

ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT

Year 2023-24



www.toftigers.org

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**TRUSTED
SINCE
2004**

INTRODUCTION

TOFTigers a non-profit NGO, is promoting Sustainable Tourism in India & Nepal. It started in 2004, with the vision of the Founders, Mr. Julian Mathews (Conservationist & Sustainability Expert) & Mr. Vishal Singh (Director, Royal Expeditions) to introduce sustainable practices in tourism industry in India. TOFTigers started as a B2B campaign for Accommodation providers, Indian tour operators and International Tour operators, where its members were encouraged to adhere to the guidelines of nature tourism. Their initial focus was to work towards conserving the tigers' numbers as a part of supply chain and support the Project Tiger. However, over the years their mission expanded to improve the ecological and economic sustainability of the wildlands and wildlife across South Asia through supply chain pressure campaign.

ON-GROUND TRAINING/ PROJECTS:

Ranthambore: Training and Talk on Conservation

TOFTigers conducted workshop and training session with local communities in a popular tourist destination in Ranthambore. The objective was to bring awareness of responsible practices to the visiting guests to the destination for one hundred employees of Jatan Sansthan, a grassroots nonprofit organization that works with rural and resource-poor communities in the state of Rajasthan. The organization has developed and implemented several initiatives to improve social and demographic indicators and works in the areas of health and education.



Mr. Dharmendra Khandal, a qualified naturalist and conservation biologist, Tiger Watch, gave a talk on conservation and shared his knowledge to raise awareness about nature and wildlife conservation, which is one of the sole motives of TOFTigers.

The participants had no awareness of the conservation, the workshop created a lot of interest in participants and was a valuable experience.



Project “ Eye for Wild ” & “Protecting the life of Forest Savers ”

TOFTigers supported ADAVI ALERT FOUNDATION for their event 'EYE FOR WILD,' a two-day PAN INDIA event in Bangalore featuring a photography contest and exhibition. This initiative aimed to raise awareness about critical issues impacting wildlife and conservation. Collaborating with organizations like Youth Photographic Society, Wildlife Conservation Trust, and Jungle Lodges & Resorts, the event attracted renowned photographers and influencers, including Dr. Anish Andheria and Mr. Sudhir Shivaram.



Adavi Alert Foundation basic aim for to raise funds for the Forest frontline workers in managing man-animal conflicts in southern Kodagu. Recognizing the invaluable contribution of these unsung heroes, efforts were made to equip them with essential tools and resources, supported by funds generated through the event. "All For Nature" from the Netherlands, TOFTigers ITO Member generously donated the sleeping bags for the frontline staff.

TOFTigers Guide Training Program- Sariska National Park, Rajasthan

In collaboration with Utsav Camp, Sariska, SAMPAT Foundation, and HATS, TOFTigers conducted a 12-day Guide Training Program from September 18th to 28th, 2023. This pioneering initiative brought guides together for the first time, fostering knowledge exchange and learning.

Participants gained insights into Sariska's wildlife and biodiversity from expert specialists. Topics covered included wildlife threats, bird and butterfly identification, flora and fauna, ethics, and snake rescue techniques. Field experiences enriched their understanding of ecosystems.

Participants enthusiastically engaged in activities, expressing newfound confidence and knowledge. Ms. Jennifer Nandi was the trainer along with guest speakers, Dr. Dharmendra Khandal and Dr. Satish Sharma.

THE GUIDE TRAINING PROGRAM, SARISKA



AWARENESS AND WORKSHOPS:

Sustainable Tourism Workshop: Raipur, Chhattisgarh

Chhattisgarh Tourism and TOFTigers collaborated to organize a workshop on Sustainable Tourism and building awareness, it brought together various stakeholders including accommodation providers, travel agents, and NGOs.

Speakers for the workshop were Ms. Ritu Makhija, TOFTigers Director Sustainability and Dr. Chindu Chandran, TOFTigers Green Team Member, who showcased successful case studies of sustainable tourism projects. They highlighted the integration of sustainable practices within the hospitality industry and the pivotal role of certification in driving responsible tourism.

The workshop witnessed the participation of approximately eighty attendees, comprising officials from different ranks of the Chhattisgarh Tourism Board, along with staff members. Tour operators and accommodation providers from various Raipur-based organizations. Notably, NGOs like Conservation Core India and educational institutions like IHM College also contributed to the workshop, making it a diverse and inclusive gathering of stakeholders.



Travelife Sustainable Tourism Workshop with Tour operators and DMCs



The Travelife Sustainable Tourism Workshop, focused on Tour Operators was conducted in New Delhi on 5–6th July in India Habitat Centre and on 8th July in Kochi in Casino hotel. The workshop, co-hosted by TOFTigers, Travelife(switchasia) & Tourism for Life which was attended by industry leaders, experts, and stakeholders to share knowledge, best practices, and innovative ideas for a more responsible and sustainable future. Some Indian Leading Travel Agents participated in the workshop. Mr. George Scaria from Kerala Voyages, the first travel agency from India to get Travelife certification shared the case history of his organization.

The participants of the workshops engaged in insightful discussions, participated in interactive sessions, and investigated real-world case studies that illuminated the path to positive change. The workshop provided the participants with effective tools for transforming their enterprises and promoting sustainability. The objective was to foster a profound understanding of our collective duty to preserve the environment and support local communities. The intention was to ignite a transformational force within the tourism industry.

Mr. Robin Boustead, Travelife South Asia's esteemed Regional Coordinator, was the speaker and he shared good practice examples and effective strategies for implementing sustainable initiatives. All the participants were inspired to commit to sustainability as a way forward.

The success of the Travelife Sustainable Tourism Workshop demonstrates the travel industry's commitment to integrate sustainable practices in organizations operations and products, bringing positive impact in the environment and local communities.

PUG and Footprint Eco- Certification

TOFTigers' Eco-based Certification Systems, commonly referred to as 'Kitemarks,' offer a robust assurance to all travellers, their agents, operators, and individuals involved in the planning, management, or operation of nature-based tourism. This certification signifies that providers who have earned it have undergone a thorough examination and have not only met but exceeded a minimum standard of commitment to sustainable practices. This commitment extends to a diverse range of accommodations, including luxury lodges, family resorts, tented camps, and humble homestays, all providing eco-friendly nature-based tourism experiences.

At the forefront of our sustainable certification efforts is the PUG (Practice Under Guidance) and Footprint Certification Programme, distinguishing itself as the first and only system designed to identify and promote environmentally focused or ecotourism-based accommodation providers in the Indian subcontinent. The audit process, led by TOFTigers' Green Teams, involves a comprehensive evaluation of lodge management and staff against 86 certification criteria. This meticulous examination serves as a guide, facilitating alignment of practices towards sustainability. Through guidance, training, and insightful suggestions provided in intensive reports based on their inspections, our Green Teams play a crucial role in developing a community of more aware and responsible businesses and individuals.

Fifteen accommodations have undergone certification/ recertification this year by the TOFTigers' green team.



Uttar Pradesh Bird Fair



Surajpur is an urban wetland in Yamuna River basin (in Uttar Pradesh) which forms suitable breeding ground for waterfowl such as Spot billed Duck, Lesser whistling Duck, Lesser -whistling Duck, Pygmy Goose and comb Duck and wintering waterfowl such as Red-crested Pochard, Ferruginous Pochard, Bar-headed Goose, Greylag Goose, Common Teal, Northern Shoveler and Gadwall. Uttar Pradesh Forest Department in collaboration with WWF-India and supported by the Greater Noida Industrial Development Authority, has implemented a project on the conservation planning and development of Surajpur wetland since 2010 and collectively making efforts to restore the area into a bird sanctuary. The wetland sets a unique example of protection and conservation of biodiversity close to Urban areas.

UP Govt's Forest Department hosted Bird Festival at Surajpur Wetland, Greater Noida. The week-long event, showcased interactive workshops, guided birdwatching tours, contests for children and photographers, and cultural performances. Technical Sessions included panel discussion based on conversation focussed on the effective destination management, importance of ecotourism to the destination, communities, responsible visitor attitudes and ethical photography. The event aligned with TOFTigers' commitment to responsible tourism and environmental stewardship.

Workshop on Responsible Tourism Guidelines for Accommodations : Madhya Pradesh

Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board under the Responsible Tourism Mission invited various stakeholders including TOFTigers to discuss and formulate the Responsible Tourism guidelines for accommodation providers.



The workshop fostered a sense of collaboration and unity among diverse stakeholders providing platform to share insights and best practices in sustainable tourism in the region.

Through the discussion key challenges and opportunities in promoting responsible tourism were brought to forefront and emphasis on welfare for local communities were highlighted.

Supporting Partner for Tadoba Festival



TOFTigers successfully collaborated with Maharashtra Forest Department as festival partners for the Tadoba Festival 2024! This collaboration marks a significant milestone in our ongoing efforts to promote sustainable travel practices and wildlife conservation.

The festival was aimed to create an immerse experience for the attendees while also giving push to responsible tourism. Through a series of engaging activities, including guided nature walks, wildlife safaris, interactive workshops, and cultural performances, the event aimed to raise awareness about the importance of preserving our natural heritage and the need to protect endangered species. It was for the first time that Tourism industry and Forest Department came together to have Panel discussions addressing various facets of sustainable tourism like Human Wildlife Conflict, Wildlife Safari experiences, Future of Wildlife Marketing.

Today, Tadoba–Andhari Tiger Reserve is regarded as one of the world’s most preferred tiger destinations, a glittering jewel in the Project Tiger crown. There are 80 tigers in reserve and 200 in the larger landscape, and is gaining popularity amongst the tourist seeking a genuine wildlife experience. Tadoba’s tigers are now found restocking the gene pools of protected areas such as Navegaon–Nagzira, Umred–Karhandla and Tipeshwar, and forests as far afield as Kawal, Nagarjunsagar and Indravati.

Expanding Presence into Nepal

Increasing TOFT footprint in Nepal



1. Travelife strategy to create region cohesiveness
2. Capacity building Training
3. TOFT Representative in Nepal
4. Focusing on PUG & FOOTPRINT certification

TOFTigers has significantly expanded its presence in Nepal, a strategic move to enhance regional cohesion. Initially, TOFT had limited membership in Nepal. However, through meticulous planning and execution, we conducted capacity-building initiatives in the region. As a result, we now have dedicated representative in Nepal, facilitating effective communication and collaboration.

Furthermore, TOFTigers is representing Travelife in Nepal, further solidifying our commitment to sustainable tourism practices. With dedicated representatives who are proficient in both local and organizational languages, we are fostering robust networks and partnerships.



The 6th TOFTigers Wildlife Tourism Awards 2023



TOFTigers, in collaboration with the esteemed Sanctuary Nature Foundation, organized the 6th TOFTigers Wildlife Tourism Awards at Bikaner House, New Delhi. The awards ceremony, theme "Recognizing and Rewarding the Good Work," served as a platform to honour outstanding contributions to sustainable and responsible tourism in the Indian subcontinent. The event brought together state tourism officials, businesses, service providers, photographers, community enterprises, and wildlife enthusiasts that have demonstrated a profound commitment to conservation through exceptional wildlife tourism initiatives.

Read more about TOFTigers awards here: <https://www.toftigers.org/toftigers-wildlife-tourism-award-2023/>

Or

Watch the full ceremony here: <https://youtu.be/IndM5WBWq7Y>

TOFTigers InstaLive/ Knowledge Series

TOFTigers started a new initiative to raise awareness and develop community of eco-conscious businesses and travellers. TOFTigers has hosted a number of Insta Live Sessions with the industry experts covering various topics of importance for the tourism industry.



**THE NEED FOR
CONTENT CREATION
IN SUSTAINABLE
TOURISM**

WEDNESDAY, 18th JAN 2023 - 3.30PM IST



**Presented by
Pooja Akula**

Travel Communications and Community Curator | Sustainable Tourism Advocate
Pooja, is an experienced content creator for slow travel often collaborating with tourism boards and private entities to research, develop and document findings around culture, people and sustainable tourism practices.

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Review Annexure 1 for more Instalive and Knowledge sessions.

CONCLUSION

As we conclude the Annual Report for 2023-24, we reflect on the strides made in promoting sustainable tourism within the travel trade community and other stakeholders. This past year has been marked going all out to create the awareness towards a responsible future. Through various collaborative efforts and innovative initiatives, we have achieved commendable progress towards our goal of creating a more sustainable tourism industry.

Way Forward:

Looking ahead, we envision a future where sustainability is at the core of every travel experience. To achieve this, we must continue to prioritize education, advocacy, and collaboration within the travel trade community. By engaging stakeholders at all levels and leveraging emerging technologies, we can further integrate sustainable practices into every aspect of the tourism value chain.

In the coming year we are working to collaborate with organisations who can support us in projects in the Tiger Reservices. We will continue to work in spreading awareness, guide training and community upliftment programmes.

In conclusion, the journey towards sustainable tourism is ongoing, and our work is far from done. By staying true to our mission and embracing a spirit of collaboration and innovation, we can create a future where travel enriches both people and the planet.

Annexure 1

TOFTigers Insta Live /Knowledge Series



CURATING RESPONSIBLE INBOUND TOURISM

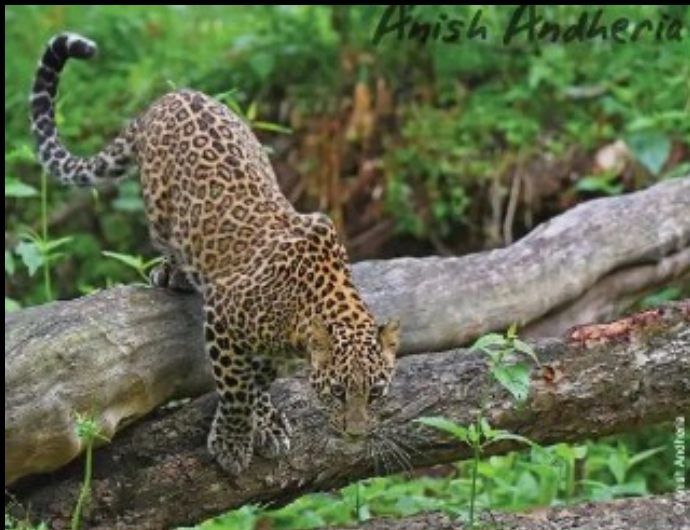


Presented by
Sowmya Rao Vijaymohan
Founder, Tres India

Sowmya Rao Vijaymohan, founder of Tres Consulting & Events. She is an expert in marketing, representation and communication for Leisure, travel & Tourism industry. She will talk to us about strategies to attract inbound tourism and her learnings over years of her experience.

WEDNESDAY, 22nd FEB 2023 - 3.30PM IST

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WILDLIFE & NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY



MONDAY, 13th MARCH 2023 - 3.30PM IST



Presented by
Anish Andheria

Conservationist, Photographer and CEO Wildlife Conservation Trust, India
Packed in a lifetime of wildlife conservation experiences, Conservationist, photographer and CEO, Wildlife Conservation Trust, India, Dr. Anish Andheria is a Carl Zeiss Conservation Awardee. A wildlife photographer of repute, Anish has photographed some of the remotest wildlife reserves in India and written books and publications.

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SUSTAINABILITY TALK: WHEN THE FOUNDER MEETS THE AMBASSADOR

WEDNESDAY, 17th MAY 2023 - 3.30PM IST



Julian Matthews



Jai Sharma

Conversation between Julian Matthews (Founder) & Jai Sharma (Ambassador)

Tune in with Julian & Jai, to hear the talk about Sustainable Tourism; why it is critical today and how it can impact the future generations.

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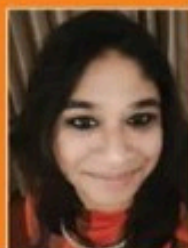


EXPERIENTIAL TOURISM FOR INBOUND TRAVELLERS

WEDNESDAY, 7th JUNE 2023 - 3.30PM IST



Philippa J Kaye



Bhavna Menon

Presented by **Bhavna Menon** Writer/TOFT Supporter
Philippa J Kaye Founder & CEO - Indian Experiences

Conversation between Bhavna & Philippa, who is a destination development specialist with a focus to showcase 'A Different India,' She is author of "Escape to India", & a blogger, who lives and breathes India.

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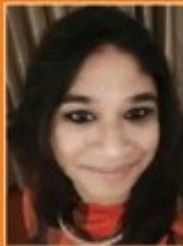


TALK WITH CONSERVATION HEROES

WEDNESDAY, 12th JULY 2023 - 3.30PM IST



Vipul Gupta



Bhavna Menon

Presented by

Vipul Gupta Founder, Earth Focus Foundation

Bhavna Menon Writer/TOFT Supporter

A captivating conversation with Vipul Gupta, Founder Earth Focus Foundation (Kanha), an engineer turned wilderness enthusiast, who has dedicated his life to the preservation of our precious forests. Bhavna talks to him about sustainable livelihoods for forest dwellers, by providing education intervention, and capacity building nature-based livelihoods through restoration of degraded land, and employment skills in the local context and impact created by his organisation.

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PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT: CRAFTING TOURS

WEDNESDAY, 16th AUGUST 2023 - 3.30PM IST



Presented by Sunita Shanker

Founder & Proprietor, Sunita Shanker Studio
Fashion Clothing and Hand crafted Textiles, Entrepreneur

Join us in conversation with Ms. Sunita Shanker, a Consultant to India's Ministry of Textiles. She has deep dedication towards promotion and preservation of India's rich textile craftsmanship and talks to us as to how this can be incorporated as a part of tourist experience.

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INTEGRATING SUSTAINABILITY INTO YOUR ACCOMMODATIONS

WEDNESDAY, 13th SEPTEMBER 2023 - 3.30PM IST



Presented by
Marcus Cotton

Managing Director
Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge, Nepal

Join us for an inspiring Insta Live Series with Mr. Marcus Cotton, a trailblazer in Nepal's conservation and responsible tourism landscape. He has championed the concept of regenerative tourism, showcasing how business and sustainability can harmoniously coexist. In this exclusive interview, we'll uncover the insights, challenges, and triumphs in his journey.

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Sustaining our world
KNOWLEDGE Series 2023

DESTINATION INSIGHT: CHITWAN NATIONAL PARK, NEPAL

WEDNESDAY, 19th APRIL 2023 - 3.30PM IST



Presented by
Mr. Prakash

An experienced hospitality expert at Barahi Jungle Lodge (a leading eco-resort in Nepal), will take you on an enchanting journey of Chitwan National Park and help you unfold the beauty of the destination.

REGISTER HERE

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Sustaining our world
KNOWLEDGE 2023
Series

DESTINATION EXCELLENCE: EMBRACING SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

WEDNESDAY, 20th DECEMBER 2023 - 3.30PM IST



Presented by
Mr. Ram Pratap Singh
Director, Mela Kothi

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Join us for a talk with Ram about "Destination and Sustainability: Excellence in Embracing Sustainable Travel"! - unravelling the journey towards creating responsible and sustainable travel destinations through the power of eco-conscious.

Thank you

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our partners and supporters who have provided constant support for TOFTigers' initiatives in promoting responsible tourism and nature conservation.

Partners and Affiliates

