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## EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

### RESTORING LANDSCAPES AND WILDLIFE-FRIENDLY PLANTING



Land at Evolve Back Kabini has been transformed from denuded farmland to wildlife oasis with extensive planting with indigenous trees, shrubs and grasses and the creation of a waterbody. Buildings occupy approximately 12% of the fifteen acres of restored land. [Read case study.](#)



Previously denuded farmland overrun with invasive plants acquired by Vanghat Lodge has been restored to healthy habitat with 5,000 indigenous trees in a valley which serves as a natural wildlife corridor. The lodge has no external lighting to avoid disturbance to wildlife. Herds of elephants now pass gracefully just outside the lodge where previously only a solitary bull was seen.



This restored landscape at Mela Kothi, is the fruit of nine years of planting between 2006-2015 drawing on indigenous trees and shrubs from the lodge's six-acre nursery. In July 2007 alone, 10,000 saplings were planted with the help of 100 local participants. The lodge is now a hub for building awareness of the wildlife and ecology of the Chambal Valley. [Read case study.](#)



Barahi Jungle Lodge has restored 30 acres of overgrazed land and now has a checklist of 130 species of native flora and more than 5,000 trees growing in the property. The mix of elephant grasses and trees has led to a profusion of birds with over a hundred species recorded. Other wild visitors include a family of jackals, small Indian civet, mongoose, monitor lizard, Indian hare and rhino. Less than 4% of the lodge's land is used for construction.



A butterfly garden planted at Singinawa Jungle Lodge has attracted a myriad of butterfly, spider and other insect species for guests to explore. More than 33,000 trees have been planted in the lodge's 110 acres which combine a mix of forest, natural grassland and water bodies which are home to more than 170 species of birds and leopard, jungle cats and wild boar amongst the mammals. [Read case study.](#)



Not forgetting the small creatures ... Evolve Back Kabini's interpretation centre includes a 2.5-acre butterfly sanctuary and a lily pond.



Over 3,000 saplings have been planted by Svasara Jungle Lodge on their ten acres over seven years. The lodge has a walk-through nursery and an indigenous tree trail for guests. The lodge is now home to numerous birds, reptiles and small mammals such as civet cat and many more. A dedicated area has been set aside and planted for butterflies.



A range of lodges involve their guests in their restoration efforts. Pictured here tree planting at Oberoi Vanyavilas to commemorate guest visits. The property has over 1,100 trees and plants (approximately 130 different species).



Common and scientific naming of plants is good practice to enhance guest education. Kanha Earth Lodge has created a Tree Trail in its grounds with local and scientific naming of more than thirty indigenous species and expert briefing provided by the naturalists. A written briefing on tree species is also available for guests.





Jaagir Lodge has leased seventeen acres of swamp land and restored it as a micro habitat for Indian otters, fishing cats, long fin eel, Burmese Python, Swamp francolin and Indian black turtle. A tube well has been installed to maintain the receding water during the summer. A local farming family has been hired to protect the wetland from illegal fishing.



Extensive site conservation with nearly 7,000 saplings planted over a three year period and a sizeable lake created for rainwater harvesting is making Pashan Garh – Taj Safaris a preferred corridor for herbivores, bears and even leopards and jackal. [Read case study](#)



More than 700,000 trees have been planted in villages around Ranthambhore with support from the [Prakratik Society](#) set up by the owner of Khem Villas.

## PROVIDING WATER FOR WILDLIFE AND RECHARGING GROUND WATER



Khem Villas has created an oasis for wildlife through making six water bodies and its extensive planting with indigenous trees, shrubs and grasses which act as a natural aquifer recharging ground water levels. Crocodiles have taken up residence at the property and guests can also enjoy seeing more than 180 species of birds, 45 butterfly species and a host of mammals. Photo: Mittal Gala / Khem Villas. [Read case study](#).



Kipling Camp's waterhole fed by rainwater harvesting enlarged from a pond now provides water for wildlife even in the severest droughts. [Read case study](#).



Water bodies created by Mela Kothi – the Chambal Safari Lodge harvest rainwater and aid pisciculture. Further habitat regeneration has been achieved through crafting check dams in ravines.



Tiger Trails Tadoba has cleared and maintained three ponds to prevent flooding, harvest monsoon rains and provide water for wildlife throughout the year. Thanks to the ponds, the water table has risen from 38 feet to 8 feet in peak summer over ten years helping to keep the forest green and attracting wildlife. Tiger, leopard and sloth bear pug marks can often be seen within 100 feet of the lodge. [Read case study](#) in [Water profile](#).



Oberoi Vanyavilas harvests approximately 1,600,000 litres of rainwater each season recharging ground water and creating a haven for wildlife in an arid region. [Read case study](#).



Jim's Jungle Retreat has transformed fifteen acres of denuded farmland by extensive planting with nearly 100 species of trees and over 50 plants and grasses native to Corbett's forests. Six water bodies – four natural and two artificial – harvest rainwater. A machan has been constructed to enable guests to view the abundance of wildlife that now resides there. Grounds include a termite walk.

## IN-HOUSE NATURALISTS



In-house naturalists are an integral part of outstanding nature-based lodges and resorts, enriching guest experience, contributing to local conservation and helping to educate local communities. Pictured here Mittal Gala, formerly, Ranthambhore's only female naturalist, joint runner-up for TOFTigers Best Naturalist in 2016 whilst at Khem Villas. [Read case study.](#)



2016 TOFTigers Naturalist Award Winner (Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge) Dhan Bahadur Tamang from Tharu Village, Chitwan, is recognised as one of Nepal's best and longest serving naturalists. His world class knowledge of tiger populations was built up through his field research over 40 years contributing to the work of pioneer wildlife researcher, Dr Chuck McDougal. A Tiger Tops naturalist for 50 years, his commitment to communicating his love of nature to visitors is second to none.



2018 TOFTigers Naturalist Award Winner (Reni Pani Lodge, Satpura) Siddharth Biniwale is a naturalist with a passion for nature, wildlife monitoring and inspiring his guests with his deep knowledge of bird calls and wildlife. A geologist by training who previously worked on water projects with the Foundation for Ecological Security, he also uses his expertise to monitor buffer zone waterholes and liaises with the forest department to ensure they are well-maintained.



Naturalists at Pugdundee Safari Lodges take part in annual training which includes learning about techniques such as Forest Bathing as well as eco issues such as water and energy conservation. Denwa Backwater runs three naturalist courses for a wider audience. [Read case study.](#)



Pugdundee Safaris nurtures local talent as well as employing naturalists from further afield. Pictured here, Harendar Sahu, a team member at Denwa Backwater who joined the lodge during construction. Spotting his passion for nature, the manager shifted his role from stores to guiding.

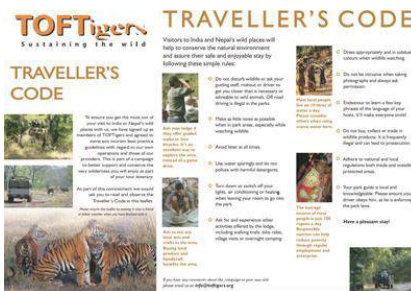


All Taj Safari naturalists undergo a three phase six-month training course on wildlife and guiding techniques to ensure their guests are provided with a world-class interpretive wildlife experience. Pictured here, naturalist with a young guest at Pashan Garh.

## BRIEFING GUESTS AND REPORTING BAD PRACTICE



Briefings on do's and don'ts are core good practice to avoid disrupting wildlife. Pictured here a briefing by one of the dedicated team of naturalists at Evolve Back Kabini to ensure responsible visitor behaviour inside and outside the park and inspiring visitors about the nature and ecology of the region.



Produce your own literature or use [TOFTigers Traveller's Code](#) to encourage your guests to follow good practice during their stay – abide by regulations, avoid disturbing wildlife and littering, save water and energy and be respectful towards local communities. Ask your staff and guests to report bad practice such as off road driving in the parks or getting too close to wildlife.



Guest briefing material at Svasara Jungle Lodge includes information on local wildlife and culture, do's and don'ts, TOFTigers Travellers Code, a briefing on jungle etiquette, and information on recycling, water and energy conservation.

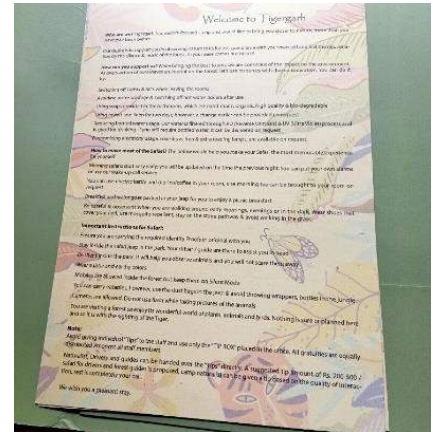




Rules and regulations of the park are clearly displayed at Kanha Earth Lodge.



... rooms have a checklist of flora and fauna, information on the National Park and sustainability policies.



Tigergarh Wildlife Resort provides guidelines in all guest rooms on what to wear, do and avoid doing on safari, and also encourages guests to conserve energy and water.

## EDUCATING AND INSPIRING YOUR GUESTS



Inspire your guests with naturalist-guided activities. Reni Pani Jungle Lodge's guests, pictured here, can look for the tracks of tigers, leopards, sloth bears and other wildlife on walking safaris and mobile camping in Satpura Tiger Reserve with the lodge's five resident naturalists and forest guides. Birdwatchers and butterfly enthusiasts are also catered for. Canoeing and cycling are other non-motorised options to explore the wilderness and its wild inhabitants.



Kanha Earth Lodge offers guided cycling expeditions in the forests adjoining the lodge. Guided walks on exclusive nature trails and birding are also offered with the lodge's expert naturalists.



Singinawa Jungle Lodge's naturalists are on hand to inspire visitors with nature walks and birdwatching. Bicycle trips and visits to a lesser known sanctuary are also offered. Pictured here, guests accompanied by local children on their visit to the park, an opportunity for guests to share their excitement and give local children access to their natural heritage.



Mela Kothi – the Chambal Safari Lodge offers a range of excursions in addition to nature walks and birdwatching including blackbuck jeep safaris, visits to the Sarus Crane Conservation Reserve and river safaris for viewing birdlife, gharials, muggers with occasional glimpses of the Gangetic river dolphin. They have also hosted two international bird festivals.



A number of lodges have machans at their properties for watching wildlife. Pictured here machan by the waterhole at Treehouse Hideaway. The lodge has three in-house naturalists providing a range of inspiring nature-based activities.



Barahi Jungle Lodge offers a number of low carbon options to explore wildlife in the area including walking, biking and traditional paddle boats.





Jim's Jungle Retreat offers a Young Ranger's programme for its guests curated to the length of their stay covering a range of topics to inspire children to become custodians of the future.



Oberoiv Vanyavilas offers a range of games for children to increase their awareness of nature conservation issues and make their visits fun. Activities include bushcraft, stargazing and exploring animal tracks, insects and birds. [Read case study.](#)



Film showings on nature and conservation issues enhance guest experience, help to build conservation awareness and provide a nature-friendly alternative to providing TVs in guest rooms. Pictured here film showing in the Teakhouse, at Svasara Jungle Lodge, a conservation centre also used for dining.



A range of lodges compile checklists of flora and fauna for visitors to look out for. Guest briefing materials at Mela Kothi – the Chambal Safari Lodge include a checklist of birds, mammals, reptiles and butterflies complementing their work in wildlife monitoring and education.



A checklist of butterflies, birds and local flora and fauna to see in and around the property is displayed at Singinawa Jungle Lodge.



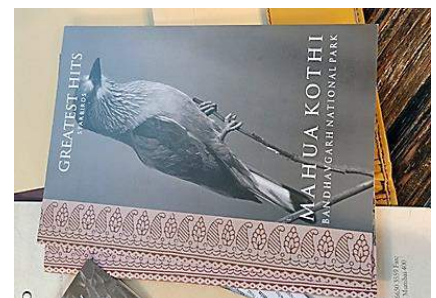
Biodiversity checklist at Svasara Resorts, part of their broader range of educational activities and resources.



Many lodges have in-house libraries with books on local flora and fauna. Pictured here the well-maintained library at Mela Kothi – the Chambal Safari Lodge on the region's natural and cultural heritage.



Wildlife literature is available in each cottage at Singinawa Jungle Lodge. The lodge also has a well-stocked library with books on local flora and fauna.



Taj Safaris lodges, pictured here, Mahua Kothi, give guests an in-house booklet on top birds to look out for in and around the respective parks. A second Taj booklet gives an introduction to birding.



Photo: Shivang Mehta



Photo: Anish Andheria



Photo: Mittal Gala





Educational resources provided by Oberoi Vanyavilas include a bird book, *The Flying Jewels* of Vanyavilas written by the in-house naturalists. Over 135 species have been recorded at the property.



Tigergarh Wildlife Resort displays notices and framed posters informing guests about nature and the environment - pictured here a briefing on the importance of bees. Other themes include why trees are important and information on the local tiger population and pug marks.



Dhole's Den sets aside an area to brief its guests on the local surrounding area and park. A well-stocked library is also available.



Tathastu Resorts has a display of bird species in its restaurant, part of its broader nature education resources which include film showings, a library and in-house naturalists.



EXCEPTIONAL – an interpretation centre – the Tiger Club - at Spice Village, Thekkady, with in house naturalists to provide further briefing.



EXCEPTIONAL - Evolve Back's, Kabini Museum, part of the Resort's Interpretation Centre, presents the region's ecology and culture, with inspiring interpretation for its guests.



Conservation briefing for college students by naturalists at Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge, part of a range of education and conservation initiatives at the lodge. [Read case study.](#)



A range of lodges mark international conservation days with educational activities. Pictured here a presentation at Mela Kothi – the Chambal Safari Lodge on World Turtle Day in the lodge to raise awareness.



Singinawa Jungle Lodge organises a wider programme of wildlife talks. Examples include a talk by local spider expert Aniruddha Dhamarika on insects and other arthropods of the Kanha landscape.



*Gharials on the Chambal. Photo: Mela Kothi – the Chambal Safari Lodge*



## EDUCATING GUESTS ON SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES



Encouraging guests to conserve water and electricity is core good practice. See Water and Energy profiles. Pictured here notice at Oberoi Vanyavilas; reminders to Go Green are presented in their grounds.



Encourage your guests to recycle and avoid littering. See Waste profile. Dhole's Den encourages its guests to take their rubbish home as well as to save energy and water.



Evolve Back Kabini has turned its eco efforts into an opportunity for guests. Daily eco walks are arranged to inform guests about sustainability issues and to spread good practice. Classes in making bags from paper recycled on site are also offered.



Sessions on global warming and the benefits of tree planting and how to take care of young plants are run by the horticulturalist at Oberoi Vanyavilas as part of their broader range of educational activities.



A range of lodges offer their guests a tour of their organic kitchen gardens and local food. Guests at Kanha Earth Lodge, pictured here, can join hands with their gardeners for weeding, watering or picking what they will eat.



A range of lodges mark Earth Hour as an opportunity to encourage guests to save energy. Pictured here, solar lighting on the pathway at Taj Safaris Pashan Garh. The lodge practices Earth Hour twice a week, when all lights are switched off and visitors are provided with a unique dining experience by candlelight.

## EDUCATING THE WIDER COMMUNITY



Engaging local schools in education on their natural heritage, conservation and eco practices is good practice. Pictured here, students taking part in a wildlife conservation programme at Fateh Public School, set up by Khem's Villas' founder through his NGO, the Prakratik Society...



... and students from Fateh Public School helping to clear garbage and plastic from Ranthambhore Park. Photo: Padmini Singh.



A range of lodges host visits by their local schools for conservation activities. Pictured here - local school children periodically invited for educational visits by Svasara Jungle Resorts. Topics covered include native trees, birds, butterflies, reptiles, the solar grid at the property and eco-friendly practices.





Evolve Back Kabini takes local school children on wildlife safaris twice a year to raise awareness of wildlife, environmental and conservation issues, one of a number of lodges giving local children access to their natural heritage. Conservation classes are also held at the resort's adopted school.



Mela Kothi – the Chambal Safari Lodge's Wildlife Week celebration and awareness camp for students has attracted close to 20,000 children from Agra and rural schools since 2004, one of an exceptional series of educational initiatives which have also included two international Bird Festivals.



Taj Safari lodges arranges safari drives in the respective National Parks for residents in tribal villages around the property. Pictured here, safari drive organised by Mahua Kothi to Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve.



Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge's Swiss Air School Tree Nursery Project helps children learn to be responsible for their natural resources. Tree seedlings are sold to villagers providing them with alternative sources for fodder, fuel and building materials.



A range of lodges host or run wider training initiatives. Pictured here Forestry probationers training camp held at Mela Kothi – the Chambal Safari Lodge.



Jim's Jungle Retreat holds three-day workshops for local guides each year to enhance local guiding skills and knowledge, part of its broader community education programme.



Barahi Jungle Lodge's green team of 20 staff helps to spread awareness about the importance of wildlife conservation to local villagers and schools and organises weekly cleaning campaigns. They also organise staff training on waste, water and energy.



Evolve Back Kabini runs educational sessions for young adults from surrounding villages on sustainable practices as part of its multi-tiered approach to nature education.



Nature walk and clean up in the forest with local children organised by Pashan Garh – Taj Safaris.



*A range of lodges are helping differently abled children to experience nature. Pictured here Taj Safaris Banjar Tola's camp for visually impaired children.*



## WILDLIFE MONITORING



A range of lodges record wildlife movements. A daily sightings diary at King's Lodge records the time of sighting, location and noteworthy details.



Reni Pani Jungle Lodge's 35-acre landscape with water bodies is home to jungle cat, common mongoose, sloth bear, leopard, wild dog, common palm civet, wild boar, sambar and chital and a host of birds. Daily sightings are recorded on a chalk board by the lodge's five in-house naturalists and guests.



Kanha Jungle Lodge's naturalists have carried out a detailed study of tigers in the area recording their markings, size, age, behaviour and where the tigers were sighted. The information is used to enhance the educational experience of their guests and contribute to conservation research. The lodge hosts international students to work with their resident naturalists. The Lodge's owner is a Trustee of NGO the Tiger Trust.



Mela Kothi – the Chambal Safari Lodge is actively involved in gathering intelligence on wildlife, its participation including the state-wide Dolphin Census, WWF/Forest Department's Chambal Valley annual census, and identification of vulture nesting sites in partnership with the US Peregrine Fund.



Naturalists at Tigergarh Wildlife Resort have carried out two butterfly surveys sharing a checklist of 42 different species with the Forest Department.



Tiger Tops Long Term Tiger Monitoring Project launched in 1980 resulted in the collection of the largest set of data on tiger ecology. They continue to record a wider range of animal movements. Pictured here wild boar captured on camera at Tharu Lodge. Lodge staff also participate in the Asian Waterbird Census.



Recording and sharing information on animal movements can inspire your guests and contribute intelligence for conservation. Pictured here porcupines captured on film at Singinawa Jungle Lodge which sets camera traps every night to provide intelligence on wildlife movements in the grounds.



Camera traps have contributed to a Tiger ID study at Tiger Trails Jungle Lodge, Tadoba, which has restored barren land and dried-up streams to thriving forest and wildlife habitat. Leopard, sloth bear, dhole, gaur, porcupine, civet, nilgai and mongoose are amongst some of the other visitors to the lodge's 30-acre grounds.



A leopard caught on film at Forsyth Lodge. Other wild visitors include civet and sloth bears.



## SUPPORT FOR CONSERVATION, FUNDRAISING AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING



Tora Eco Resort in the Sundarbans, the successful brainchild of [WWF's](#) State Director, the West Bengal Forest Department and the Bali Nature and Wildlife Conservation Society is a collaboration between a private sector company and BNWCS with community benefits spelt out in the agreement. The initiative has provided new livelihood opportunities and is reducing dependency on forest resources. [Read case study.](#)



Jatayu Vulture Restaurant on the borders of Chitwan National Park, brainchild of the manager of Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge, has led to a 150% increase in buffer zone populations and a 200% increase in nesting.



Ongoing support for gharial conservation by staff at Mela Kothi – the Chambal Safari Lodge, is helping to protect populations of this critically endangered species decimated during the gharial crisis of 2007. Every year, the lodge's foundation identifies and provides protective covers for gharial and mugger nesting sites. It is also working with [WWF](#) on a Chambal river basin management plan.



Kipling Camp hosts annual Forest Creation workshops run by [Afforestt](#), giving participants an insight into the importance of the forest ecosystem and hands-on experience in how to create a forest. The saplings are supplied by a local villager, Pintu, who has established an organic, indigenous plant nursery with the lodge's assistance.



Taj Safaris lodges Mahua Kothi and Banjaar Tola provided the funds and support to enable India's largest herbivore, the Gaur, locally extinct in Bandhavgarh to be reintroduced in 2010-11. The population is thriving with more than 100 in Bandhavgarh in 2018.



WaterWoods Lodge & Resorts helped to raise around INR 18 lakhs from three charity golf tournaments in Bangalore between 2014-2016 for [WWF](#) Karnataka chapter projects including two solar borewell systems to rejuvenate water holes in Bandipur and Nagarhole Tiger Reserves. Pictured here, a further partnership project with WWF and local wildlife range offices to raise awareness about preventing forest fires. 150 students from fourteen villages took part in the fifteen km walk.



Singinawa Jungle Lodge offers guests the option to visit local projects, hosts voluntourism and encourages them to make donations. Pictured here, guest taking part in their tree planting initiative.



A range of lodges support their forest departments, forest guards and guides. Examples include training, access to clean water, warm clothing, binoculars and field guides. Pictured here a solar unit donated by [Singinawa Conservation Foundation](#), one of two anti-poaching units supported to improve living conditions.

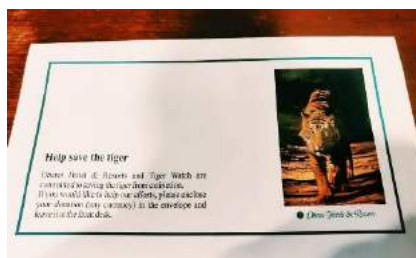


Singinawa Conservation Foundation's support for field researcher Zeeshan Mirza from the National Centre of Biological Sciences, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, has led to the discovery of a new species of slender snake.





Pugdundee Safari Lodges encourage their guests to make donations to The Madhya Pradesh Tiger Foundation Society.



Other lodges put envelopes for donations in guest rooms highlighting local conservation causes. Pictured here Oberoi Vanyavilas encouraging support for Tiger Watch.



A box to encourage support for nature and wildlife conservation at Aahana The Corbett Wilderness. The resort's support includes compensation to villagers for domestic animals harmed by wildlife to avoid conflict.

## CLEARING INVASIVE SPECIES



Staff at Evolve Back Kabini and at other lodges and resorts, help to clear invasive weeds. Pictured here, weeding out Parthenium and Eupatorium to enable beneficial, vegetation to grow.



The clearance of invasive plant species on land surrounding Jatayu Vulture Restaurant, brainchild of the manager of Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge, has seen the population of critically endangered Bengal Floricans increase.



Charcoal briquettes made from lantana, an invasive weed, were developed as a local enterprise training initiative by the Singinawa Conservation Foundation and the Kanha Lodge Association – one of a number of initiatives also catalysed elsewhere to find new uses for invasive species waste.

## COMBATING POACHING, MAN/ANIMAL CONFLICT, BUSHMEAT AND DEFORESTATION



The Ranthambhore Sevika Hospital, established by the Prakratic Society, set up by the owner of Khem Villas, is one of a series of initiatives to convert poachers into protectors. Khem Villas and the Society also work closely with NGO Tiger Watch which runs a Village Wildlife Guardians programme and helps to find new sustainable livelihoods.



Thanks to the efforts of Tora Eco Resort, a successful partnership of conservation and community-based tourism working hand in hand, poaching on Bali Island in the Sundarbans has practically been reduced to zero and when a tiger strays onto the island, the community assists the Forest Department to capture and release it back to the wild. Read case study. Photo: Apurba Chakraborty / Tora Eco Resort



Kipling Camp assists the Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI) in implementing its conservation awareness and anti-poaching programmes in villages around Kanha Tiger Reserve. Read case study.





Forsyth Lodge naturalists help to patrol habitats and educate villagers about conservation issues working with the local Forest Department. Pictured here taking down nets being used to trap birds. The problem has not re-occurred after sensitising the local community on the issue.



Jatayu Vulture Restaurant set up by the manager of Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge has a community based anti-poaching group. The lodge also pays the salaries for two buffer zone guards and works closely with local authorities on anti-poaching activities.



Guests at Tigergarh Wildlife Resort are shown The Truth About Tigers, a film giving an insight into the history of tigers and the export of tiger parts to China to raise awareness about the illegal wildlife trade.



A seedling nursery financed by the Prakratik Society (NGO set up by the owner of Khem Villas) is enabling local communities to grow their own supply of wood. The society has also provided more than 600 households with biogas digestors for cooking fuel to reduce pressure on the forest.



An artificial insemination centre and sustainable stall feeding has been established by the Prakratik Society to help improve cattle breeds and milk yields and reduce pressure on grazing land.



Pashan Garh Taj Safaris, in association with Last Wilderness Foundation and Panna Tiger Reserve, conduct a regular Guide Training Programme for Pardhi tribe members to enhance their existing knowledge of the forest and its wildlife. The initiative aims to develop an alternative livelihood opportunity – Walk with the Pardhis – for a community formerly involved in poaching.



*Umpanai cubs. Photo: Chandrabhal Singh*



## CASE STUDIES

- **Khem Villas, Ranthambhore . . . . . 14**  
People, landscape and sustainable tourism – a visionary approach to conservation
- **Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge, Chitwan, Nepal . . . . . 16**  
More than 50 years of giving back to nature
- **Kipling Camp, Kanha . . . . . 18**  
A hub for conservation
- **Tora Eco Resort, Bali Island, West Bengal, Sundarbans . . . . . 20**  
Conservation and community-based tourism working hand in hand
- **Mela Kothi - National Chambal Safari Lodge . . . . . 22**  
Conservation flying alongside eco-tourism
- **Singinawa Jungle Lodge, Kanha . . . . . 24**  
Giving an inspiring taste of the wild and the need to protect it
- **Evolve Back Kabini, Naharhole . . . . . 26**  
Restoring landscape and promoting conservation
- **Oberoi Vanyavilas, Ranthambhore . . . . . 28**  
Inspiring the next generation to become custodians of nature
- **Denwa Backwater, Saptura . . . . . 30**  
Inspiring conservation through training, experience and example
- **Pashan Garh – Taj Safaris, Panna . . . . . 32**  
Providing a first-class experience of the wild
- **Mittal Gala, Runner-up Best Naturalist 2016 . . . . . 34**



## Khem Villas, Ranthambhore

### People, Landscape and Sustainable Tourism - a Visionary Approach to Conservation



*Before and after landscape restoration.*

The Rathore family lie at the heart of an inspiring story of landscape restoration, sustainable tourism and visionary community support which have helped to transform Ranthambhore's fortunes over the years into a conservation success story.



*A natural oasis created with extensive indigenous planting and six water bodies home to an abundance of wildlife.*



*Wetland birds.*



*Resident crocodile.*



*Jungle cat and kitten.*



*Blue bull.*

Long before Khem Villas became a jungle camp, Dr Goverdhan Singh Rathore, son of legendary Fateh Singh Rathore, Ranthambhore's most celebrated Director, transformed 25 acres of once ravaged desert land on which the lodge now stands into a thriving wilderness haven. Extensive planting with indigenous shrubs and trees and six lakes dug to harvest monsoon rains, have created a mosaic of forest, open grass lands and watering holes. The grounds are now home to more than 180 species of birds, 45 butterfly species, crocodiles and a host of mammals for guests to enjoy.



*Striped tiger butterfly.*

*Wildlife Photos Mittal Gala / Khem Villas.*





*Seedling nursery for local farmers.*

More than 700,000 trees have been planted in villages around Ranthambhore with support from Dr Rathore's foundation, the Prakratik Society. Farmers have been provided with seedlings to grow their own wood plantations rather than cutting down the existing forest. In addition, over 600 households have benefitted from biogas digesters for cooking to improve lives and replace wood previously collected from the forest. Support for animal husbandry has seen an improvement in milk yields from fewer stall-fed cattle, an additional measure to reduce grazing pressures on the park.

The Society works closely with Tiger Watch, an NGO started by Goverdhan's father and headed by Dr Dharmendra Khandal, to find alternative employment for the Moghiya community, for centuries poachers, with tourism bringing alternative income opportunities. Tiger Watch's Village Wildlife Guardians programme, run with Goverdhan's support, with TOFTigers a founding funder, is providing intelligence and changing local perceptions to prevent poaching and wildlife/human conflict.

A multi-specialty hospital and outreach medical camps run by the Prakratik Society for Ranthambhore's poor are also helping to change poaching habits with Tiger Watch providing free support where possible. For those not yet converted, the Society operates a legal cell to help prosecute poachers and to train and support forest officers.



*Mittal Gala, Runner-up of TOFTigers 2016 Best Naturalist Award*



*Birdwatching with Khem Villas' naturalists. Photo: Mittal Gala.*

The Society's Fateh Public School serving more than 600 pupils aims to change perceptions and instill pride in natural heritage amongst the locality's young people alongside providing a quality education. Khem Villas' three naturalists who included Mittal Gala, Ranthambhore's only female naturalist, lend their expertise to the school and the community to spread conservation awareness besides inspiring lodge visitors.

The Society's environmental work with children doesn't stop there. It also supports a broader range of educational out-reach programmes to foster awareness of our endangered world through activities such as park visits, film shows, competitions, nature camps and tree planting initiatives. Highlights of their 2019-20 programme included 34 nature camps involving over 1,300 students and the planting of over 3,000 saplings with five nature clubs from thirteen villages and children from 31 schools taking part. See the Society's annual report for the full range of their impressive activities.



*Clearing garbage from the park. Photo: Padmini Singh.*

The combined efforts are paying off. Tigers have recovered since 2003, from eleven individuals to over 70 wild tigers today living alongside the Reserve's local communities and inspiring visitors. A win-win for conservation, communities and the local economy.



*Students from the Fateh Public School taking part in a wildlife conservation programme*



## Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge, Chitwan, Nepal

### More Than 50 Years of Giving Back to Nature

Besides adhering to rigorous environmental standards in its own operations, Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge, which has been operational since 1980 in Nepal's Chitwan National Park, extends their support to a range of local conservation efforts.



*Jatayu Vulture Restaurant is located in Kawasoti Nawalparasi district along the buffer zone of Nepal's Chitwan National Park.*

#### **Jatayu Vulture Restaurant – Increasing Wildlife Populations**

The Jatayu Vulture Restaurant in Kawasoti Nawalparasi district along the buffer zone of Chitwan National Park is worth a special mention. The brainchild of D B Chaudhary, manager at the Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge, this community-managed vulture restoration project has helped revive populations of eight endangered vulture species leading to a 150% increase in their buffer zone populations and a 200% increase in nesting. This unique vulture feeding centre provides multi-faceted benefits: rescue and care for old cattle, supply

of a non-toxic food source to vultures and village income from home stays and guiding.

To free low-income families of the burden of caring for ailing cattle, the initiative buys unproductive cattle from surrounding villages at 250 NRS a piece and keeps them at a hospice for at least seven days to ensure they are free of diclofenac, a veterinary product toxic to vultures. When the cattle die naturally, the carcass is fed to the vultures at the restaurant.

The restaurant is being promoted as an eco-tourism initiative creating local jobs and spreading conservation awareness through a Community Learning Centre. The clearance of invasive plant species on surrounding land has seen the population of critically-endangered Bengal Floricans increase.



*Conservation of surrounding wetland.*

The Tiger Tops Swiss Air School Tree Nursery Project helps children imbibe lessons on responsibility for their natural resources. Tree seedlings are sold to villagers, providing them with alternative sources for fodder, fuel and building materials.



*Tiger Tops staff taking part in the Asia waterfowl census count.*

Conservation of surrounding wetland and grassland for wild inhabitants including deer, rhino, birds and many herbivores is also underway.

#### **Education**

Seven in-house naturalists enable the lodge to act as a centre of nature excellence for visiting guests, educational groups, the surrounding community and conservation initiatives.



*Students taking part in the TTSA School Tree Nursery Project.*

### Wildlife Monitoring and Anti-Poaching Initiatives

The Tiger Tops Long Term Tiger Monitoring Project, launched in 1980 and funded by ITNC, FFNC and the Nepal Tiger Trust, has resulted in the collection of the largest set of data to-date on tiger ecology, territorial dynamics, turnover, reproduction and tiger survival. The Smithsonian Institution's long-term tiger monitoring project used Tiger Tops' trackers to pioneer the use of camera-trapping. Camera-trapping has been ongoing since 1995 and has helped to inform official tiger protection strategies.



*Tiger photographed on camera trap.*

Tiger Tops provides the salaries of two buffer zone guards in Chitwan working closely with local authorities on anti-poaching activities. They lend cars, boats, and manpower for patrols and wildlife monitoring and provide logistical support for the annual Asian Waterbird Census January counts.



*Elephants are not used for safaris at the Tharu Lodge. Housed in five spacious enclosures, they are allowed to follow their own routines.*

### Elephant Welfare

Tiger Tops has pioneered elephant welfare projects and is setting an example on how to ethically treat captive elephants. At their Tharu Lodge Camp, resident elephants are kept free of chains in five large enclosures and are not used for safaris. These twelve elephants now follow their own routines and have formed their own natural groupings. Guests are given a chance to observe these animals, interact with their mahouts, and learn from their experiences.

### TOFTIGERS WILDLIFE TOURISM AWARDS 2016 NATURALIST AWARD WINNER World class local expertise



Dhan Bahadur Tamang, a local from Tharu Village, Chitwan, is recognised as one of Nepal's best and longest serving naturalists. His world class knowledge of tiger populations was built up through his field research over 40 years contributing to the work of pioneer wildlife researcher, Dr Chuck McDougal. A Tiger Tops naturalist for 50 years, his commitment to communicating his love of nature to visitors is second to none.



## Kipling Camp, Kanha

### A Hub for Conservation



*Waterhole fed by rainwater harvesting enlarged from a pond provides year-round water for wildlife. The lodge also collaborates with the Wildlife Protection Society of India.*

Kipling Camp has been a hub for conservation ever since it was started by conservationists Bob and Anne Wright in 1982 on farmland almost bare of large trees on the edge of Kanha National Park. Transformed into a wooded landscape of indigenous trees, shrubs and grasses, the lodge is now owned and managed by Anne and her daughter, well known tiger conservationist Belinda Wright. It has been operating as a not-for-profit organisation since 2005. A wildlife waterhole carefully enlarged from the original pond and contoured to form an effective rainwater harvesting lake, provides water for wildlife even in the severest droughts. Less than 10% of the camp's nine acres has been utilised for construction and about fifteen acres has been set aside as an undisturbed sanctuary for wildlife.

Guests are encouraged to go for nature walks and birdwatching with the camp's three naturalists and have access to a well-stocked library and checklists of birds to look out for. Wildlife films and orientation talks are given in the evenings in the camp's small conference centre, which is also used for wildlife conservation meetings and training programmes.



*Hands-on annual Forest Creation workshop.*

The lodge hosts annual Forest Creation workshops run by [Afforestt](http://afforestt.org), giving 7-12 participants an insight into the importance of the forest ecosystem and hands-on experience in how to create a forest. The saplings are supplied by a local villager, Pintu, who has established an organic, indigenous plant nursery with the lodge's assistance.



*Birds of Kanha. Photo: © Green Humour.com*



Pintu now has saplings for 83 indigenous tree species, distributes plants throughout India and lectures on the use of native trees and planting techniques.



*Local farmer, Pintu's tree nursery established with the lodge's support.*



*Pintu explaining the growth of saplings to workshop participants.*



*Involving local people in the Forest Creation Workshops.*



*WPSI vans used for conservation awareness raising initiatives and wildlife film screenings.*

Kipling Camp assists the Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI) founded in 1994 by Belinda Wright, the camp's owner, in implementing conservation awareness programmes in villages around Kanha Tiger Reserve. Wildlife films are screened from a small van to facilitate solutions on wildlife conflict issues, to inform villagers about government compensation initiatives for cattle kill and crop damage and to give rewards for information on poaching and other illegal wildlife activities.

Treading softly in the jungle, the camp's motto, is put into practice. Guests are briefed on arrival on the code of conduct in the camp and when visiting the park. The camp has three eco-friendly open wells and no bore wells. Formal gardens, televisions and single use plastic are avoided. Solar lamps with sensors light the pathways only when required and only legal wood is used for campfires. The camp has spearheaded a Kanha Waste Management Committee. Solid waste is segregated and composted organically or removed by waste collectors.



*WPSI Field Officer briefing villagers about wildlife conflict issues.*



*Keeping the grounds wild - chital walking through the camp.*



## Tora Eco Resort, Bali Island, Sundarbans, West Bengal Conservation and Community-Based Tourism Working Hand in Hand



*Helping to protect a UNESCO world heritage site through sustainable tourism*

Step in Tora Eco Resort, the successful brainchild of a collaboration between WWF's State Director, Lt Col Shakti Ranjan Banerjee (Retd), the West Bengal Forest Department and the Bali Nature and Wildlife Conservation Society (BNWCS). Land was donated by conservationist Sri Anil Mistry, the Society's Chairman and four cottages built by Vivada Hospitality Services Pvt Ltd who own the enterprise. Land ownership remains with BNWCS. Community benefits are spelt out in the agreement and a community leader is a member of Vivada's Board of Directors.



*Guest accommodation supporting local livelihoods.*

Laundry is done by a local women's self-help group. Local theatre and dance performances for visitors provide a further income source. Locals have been trained as guides, naturalists and in hospitality with a range of other tourism-related enterprises springing up. The resort's small souvenir shop promotes locally made products such as honey.

A Tiger Conservation Centre set up by the Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI) located at the resort is used for wildlife film shows, educational activities, community meetings and medical camps for the island's inhabitants and houses an office for WPSI.

Tora Eco Resort, a community-based ecotourism project, is helping to protect a pocket of the Sundarbans, a UNESCO world heritage site, through providing new livelihood opportunities and reducing dependency on forest resources. This has become particularly pressing in the wake of climate change pressures on the region.

The resort is located on Bali Island in West Bengal, an area with 37,000 inhabitants spread across fifteen villages. With limited resources and a growing population, the island was a hotspot for the illegal wildlife trade with constant pressure on youth to find new opportunities for employment.



*Low impact buildings reflecting local culture.*

Guest cottages built in the rural style from local materials with mud walls and thatch are designed to minimise impact on the area. Planting with indigenous trees, shrubs and grasses in the grounds and a natural pond recharge ground water. Trees provide natural shading and cooling; there is no air conditioning to minimise energy use.

Over 90% of the resort's team which employs thirteen people are from local communities who would otherwise be dependent on ecosystem resources. The resort also has a positive multiplier effect on the local economy. Local produce is purchased for the traditional Bengali cuisine served to guests.





*WPSI Serenity School supported by the resort.*

The resort supports WPSI in running a small school located on the resort's boundary and has also contributed to a hospital managed by Samarpan Foundation. WPSI's other activities from its base on the island include assisting the Forest Department with anti-poaching activities, outreach conservation awareness programmes in outlying villages and environmental education in local schools.

Visiting tourists are given an opportunity to get an insight into community life and encouraged to make donations. One such

donation financed the purchase of an ambulance to transfer emergency patients to hospital.

The resort has become a hub for a broader range of new livelihood programmes to reduce the island's dependency on forest resources and poaching. A fish hatchery developed by the Indian Council for Agriculture and Research (ICAR) in association with WPSI and Tora Eco Resort is providing hatchlings for local communities. Run by WPSI and BNWCS, the hatcheries produce over 300,000 young fish each year for distribution to locals for alternative livelihoods. Training in developing ponds was provided by the Centre of Inland and Freshwater Aquaculture, part of ICAR.

The combined social and livelihood improvements provided by WPSI, BNWCS and Tora Eco Resort are having a positive impact on conservation. Poaching has practically been reduced to zero and when a tiger strays onto the island, the community assists the Forest Department to capture and release it back to the wild. A win-win situation for wildlife and communities.



*Health Check-up camp organised at WPSI's centre in the resort's grounds*



*Wildlife flourishing in the area*

*Photo: Himani Kala / Tora Eco*



*Photo: Apurba Chakraborty / Tora Eco Resort*



*Photo: Anil Mistry / Tora Eco Resort*



## Mela Kothi – the Chambal Safari Lodge, National Chambal Sanctuary Conservation Flying Alongside Eco-tourism



*Indian Skimmer, one of over 300 species of bird documented in the Chambal Valley.*

### Habitat Restoration

Mela Kothi – the Chambal Safari Lodge is an outstanding example of wildlife conservation working hand in hand with sustainable tourism. Lodge owners Ram Pratap Singh and Anu Dhillon are helping to protect and regenerate the natural and cultural heritage of a previously little-known area through the Chambal Conservation Foundation, set up with their own funds.

Six acres of land at their lodge was set aside for a forest nursery to supply indigenous shrubs and trees for a planting drive between 2006-2015. In July 2007 alone, 10,000 saplings were planted with the help of over 100 local participants. The lodge now boasts a checklist of over 198 species of birds, reptiles and mammals. Water bodies and check-dams in nearby ravines harvest rainwater and recharge groundwater. The team's expertise has been shared with forest range offices to benefit local people and reduce their dependence on the Sanctuary.

### Conserving Endangered Species

The Foundation has been actively assisting the Gharial Crisis Management and WWF at a field level since a crisis in December 2007 saw massive deaths of this critically endangered species in the Chambal River, home to half of the world's population. Every year, it identifies and provides protective covers for gharial and mugger nesting sites. It is also working with WWF on a Chambal river basin management plan.



*Participating in the Gharial crisis in 2007.*



*Children taking part in Wildlife Week celebrations.*

### Nature Education

It plays an impressive role in nature education and conservation awareness. Nearly 20,000 children from Agra and local rural schools have participated in the Foundation's annual Wildlife Conservation Week which involves talks, competitions and visits to Protected Areas near Agra including the National Chambal Sanctuary. Awareness camps and interactive meetings are organised in partnership with the Forest Department for local communities to strike a balance between divergent needs.

Two Uttar Pradesh International Bird Festivals organised at the lodge in 2015 and 2016 in partnership with the UP Forest Department raised the profile of this little-known valley to help secure its continuing protection. Over 200 experts from 29 countries were involved in 2016 including representatives from WWF, Bombay Natural History Society, Bird Life International, Wildlife SOS and the Nature Conservation Foundation. Interactive workshops and talks were complemented by bird-ringing demonstrations and an exhibition of more than 200 photographs and paintings. Over 2,000 people attended in 2015 and 2016 including over 400 school children in 2015 and 500 in 2016.



*International Bird Festivals with speakers from 29 countries in 2016.*





*Participating in the state-wide Dolphin Census in 2006, 2012 and 2015.*

### Wildlife Intelligence

Intelligence on wildlife is regularly provided to national and international conservation organisations. The Foundation worked with the US Peregrine Fund in 2006 to identify vulture nests in the Chambal Valley and contributed to the state-wide WWF, Forest Department Dolphin Census in 2006, 2012 and 2015. It participates in and hosts the team for the National Chambal Sanctuary's annual census carried out by the Forest



*Checklists of birds, mammals and reptiles are provided to guests to look out for.*

Department and WWF. Detailed scientific listings of bird, mammal and reptile sightings have been compiled which are revised and updated each year. Listing of flora has also been initiated.

### Anti-Poaching Support and Sustainable Livelihoods

The Foundation supports and contributes to the Forest Department's anti-poaching activities and efforts to eliminate illegal sand-mining operations. The lodge's boats are used for patrolling and a check-post has been created at a vital junction reducing the incidence of both these threats. Central to the lodge's approach is also helping establish and revive eco-development activities bringing new employment and economic benefit for the local population to ensure their participation in conservation and protection efforts (see Local Economy profile). The foundation is actively involved in eco-tourism policy and setting guidelines for carrying capacity in the Sanctuaries and National Parks of Uttar Pradesh to ensure sustainable development.



*Ongoing support for gharial conservation is helping to ensure this critically endangered species continues to thrive after the Gharial crisis of 2007.*



*2015, 2016 - International Bird Festival success story.*



## Singinawa Jungle Lodge, Kanha

### Giving an Inspiring Taste of the Wild and the Need to Protect it



*Natural habitat combining forest, grassland and water bodies set in 110 acres.*

Under new ownership, the lands at Singinawa Jungle Lodge have been doubled in size to 110 acres with close to 30,000 saplings planted under a new restoration drive guided by the lodge's naturalists. Only 10% of the land is used for construction; the majority is left undisturbed.

The indigenous trees, natural grasslands and watering holes are now home to an abundance of wildlife including chital deer, muntjac, jungle cats, leopards, wild boar, sambar and swamp deer and more than 170 species of birds. A butterfly garden has also been created attracting a myriad of butterfly, spider and other insect species for guests to explore.



*Butterfly garden.*



*Daily wildlife recording – porcupines caught on film.*

Camera traps set every night in the grounds provide intelligence on wildlife movements. The in-house lodge naturalists offer guests a range of educational experiences and contribute to local wildlife intelligence and research.

Guests can explore a nature trail set within 58 acres of the lodge grounds, go bird watching and learn about forest conservation. A checklist of birds, flora and fauna is available to see what to look out for. An aromatic and fragrant trail is a further experience to explore culinary and medicinal herbs.

Walking and biking activities in the wider locality and day trips to Phen Wildlife Sanctuary in the buffer zone give opportunities for guests to experience the wilderness away from mainstream tourism.



*Checklist of local flora and fauna to look out for.*





*Bike trips accompanied by lodge naturalists, a low carbon way to explore nature.*

Guests are offered the opportunity to let local children accompany them to the park and share in their excitement. Volunteering is also catered for with guests able to lend a hand with some of the projects supported by the lodge's foundation from tree planting to the construction of five water holes in the core park area.

Adults benefit from a wider programme of wildlife talks. Examples include a talk by local spider expert Aniruddha Dhamarika on insects and other arthropods of the Kanha landscape.

Activities for children include pugmark identification and reading the signs of the jungle.



*Talk by local spider expert.*



*Tailored activities for children.*



*Guest enjoying the opportunity to contribute.*



*Park outings with guests and local children.*



*Solar power provided to anti-poaching camps.*

The lodge works closely with the forest department on its afforestation drives encouraging guests to plant a tree to mark their visit. The replanting drive has covered the lodge grounds and nearby villages of Mukki, Baiga Tola, Samnapur and Kohka. Its Foundation has provided solar power for two Forest Department anti-poaching camps to improve living conditions and donated warm clothing.

The Foundation is supporting a snake awareness campaign amongst villagers to protect man and beast.



*Field research bursary recipient.*



*New species discovered through bursary.*

Support for a research bursary provided by the Foundation for field researcher Zeeshan Mirza from the National Centre for Biological Sciences, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Bangalore, has led to the discovery of a new species of slender snake in Arunachal Pradesh. The support is also covering DNA extraction for a new lizard species from Chhatisgarh and fieldwork in Madhya Pradesh.



*Snake awareness programme for villagers.*



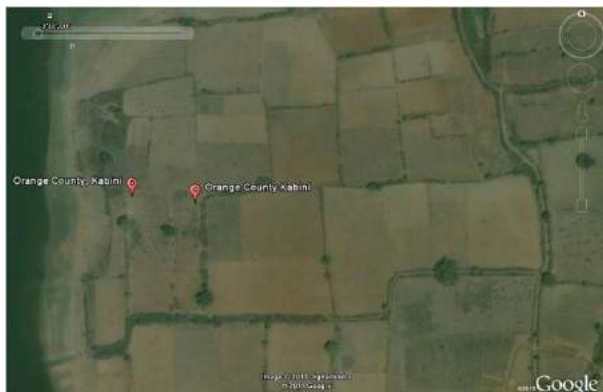
*Clean-up drives by lodge staff.*

Lodge staff take part in local clean-ups especially along the Tannaur and Banjar river flows to prevent plastic and litter entering waterways.



## Evolve Back Kabini, Nagarhole

### Restoring Landscape and Promoting Conservation



*Denuded landscape restored - before and after restoration with indigenous planting and the creation of a water body.*

Making a positive contribution to the local ecosystem and conservation of natural diversity lies at the heart of Orange County's responsible tourism policy, the parent company of Evolve Back Kabini. A plot of barren farmland with no green cover acquired in 2005 has been transformed by planting only local trees and plants with landscaping emulating the local terrain allowing bird, insect and small animal life to be restored. The resort has created an exceptional educational experience through their on-site Kabini Interpretation Centre - the Kabini Museum, Butterfly Sanctuary, Lily Pond and Kuruba Trival Hut designed to give a unique insight into a beautiful, environmentally and culturally fragile region.



*The Kabini Interpretation Centre - an exceptional educational resource for guests.*

Guests are briefed by the resort's team of in-house naturalists on etiquette when visiting the park and given inspiring talks on nature. Low carbon opportunities to explore the natural environment and its inhabitants beyond the jeep and boat safari are provided on foot, by bullock cart and coracle.



*Low carbon opportunities to explore nature.*

Daily Eco Walks and classes enabling guests to make bags from recycled materials are offered to help spread the resort's good sustainability practice into their lives.



*Guests encouraged to go eco through tours and classes.*





*Conservation classes at the resort for local children.*

The expertise of the resort's in-house naturalist is utilised to spread conservation awareness amongst the broader community. Conservation classes at the resort are held for children from their adopted school. The children are taken on wildlife safaris twice a year to inspire care for the fragile environment and the wildlife it harbours.



*Giving local children access to their natural heritage.*



*Building conservation awareness among young adults.*

Educational sessions are also run for young adults from surrounding villages on sustainable practices.



*Clearing invasive weeds.*

The resort conducts periodic visits to local villages to weed out parthenium and eupatorium, invasive weeds, to enable beneficial vegetation to grow. It assists the Forest Department in periodic drives to clean Nagarhole National Park. Its staff also have clean-up drives in surrounding villages removing plastic and other waste to set an example to the local community.



*Clean up drives in the National Park....*



*... and in local villages*



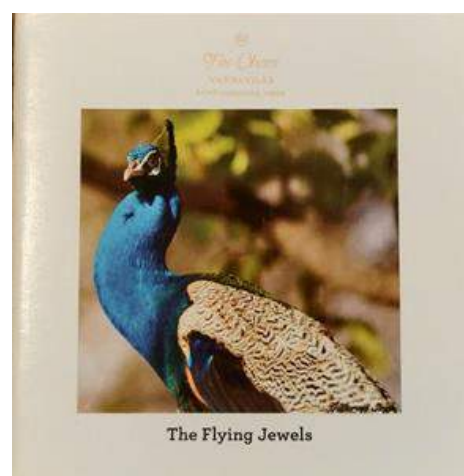
## Oberoï Vanyavilas, Ranthambhore

### Inspiring the Next Generation to Become Custodians of Nature



*Rainwater harvesting in this picturesque lake helps to recharge groundwater levels and provide a haven for wildlife.*

Thanks to their planting policy and skilful use of rainwater harvesting, the grounds at Oberoi Vanyavilas cut a green swathe in the surrounding dry area of Sawai Madhopur. The resort has planted more than 1,100 trees in its grounds. Numerous fruiting and flowering trees and the presence of water through the year, have created a paradise for domestic and migratory birds. Over 135 species have been recorded at the property.



*In-house guide to birds.*

Educational materials in the guest rooms, daily presentations by the lodge's three naturalists, wildlife films and a guide book, *The Flying Jewels* written by the lodge naturalists on birds in and around the property are provided to enhance guests' experience of the wild. Morning and evening walks around the property are also offered to give an insight into local flora and fauna, especially birdlife.

The resort offers a range of nature-based activities and games for children of all ages to increase their awareness of nature conservation issues and make their visits fun. Sessions on global warming, the benefits of tree planting and how to take care of young plants are run by the horticulturalist. Children can explore animal tracks, insects and birds and make a journal to take home. Night-time adventures, learning bushcraft skills and stargazing are also part of the mix of educational fun.



*Making learning about nature and the planet fun and educational for children and young people.*





*Extensive vegetable garden.*

Guests of all ages can also enjoy a visit to the resort's sizeable vegetable garden and its wholesome fare – and appreciate the merits of growing your own.



Water and energy conservation are encouraged.

Important national and international wildlife and green days such as Wildlife Week, World Environment Day, World Tiger Day and Earth Hour are celebrated as part of the resort's conservation activities.

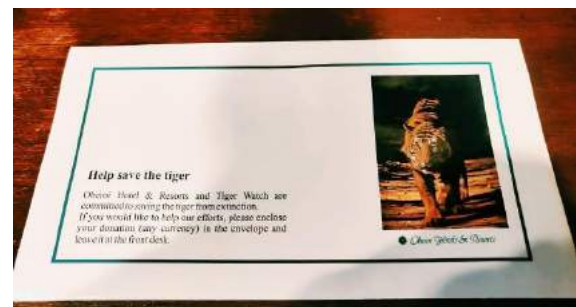


*Encouraging water conservation.*

The resort has built a water hole in the park to support the forest department and helps to maintain and refill it through rainwater harvesting. It also insures over 200 forest guards. Basic equipment such as torches, water purifiers, blankets and washroom facilities have also been provided to these guardians of the forest.



*Planting for the future.*



*Envelope in guests room to encourage support for wildlife conservation..*

Guests are encouraged to support local conservation NGO, Tiger Watch by placing envelopes in guest rooms. They can also plant a tree to commemorate their visit and contribute to the resort's plantation efforts.



## Denwa Backwater, Satpura

### Inspiring Conservation Through Training and Example



*Naturalist training out in nature.*

Denwa Backwater is one of six Pugdundee Safaris lodges with an inspiring ethos of building a culture of care for the environment amongst its staff and partners through training, awareness building and delivering economic benefit to local communities. All staff undergo training off-season with briefing sessions on issues the lodge is committed to such as green purchasing, water and energy conservation and why they are important.

Naturalists are provided with regular updates on wildlife and conservation-related issues and have access to a well-stocked

wildlife library at each of the lodges. Wildlife observations seen during jungle drives are recorded and the information used to produce a regular newsletter from the bush.



*Resident crocodile.*

Conservation of the river banks within the premises has seen three crocodiles and several water bird species taking up residence. Camera traps have been installed to record wildlife movements and contribute to long term habitat management. A checklist of mammals, birds, reptiles and trees to look out for is displayed for guests.



*Checklist of what to look out for.*



*Experiencing nature on foot ....*

Guests are treated to an immersive wildlife experience with expert briefings by the naturalists, reading material, presentations and activities helping to turn hearts and minds to the importance of wildlife conservation. Nature walks, village visits and cycling accompanied by naturalists give a holistic insight into the area's ecology, flora and fauna and local culture. Evening

wildlife presentations cover a variety of topics beyond the tiger such as butterflies, local trees and their cultural significance, birds and more. Walking safaris in Satpura Tiger Reserve provide a magical experience of nature with camping under a canopy of stars.



*.. biking ...*



*... by boat.*





*PRONAT - naturalist training out in nature.*

Three courses are on offer for those wishing to delve deeper into nature conservation. A-NAT, a five day programme, aims to create amateur naturalists with elementary knowledge. PRONAT (Professional naturalist training course), is geared towards elevating nature enthusiasts into professional naturalists over 21 days. The Junior Naturalist Program builds a foundation for lifelong appreciation and connection with nature amongst the young generation covering mammals, reptiles, birds and outdoor photography with games, quizzes and interactive experiences in the wild.



*PRONAT in the classroom.*



*Tree planting at the local school.*

The naturalist team engage with the local school for a day during wildlife week planting trees, highlighting the importance of nature and helping to clean the area. The lodge has donated nature guidebooks in Hindi to local field guides in Satpura National Park to enhance their knowledge.

The lodge marks Earth Hour by turning off non-essential lights for an hour to raise awareness about climate change. Guests are encouraged to assist the Forest Department by making donations to the Madhya Pradesh Tiger Foundation Society.



*Inviting guests to make donations.*

#### DEVELOPING LOCAL SKILLS



Harendra Sahu – a team member at Denwa Backwater is from a small local village and joined the lodge during construction. Spotting his passion for nature, the manager shifted his role from stores to guiding. Having grown up in the jungles, he is at his best in the wilderness.



## Pashan Garh – Taj Safaris, Panna

### Providing a First-Class Experience of The Wild



*200-acres of natural grounds provide a natural haven for wildlife.*

Pashan Garh is a 200-acre haven for wildlife with a built area covering less than 1%, of the site. Twelve cottages built using locally available stone and slates are set within the natural landscape with verandas for guests to observe wildlife and birds. Extensive site conservation with nearly 7,000 saplings planted over a three year period and a sizeable lake created for rainwater harvesting, is making the property the preferred corridor for herbivores, bears and even leopards and jackal. This, combined with the lodge's team of five specially trained naturalists, gives an exceptional wildlife experience which has resulted in the highest satisfaction guest scores across the four Taj Safaris lodges, even though tiger sightings are the lowest in Panna National Park.



*Cottages built with local materials have verandas for wildlife viewing.*



*Guides produced by Taj Safaris.*

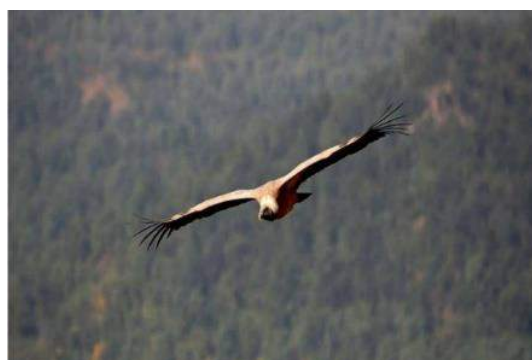
Nature activities include nature walks, birding and night safaris with the naturalists. A walk with local guides from the Pardhi tribe, village visits and an excursion to the Pandav Cave are also available for guests. Resources in guest rooms include an introduction to Panna National Park, a guide to key birds found there and an introduction to birding.



All Taj Safari naturalists undergo a three phase six-month training course on wildlife and guiding techniques to ensure their guests are provided with a world-class interpretive wildlife experience. The company's permanent naturalist training school which operates near Kanha National Park has, to date, fully trained 30 Indian naturalists who are employed at Taj Safari's four wilderness lodges.



*Birdwatching with one of the lodge's naturalists.*



*Vulture in the 200 acre property.*



Apart from inspiring guests, as part of giving back, the lodge naturalists at Pashan Garh conduct regular conservation classes for local children and assist the Forest Department in running nature camps for local children. The naturalists monitor wildlife movements on a daily basis and contribute to local bird census counts, the removal of lantana and local litter clearing drives. They are also working with Last Wilderness Foundation and the Forest Department on a regular Guide Training Programme for Pardhi tribe members to enhance their knowledge of their natural heritage, promote good practice and provide new livelihood opportunities. Eighteen young men and women have been trained in the last two years.



*Training local Pardhis as guides.*



*Wildlife sessions held for forest officials by lodge naturalist.*



*Wild inhabitants ... Pangolin on the lodge's land ...*



*... and sloth bear.*



## Mittal Gala, Runner-up of TOFTigers 2016 Best Naturalist Award



*Ranthambhore's only female naturalist.*

programme of wildlife and nature films, presentations, talks and occasional field visits for guests and encouraged support for the work of local conservation groups.



*Resident crocodile at Khem Villas. Photo: Mittal Gala*

Mittal Gala, former Chief Naturalist at Khem Villas in Ranthambhore is adept at inspiring all age groups with her knowledge of nature and wildlife from insects and butterflies to birds, reptiles, amphibians and mammals. The lodge's 25 acres of restored habitat of water bodies, grassland, dry deciduous forest patches and organic fields provides a platform for a host of nature-based activities she organised for guests. Guided walks in the lodge grounds give an insight into the diversity of local flora and fauna beyond the tiger for which Ranthambhore is most famous and introduce guests to signs of wildlife such as tracks, scats and droppings.

A gifted communicator with children, Mittal's activities involved young people in setting up camera traps, bug walks and night walks looking at nocturnal life forms to help nurture the young generation as custodians of nature. She also organised a wider

Helping to maintain the restored habitats at Khem Villas, documentation and monitoring also formed an important part of her work. 180 species of birds, 45 butterfly species, 25 species of reptiles and six species of amphibians have been recorded in the lodge grounds. Bird sightings shared on [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org) provide the wider scientific and conservation community with real-time data on bird distribution and abundance. Her wider monitoring and recording has resulted in several short manuscripts on identification and observations of birds in Sawai Madhopur and Rajasthan.



*Inspiring people about nature in all shapes and sizes. Photos: Mittal Gala.*

A champion of sustainability issues, she initiated multiple steps to recycle and reuse waste generated at Khem Villas and to use natural pesticides for the crops farmed in the grounds. Staff benefitted from her informal briefings on snakes, common misperceptions, safety issues and snake bites. Her skills were also harnessed to help enable children at local Fateh High School to learn about their natural heritage.

Mittal was Chief naturalist for Khem Villas between 2014-2019 and runner up TOFTigers Best Naturalist of the Year Award in 2016 when she was Ranthambhore's only female naturalist. She previously worked for the Madras Crocodile Bank Trust. She now works for [Bird Count India](http://Bird_Count_India), part of the Nature Conservation Foundation, joining them in 2019.



*Inspiring the nature custodians of the future.*







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Your *corporate commitment*  
to sustainability



TOFTigers is a global business-to-business nature travel charity with a mission to improve the ecological and economic sustainability of wildlands and wildlife across Asia. Well-planned and well-managed responsible tourism is a force for good bringing economic benefits to rural areas, restoring habitat, supporting conservation and local communities, changing poachers into protectors and giving visitors inspiring experiences of nature. We work with the travel trade, destinations, accommodation providers, governmental and conservation organisations to make this happen through training, advocacy, certification, promoting best practice and partnership working.

Our **certification programmes** place local communities, nature and environmental sustainability at the heart of business operations. They are a symbol of assurance for travellers and the travel trade that the places they select to stay at have been reviewed by environmental experts and exceed a minimum standard on a journey towards best practice. The PUG certification is recognised by the United Nation's Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) and is aimed solely at nature focused accommodation. The Footprint certification has a broader client base that is not wholly nature focused and encompasses accommodation providers in rural, natural or more urban landscapes.

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***Correct at time of press. Information included may not be appropriate to every situation, destination and country and is intended for general guidance only and may be subject to change.***

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