken root in villages, schools, forests, and hearts across India. Our approach remains grounded in three simple principles – community ownership, collaboration with institutions, and capacity building. Together, these pillars have allowed us to create spaces where conservation is not just a distant idea, but a shared responsibility.

What has made this journey meaningful is the people who make it possible our team, who work tirelessly in the field; our supporters, who trust in our vision;



and the communities, who show us every day what coexistence truly means. Each one has added strength to our mission and depth to our work.

Looking ahead, our commitment is unwavering. We will continue to nurture partnerships, advocate for stronger protection of wild spaces, and create opportunities for people to see the wild not as something separate, but as an essential part of their own lives. Conservation, after all, is not only about saving species or forests—it is about safeguarding our shared future.

Thank you for standing with us. Together, we are not only protecting the wild, but also reimagining the ways in which people and nature can thrive side by side.

Warm Regards,

**Nikhil Nagle**  
Founder and Director



# WELCOME MESSAGE

# THE DIRECTOR

## To Supporters and Friends

Every forest tells a story. Some stories are as old as the land itself, while others are just beginning to unfold. At Last Wilderness Foundation, we see ourselves as both listeners and storytellers listening to the voices of communities, forests, and wildlife, and weaving them into a shared narrative of coexistence.

The year 2024-25 has been one of the turning points for us.. We stepped into new landscapes like Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary, where the promise of fresh beginnings lies, and explored opportunities in Ranipur Tiger Reserve, Uttar Pradesh. At the same time, we deepened our roots in familiar places strengthening our ongoing work in Kanha, Bandhavgarh, and Panna, and watching long-running initiatives like the Pardhi Empowerment Programme and Gram Rakshak gather momentum. What started as small steps years ago are now pathways of change, leading children into classrooms, communities into dialogue, and forests into safer futures.

What makes these journeys possible are not just our projects, but the people behind them. The mothers

who choose education for their children, the youth who step up as Gram Rakshaks, the artisans who carry forward traditions through sustainable crafts each one adds a brushstroke to the larger picture of conservation. It is their resilience and ownership that give strength to our mission.

As Last Wilderness Foundation approaches fifteen years, we are reminded that conservation is not a destination but an evolving process. It calls for trust built over time, partnerships that respect local wisdom, and a vision that sees people and wildlife not in conflict, but as co-inhabitants of a shared home.

The road ahead is as challenging as it is inspiring. With your continued support, we will keep listening, keep learning, and keep working to ensure that the wild stories of India: of forests, of tigers, of communities, are not just preserved, but allowed to thrive.

With gratitude and hope,

**Vidya Venkatesh**  
Director





## ABOUT

# LAST WILDERNESS FOUNDATION

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Last Wilderness Foundation (LWF) works to create a model of inclusive, community-led conservation across Madhya Pradesh's critical wildlife landscapes. For over a decade, the Foundation has partnered with local communities and the Forest Department to balance ecological protection with human well-being through education, outreach, alternate livelihoods, and active conservation through community participation.

Since the project's initiation in 2023 at Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary, LWF has engaged approximately 23 schools and 15 villages, reaching over 2,800 students and 3,900 villagers through wildlife and general awareness programmes, snakebite safety sessions, capacity building & skill development workshops, exposure visits.

LWF has also been invited to serve as the knowledge partner for the Nature Information Centre at Rampura, and local youth are being trained as nature guides, strengthening conservation education for visitors and communities.

Overall, LWF's work at Gandhi Sagar has touched the lives of over 10,000 people,

building trust and preparing the landscape for the upcoming cheetah reintroduction.

Beyond Gandhi Sagar, LWF's projects span Panna, Bandhavgarh, and Kuno, impacting over 500 villages. In 2023–24 alone, the Foundation worked directly with more than 12,000 people, creating ripple effects across 36,000+ lives. From Pardhi and Moghiya education programmes to livelihood opportunities like Baiga Jewelry, Pardhi handicraft and 'Walks with Pardhis', to regular and regimented Outreach and Awareness sessions addressing towards human-wildlife negative interactions, initiating community participation for forest fire prevention and community driven wildlife corridor protection, further also engaging in active conservation, through Gram Rakshak initiative, Fodder-land and Stall-feeding initiative, catalysing Water Security & Forest Restoration. LWF's initiatives demonstrate measurable changes – reduced conflict, healthier ecosystems, and stronger community stewardship of India's wild spaces.



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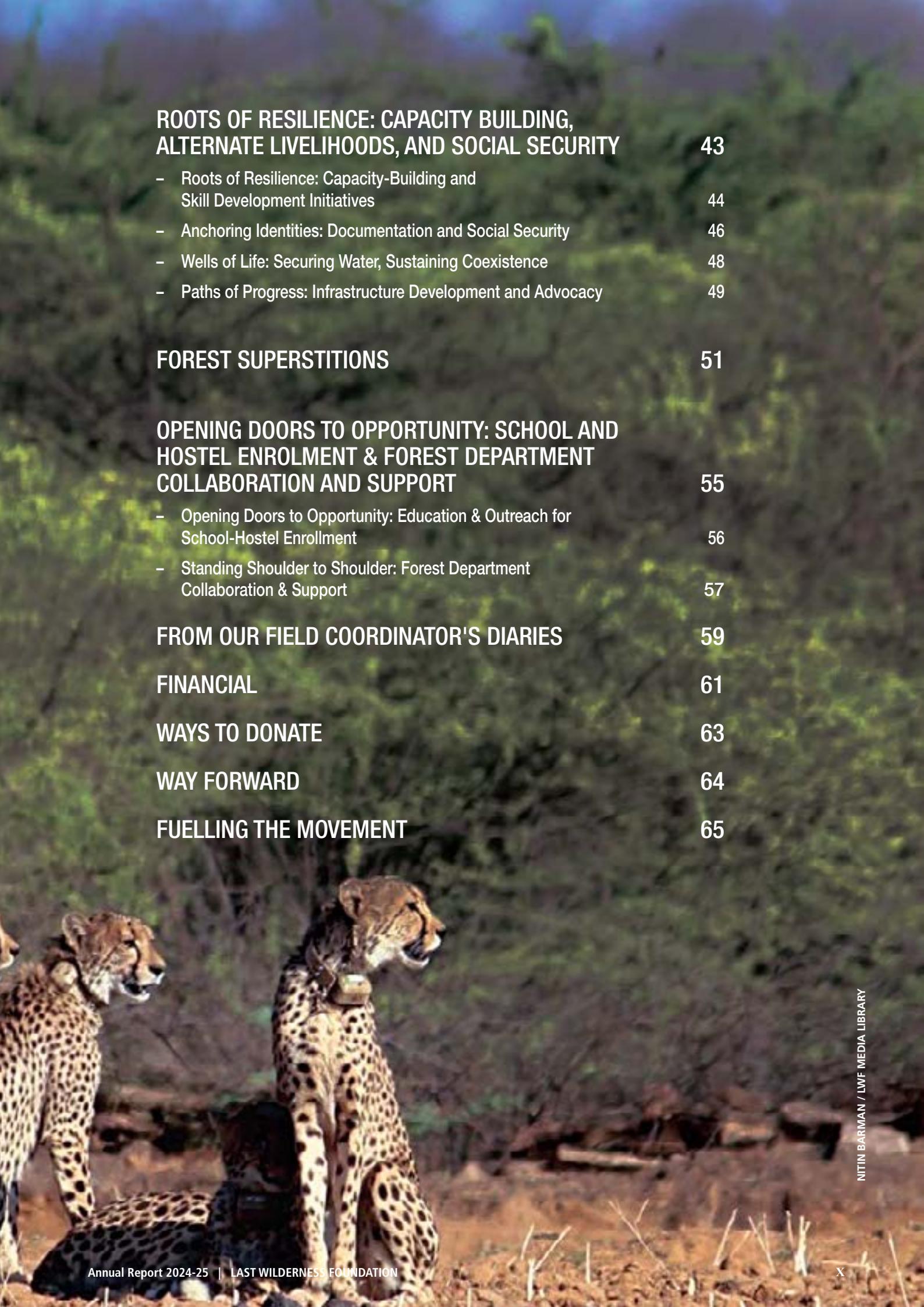
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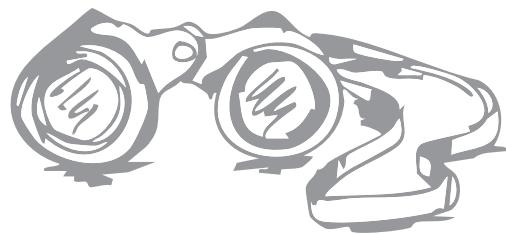


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# ABOUT US

## Our Vision

An India with a vibrant and eternal natural heritage, which is respected and protected by its people.



## Our Objective

Ensure stakeholder participation in conservation efforts to create an inclusive model of conservation and reduce negative interactions between humans and wildlife.

To achieve our objective, Last Wilderness Foundation works on the following three-pronged strategy:

- Community focus and ownership
- Partnerships with local Government institutions
- Capacity building at the community, institution, and internal organisation level

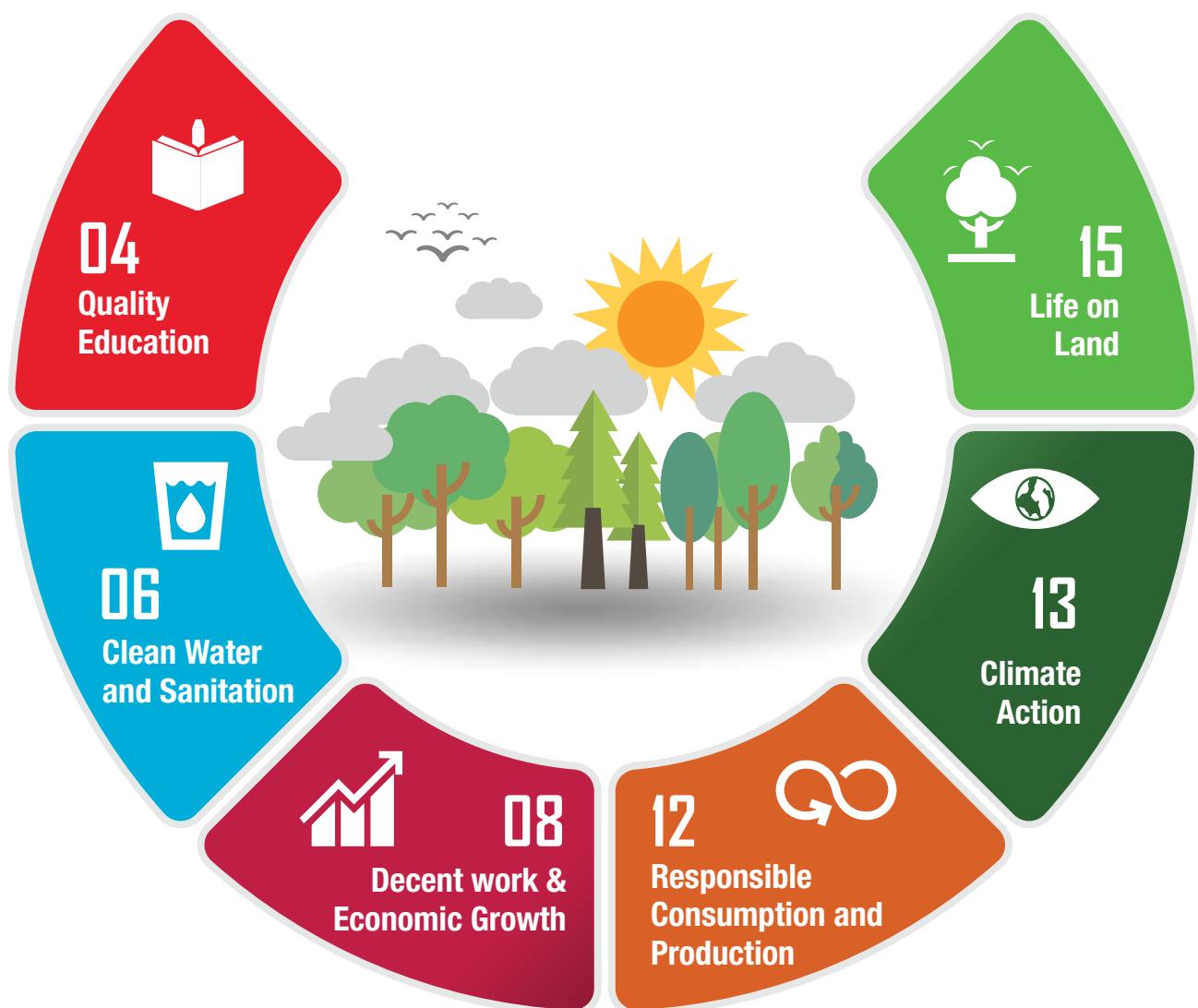
## Our Mission

- To increase awareness about India's wildlife, forests, and people.
- To assist various individuals and organisations (governmental or otherwise) in their battle to conserve their natural heritage.
- To be actively involved in the sustainable development of villages and tribal settlements based in the peripheries of India's forests.

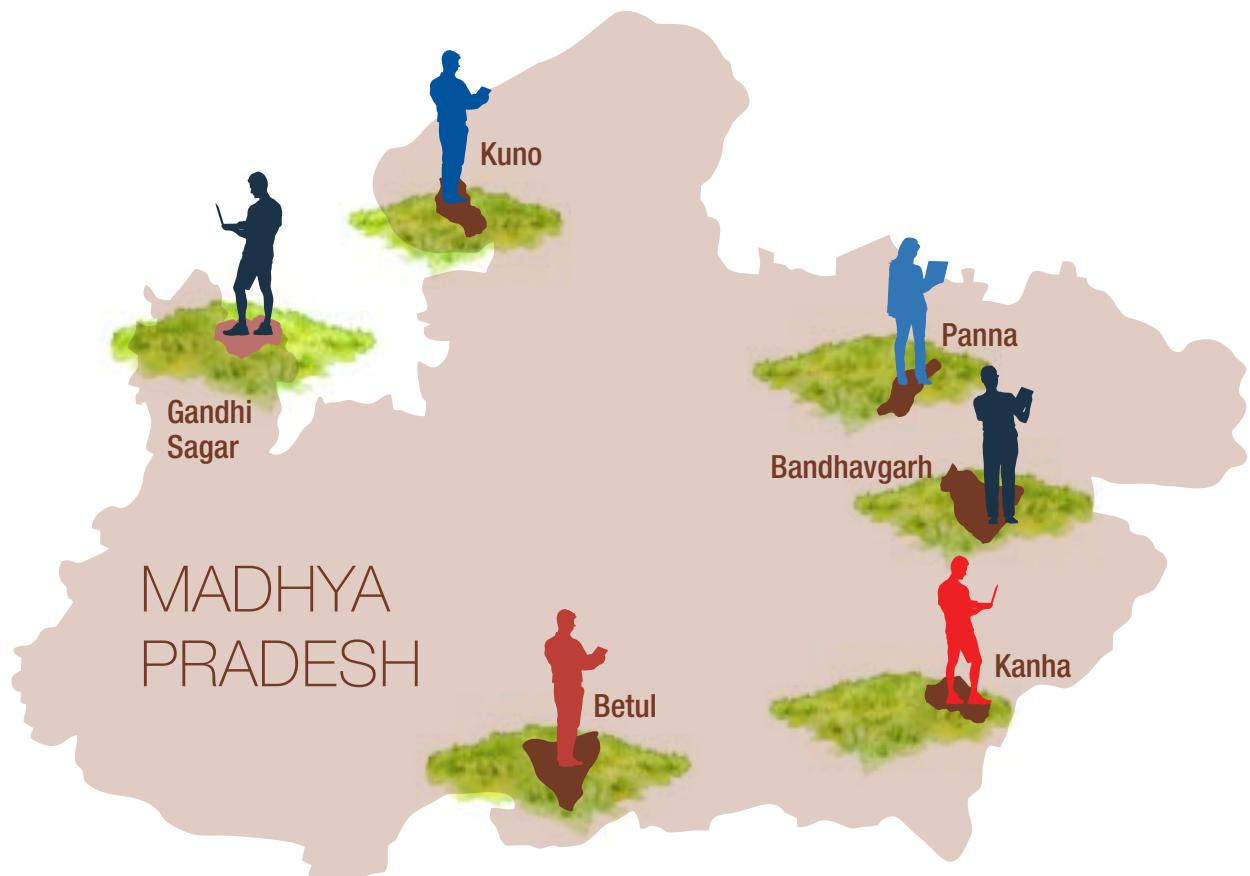


# UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

Last Wilderness Foundations work helps fulfil the following six Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) formulated by the United Nations:



## WHERE WE WORK



**5+**

Protected Areas  
Covered

**150+**

Projects &  
Initiatives

**500+**

Villages  
Covered

**35,000+**

Lives  
Touched



# OUR PROGRAMME AREA

The Central Indian landscape is more than a stretch of forests—it is a living mosaic of rivers, grasslands, wildlife, and people. For centuries, this land has carried the songs of tigers in its forests and the traditions of communities who call it home. Yet, in recent decades, it has also become one of the most fragile frontlines of conservation.

Forest-dependent communities stand at the heart of this story. Their lives are interwoven with the rhythms of the wild, every change in the forest touches them directly. Too often, they are left at the margins of conservation, despite being the very people who hold the knowledge and resilience to protect it.

Through years of sustained engagement, LWF's programmes have evolved into pillars of trust, learning, and empowerment

## Gram Rakshak Programme

Training and mentoring community members especially youth as guardians of their villages and surrounding forests.

## Village Wildlife Awareness Programme

Inspiring forest-fringe communities to value and safeguard their natural surroundings.

## Pardhi Empowerment Programme

Creating pathways of education and new opportunities for the Pardhi community which is traditionally marginalised and vulnerable.

## Alternative Livelihoods through Arts and Crafts

Providing sustainable income avenues that celebrate traditional skills while reducing dependency on forest resources.

## School Awareness and Exposure Visits

Inspiring forest-fringe communities to value and safeguard their natural surroundings.

## Partnerships with Local Governing institutions including Forest Department

Supporting conservation through joint initiatives in protected areas and wildlife corridors under, with extensive human pressure and dependency on forest resources for livelihood.

Together, these programmes form the heart of LWF's work — where conservation is not only about protecting wildlife, but also about enabling communities to thrive alongside it.



## YEAR AT A GLANCE

In the tribal villages of Baroda Kala and Dogarpur, Kuno where the Seharia and Moghiya communities live at the forest's edge, fire awareness wasn't just about training — it was about building trust. LWF, alongside forest officials, didn't just speak about fire. They spoke about caste certificates, water access, education for children, and the right to a dignified life.

When fire prevention is part of a larger conversation on empowerment, it sticks.





## OVERVIEW

### WHERE WE WORK

Bandhavgarh, Panna, Kuno,  
Gandhi Sagar (M.P)

### TOTAL REACH

Approximately 9,800 individuals  
across more than 150 villages.

### CORE FOCUS

Community engagement, wildlife conservation, education,  
coexistence, livelihood enhancement, and social security



## SNAKEBITE AWARENESS & RESPONSE

### TOTAL REACH

Approximately  
1,850 individuals  
trained in snakebite  
identification,  
prevention, and  
emergency care.

**GANDHI SAGAR:** **16** Sessions

Anti-venom stocked,  
eco-camps held

**300** People reached<sup>1</sup> throughout  
this section

**BANDHAVGARH:** **50+** Sessions

School workshops, beat  
guard training

**450+** People reached<sup>1</sup> throughout  
this section

**PANNA:**

**30+** Sessions

Myth-busting, first-aid  
awareness

**1000+** People reached<sup>1</sup> throughout  
this section

**KUNO:**

**5+** Sessions

Awareness sessions with  
Moghiya communities

**100** People reached<sup>1</sup> throughout  
this section





## LIVESTOCK HEALTH & COMPENSATION

**TOTAL CATTLE  
VACCINATED**  
**3,838**

**PEOPLE  
REACHED**  
**300+**

**GANDHI SAGAR:** **5** Villages  
**3,538** Cattle Vaccinated.

**PANNA:** **80** Villages  
**300+** Villagers reached through vaccination & health camps.

**Cattle Kill Compensation Programme.** Swift support reduced retaliatory risks.

Prevented Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), rabies, infections.

## EDUCATION & AWARENESS INITIATIVES

### ECO-CLUBS (BANDHAVGARH)

50+ teachers trained in conservation-based learning and citizen science tools (iNaturalist, eBird, Merlin).

### STUDENT OUTREACH

1,700 students across Bandhavgarh, Panna, Kuno, and Gandhi Sagar participated in Wildlife Week, drawing contests, and eco-club activities.

### PARDHI EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME

163 children and youth supported hostels and early learning centers; 12 students entered higher education.



## CORRIDOR CONSERVATION & HABITAT RESTORATION

### BANDHAVGARH

117 households surveyed to guide corridor protection and reduce forest dependency.



### PANNA

7 Cattle owners were encouraged and assisted to grow fodder and stall feed their cattle.



### TOTAL PARTICIPANTS

1,100+ in skill and livelihood programmes

## CAPACITY BUILDING & LIVELIHOODS

### BANDHAVGARH

1,000+ individuals trained (forest staff, teachers, community members).

### KUNO

55 farmers trained in sustainable agriculture; 33 linked to government livelihood schemes.

### PANNA (RANIPUR)

Women trained in LPG safety, Gram Rakshaks in emergency and wildlife response; citizen science participation launched via SeasonWatch.

### GANDHI SAGAR

6 youth trained as eco-guides through exposure at Kuno National Park.



## HUMAN – WILDLIFE COEXISTENCE & FIRE PREVENTION

### PEOPLE TRAINED

1,800+ villagers became fire stewards and Gram Rakshaks

### SITES COVERED

Bandhavgarh, Panna, Kuno



### HIGHLIGHT

25+ villages participated under the Gram Rakshak initiative near Panna; over 800 people reached through 20 intensive programmes

### IMPACT

Fire prevention, early reporting, and strong community–forest collaboration



### OVER 400 INDIVIDUALS

Gained access to essential welfare schemes, identity documents, and social entitlements.

## FELICITATED DOCUMENTATION & SOCIAL SECURITY

### AADHAAR CARDS

**83**

### BIRTH CERTIFICATES

**16**

### SCHEME APPLICATIONS

**151**

### PM AWAS (HOUSING)

**40**

### FARMER ID's

**75**

### AADHAAR/EKYC UPDATES

**64**

## WATER SECURITY & INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

### PANNA

Pond restoration at Khajri-Kudar.

FRA-based approval, restored corridor water access.

### GANDHI SAGAR

Percolation tank at Ravlikudi Chainpuriya.

Sustainable water supply for villages.



## FOREST DEPARTMENT COLLABORATION

Joint patrols and anti-snare drives in Panna and Bandhavgarh.

Coordination for Anubhuti nature camps under Madhya Pradesh Ecotourism Development Board.

Support for Meri Beat Mera Abhiman and Meri Range Mera Abhiman training sessions involving 60 forest personnel.

Rapid community response during wildlife incidents (e.g., tiger and elephant encounters).



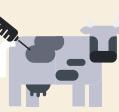
## SUMMARY OF VERIFIED IMPACT

**9,800** 

TOTAL INDIVIDUALS REACHED

**50+** 

TEACHERS TRAINED

**3,838** 

CATTLE VACCINATED

**1,850** 

SNAKEBITE AWARENESS PARTICIPANTS

**150+** 

VILLAGES ENGAGED

**1,700** 

SCHOOL STUDENTS ENGAGED

**163** 

PARDHI CHILDREN & YOUTH SUPPORTED

**88** 

FARMERS SUPPORTED

**1,800+** 

GRAM RAKSHAKS / FIRE STEWARDS

**1,100+** 

CAPACITY BUILDING PARTICIPANTS

**400+** 

IDENTITY DOCUMENTS FACILITATED

**2** 

WATER PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED

**IN ESSENCE:** 2024–25 was a year of deepened trust, tangible coexistence, and growing community stewardship. Villagers became fire stewards, children became nature ambassadors, and the forests of central India grew safer through connection, compassion, and collaboration.



# TADOB ANNUAL MEET









# THE TEAM



## Vidya Venkatesh

### Director

Vidya is a dedicated wildlife conservationist with a special love for butterflies and a deep commitment to protecting India's natural heritage. She leads strategic, community-rooted conservation initiatives, bringing together strong project management, stakeholder engagement, and on-ground ecological insight. Through her work, she fosters partnerships that strengthen wildlife protection and inspire collective stewardship of the wild.



## Gaurav Shirodkar

### Deputy Director

Gaurav Shirodkar is a naturalist and conservation leader with over 15 years of experience. Inspired by Sanjay Gandhi National Park, he shifted from research to fieldwork and combines biodiversity expertise with public engagement, including theatre. As Deputy Director at Last Wilderness Foundation, he drives conservation initiatives and organisational growth.



## Abhishek Singh

### Programme Manager

Abhishek Singh is a Biotechnology graduate who transitioned from lab work to wildlife conservation. Over the past six years, he has focused on field research, community-based conservation, and promoting human-wildlife coexistence. Passionate about bridging science with traditional wisdom, he works to make conservation practical, sustainable, and deeply connected to the natural world.



## Crystal Fernandes

### Communications Manager

Crystal Joan Fernandes is a naturalist, wildlife rehabilitator, and environmentalist with a Master's in Environmental Science and Technology. After leaving the corporate sector and a stint in teaching, she found her true passion in conservation. She has diverse experience across wildlife rehabilitation, environmental education, programme management, and community engagement, and currently serves as Communications Manager at Last Wilderness Foundations.



## Sitalaxmi

### Accounts Manager

Sitalaxmi is an accomplished accounting professional with a postgraduate degree in Commerce and over 20 years of experience in accounts management, bookkeeping, and financial analysis. Known for her meticulous, results-oriented approach, she brings strong organisational skills to her work.



## Indrabhan Singh Bundela

### Regional Coordinator

Indrabhan is a historian and conservationist with over a decade of experience, including work with WWF-India and Last Wilderness Foundation. He has led community-focused conservation programmes, particularly with the Pardhi community in Panna. A quiet man with loud thoughts, he inspires others through poems that teach about trees, animals, and conservation.



## Shyambihari Yadav

### Field coordinator - Kuno (South)

Shyambihari Yadav is a field coordinator working on community-based conservation near Kuno National Park, focusing on awareness programmes and human-wildlife conflict. With a background in Commerce and Computer Applications, he uses storytelling, video, and his hidden talent—singing—to inspire communities to connect with nature.



## Sonu Verma

### Field Coordinator - Kuno (North)

Sonu Verma is a hands-on wildlife professional passionate about tiger conservation and community engagement. Based in Sheopur, he combines field expertise in camera trapping and tracking with mentorship for local forest staff. Known for his leadership and enthusiasm, he inspires communities to embrace conservation while enjoying wildlife exploration and outdoor adventures.



## Manish Rawat

### Field Coordinator - Panna

Manish Rawat brings a strong foundation in education and history to his conservation work in Panna. His experience in teaching and environmental outreach allows him to connect meaningfully with children and local communities, fostering a lasting conservation ethic. Manish enjoys exploring natural landscapes and aims to create impactful programme within LWF.



## Nitin Barman

### Field Coordinator - Bandhavgarh

Nitin Barman is a dedicated conservationist from Bandhavgarh's Tala range who has quickly developed expertise in biodiversity and field research. His curiosity, creativity, and commitment make him a valuable member of the team. Outside the field, Nitin channels his observational skills into sketching and enjoys cricket, combining passion with learning.



## Himanshu Singh Rathore

### Field Coordinator - Gandhi Sagar

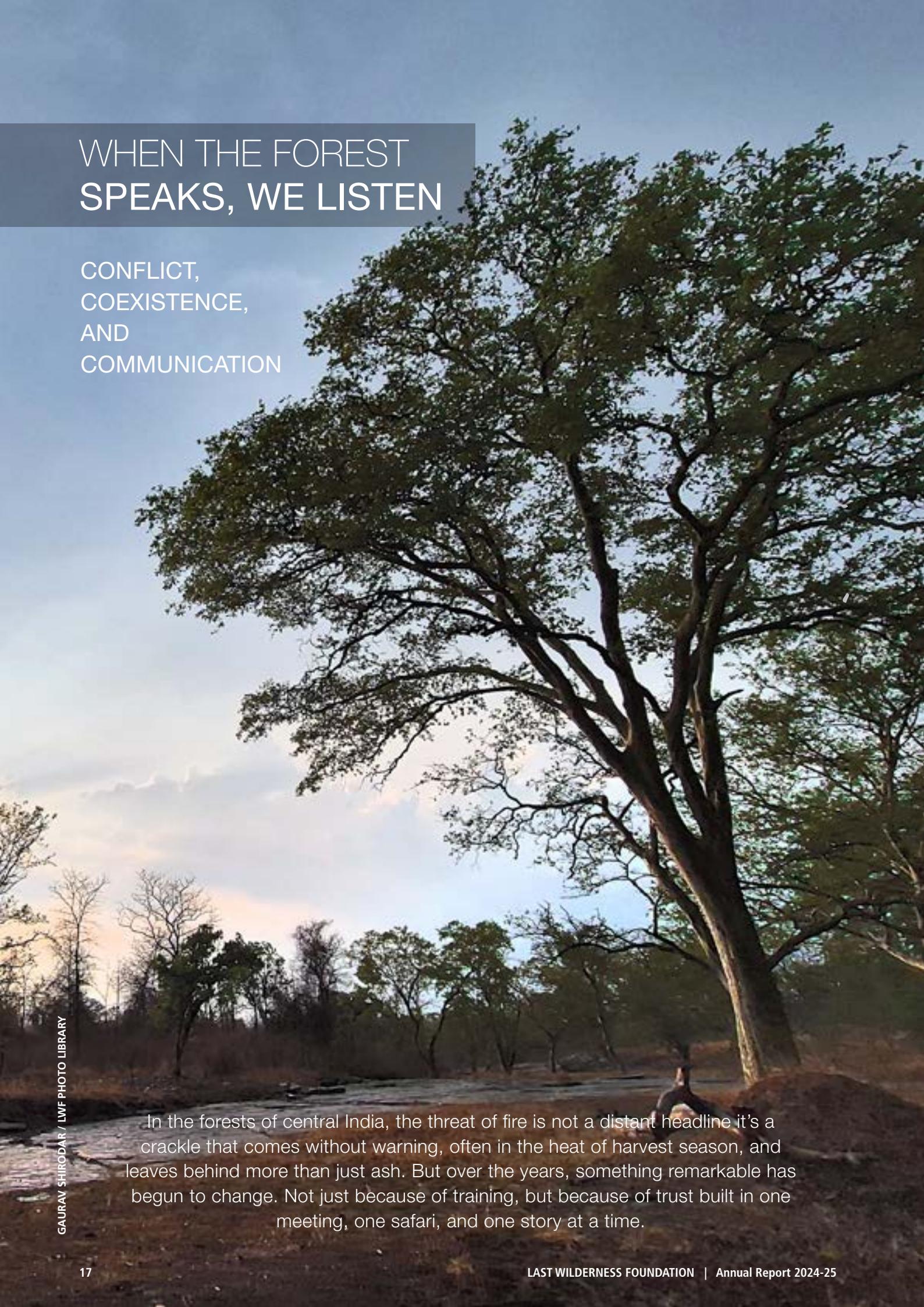
Himanshu Singh Rathore blends a unique background in hospitality and IT with a deep commitment to wildlife conservation. His adaptability and people skills allow him to engage communities effectively while supporting LWF's mission. Himanshu balances his fieldwork with recreational interests like cricket and volleyball, bringing energy and dedication to every initiative.



# WHEN THE FOREST SPEAKS, WE LISTEN

CONFLICT,  
COEXISTENCE,  
AND  
COMMUNICATION

GAURAV SHIRODAR / LWF PHOTO LIBRARY



In the forests of central India, the threat of fire is not a distant headline it's a crackle that comes without warning, often in the heat of harvest season, and leaves behind more than just ash. But over the years, something remarkable has begun to change. Not just because of training, but because of trust built in one meeting, one safari, and one story at a time.

## The Fire We Fought Together

### THE FLAME THAT BURNED BRIGHT IN BANDHAVGARH



In the village of Kushmaha near Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve, 41 villagers sat cross-legged inside the school courtyard as a strange silence hung in the air. The projector blinked to life, playing a video of the forest burning. Some averted their eyes. Others whispered. "Yeh toh humare gaon mein bhi hua tha," someone said.

### UNDERSTANDING THE FOREST THROUGH ITS FIRE AT PANNA



At Panna, the flame of awareness was kindled not with fear, but with fascination. Villagers, some of whom had never set foot inside the forest, were

But it wasn't the video that stayed with them — it was what followed.

A woman from Salkhaniya shared how a forest fire had once come dangerously close to her home, and how now, because of the new fireline they built together, she sleeps without fear. LWF's Regional Coordinator, Indrabhan Bundela, handed out caps and bags not as gifts — but as tools for guardians. The Deputy Director of Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve, Shri P.K. Verma, thanked the community, not with formality but with fellowship.

Across 20+ villages in 8 park ranges, over 422 people became fire stewards by lived experience. And this wasn't just in Bandhavgarh.

taken on safaris. As the sun rose over the trees, they saw deer move silently through sal patches — and sometimes, a tiger stepping out from the mist. In that moment, the forest became real. Worth protecting. Worth listening to.

At every site, the message was clear: You cannot protect what you don't love. And you can't love what you've never seen.



## KUNO: WHERE FIRE MEETS FELLOWSHIP

In the tribal villages of Baroda Kala and Dogarpur, where the Seharia and Moghiya communities live at the forest's edge, fire awareness wasn't just about training — it was about building trust. LWF, alongside forest officials, didn't just speak about fire.

They spoke about caste certificates, water access, education for children, and the right to a dignified life.

When fire prevention is part of a larger conversation on empowerment, it sticks.

## GUARDIANS IN THE MAKING: GRAM RAKSHAKS RISE

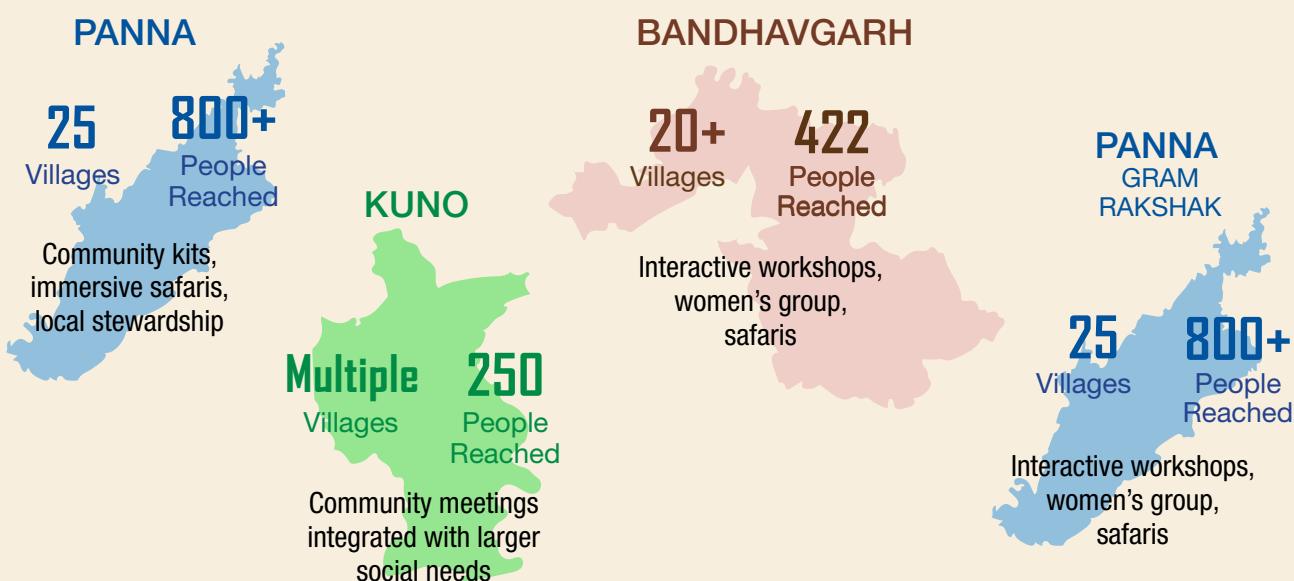


Under the Gram Rakshak initiative near Panna, 30 selected villagers from each participating village became community sentinels. They weren't just

trained — they were equipped: with kits, caps, and knowledge. And they were taken on forest safaris, where ecosystems unfolded before them like a sacred text.

These Rakshaks are now first responders — they notice smoke before it becomes a blaze, they alert chowkis, and they organize fire lines faster than ever before. Twenty-five villages participated, reaching 800+ people through 20 intensive programmes.

## IMPACT AT A GLANCE FIRE AWARENESS PROGRAMME (2024–25)



We no longer fight fires alone. In these landscapes, villagers are not bystanders — they are the front line guardians & fighters.

## The Day the Villagers Chose Patience Over Panic



Human-animal negative interaction often begins where needs overlap — for land, water, and safety. As wildlife populations recover and communities expand, tensions can rise. But with dialogue, rights-based approaches, and trust-building, conflict can give way to coexistence.

### A CROWD, A BEAR, A CHOICE



In Patha Palathra, a remote village near the Devendranagar Range of Panna Tiger Reserve, a female sloth bear attacked a local resident, Pattu Adivasi, while he was out gathering resources. The response could've gone very differently.

But instead of escalating the conflict, Gram Rakshak Dhanesh Rani stepped in — calming the crowd, arranging for urgent hospital transport, and helping Pattu's family secure official compensation from the Forest Department. His presence turned panic into process.

### FACE TO FACE WITH MIGHTY STRIPES!



On January 13, 2025, in Itwakala village (Panna Core), a child suffered minor injuries during a tiger encounter while grazing goats near the forest boundary. Once again, Gram Rakshak Avadh Pal Singh acted quickly managing the frightened villagers and coordinating with the Forest Department to ensure the child received immediate medical attention.

These stories are not just incidents — they are evidence of a growing culture of preparedness across high-risk areas.



## COEXISTENCE THROUGH SOLUTIONS: THE KHAJRI-KUDAR MODEL



In Khajri-Kudar, where villagers share boundaries with a critical corridor between Panna and Ranipur

Tiger Reserves, conflict used to be a seasonal certainty.

When crop damage by wildlife spiked, villagers came together and requested fencing support. Instead of waiting for external help, they offered cement poles, while LWF supported the installation of solar fencing. The result: wider coverage, shared ownership, and a promising drop in wild animal incursions.

Farmers like Arvind Yadav, whose fields lie on the forest edge, now report safer harvests and less fear.

## WHEN SHARED RESOURCES LEAD TO SHARED SOLUTIONS



Open grazing in forest corridors continues to strain human-wildlife relations — especially as tiger numbers

rise post-reintroduction in Panna. But water access plays a quiet role too.

When Khajri-Kudar's community pond fell into disrepair, villagers pushed for restoration. But with part of the land under dispute, progress stalled. LWF facilitated multi-stakeholder dialogue under the Forest Rights Act, bringing together the Gram Panchayat, Forest Department, and Civic Authorities.

The result? Demarcation, a Panchanama, and official FRA-based permission to begin pond restoration, bringing not just water security but also reduced dependency on forest resources.

## RANIPUR'S CHAIN-LINK CHANGE



In Ranipur, where communities have adopted stall feeding for cattle to avoid risky grazing, a new threat emerged: wild animals damaging fodder crops.

Seven women farmers came forward with a solution: chain-link fencing. Instead of seeking full funding, they offered to contribute to poles and maintenance. This co-investment model, now underway, not only reduces future conflict but also empowers women as land and livelihood protectors.

## BANDHAVGARH: LISTENING TO ELEPHANT FOOTFALLS



Following a series of wildlife attacks and crop raids in Damna, Gatta, and Ghaghod villages, LWF initiated community awareness sessions, including one with 50 eco-club students at CM Rise School, Manpur. These sessions focused on elephant behaviour, safety strategies, and open discussions around cohabitation.

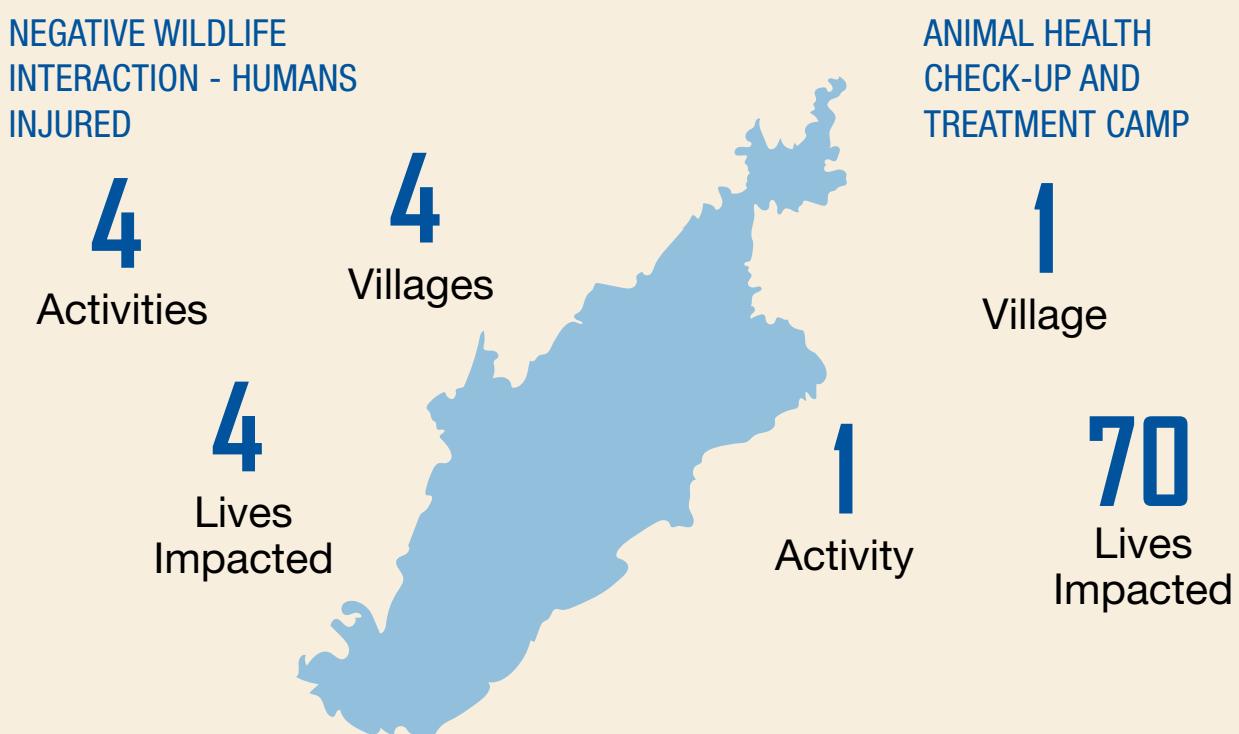
A baseline survey of 117 households revealed that while most families had never even seen a tiger, they faced its impact regularly. This highlighted a need for deeper education and engagement.

In Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve's Manpur buffer villages, conflict is evolving with the arrival of Asian elephants.

### IMPACT AT A GLANCE

GRAM RAKSHAK'S INITIATIVE PANNA TIGER RESERVE, MP, INDIA

(APRIL 2024 TO MARCH 2025)



## Strike of Awareness: Preventing Snakebite Through Knowledge

In the villages skirting the forests of Madhya Pradesh, snakes are a part of life seen in fields, courtyards, and sometimes, curled unseen beneath firewood stacks. But for generations, what has been most dangerous isn't the snake itself but the fear that follows. Fear that kills the snake before the question. Fear that sends victims to unverified healers. Fear that costs lives.

### GANDHI SAGAR: LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER, SAVING EACH OTHER



It began quietly in Gandhi Sagar, with a question in a school classroom: "How do you know if it's venomous?" From July to September 2024, snakebite awareness sessions were rolled out across villages surrounding the sanctuary

Anti-venom was stocked at the Bhanpura Health Centre, and Field Coordinators led outreach in schools through conservation-themed sports and cultural events.

Then came the Anubhuti Camps. LWF Coordinators assisted the Madhya Pradesh Ecotourism Development Board in this camp, first in October 2024, and the second, in early 2025, guided by Range Officers Ankit Soni and Pannalal Raikaur, debunked local myths, and demonstrated lifesaving first aid.

जब जंगल आवाज़ दे,  
सुनना ज़खी हैं – डरना नहीं।

## BANDHAVGARH: QUESTIONS, AND 450 YOUNG RESPONDERS



In July and August 2024, snakebite awareness entered the classrooms of over 50 schools around Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve. LWF field teams

used posters, demonstrations, and discussions to teach students how to recognize venomous snakes and respond to bites.

On World Snake Day (16<sup>th</sup> July), special sessions at St. Xavier's, Navjyoti Academy, and Government Girls Higher Secondary School in Manpur brought together 450+ students. They learned how to stay calm, apply first aid, and use makeshift stretchers to transport victims.

Local educators like Mr. Arun Patel reinforced the lessons, while beat guard trainees received practical training in snakebite response ensuring the message reached classrooms and frontlines.

## KUNO: ONE MESSAGE, MANY CONVERSATIONS



At Kuno, snakebite awareness was built into broader community engagement with the Moghiya community. On World Snake Day, Field Coordinators led sessions in schools and villages, focusing on snake identification, first aid, and the importance of seeking medical help.

The conversations were small but purposeful — building trust, correcting misinformation, and quietly preparing communities to respond when the forest strikes without warning.



## PANNA: THIRTY SESSIONS THAT COULD SAVE A LIFE

In Panna, the approach was clear and consistent. On World Snake Day, awareness programmes were conducted at Kunjwan, Taara, Dwari, Dhargarh, and Saraswati High School, Itwankala.

These were followed by 30 sessions across 21 villages, led by Gram Rakshaks and LWF

teams. More than 1,000 people were reached — learning how to prevent, identify, and respond to snakebites.

In a landscape where myths often cost lives, these sessions planted something more powerful: informed action.

| GANDHI SAGAR  | BANDHAVGARH  | KUNO   | PANNA   |
|---|--|--|---|
| Multiple villages, schools,   | <b>50+</b><br>schools, Bagdari village, 3 schools in Manpur<br><b>3</b><br>schools in Manpur | Schools and Moghiya community villages                           | <b>21</b><br>villages,<br>(e.g., Dwari, Taara, Kunjwan)                       |
| <b>16</b><br>Programmes   | <b>50+</b><br>Workshops  | <b>35+</b><br>Programmes   | <b>30</b><br>Programmes   |
| Anti-venom confirmed, school outreach, cross-site mentoring, guided camps by forest officials | Posters, students trained, stretcher demonstrations, beat guard training                     | Field-led education, first-aid awareness, World Snake Day events | School and village outreach, myth-busting, community-wide first-aid education |
| <b>100+</b><br>Individuals  | <b>450+</b><br>Students  | <b>500+</b><br>Individuals                                       | <b>500+</b><br>Individuals  |

## When a Footprint Warns, a Community Responds (Gram Rakshak)

### PANNA TIGER RESERVE JANUARY 2025 RESPONDERS



In the winter dust of Ranipur village, a set of fresh tiger pugmarks appeared on January 9, 2025. The discovery wasn't met with preparation. Parvat Singh, the Gram Rakshak of the area, alerted both villagers and the forest department, beginning a chain of calm, coordinated action.

Similar alerts followed in Machli Patha (Jan 23) and Jhalai (Jan 24), thanks to Gram Rakshaks Dhanesh Rani and Bhagwan Singh who documented tiger movements near their villages and alerted the people. These were signs of a steady progress. People living closest to the forest were becoming its most alert and reliable messengers. Meanwhile, Gram Rakshaks joined hands with forest officials for joint patrols in Brajpur and nearby areas, preventing illegal activities while reinforcing protection across forest borders.

Outreach didn't stop at patrolling. Through school sessions, cattle herder counseling, and Anubhuti nature camps organised by the Madhya Pradesh Ecotourism Development Board, awareness reached students, shepherds, and farmers alike. In Patha Palthara, two cattle kills by tigers in January were documented and compensation facilitated with the right process.

In Tara village, when farmers laid electric wires near fields, Gram Rakshak Anish Khan stepped in and convinced them to shift to poles, sourcing materials, and ensuring safer farming for both people and wildlife.

And in Itwakala, when a child suffered minor injuries during a tiger encounter on January 13, Gram Rakshak Avadh Pal Singh acted swiftly. He ensured the child received prompt medical care and maintained calm until forest officials arrived. He prevented chaos and coordinated the treatment and compensation process.

In every village, behind every response, one truth stood out: Conservation begins with a conversation!



## Immunity at the Edge: Safeguarding Livestock, Forests, and Futures (Cattle vaccination)

### GANDHI SAGAR: A SHIELD OF IMMUNITY ALONG THE FOREST'S EDGE



In the quiet belt of villages surrounding Gandhi Sagar, the rhythm of life moves with cattle bells, forest winds, and the rustle of coexistence. Here, where domestic animals often graze along forest peripheries, disease can be a threat to the ecological balance.

To address this, a coordinated livestock vaccination campaign was launched, rooted in both science and the stories of those who live alongside the wild.

Field coordinators, in collaboration with the local veterinary officer, convened in the heart of these rural settlements to assess the scope of immunization for cows, buffaloes, and the village dogs.

The findings were encouraging. Across the five villages of Ravalikudi, Chenpuriya, Junapani, Besla, and Khemla, every recorded domestic animal had been brought under the umbrella of protection. A total of 3,538 cattle were vaccinated, receiving essential doses against foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), rabies, and other regionally prevalent infections.

By halting the spread of transmissible diseases, the campaign not only protected livestock livelihoods but also served as a biological barrier, keeping pathogens from crossing into the wild. The work doesn't end here. Sustained vigilance, community engagement, and timely booster doses will determine the long-term success of this effort.

### PANNA: WHEN PREVENTION AND COMPASSION WALK HAND IN HAND (CATTLE VACCINATION)



The communities in Panna, rely on their cattle for livelihood, nourishment, and survival. But for too long, disease and predation have silently chipped away at their security. This year, the forest and veterinary departments joined hands to change that.

Last year, a vaccination drive was held across 80 villages in the Panna landscape. Coordinated by World Health Organization WGO, Veterinarian Dr. Sanjay Gupta Panna Tiger Reserve and our Field Coordinator Manish Rawat, the campaign

focused on proactive prevention, targeting common but serious infections that could cripple rural economies and spill over into forest ecosystems.

In Ranipur village, 300 cattle were vaccinated. The immunization effort not only curbed the spread of disease but also restored community confidence offering reassurance that their animals were not forgotten.

Khajri Kudar, another key village in the region, became a health hub when a cattle health camp was organized. Over 100 villagers from more than 6 villages attended, engaging directly with officers from the Veterinary Department. Diagnoses were conducted, medicines distributed, and conversations sparked around stall feeding, alternate livelihood options like dairy development, and reducing dependency on forest grazing.

## COMPENSATION AS CONFLICT PREVENTION

The Cattle Kill Compensation Programme worked in parallel, responding swiftly when cattle were lost to tigers or leopards. Field-level Gram Rakshaks (GRs) stepped in not just with paperwork, but with empathy.

By ensuring timely and transparent compensation, resentment was softened before it could ignite. Every

processed claim became a symbol of trust preventing retaliatory actions like poisoning of carcasses or forest fires that often follow wildlife encounters.

Together, the vaccination and compensation efforts cattle protected livestock and they protected the fragile relationship between humans and the wild.

## IMPACT AT A GLANCE: LIVESTOCK VACCINATION & HEALTH INITIATIVES

| GANDHI SAGAR  | PANNA  | PANNA  |
|---|--|--|
| Livestock Vaccination Drive                             | Vaccination & Health Outreach  | Cattle Kill Compensation Programme   |
| Ravlikudi, Chenpuriya, Junapani, Besla, Khemla          | 80<br>Villages (incl. Ranipur, Khajri Kudar + 6 others)  | Panna region   |
| FMD, rabies & infection prevention for domestic animals | Coordinated vaccination campaign, targeted immunization in Ranipur, health camp with vet support, medicines, awareness on stall feeding and dairy livelihood | Timely support for tiger/leopard predation losses to prevent conflict escalation |
| <b>3,538</b><br>Cattles vaccinated                      | <b>300</b><br>People made aware  | <b>10+</b><br>People   |



# GRASSLANDS

ABHISHEK SINGH / IWF PHOTO LIBRARY



# Tropical Savanna Grasslands (India)

## LOCATION

- Found mainly in **central and peninsular India**, including parts of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, and Karnataka.

## CHARACTERISTICS

- Landscape of **tall grasses** interspersed with scattered trees and shrubs.
- Typical trees include **Acacia**, **Butea (Flame of the Forest)**, and **Terminalia** species.
- Experiences a **tropical climate** with distinct wet and dry seasons:
  - Heavy rainfall during the monsoon supports grass growth.
  - Dry summers and winters limit dense forest growth, giving rise to the savanna structure.

## EXAMPLE IN INDIA

- Savannas of Madhya Pradesh
  - Spread across plateaus and plains.
  - Rich grazing grounds for herbivores like chital, nilgai, and blackbuck.

## WILDLIFE SUPPORTED

- Large herbivores: **Blackbuck**, **Chinkara**, **Chital**, **Nilgai**, **Gaur**.
- Predators: **Indian Wolf**, **Striped Hyena**, **Jungle Cat**, and occasionally **Tigers** and **Leopards**.
- Birds: **Great Indian Bustard**, **Lesser Florican**, **Harriers**, and larks thrive in open savanna habitats.

## ECOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE

- Act as critical **grazing ecosystems** for both wildlife and local pastoral communities.
- Support high biodiversity despite open landscapes.
- Provide **migration corridors** for species between forests.
- Maintain **soil fertility** and prevent erosion.

## THREATS

- Conversion into farmland and settlements.
- Overgrazing leading to land degradation.
- Firewood collection and felling of scattered trees.
- Habitat loss threatening species like the **Great Indian Bustard**.

## CONSERVATION NOTE

- Savannas are often misclassified as “degraded forests” or “wastelands” in India.
- Need recognition as distinct ecosystems for effective conservation.
- Protection of species like the **Great Indian Bustard** indirectly safeguards savanna habitats



# THE FOREST AS A CLASSROOM: AWARENESS, EDUCATION, AND STEWARDSHIP

GAURAV SHIRODAR / LWF PHOTO LIBRARY

## **Projects include**

- | Green Day Celebrations (GC) | Eco Clubs (EC)
- | Corridor Ambassador (CA – youth module)
- | Meri Beat Mera Abhiman (MBMA)
- | Pardhi Empowerment Programme (all sub-activities under this)

## Shades of Green: Planting Hope, Nurturing Tomorrow (Green Day Celebrations)

### GANDHI SAGAR: SMALL STEPS SPARK BIG CHANGEHAND IN HAND (CATTLE VACCINATION)



High above the Chambal River, the ancient walls of Hinglaj Mata Fort stood witness as villagers and forest officials came together with brooms in hand & resolve in their hearts. This began as a cleanliness drive but became a pledge to protect both history and habitat. Under the shade of an old banyan tree, an awareness session reminded everyone, "Safai sirf zameen par nahi, soch mein bhi honi chahiye." A fort was cleaned that day and a shared sense of responsibility was restored.

June brought another moment of unity under Mission LiFE. On World Environment Day, the morning sun lit up Gandhi Sagar as a yoga session led by LWF turned still ground into a space of calm. Soon after, action took root, quite literally, with a plantation drive, a Swachhata Abhiyan, and sanitation work at Gandhi Sagar No. 3. Saplings were planted, conversations sparked, and well being of ones own health and the planet was discussed.

Then came the river's turn to breathe. The Chambal, that has long been a lifeline for people and wildlife, had been whispering under the weight of waste. During the Jal Ganga Sanvardhan Abhiyan, LWF teams waded into its edges, pulling out what didn't belong. And as sacks filled with discarded plastic, children sat by the water, learning that even a single wrapper has a ripple effect. The young minds learnt an important lesson that day!

October brought celebration in its purest form. Wildlife Week transformed schools near Gandhi Sagar into vibrant hubs of creativity. Students painted forests alive with color, penned essays on conservation with fierce conviction, and ran cheetah races that echoed with laughter. Villages like Naval, Prempuriya, Ravlikudi, Sawat, Dawat, Bhooj, and Besla joined the movement through awareness programmes that carried the message to classrooms and beyond, proving that conservation thrives only if when communities thrive.

Through all these moments, Wildlife Week, World Environment Day, and World Tiger Day, more than 300 people came together across six major events. Schools, Anganwadis, and health centers became places where future of coexistence was discussed and encouraged.



## IMPACT AT A GLANCE:

### CONSERVATION AWARENESS IN GANDHI SAGAR (2024)

#### HINGLAJ MATA FORT CLEANLINESS DRIVE

Fort clean-up +  
awareness seminar

**50+** Reach

#### WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY (MISSION LIFE)

Yoga session, plantation,  
sanitation drive

**60+** Reach

#### JAL GANGA SANVARDHAN ABHIYAN

Chambal River clean-up  
+ awareness session

**70+** Reach

#### WILDLIFE WEEK (OCT 1–7, 2024)

Painting, essay, quiz,  
cheetah race in schools +  
village programmes

**100+** Reach

#### SPECIAL EVENTS (WORLD TIGER DAY, OTHERS)

Celebrations & outreach  
in schools and villages

**40+** Reach

Approximate Total Participants  
Across All Activities

**300+** Reach

## KUNO: PLANTING ROOTS FOR TOMORROW

### A Day for Green Dreams



On 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024, the quiet courtyards of Tapariya and Sesaipura schools came alive with the laughter of children. LWF, along with local communities, turned an ordinary day into an extraordinary promise of shade, sustenance, and life. Amla, Sesame, Neem, and Mango saplings found their new home in the soil, while eager hands patted the earth with care. However, planting was only the beginning. Villagers stepped forward to take guardianship of the trees, proving that conservation thrives where community leads.

## When Hands Tell Stories



Some moments stood out like green shoots on a dry plain. At Chak Kishanpura, LWF's field coordinator joined Heeralal Moghiya to plant 25 native trees. Each one of these saplings served as a silent pledge to the land.

In Tapariya, forest guide Beerendra Yadav knelt beside young Dhanendra Yadav and worked together to plant the saplings. This may only be an event for some but for the forest and its animals, it is a future to cherish.

## PANNA: WHEN LEARNING TURNED INTO PLAY

### Keeping Curiosity Alive



In the heart of Panna, our team faced a challenge; as the academic year stretched on and winter approached, student attendance dipped. The excitement that once came with free resources and activities began to fade. We knew the solution wasn't just about rewards but about rekindling interest through creativity and fun.

National Wildlife Week, held every October, gave us the perfect stage. In partnership with the

Madhya Pradesh Forest Department, seven schools became hubs of energy and color. Nearly 640 students poured their imagination into drawing sheets, tested their knowledge in quizzes, spoke passionately during elocution, and sprinted to the finish line in running competitions.

But the real magic lay in the games. Snakes and Ladders taught forest safety, Bingo explored animal identities, and Domino pieces formed the links of a food chain. Conservation lessons that often feel distant suddenly became part of play.

By the end of the week, 81 winners walked away with school bags, water bottles, compass boxes, and certificates, small tokens that carried big meaning. Some moments were unforgettable, like the Higher Secondary School, Brijpur, student who painted her face as a butterfly, perhaps dreaming of flying free under a forest sky!



## Eco Clubs: Growing Green Minds Across Landscapes (Eco clubs)

### BANDHAVGARH: PLANTING ECO-CLUBS, GROWING GUARDIANS



In July 2024, the classrooms around Bandhavgarh stirred with new energy. For two days, more than 50 teachers set aside their usual routines and gathered under one roof, this time to learn rather than lead.

The Teacher's Training Workshop was organised by LWF in collaboration with Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve. Its sole purpose was to breathe life into eco-clubs under the Samagra Shiksha scheme.

Through games, storytelling, and hands-on activities, teachers were shown that conservation isn't a subject

confined to books, it is something that children can live and practice every day. They were introduced to citizen science tools like iNaturalist, eBird, and Merlin, simple yet powerful apps that could turn every walk to school into a biodiversity survey, every sighting into a data point, and every child into a young naturalist.

Senior officials, including Deputy Director Shri P. K. Verma and Eco-club Nodal Officer Shri Nagendra Tiwari, Education Department, joined the sessions, underscoring the importance of weaving conservation into education. For many teachers, the experience was transformative. They not only gained new skills but also the confidence to guide their students in documenting, observing, and understanding the natural world around them.

Since then, schools with active eco-clubs have become the anchors of LWF's education programmes in Bandhavgarh. In every activity, the seeds planted during those two days continue to grow into future guardians of the forest.

### IMPACT AT A GLANCE: ECO-CLUBS

#### TEACHERS TRAINED

**50+**

from local schools

#### CITIZEN SCIENCE TOOLS INTRODUCED

iNaturalist, eBird,  
Merlin

#### OFFICIALS PRESENT

DD BTR Shri P.K. Verma, Shri Nagendra Tiwari (Eco-Club Nodal Officer), SDO, BTR - Shri Fateh Singh Nimama, Director, LWF, Ms. Vidya Venkatesh

#### LONG-TERM IMPACT

Strengthened eco-clubs under the Samagra Shiksha scheme, ensuring sustained student engagement in biodiversity documentation and conservation education

## Bridging the Wild: Restoring Pathways, Reviving Life (Corridor Conservation and Habitat restoration)

### BANDHAVGARH: WHERE SURVEYS SHAPE SOLUTIONS



Wildlife corridors are lifelines for tigers and other large mammals, but in Bandhavgarh, these green pathways are shrinking under the weight of deforestation, livestock grazing, and timber dependence. To understand this complex reality, LWF began with a question, not an answer.

A baseline survey across 117 households in

conflict-prone villages was conducted to understand the story of connection and distance. Agriculture dominated livelihoods, joint families remained the norm, and education levels were relatively high. Yet, despite living near one of India's iconic tiger reserves, only 10% of respondents had ever entered the forest for leisure or seen a tiger. These communities lived close to the forests, but their bond with it was fragile.

Field teams worked in places such as Damna in the Manpur Buffer, listening to people's concerns and mapping their needs. The answers we received are now shaping strategies to reduce forest dependency, promote sustainable alternatives, and bring communities into the heart of corridor protection. For it is only when people see the forest as a shared home, that coexistence takes root.

### PANNA: A WALL THAT GUARDS MORE THAN SAPLINGS



Sometimes, the strongest guardianship is built brick by brick. In Ranipur village, a stretch of forest that forms part of a critical wildlife corridor was under constant pressure from grazing and encroachment. A retention wall was repaired

to shield a plantation plot, ensuring saplings had a chance to grow into trees, and forests could reclaim their space. Community members stood by this effort, literally. A local guard watched over the plantation until March 2025, and villagers joined hands to secure what they had planted.

This monsoon will tell us how many saplings have survived, but one thing is already clear and that is when a community trusts and joins hands, a future can be built where corridors remain open for the wildlife to move, and for people to thrive alongside.



## IMPACT AT A GLANCE: CORRIDOR CONSERVATION & HABITAT RESTORATION

### BANDHAVGARH

**Baseline Survey:** 117 households across conflict-prone villages.

**Key Findings:** Agriculture primary livelihood, large joint families, higher education levels (1–2 graduates per household), only 10% had ever entered the forest or seen a tiger.

**Outcome:** Identified gaps in community–forest connection to guide corridor protection strategies.

### PANNA

**Habitat Protection:** Retention wall repaired in Ranipur village to safeguard plantation patch within a key corridor.

**Community Involvement:** Local participation in plantation protection, with a guard deployed until March 2025.

**Impact:** Reduced grazing pressure, protection of saplings, and promotion of natural regeneration.

## The Forest Speaks, Communities Respond (Wildlife Conservation Initiatives)

### KUNO: CONSERVATION ON SCREEN AND IN THE FIELD



In Kuno, conservation began with movies. Schools across Agra, Sheopur, Taparpura, Dangpura, and Madanpur, showed students wildlife films that brought the park to life. Tigers in their forests, antelopes on the grasslands, and the fragile balance that holds them together. Competitions

held as part of National Wildlife Week preparations gave children a chance to respond with creativity, while sessions on fire prevention and tree conservation reminded them that protecting the forest is also about everyday choices.

The month ended with knowledge-sharing of another kind. On October 25, 2024, LWF field coordinators facilitated a Caracal Conservation Training, which was led by a team from WWF. Here, the forest department staff learned new skills in camera trapping, habitat study, and wildlife monitoring; these are tools that will help them protect what films have shown the children. In every way, LWF served as a bridge carrying students' voices to higher authorities and bringing expertise back into the communities.

## PANNA: COMMUNITIES AS CONSERVATION PARTNERS



In Panna communities became conservation actors. Gram Rakshaks led cleanliness drives, tree plantations, and awareness campaigns, reducing waste, improving green cover, and building pride

in biodiversity. Schools, too, were central, from Khajri-Kudar to Gandhigram, nearly 250 students joined conservation outreach sessions. At one rally, children shouted together: "Who will protect the forest? We will! We will!". This was a promise as strong as any wall or patrol.

The partnership of beat guards, teachers, and Gram Rakshaks ensured that conservation wasn't limited to forests alone, but woven into classrooms, households, and daily life. In Gandhigram and Rakseha schools, eco-activities became a routine part of learning, connecting children to the corridor forests that run alongside their homes.

### IMPACT AT A GLANCE: WILDLIFE CONSERVATION INITIATIVES

#### KUNO

- Wildlife films screened in 5 schools (Agra, Sheopur, Taparpura, Dangpura, Madanpur).
- Students engaged through National Wildlife Week competitions and awareness sessions.
- Key topics:** fire prevention, tree conservation, forest protection.
- LWF field coordinators facilitated a Caracal Conservation Training programmes led by a team from WWF (25<sup>th</sup> Oct 2024), learning camera trapping, habitat study, and wildlife monitoring.

#### PANNA

**Intelligence & Surveillance:** Real-time updates via Gram Rakshaks and forest staff, shared through a closed WhatsApp group.

**Community Involvement:** Local participation in plantation protection, with a guard deployed until March 2025.

**Key actions:** tigress rescue (May 2024); repeated reports of tiger pugmarks in Ranipur, Rakseha, Patha Palathara, Machli Patha, Jhalai (2024–25)

**Community Engagement:** Cleanliness drives, plantations, and awareness activities led by Gram Rakshaks and volunteers

**Education Outreach:** ~250 students engaged through sessions in 5 schools (Khajri-Kudar, Gandhigram, Ranipur, Dahlan Chauki, Rakseha)

Student rallies and eco-activities strengthened long-term conservation awareness



## Pride in Every Beat, Strength in Every Range (Meri Beat Mera Abhiman & Meri Range Mera Abhiman)

### KUNO: TRAINING THE PROTECTORS



In February 2025, the quiet Sal forests of Kuno echoed with laughter, strategy, and camaraderie. Forest beat guards, who are often seen as lone sentinels of the wild, gathered for a very different kind of duty. Under the Meri Beat Mera Abhiman

initiative, they were enjoying playing “Jungle Migration,” debating through “Inside Out,” and building trust in “Cup Chat.” These simple activities became powerful lessons in teamwork, communication, and leadership which are as important as their lathis and field boots.

At the close of the quarter, the spotlight shifted to the Meri Range Mera Abhiman session, this time designed for the Range Forest Officer. When presentations concluded, APCCF Uttam Sharma and DFO Thirukural stood to commend the officers, calling the initiative not just a training, but a transformation. They praised the confidence, clarity, and problem-solving spirit the officers carried forward. The qualities gained will echo in every decision taken for the forest.

### PANNA: LESSONS BEYOND THE BEAT



March 2025 saw the Meri Beat, Mera Abhiman programme reach the North Panna Territorial Division as well! Here, 30 forest personnel gathered for three days of learning that felt more like discovery. DFO Garvit

Gangwar inaugurated the workshop with a reminder: “Our strength is not just in guarding trees, but in standing together.” Over the next sessions, guards solved puzzles side by side, role-played difficult scenarios, and tested their communication through card games and teamwork challenges.

For many, it was the first time professional training felt personal as these exercises helped build confidence, improve coordination, and hone problem-solving skills that will serve them not just in the forest, but in every interaction with communities. By the end, participants carried a sense of pride, a pride that taught them that their beat, their range, and their role in conservation truly mattered.

## Learning at the Edge: Classrooms, Care, and Confidence

### PARDHI: EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME



Supported by Morningstar Pvt. Ltd., LWF's Pardhi Empowerment Programme expanded across hostels and education centres this year, pairing classroom support with dignity-building care so Pardhi children can learn, stay, and thrive.

### HOMES THAT HELP CHILDREN STAY IN SCHOOL



At the Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Boys' Hostel (Panna), 9 new Class 1 admissions brought the roll to 28 students (Classes 1–7); three remedial teachers, Chhotelal Choudhary, Purushottam Lal Kori, and Pratima Tiwari, closed learning gaps while LWF ran regular motivation sessions. At the Girls' Hostel (Kunjyan, Panna), 12 new Class 1 admissions took the total to 45 students (Classes 1–7), supported by remedial teachers Madhuri Rai and Lakshmi Narayan Singh, with an emphasis on academics and extracurriculars for girls.

### EARLY LEARNING CENTRES THAT OPEN DOORS



The Pardhi Empowerment Centre (PEC), Anganwadi, Gandhigram, enrolled 39 young learners with a community teacher and regular oral assessments. PEC Kupnaghati, Shahnagar is recorded as 32 students enrolled during the year (centre-wise year-end tally notes 25), focused on foundational literacy and numeracy. PEC Bhadnapur Pahad, Malhar, enrolled 14 students, preparing children for mainstream school entry.



## BEYOND BASICS: BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND COMMUNITY



Learning stretched past textbooks through regular sports/physical training, moral-value education, storytelling, and creative arts; National Wildlife Week was celebrated with students, and mornings began with Physical Training at the girls' hostel. Nutritional support respected community preferences, chicken every alternate Sunday, while clothing, books/stationery, and bedsheets were distributed across hostels and centres to ensure study with comfort and pride.

The programme helped 12 students transition into higher education. Four Pardhi youth pursued

advanced degrees: Priya Pardhi (B. Pharma, TIT College, Bhopal), Pushpendra Pardhi (MSW, distance learning), Neelam Pardhi (MA Final, applying for BPED), and Raksha Pardhi (LLB, Bhopal). Community role models were celebrated: Priya (education), Neelam (sports), and Pushpa Pardhi (handicrafts) were honoured on International Women's Day—proof for younger students that persistence can change a family's story.

### IMPACT AT A GLANCE:

2024-25

**Enrolments (centre-wise tally):** Boys' Hostel 28; Girls' Hostel 45; PEC Gandhigram 39; PEC Kupnaghati 25; PEC Bhadnapur Pahad 14; Higher Education 12.

**Academic support:** 5 remedial teachers across boys' and girls' hostels; routine motivation and assessment.

**Whole-child care:** Sports/PT, storytelling, creative activities; nutritional meals; clothing, bedsheets, and learning materials supplied.

**Role models & recognition:** Women's Day honours for Pardhi students/alumni in education, sports, and handicrafts.

# CENTRAL INDIA

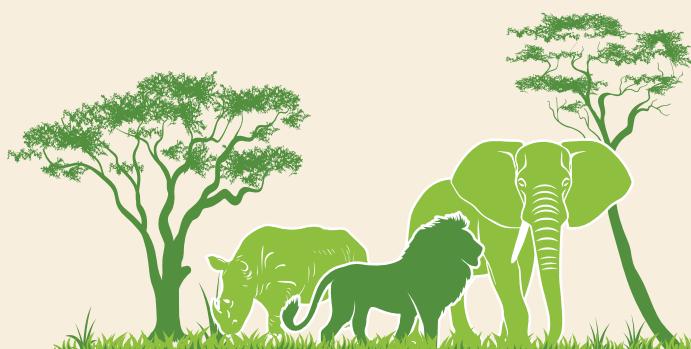
# WILDERNESS

# QUIZ

1. Which animal uses its long tail for balance while climbing trees?
  - a) Leopard
  - b) Langur (Hanuman monkey)
  - c) Indian Wolf
  - d) Sloth Bear
2. The Great Indian Bustard prefers which type of habitat?
  - a) Dense forests
  - b) Grasslands and open scrublands
  - c) Swamps and wetlands
  - d) Snowy mountains
3. What should you not do if you encounter a Sloth Bear in the forest?
  - a) Stay calm and back away slowly
  - b) Climb a tree immediately
  - c) Make loud noises or throw stones
  - d) Avoid blocking its path
4. Which antelope species is commonly found in the grasslands of Madhya Pradesh?
  - a) Nilgai (Blue Bull)
  - b) Chinkara (Indian Gazelle)
  - c) Blackbuck
  - d) All of the above
5. Which of these is a ground-dwelling bird seen in Central Indian grasslands?
  - a) Peacock
  - b) Jungle Bush Quail
  - c) Great Indian Bustard
  - d) Both b and c
6. Langurs play an important role in forests because they...
  - a) Spread seeds through their droppings
  - b) Hunt small animals
  - c) Build nests for other species
  - d) Pollinate flowers at night
7. Which predator is often called the “ghost of the grasslands” in Central India?
  - a) Tiger
  - b) Indian Wolf
  - c) Striped Hyena
  - d) Caracal
8. Why do vultures circle high above in the sky?
  - a) To look for water
  - b) To enjoy flying
  - c) To spot dead animals for food
  - d) To scare other birds

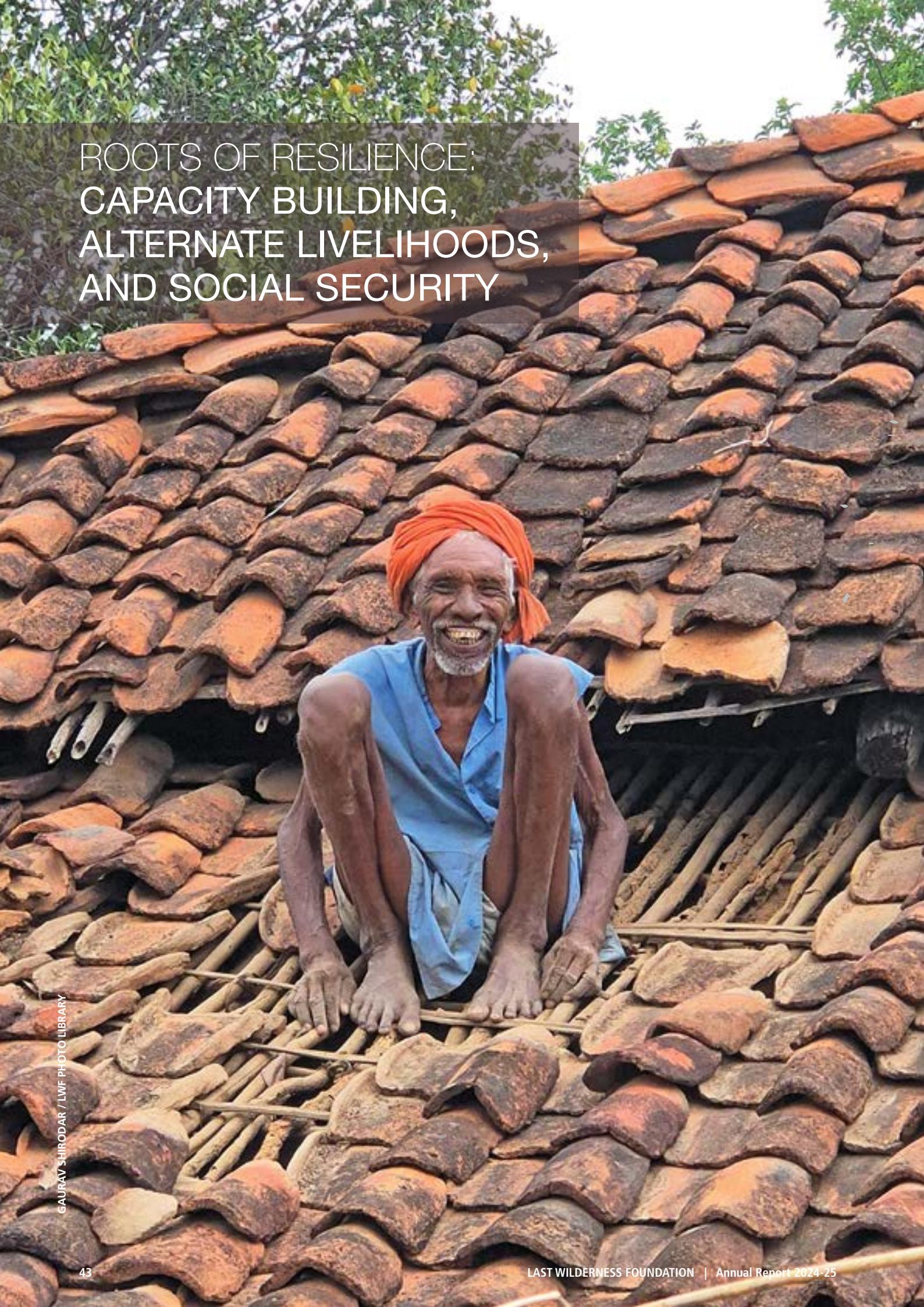
ANSWER KEY

1. b) Langur (Hanuman monkey)
2. b) Grasslands and open scrublands
3. c) Make loud noises or throw stones
4. d) Both a and c
5. a) Both b and c
6. a) Spread seeds through their droppings
7. b) Indian Wolf
8. c) To spot dead animals for food



# ROOTS OF RESILIENCE: CAPACITY BUILDING, ALTERNATE LIVELIHOODS, AND SOCIAL SECURITY

GAURAV SHIRODAR / LWF PHOTO LIBRARY



## Roots of Resilience: Capacity-Building and Skill Development Initiatives

### GANDHI SAGAR: LEARNING FROM THE WILD



In September 2024, the Rampura Range came alive with a survey of plants, butterflies, and birds. For participants, it wasn't just data collection — it

was an invitation to notice the delicate threads connecting species in this landscape. Later in the year, six young men from nearby villages travelled to Kuno National Park, where they learned the art of guiding. From spotting chital and peacocks on safari, to listening to Moghiya elders speak about medicinal plants, to watching vultures wheel over Daulatpura cliffs, every session revealed that conservation and livelihood can go hand in hand. With cheetah reintroduction on the horizon, these lessons hold the promise of new, sustainable futures in tourism and guiding.

### BANDHAVGARH: BUILDING LOCAL CHAMPIONS



Capacity building in Bandhavgarh took many forms. Over 1,000 individuals from forest staff to eco-club teachers participated in workshops

designed to sharpen knowledge and skills. Village Watchers, called **Bandhav Veers**, patrolled buffers and cores, their vigilance reducing conflict and preventing fires. Teachers trained to lead eco-clubs, while nature guides learned to read the subtle signs of trees through the SeasonWatch programme. Even trainee beat guards were engaged with playful but profound learning tools, like a life-sized Snakes and Ladders game where ladders stood for eco-friendly actions. Through each effort, Bandhavgarh's people became not just protectors, but interpreters of their forest.



## KUNO: FARMING FUTURES AND FOREST GUIDES



Capacity building here stretched from fields to forests. In Naya Baghcha, 55 farmers trained in soil

testing, horticulture, and sustainable farming, with pathways opened for subsidies and Kadaknath poultry. By August, 33 Sehariya farmers were formally linked with government schemes, giving them new footholds of security.

Meanwhile, training also touched the forest edges. Young men and women were exposed to the world of guiding and eco-tourism, seeing firsthand how Kuno's landscape could sustain livelihoods that rely on preservation rather than extraction.

## PANNA: GUARDIANS IN TRAINING



In Panna, the Gram Rakshaks stood at the heart of capacity building. These community stalwarts joined carefully curated workshops that taught wildlife

identification, soft skills, emergency response, and even digital processes for claiming government compensation. From jungle safaris that honed their eyes for pugmarks, to hands-on sessions on animal welfare and vaccination, their training bridged knowledge with action. Women too were engaged, with workshops in Khajri-Kudar addressing safe LPG use as an alternative to firewood. And through SeasonWatch, selected Gram Rakshaks became citizen scientists, recording tree phenology as part of a nationwide effort. Each training planted confidence, turning everyday villagers into custodians of coexistence.

## IMPACT AT A GLANCE: CAPACITY-BUILDING AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Gandhi Sagar | Plant, butterfly, and bird survey in Rampura Range; Academic support: 5 remedial teachers across boys' and girls' hostels; routine motivation and assessment.  |
| Bandhavgarh  | 1,000+ individuals trained, including forest staff, eco-club teachers, and community members; <b>Bandhav Veer</b> initiative empowered 40+ local watchers; innovative eco-games and SeasonWatch introduced.  |
| Kuno         | 6 youths trained in eco-tourism and guiding through hands-on exposure at Kuno NP. 55 farmers trained in sustainable agriculture; 33 Sehariya farmers registered under government schemes; exposure to eco-tourism and guiding as alternative livelihoods.      |
| Panna        | Multiple workshops for Gram Rakshaks on wildlife knowledge, emergency response, compensation processes, and conservation skills; women's LPG safety training reduced fuelwood dependency; citizen science through SeasonWatch launched with selected Rakshaks. |

## Anchoring Identities: Documentation and Social Security



For families living on the edge of forests, progress often depends on connections — not just to land and resources, but to the systems meant to support them. Yet, many of these connections remain fragile. The Sehariya, recognized as a Scheduled Tribe, can lean on existing frameworks, while the Moghiya, still struggling for official recognition as a Denotified Tribe (DNT), are often left outside the circle of government support.

To close these gaps, LWF became a bridge. Field coordinators moved between villages and government offices, carrying lists of names, forms, and stories. In agriculture, education, animal husbandry, and forest departments, doors were knocked and files submitted — each visit opening new opportunities for marginalized families. Ration cards, farmer IDs, and school admissions became more than paperwork; they became lifelines.

In the summer of 2024, LWF field coordinators went village to village, helping families from Moghiya and Sehariya communities navigate the maze of government paperwork. At kitchen tables and under neem trees, forms were filled out and thumbprints pressed. By the end of the quarter, 151 applications had been filed; ranging from ration cards to housing schemes. For nine Moghiya children in Taparpura, the day ended with something simple yet life-changing: a birth certificate with their names on it.

As the monsoon arrived, the work deepened. Camps were set up across villages, bringing government processes closer to the people. 53 new Aadhaar cards were issued, 16 updates completed, and one Moghiya family in Shyampur finally saw their child's name appear on an official record. Meetings with district officials ensured that hostel admissions for tribal children were not lost in bureaucratic delays. Slowly, the gap between entitlement and access began to close.

By post-monsoon, the results were visible. More families carried proof of their rights: 15 new Aadhaar cards, 16 updates, 3 new birth certificates, and even 2 E-Shram cards for daily wage workers who had never before been recognized in official systems. Each card was dignity, security, and the promise of a safer future.

The final months of the year saw momentum carried forward. In Adhavada and Chak Kishanpura, families voiced their needs for Farmer IDs, housing under PM Awas, and hostel opportunities for their children. Field coordinators listened, documented, and guided, ensuring that no request disappeared into silence.

Through persistence and partnership, LWF helped transform vulnerability into visibility. For hundreds of forest-edge families, identity was something they now carried in their hands.



## IMPACT AT A GLANCE: DOCUMENTATION AND SOCIAL SECURITY

### IDENTIFICATION & DOCUMENTATION

A strong focus was placed on issuing essential identity documents necessary to unlock government services.

- Aadhaar Cards: Facilitated the process to issue 83 new cards were issued, with a significant push for Moghiya children and a dedicated Aadhaar camp held for Sehariya and Moghiya communities (Q2).
- Birth Certificates: 16 new birth certificates were secured, including 9 for Moghiya children in Taparpura.
- Aadhaar/eKYC Updates: A total of 64 updates were completed, which included 32 eKYC updates necessary for scheme applications.

### SOCIAL SECURITY & SCHEME ACCESS

The programme directly assisted families in accessing government welfare and housing programmes.

- Scheme Applications: 151 general applications were filed for schemes like ration cards, farmer IDs, and housing (Q1).
- PM Awas (Housing): 40 applications were successfully processed, including 30 in Vasona (Q1), with continued family assistance through Q4.
- Farmer IDs: 75 Farmer IDs were processed in Q1, with the need for continued support identified in Q4 community discussions.

### STRATEGIC & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Beyond documentation, efforts focused on educational access and future planning.

- Hostel Admissions: The team completed the necessary documentation and compilation of lists for children requiring hostel facilities.
- Future Needs: Community discussions were held in Adhavada and Chak Kishanpura (Q4) to identify ongoing and emerging needs, confirming continued priorities for Aadhaar, Farmer IDs, and hostel admissions.

## Wells of Life: Securing Water, Sustaining Coexistence

### GANDHI SAGAR: WHEN VOICES REACHED THE AUTHORITIES



In the dry months of early 2025, villagers from Ravlikudi, Bassi, and Junapani gathered to speak about the same worry: water. Wells ran low, and fields cracked under the heat. LWF carried these voices to the administration, first to **SDM Pawan Beria** and later to Janpad **CEO Arvind**. On March 21, 2025, after weeks of dialogue, a plan was approved for a percolation tank in Ravlikudi Chainpuriya. The villagers now had a new hope, it was hope that their summers would no longer be spent waiting for tankers or walking long distances with pitchers.

### PANNA: RESTORING A CORRIDOR THROUGH WATER



In Khajri-Kudar, water scarcity proved to be more than a daily hardship for the local communities; it was the reason a forest corridor was shaping up. Open grazing around the village left little for wild herbivores, fueling conflict with predators and

putting both cattle and people at risk. A pond, once the village's lifeline, had fallen into disrepair. When the Gram Panchayat raised the issue, it hit an impasse and parts of the pond lay on disputed land.

Here, LWF stepped in as mediator. Over months, meetings were held between the Panchayat, Forest Department, and Civic Authority. Documentation was gathered, maps demarcated, and a Panchama was filed. The breakthrough came when the Panna Tiger Reserve granted FRA-based permission for repair. With final approval in hand after a year of persistent follow-up, the pond restoration began. Something that started as a local grievance had become a step toward safer passage for tigers and secured water for both people and livestock.



## IMPACT AT A GLANCE: WILDLIFE CONSERVATION INITIATIVES

### GANDHI SAGAR

- Villagers from Ravlikudi, Bassi, and Junapani raised water shortage concerns
- Meetings with SDM and Janpad CEO led to approval for a percolation tank in Ravlikudi Chainpuriya

### PANNA

- Pond restoration initiated in Khajri-Kudar, a key forest corridor village
- Conflict over disputed land resolved through FRA-based permissions
- Nearly a year of follow-up led to final approval and start of repair work
- Outcome: Improved water access for people, livestock, and safer wildlife corridors

## Paths of Progress: Infrastructure Development and Advocacy

### GANDHI SAGAR: WHEN VILLAGES ASKED, AND VOICES CARRIED



In Bassi, Junapani, Bhuj, and Ravlikudi, villagers gathered to share their worries: broken ponds, unreliable roads, and scarce water. Each concern echoed their struggle for survival. LWF field teams listened, documented, and carried these voices into offices where decisions are made. Meetings with engineers, commissioners, and local officials brought long-standing issues into focus.

By July 2024, estimates for repairing the Ravlikudi stop dam and the Bassi pond were in progress. Later in the year, advocacy expanded to include a proposed sports ground in Junapani. Even when development was stalled by a nuclear energy project, LWF worked with the Water Resources Department to keep the Ravlikudi stop dam moving forward.

Infrastructure alone, however, cannot stand without trust. In Bassi, where skepticism ran deep, repeated visits by LWF's coordinator slowly opened dialogue. The village head, once cautious, eventually partnered in socio-economic surveys. In Junapani, similar trust-building efforts addressed grazing and water challenges. With each conversation, conservation was reframed!



## Building Bridges with Governance

Beyond projects, LWF acted as a connector between people and systems. Under the guidance of the District Collector and SDM, a multi-departmental committee visited Ravlikudi Chenpuriya to introduce villagers to government schemes on agriculture,

horticulture, and animal husbandry. Farmers learned about subsidies, modern practices, and livestock care, while officials listened to local challenges in return.



## Cleaner Energy, Healthier Forests

Recognizing the toll of fuelwood dependence, LWF also championed LPG access under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana. In Ravlikudi Chenpuriya, nearly 80% of households now use LPG connections.

Efforts continue to ensure the remaining families are included, easing pressure on forests while improving health and quality of life.



# FOREST SUPERSTITION

## SUPERSTITIONS ABOUT SNAKES

- Snakes (male and female) take revenge across lifetimes.
- A female snake (Nagin) captures the image of her dead mate's face in her eyes, which is why the male snake is cremated to protect against her.
- People believe that worshipping snakes on Nag Panchami ensures they never cause harm.
- Offering milk to snakes pleases them.
- In some places, there is a superstition that snakes guard hidden treasures underground. Where snakes are often seen, buried wealth is believed to exist.



## SUPERSTITIONS ABOUT OWLS

- In villages, it is believed that if an owl hoots at night while sitting on the roof or a tree near the house, it signals an upcoming crisis or even death in the family.
- Children's clothes should not be left outside at night, because villagers believe that the owl takes them away, buries them in the ground, and this causes the child to fall ill.
- In rural superstitions, owls are associated with black magic, occult practices, and witchcraft.
- According to religious beliefs in villages, the owl is considered the vehicle of Goddess Lakshmi, and therefore many people regard it as a symbol of wealth and good fortune.



## KUNO

- Many community groups believe that evil spirits dwell in the forest, which is why going alone into the jungle is considered inauspicious, especially at night, when people avoid it out of fear.
- Certain trees such as **Peepal (*Ficus religiosa*)** and **Banyan (*Ficus benghalensis*)** are regarded as sacred, and cutting them is considered forbidden, as they are believed to be the dwelling places of 36 crore deities.
- Herbal plants are often considered miraculous medicines for curing diseases.

4. Animal calls are interpreted as signs of good or bad luck. For example, the cry of the Jackal is believed to be a bad omen. They say that if it howls, someone will pass away in the village.



## PANNA

### PORCUPINE QUILL

There is a belief that if a porcupine quill is secretly placed inside a house, quarrels and conflicts will continue in that household until the quill is removed.

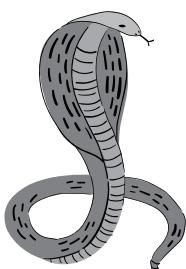


### THE “BHOOLNI” TREE

Another belief, which some people claim to have personally experienced, concerns a tree in the forest called **“Bhoolni.”** It is said that if someone touches this tree, they become disoriented, losing all sense of direction, and risk getting lost in the forest. The only solution, according to the belief, is for the person to sit cross-legged at the same spot, close their eyes, meditate, and focus on directions — only then will they regain their sense of orientation. Apart from this, no other remedy is thought to exist.

### BIRDS AND BLACK MAGIC

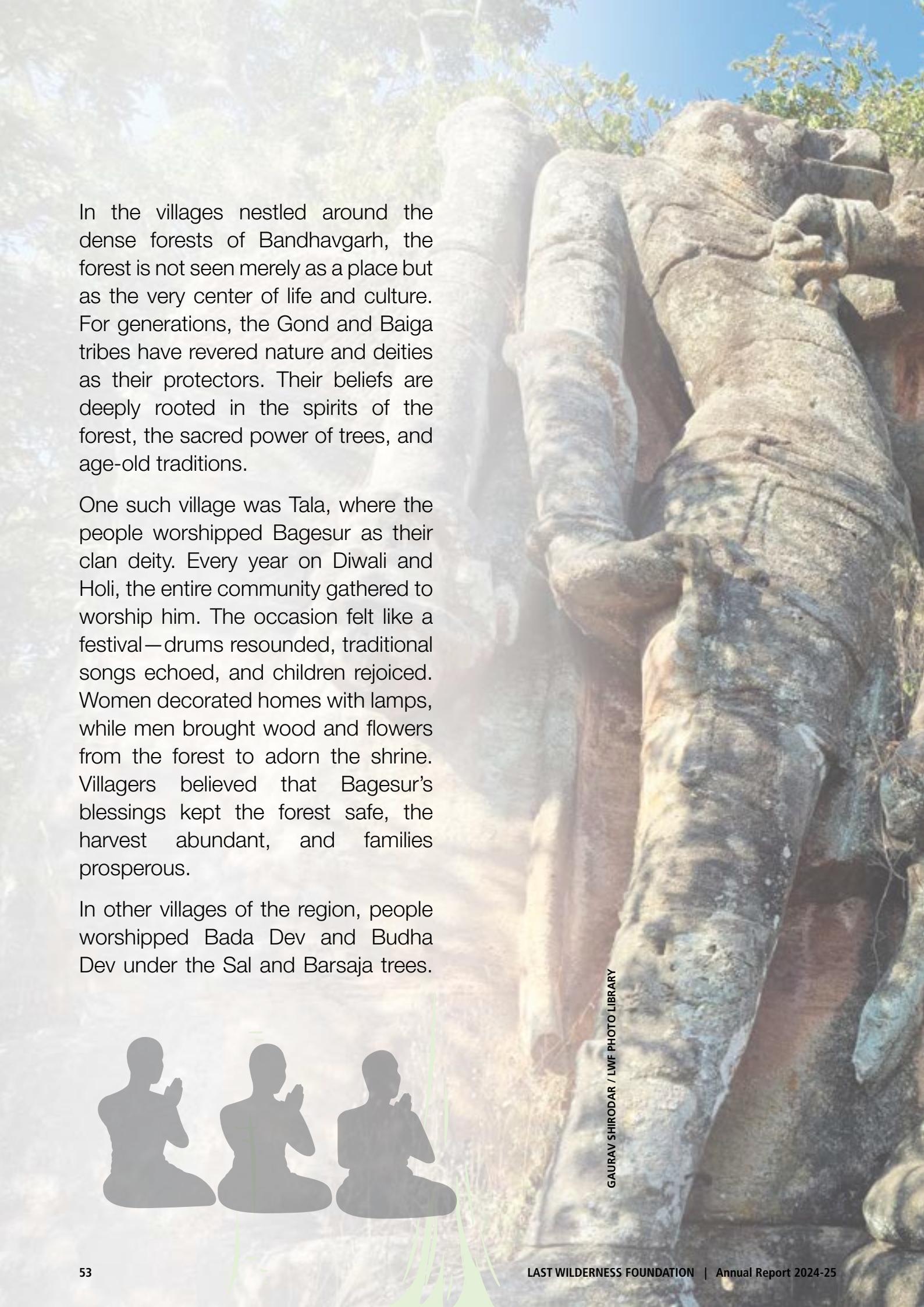
Some birds are also associated with witchcraft and black magic, such as owls and bats. It is believed that if the remains of an owl are placed at the entrance of a house, the family begins to fear that someone has cast a spell on them and that misfortune may strike.



### SNAKES AND NAGMANI

There are several superstitions about snakes, the most prominent being the belief in Nagmani (a mythical gem said to be possessed by snakes). According to local belief, if a snake lives for 100 years, it transforms into an Ichchhadhari Naag (a mythical shapeshifting serpent) capable of taking any form. It is also believed that anyone who acquires a Nagmani can fulfill any desire. Because of such myths, snakes are often killed in attempts to obtain this gem.





In the villages nestled around the dense forests of Bandhavgarh, the forest is not seen merely as a place but as the very center of life and culture. For generations, the Gond and Baiga tribes have revered nature and deities as their protectors. Their beliefs are deeply rooted in the spirits of the forest, the sacred power of trees, and age-old traditions.

One such village was Tala, where the people worshipped Bagesur as their clan deity. Every year on Diwali and Holi, the entire community gathered to worship him. The occasion felt like a festival—drums resounded, traditional songs echoed, and children rejoiced. Women decorated homes with lamps, while men brought wood and flowers from the forest to adorn the shrine. Villagers believed that Bagesur's blessings kept the forest safe, the harvest abundant, and families prosperous.

In other villages of the region, people worshipped Bada Dev and Budha Dev under the Sal and Barsaja trees.

Gaurav Shirodar / LWF Photo Library



The Sal tree was regarded as a giver of life (its abundance ensured the region never faced water scarcity), while the Barsaja tree, with its air-filtering leaves, was seen as a protector of the village. Women offered turmeric, rice, and flowers, while men danced to the rhythm of drums. Bowing to the trees, they prayed: "Under your shade, our lives are safe."

Within the Tala core zone, the worship of Shesh Shaiya, Barah Avatar, and Bandhavadhish holds great importance, especially during Krishna Janmashtami. Villagers gather at the temples for bhajans, kirtans, and rituals. The festival is not only an act of worship but also a tradition that connects generations.

Alongside these deep-rooted beliefs, however, some superstitions also prevail. When illness struck or misfortune befell, the village shamans performed rituals to ward off evil. They used herbs, ashes, and chants as remedies. Sometimes, these methods seemed effective, which only reinforced people's faith in them.



शास्त्रीय विद्यावाङ्गम  
विद्यावाट मिशन प्रूफ़िल शिक्षा

# OPENING DOORS TO OPPORTUNITY: SCHOOL AND HOSTEL ENROLMENT & FOREST DEPARTMENT COLLABORATION AND SUPPORT



SONU VERMA / LWF PHOTOLIBRARY

## Opening Doors to Opportunity: Education & Outreach for School-Hostel Enrollment

### KUNO: WHERE ACCESS BECOMES EMPOWERMENT



In the summer of 2024, as schools prepared to reopen, LWF teams in Kuno went door to door, helping families navigate forms, certificates, and hostel applications. LWF initially began to meet a target of 100 enrollments, but this grew into something far greater: 290 admissions completed, with 144 children entering schools and 128 moving into hostels. For many Moghiya and Sehariya families, this was the first step toward breaking cycles of exclusion.

The monsoon months brought new challenges and triumphs. Four Moghiya girls, once at risk of dropping out, were admitted to Kasturba Gandhi Kanya Ashram after documentation hurdles were resolved. Eight Adivasi children joined Aadhar Shila School, while others transitioned successfully to hostels with transfer certificates in hand. Each admission proved that persistence, advocacy, and determination were key to success for families who wanted more for their children.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> August, a wildlife documentary screening at High School Silpuri brought Kuno's landscapes and animals into focus, reminding students that their own futures are tied to the survival of the forest.

By the year's end, LWF's advocacy with the District Project Coordinator and the Collector's Office secured funds to operationalize a new hostel for Moghiya children complete with budgets for furnishing, maintenance, and accommodation. Seventy boys and thirty girls are now set to move into this space in 2025, marking a major step toward stability and opportunity.

Through consistent school, hostel, and Anganwadi visits, LWF ensured that children's concerns reached higher authorities. The goal remains simple yet powerful: to create safe, supportive spaces where children learn, grow, and one day become conservation stewards of their own landscapes.



## IMPACT AT A GLANCE: KUNO (2024–25)

- **290 total enrollments:** 144 in schools, 128 in hostels (172 from Kuno North, 100 from Kuno South)
- **Community reach:** 76.1% Moghiya, 23.9% Sehariya
- **Hostel breakthroughs:**
  - 4 Moghiya girls admitted to Kasturba Gandhi Kanya Ashram
  - 8 Adivasi children enrolled at Aadhar Shila School
  - 70 boys and 30 girls approved for transition to new hostel (budget sanctioned Dec 2024)
- **Advocacy wins:** Hostel file approved by Collector's Office; budget released for maintenance and furnishing
- **Awareness & learning:** Wildlife documentary screened at High School Silpuri (Aug 22, 2024)
- **Continuous engagement:** Regular school, hostel, and Anganwadi visits ensured issues were addressed at higher levels

## Standing Shoulder to Shoulder: Forest Department Collaboration & Support

### BANDHAVGARH: WALKING BESIDE THE GUARDIANS OF THE FOREST



In Bandhavgarh, conservation is a shared responsibility one that Last Wilderness Foundation (LWF) carries forward in close coordination with the Forest Department. While running independent community programmes, the team also steps in to support official initiatives, whether it's environmental campaigns, awareness drives, or enforcement

support. On 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2024, LWF joined the Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve staff in a cleanliness drive at Tala, sweeping not just the streets but also old notions that conservation is the Forest Department's work alone.

Support also takes more personal forms. When families suffer the loss of loved ones to tiger or elephant encounters, LWF ensures they are not left behind in grief. Coordinators visit homes, sit with families, and liaise with officials to secure compensation, education support, and livelihood opportunities. In Bamera village, after the tragic death of an elderly grazer, LWF Coordinator visited with Sarpanch Mr. Jaiswal to console the family and assure them that they would not face the burden alone. In landscapes where wildlife and people meet daily, such gestures become threads of trust.

## PANNA: ON PATROL WITH PEOPLE AND PROTECTORS



In Panna, partnership often takes the shape of patrols. Side by side, Beat Guards, Gram Rakshaks, and forest officials walk the fringes of villages and forests, scanning for snares, traps, or illegal grazing. Night or day, these joint efforts strengthen

the safety net for both people and wildlife. In June 2024, for instance, a patrol in Dhangarh by Gram Rakshak Narayan Singh Yadav and Beat Guard Vinod Kumar Maury identified active wildlife movement corridors and advised villagers to shift their cattle. By February 2025, coordinated patrols in Sarangpur, Itwakala, and Brajpur had not only removed snares but also reassured communities that their forests were being watched over.

These efforts drew together a diverse cast: Deputy Ranger Mahroob Khan, Beat Guards like Munna Lal Yadav and Rajesh Gupta, and Gram Rakshaks such as Chandrika Tiwari and Avadh Lal Pal. Each carried a piece of the responsibility, turning vigilance into collaboration.

## ANNUBHUTI: LEARNING THROUGH NATURE



Beyond protection, LWF also supports the Forest Department in nurturing future custodians of nature. Through the Madhya Pradesh Ecotourism

Development Board's Anubhuti programme, schoolchildren across Kanha, Panna, and Bandhavgarh step into the forest to learn through sight, sound, and experience. With coordinators and volunteers from LWF guiding activities, these camps transform the forest into a living classroom and a space where curiosity replaces fear and connection replaces distance.



# FROM OUR FIELD COORDINATORS DIARIES



SHYAM YADAV / LWF PHOTO LIBRARY



### Shyambihari Yadav

Working with LWF in Kuno has been a truly enriching experience. I've not only connected closely with wildlife but also with the local communities, learning about their lives and perspectives. What inspires me most is seeing children and young people show such curiosity and enthusiasm for conservation. Every day here brings something new, and it has taught me that true conservation is about balancing people and nature.



### Sonu Verma

Working with LWF in Kuno has been one of the most meaningful chapters of my life. Every day here teaches me something new whether it's spotting rare wildlife in the forest or listening to stories from the community. The most inspiring moments are when I see children and young people show curiosity and enthusiasm for conservation; their energy keeps me going. I've also built a special bond with the village kids, who always run up to me with warmth and affection, and that simple joy reminds me why this work matters.



### Manish Rawat

Working with Last Wilderness Foundation has been an inspiring and enriching journey.



### Nitin Barman

I truly enjoy working with Last Wilderness Foundation because it feels like I'm contributing to a bigger mission — protecting forests and wildlife.



# FINANCIALS

## LAST WILDERNESS FOUNDATION

(CIN: U93300MH2009NPL196854)

(Address: 0-2201, Floor-22, Plot-822, Aaversekar Heights, Dr Annie Besant Road, Worli Naka, Worli, Mumbai City.

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2025

| Particulars   | Note | 31 March 2025 | (Rs in '00)   |
|---|------|---------------|---------------|
| <b>I. EQUITY AND LIABILITIES</b>                        |      |               |               |
| (1) Shareholders' funds                                 |      |               |               |
| (a) Share Capital                                       | 3    |               |               |
| (b) Reserves and Surplus                                | 4    | 31,849        | 23,547        |
| <b>Total</b>  |      | 31,849        | 23,547        |
| <b>(2) Current Liabilities</b>                          |      |               |               |
| (a) Other Current Liabilities                           | 5    | 16,112        | 14,033        |
| <b>Total</b>  |      | 16,112        | 14,033        |
| <b>Total Equity and Liabilities</b>                     |      | <b>47,961</b> | <b>37,580</b> |
| <b>II. ASSETS</b>                                       |      |               |               |
| (1) Non-current assets                                  |      |               |               |
| (a) Property, Plant and Equipment and Intangible Assets |      |               |               |
| (i) Property, Plant and Equipment                       | 6    | 3,637         | 2,270         |
| <b>Total</b>  |      | 3,637         | 2,270         |
| (2) Current assets                                      |      |               |               |
| (a) Cash and cash equivalents                           | 7    | 43,329        | 35,053        |
| (b) Short-term Loans and Advances                       | 8    | 446           | 257           |
| <b>Total</b>  |      | 44,329        | 35,310        |
| <b>Total Assets</b>                                     |      | <b>47,961</b> | <b>37,580</b> |

See accompanying notes to the financial statements

As per our report of even date

For S. P Gupta & Associates  
Chartered Accountants  
Karni's Registration No. 103445W

Preeti Pararampuri  
Partner  
Membership No. 131204  
UDIN: 251312048M12J0103  
Place: Mumbai  
Date: 20 September 2025



Nikhil Nagle  
Director  
02267216

Vidya Venkatesh  
Director  
02268000

For and on behalf of the Board of  
LAST WILDERNESS FOUNDATION



Place: Mumbai

Date: 20 September 2025

**LAST WILDERNESS FOUNDATION**

(CIN: U93000MH2009NPL196854)

(Address: 0-2201, Floor-22, Plot-822, Avarsekar Heights, Dr Annie Besant Road, Worli Naka, Worli, Mumbai City,

**Statement of Profit and loss for the year ended 31 March 2025**

(Rs in '00)

| Particulars  | Note | 31 March 2023      | 31 March 2024    |
|--|------|--------------------|------------------|
| Revenue from Operations  |      | —                  | —                |
| Donation Received  | 9    | 1,47,383.00        | 92,784.00        |
| Other Income   | 10   | 3,053.00           | 1,195.00         |
| <b>Total Income</b>  |      | <b>1,50,436.00</b> | <b>94,379.00</b> |
|  |      | —                  | —                |
| <b>Expenses</b>  |      |                    |                  |
| Project Expenses   | 11   | 56,785.00          | 42,861.00        |
| Employee Benefit Expenses  | 12   | 46,802.00          | 34,537.00        |
| Establishment Expenses   | 13   | 36,508.00          | 15,587.00        |
| Depreciation and Amortization Expenses                                 | 14   | 2,440.00           | 550.00           |
| <b>Total expenses</b>  |      | <b>1,42,135.00</b> | <b>93,535.00</b> |
|  |      | —                  | —                |
| <b>Profit/(Loss) before Exceptional and Extraordinary Item and Tax</b> |      | <b>8,301.00</b>    | <b>844.00</b>    |
| Exceptional Item   |      | —                  | —                |
| <b>Profit/(Loss) before Extraordinary Item and Tax</b>                 |      | <b>8,301.00</b>    | <b>844.00</b>    |
| Extraordinary Item   |      | —                  | —                |
| <b>Profit/(Loss) before Tax</b>  |      | <b>8,301.00</b>    | <b>844.00</b>    |
| Tax Expenses   |      | —                  | —                |
| Current Tax  |      | —                  | —                |
| <b>Profit/(Loss) after Tax</b>   |      | <b>8,301.00</b>    | <b>844.00</b>    |
| Earnings Per Share (Face Value per Share Rs. each)                     |      |                    |                  |
| -Basic (in Rs)   | 15   | —                  | —                |
| -Diluted (in Rs)   | 15   | —                  | —                |

See accompanying notes to the financial statements.

As per our report of even date:

For S. P Gupta &amp; Associates

Chartered Accountants

Firm's Registration No. 103445W

For and on behalf of the Board of  
LAST WILDERNESS FOUNDATION


Preeti Parancampuria

Partner

Membership No. 131204

UDIN: 251312048M12701103

Place: Mumbai

Date: 20 September 2025



Nikhil Nagle

Director

02667236


Vidyut Venkatesh

Director

05168000



Place: Mumbai

Date: 20 September 2025



## WAY TO DONATE

### BECOME A MONTHLY SUPPORTER

A monthly contribution ensures that LWF consistently grows its far-reaching efforts to preserve our wilderness spaces in tandem with community members.

### STAKEHOLDER LIAISON

Help establish tie ups with institutions or organisations who can aid LWF in spreading awareness about community members, the on-ground challenges and the work being done to combat these issues. Such partnerships can also be used to showcase the skill sets possessed by community members in the form of products, the proceeds of which will go back to the community members.

### SPONSOR FOR EDUCATION

Support the supplementary needs of our educational projects by helping establish libraries, distribute winter uniforms and school supplies etc.

### SUPPORT OUR HEROES

Equip frontline Forest Department staff with necessary resources that will aid protection measures.

### CONSERVE WHILE YOU TRAVEL

For your next holiday, opt for unique itineraries while visiting any of our featured tiger reserves in Madhya Pradesh. You can get oriented with community members and engage in our on-ground conservation activities and projects. Immerse yourself in our various alternate livelihood projects like village walks, lunch/dinner with community members, camping, nature walks etc., in which 100% of the proceeds are given to community members. These can be arranged as family holidays or even corporate offsites.

### SPONSOR A STUDENT

Support the education of a child by covering their top-to-bottom expenses for one academic year in mainstream education.



To know more about our work and how you can contribute, please visit our website

[www.thelastwilderness.org](http://www.thelastwilderness.org)

and/or write to us on

[conservation@thelastwilderness.org](mailto:conservation@thelastwilderness.org)



## WAY FORWARD

Change has been our constant companion, guiding the journey of Last Wilderness Foundation over the past fifteen years.

What began with a handful of people working alongside a few communities has grown into a diverse and dedicated team—driven by passion, experience, and a shared belief in coexistence. With this growth, we are ready to take on larger challenges, expand our reach, and deepen our impact.

Our vision remains unchanged: conservation through community participation. For us, this means not only protecting forests and wildlife, but also empowering people who live closest to these landscapes to become their strongest guardians. Through initiatives like the Gram Rakshak Programme, community members continue to step forward as stewards of their land, while Meri Beat Mera Abhimaan (MBMA) strengthens frontline staff with skills that enhance their engagement and responsiveness.

As habitats shrink and corridors grow fragile, our efforts have expanded to securing safe passages for wildlife across critical landscapes—linking Bandhavgarh with Panna, Panna with Ranipur (Uttar Pradesh), Bandhavgarh with Sanjay, and around Kuno National Park with Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary. These are not just ecological connections, but lifelines essential for species survival.

Looking ahead, we are committed to three priorities:

- Expanding outreach and education to inspire future generations to take pride in their natural heritage.



- Strengthening our team's knowledge and capacity to remain adaptive and innovative in addressing conservation challenges.
- Collaborating with scientists, researchers, and volunteers to design solutions for threats such as forest fires, deforestation, and water scarcity.

We are also scaling up habitat restoration and water conservation, recognizing that resilient ecosystems sustain both wildlife and human well-being. Every project we take on is a step towards balance—where forests thrive, communities flourish, and coexistence becomes reality.

The way forward is a collective journey, built on trust—of our partners, communities, and supporters. With your continued faith, and the strength of our growing team, Last Wilderness Foundation is ready to embrace new challenges and create new stories of hope.

Together, we can ensure the wild endures, not as a relic of the past, but as a living legacy for generations to come.

**Gaurav Shirodkar**  
 Deputy Director



# FUELLING THE MOVEMENT

Enduring conservation is achieved through the support and cooperation of a broad range of extraordinary partners, that include governments, local communities, corporates, small businesses and individual donors.

We leveraged the strengths of these associations to achieve what we have over the past year.



IF YOU WANT TO  
GO FAST, GO  
**ALONE**

IF YOU WANT TO  
GO FAR, GO  
**TOGETHER**

- AN AFRICAN PROVERB



Thanking all our partners, donors, volunteers and followers for trusting & supporting us generously.

We look forward to interacting with each one of you through our programmes every year.



LWF PHOTO LIBRARY

With best regards.

**LAST WILDERNESS FOUNDATION**

[www.thelastwilderness.org](http://www.thelastwilderness.org)









To know more about our work and how you can contribute, please visit our website

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