

# Student Conference on Conservation Science (SCCS) - Bengaluru 2021

## Conference Report



**nature  
conservation  
foundation**



National Centre for Biological Sciences  
Tata Institute of Fundamental Research

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# Overview

The Student Conference on Conservation Science (SCCS) – Bengaluru brings together young professionals interested in, working on and studying the science and practice of biodiversity conservation. The conference facilitates interaction, encourages exchange of research ideas and methods, sharing of knowledge and experience related to conserving wildlife and helps build contacts and capacity.

SCCS- Bengaluru was first organised in 2010 by a group of like-minded individuals passionate about encouraging young minds to explore the science and practice of conservation. As a sister conference to SCCS-Cambridge, SCCS-Bengaluru focuses on attracting student participants, primarily from countries in South and South-east Asia, and Africa.

The conference returned for its **12th edition** from **September 27-30, 2021 on Slack**, with sessions such as student talks and poster presentations, useful skill building workshops, conservation career panels and some inspiring plenaries. Also on offer were opportunities for participants to network with peers in conservation and other allied fields, and experts from leading conservation organisations!



Bengaluru 2021

# At a Glance



400 Participants

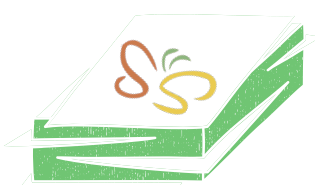


**From 11 countries:**

Australia, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, South Africa, UAE, UK, USA and India



6 Plenaries



100+ Abstract Submissions



26 Workshops



12 Student Talks



17 Poster Presentations



# Plenaries

## Asha De Vos

Asha de Vos is an internationally acclaimed Sri Lankan marine biologist, ocean educator and pioneer of long-term blue whale research within the Northern Indian Ocean. She is also an Adjunct Research Fellow at the Oceans Institute of the University of Western Australia. She has degrees from the University of St. Andrews, University of Oxford and the University of Western Australia but escaped academia to establish her own Sri Lankan grown non-profit, Oceanswell - Sri Lanka's first marine conservation research and education organisation. Her work has been showcased internationally by the BBC, the New York Times, TED and National Geographic to name a few. Asha is the first and only Sri Lankan to have a PhD in Marine Mammal research, the first Pew Fellow in Marine Conservation and first National Geographic Explorer from Sri Lanka, and the first Sri Lankan woman to have her portrait hung at Oxford University. Asha is also a TED Senior fellow, an Ocean Conservation Fellow at the New England Aquarium, a Duke Global Fellow in Marine Conservation, and a World Economic Forum Young Global Leader.

In 2019 Asha was named one of 12 Women Changemakers by the Parliament of Sri Lanka and won the inspirational icon awards at the 21st Century icon awards in London. In 2020, she was named a HCL Technologies Global Goodwill Champion at the World Economic Forum's annual meeting in Davos, was awarded a Maxwell-Hanrahan Award in Field Biology and named a Scuba Diving magazine and Seiko watches of America Sea Hero for November 2020. In 2021 Asha was awarded a Vanithaabimani lifetime achievement award for her outstanding achievements in her field and for bringing pride to her island nation.

### **Title: The Power Of Being Local**

**Abstract:** Dr. Asha De Vos, aims to change how we think about and carry out marine conservation. Fresh out of the University of St. Andrews, and while working on a whale research vessel as a deckhand, she discovered a unique population of blue whales that inhabit the waters around Sri Lanka year round. This groundbreaking discovery—previously, all blue whales were thought to be migratory—and her research journey have challenged the existing marine conservation model and her view of it. Now, she strongly believes every coastline needs an army of local ocean heroes. Learn how being local has paved the way for her to do meaningful and impactful conservation research in Sri Lanka while inspiring a generation of marine conservationists.

Asha's plenary can be viewed on the SCCS-Bengaluru Youtube, [here.](#)



# Plenaries

## Paula Kahumbu

Paula Kahumbu is one of Africa's best-known wildlife conservationists. She is the CEO of WildlifeDirect and the brain behind the Hands Off Our Elephants campaign. She is the producer and host of Africa's first wildlife documentary series made by Africans for Africans called Wildlife Warriors. Paula is the winner of the Whitley Award Gold Award 2021, ROLEX National Geographic Explorer of the Year for 2021, The Whitley Award 2014, National Geographic Howard Buffet Award for conservation leadership in Africa in 2010 and is a National Geographic Emerging Explorer. She is recognised as a Kenyan conservation ambassador by Brand Kenya and in 2015 received the Presidential Award and title of Order of the Grand Warrior (OGW). She is a trustee of the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation and the Maun Science Park Botswana. Paula received her PhD in Ecology from Princeton University where she studied elephants in coastal Kenya.

### **Title: Wildlife filmmaking as a conservation tool**

**Abstract:** Africa's landscapes and wildlife have played a key role in the creation of wildlife documentaries which have shaped global attitudes towards animals, and played a significant role in the environmental movement. The films, made exclusively by international crews, shaped the west's perception of Africa - a wild Eden in which the cultural specific information such as language, dress, music were intentionally left out. As a result, westerners assumed responsibility for ideas and approaches for the conservation of nature in Africa which ignored traditional knowledge and granted privilege to non-African minority. This may have seriously undermined the conservation outcomes of the continent where elephants, rhino, lions, cheetah, and many other species that are now critically endangered and critical habitats that are severely degraded due to over exploitation and lack of protection.

WildlifeDirect is exploring how Africa can take back their narrative through the power of the lens to celebrate African traditions and relationship with wildlife in order to inspire viewers, and change attitudes and behaviours to save their spectacular wildlife. They produce a successful TV series, Wildlife Warriors, which is currently the only African wildlife TV series made by Africans for Africans. Paula explored this theory of change and what WildlifeDirect have learned and what needs to happen to engage audiences and inspire them to take action.

Paula's plenary can be viewed on the SCCS-Bengaluru Youtube, [here](#).



# Plenaries

## Arjun Srivathsa

Arjun Srivathsa is a Research Associate with the Wildlife Conservation Society-India. He has a Bachelor's degree in Biology and a Master's degree in Wildlife Biology and Conservation from the National Centre for Biological Sciences. He earned his PhD from the University of Florida in 2020. Arjun has worked for over a decade in the field of conservation research in India. His recent research work deals with understanding carnivore ecology and human-carnivore interactions across multiple landscapes. His PhD work focused on the conservation ecology of Asiatic wild dogs or 'dholes'. He is a member of the IUCN Canid Specialist Group and the IUCN Dhole Working Group. Arjun is also an artist, cartoonist, and science communicator, specialising in creating conservation-themed artwork. His cartoons and illustrated storyboards have been translated into regional languages, used in fund-raising for research, nature education in villages around forests, leveraged for communicating best practices to reduce human-wildlife conflict, helped promote sustainable harvest of fisheries, and used as outreach material in Forest Department visitor centres.

### **Title: The dog and the funny bone**

**Abstract:** Is my research boring? Do people start thinking about Grey's Anatomy or the IPL when I'm talking about my science? Does anyone even read the papers that I, shedding blood (certainly), sweat (copiously) and tears (secretly), publish? As scientists working on various aspects directly linked to the natural world, our study-species, landscapes, its people, and their interactions are inherently fascinating. Unfortunately, the way we communicate our science to other scientists or the general public is often paralysed by the means, methods and platforms we use. I love dogs. I have always adored them. This love eventually spilled over to their wild cousins- dholes, wolves, jackals and foxes, and evolved into scientific curiosity about carnivores in India. For the most part of the last decade, I have tried to better understand wild canids, and figure out ways to conserve them and their habitats. Contrary to what one would expect of a scientist, my view of these animals is not objective; I see them as quirky characters with unique personalities, doing interesting things to live and thrive in an increasingly human-modified world. I will present an illustrated version of the wonderful things we (no one achieves anything alone!) have discovered along the way, with case studies from central, western and southern India, and our countrywide project on mapping and monitoring wild canids. While doing so, I will also demonstrate how infusing art, humour, popular culture and visual aesthetics with our messaging, and carefully tailoring it to our audiences, can perhaps amplify our scientific findings and broaden its impacts. Who is Justice Beaver?

Arjun's plenary can be viewed on the SCCS-Bengaluru Youtube, [here](#).



# Plenaries

## David Borchers

David Borchers is a statistical ecologist with more than 30 years' experience in developing and applying statistical methods to address problems in ecology. He is currently the director of the Centre for Research into Ecological and Environmental Modelling (CREEM) at the University of St Andrews. He obtained his PhD from the University of Cape Town and has been at the University of St Andrews since 1993. His current research interests focus on spatial capture-recapture methods, distance sampling methods and spatial modelling. While spending most of his time desk-bound in front of a computer, he enjoys opportunities to participate in fieldwork and better understand how data is gathered and the logistic constraints on implementing statistical theory in practice.

**Title: Ecological inferences from sparse data**

**Abstract:** Historically we obtained information about human populations only from periodic surveys or censuses. In the not-too-distant future, Google may know where everyone is and what they are doing almost all of the time. We would like to have this sort of information for animal populations, to identify conservation problems and take actions to solve them, but we are a long way from having it.

Although new technology is giving us more and more information on wildlife populations, we still usually have only very sparse data from which to find out about their abundance and distribution, their habitat preferences, movement patterns and population trajectories. In this talk I will use examples from recent surveys to illustrate how statistical methods, some using new technologies, allow us to exploit the limited information that we get from sampling wildlife populations, to draw inferences about parameters relevant to conservation.

David's plenary can be viewed on the SCCS-Bengaluru Youtube, [here](#).





# Plenaries

## Radhika Govindarajan

Radhika Govindarajan is an Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Washington. She is the author of *Animal Intimacies: Interspecies Relatedness in India's Central Himalayas*, published in 2018 by the University of Chicago Press and by Penguin India in 2019. The book was awarded the Edward Cameron Dimock Jr. Prize in the Indian Humanities by the American Institute of Indian Studies and the Gregory Bateson Book Award by the Society for Cultural Anthropology.

**Title: Paltu-Jungli: The Fluidity of Wildness in Contemporary Uttarakhand**

**Abstract:** How does one write an ethnography of animals that takes account of their distinct histories and personalities without collapsing them into the homogeneous category of 'animal'? What can ethnography as a method and theory reveal about the particular nature and texture of animal's lives, and what does it withhold? In this plenary, I address these questions through an exploration of villagers' stories about a domestic sow who went "wild" in the mountains of Uttarakhand a few decades ago, and who they think is the ancestor of the numerous wild boar who reside in their neighbourhood today. I ask what the pig's journeys across different spaces and places - from wild to domestic, from field to forest - might illuminate about wildness, and how it is differentially articulated and experienced by the (post)colonial state, wildlife conservationists, villagers, and wild boar themselves. I argue that taking her history seriously offers a glimpse into what I call an otherwild, a messy and radical wildness that reconfigures, unsettles, and exceeds the ways in which it is framed in projects of colonial and caste domination or in fantasies of human mastery over nature.

Radhika's plenary can be viewed on the SCCS-Bengaluru Youtube, [here](#).



# Plenaries

## Ambika Aiyadurai

Ambika Aiyadurai is an anthropologist in IIT-Gandhinagar, interested in the social dimensions of wildlife conservation. Her ongoing and long-term research aims to understand how local and global forces shape human-animal relations. Her interest in Anthropology began while examining human-dhole conflict in Arunachal Pradesh. She completed her Ph.D. in Anthropology at the National University of Singapore. She has degrees in Wildlife Sciences from Wildlife Institute of India (Dehradun) and Anthropology, Environment and Development from University College London. Ambika's book 'Tigers are our brothers: Anthropology of Wildlife Conservation in Northeast India' was recently published.

**Title: Wildlife researchers and local communities: Politics of Encounter**

**Abstract:** Wildlife research and the implementation of conservation projects are multicultural exercises, which are not possible without the active participation of local communities. Both parties (researchers and local communities) have unique sets of skills, knowledge, and varying expectations. Both have different, sometimes contradictory, commitments and agendas. Opportunities for potential collaboration often lead to confusion, amusement, frustration, and potential conflict, straining the relations between individuals, institutions and cultures. Moreover, due to the unequal and hierarchical positions, their encounters may not always be friendly. Drawing from my research in Arunachal Pradesh and from my experiences of working with various conservation NGOs, in this talk, I will highlight the need to critically analyse the changing relationship between local communities and wildlife researchers in conservation sites and how they unfold on the ground, while carrying out field research or implementing conservation projects. The dominant narrative has long been that indigenous marginal communities are excluded from conservation decision-making processes, but what is increasingly seen is that the local communities are challenging the terms of governing local ecological resources. They are no more passive participants in research and conservation, but they actively seek information about research findings, including how their landscapes are surveyed, studied, mapped and published in academic literature and other platforms. Field researchers find themselves ill-equipped to justify their research on the ground to the community members, whose support they seek. When we researchers engage with the residents of a conservation site, how do we understand who the local community is? What makes a community? Do we consider ourselves as part of the community we engage in? Who has the right to govern their landscape? These are some of the concerns I will address in my talk. I will suggest that researchers need to engage with the local communities, whose landscape and ecology we aim to study and secure, in new meaningful ways.

Ambika's plenary can be viewed on the SCCS-Bengaluru Youtube, [here](#).



# Abstract Submission and Review

We received 100 abstract submissions covering a range of topics within both natural and social science facets of conservation science. Each abstract went through two independent blind rounds of external reviews. We selected 29 abstracts for the conference that successfully met the acceptance standards set by the organising committee. Of these, we selected 12 from diverse locations and fields to be presented as student talks, while 17 were selected for student posters.

The record of all Abstract reviewers for this year is listed in the **'People Behind the Conference'** section of this report.

## **Student Presentations:**

All talks and poster presentations were broadly grouped into natural and social sciences with the mix being followed on each day of the conference. Each talk was allotted a total of 15 minutes of which 10 minutes were for the talk and 5 minutes for the Q&A. Poster presentations were allotted a total of 10 minutes, with 3 minutes for the presentation and 7 minutes for the Q&A.

The talks covered a broad range of topics such as human perception of pachyderms, biopolitics of sharing resources, spatio-temporal change in distribution of large mammals and their relation with the changing land use and wildlife crime prosecution.

Similarly, posters ranged from exploring rhino conservation amidst ethnic conflict, and assessing habitat connectivity of a flagship species in human-dominated landscapes to identifying threats and perspectives of rural communities towards wildcat conservation. However, we noted that there was a shortage of abstracts pertaining to the marine and freshwater habitats.

# Student Talks



- |  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| • Factors influencing the habitat-use of owls in a mosaic landscape in Garo Hills north-east India                                       | <b>S Sangeeth<br/>Sailas</b>    |
| • Making' Homes: Biopolitics of sharing resources in the grasslands of Manas National Park   | <b>Anasuya Borah</b>            |
| • Assessing the potential of the Eastern Ghats landscape to support global tiger ( <i>Panthera tigris</i> ) recovery efforts by          | <b>Rohit Subhedar</b>           |
| • Dogs in the Himalaya: Management and risk of disease spillover to wildlife   | <b>Debby Ng</b>                 |
| • Understanding people's perception and attitudes towards elephants in Thadagam Valley Tamil Nadu  | <b>Shweta<br/>Madgulkar</b>     |
| • En-Gendering's Human-Wildlife Conflict and Implications to Conservation  | <b>Sayan Banerjee</b>           |
| • Spatio-temporal change in distribution of large mammals and their relation with the changing land use and land cover of Guwahati       | <b>Amlan Aditya<br/>Goswami</b> |
| • Trade-offs in management of Tendu leaf production in community forest rights areas of Gadchiroli District Maharashtra                  | <b>Anuja Date</b>               |
| • Wildlife crime prosecution: Understanding why wildlife crime cases fail in court   | <b>Shubhra Sotie</b>            |
| • Evaluating the efficacy of metabarcoding versus hair-based microhistology to determine the diet of tigers in Ranthambore Tiger Reserve | <b>Sarang<br/>Mishrikotkar</b>  |
| • Angling for conservation: Citizen contributions to monitoring freshwater fish  | <b>Naren<br/>Sreenivasan</b>    |
| • Avenue figs and associated bird communities in urban landscape of Delhi  | <b>Prakhar Rawal</b>            |

# Student Posters

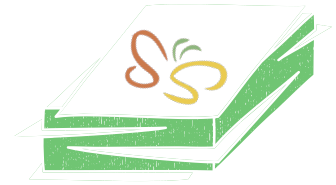


- Saving rhinos amidst ethnic conflict in Karbi Anglong  
**Gargi Sharma**
- Establishing a detection framework for the Forest Owlet using Automated Recording Units  
**Amrutha Rajan**
- Fuelling Change: A holistic community-based conservation initiative for the people wildlife and forests  
**Ashritha Anoop**
- An innovative approach for assessing habitat connectivity of a flagship species in human-dominated landscapes  
**Rajashekhar Niyogi**
- Globally vulnerable small-clawed otter in northeast Bangladesh: Activity pattern of a newly discovered population in a human-dominated riparian mixed-evergreen forest  
**Muntasir Akash**
- Does the benefit outweigh the cost of inhabiting areas close to human settlements for some wild animals?  
**Avantika Thapa**
- Species and habitat-specific detection framework using Automated Recording Units: A case study on the Critically Endangered Jerdon's Courser (*Rhinoptilus bitorquatus*)  
**Chiti Arvind**
- Assessing poaching threats to Tigers using Spatial Monitoring And Reporting Tool (SMART) in the Kawal-Tadoba corridor, Central India  
**Harsh Vardhan Gujja**
- Estimating population density of Wayanad Dancing Frog *Micrixalus saxicola* (Jerdon 1853) by Spatial-explicit capture-recapture in Wayanad  
**Abhijith Vijay**

# Student Posters



- |  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| • Status of Alpine Floristic Diversity at Rohtang Pass Kullu Himachal Pradesh under COVID-19 scenario  | <b>Simran Tomar</b>             |
| • Identifying threats and perspectives of rural communities towards wildcat conservation at Knuckles mountain range Central highlands of Sri Lanka | <b>Chathuranga Dharmarathne</b> |
| • Where to stop-over? Identifying Amur Falcon <i>Falco amurensis</i> refuelling sites across Northeast India                                       | <b>Amarjeet Kaur</b>            |
| • Prey Availability and Predation Pattern of Tigers ( <i>Panthera tigris</i> ) in Sub-Optimal Habitat of Central India                             | <b>Rajasekar Rajaraman</b>      |
| • The 2018 and 2019 Kerala Flood: Reportage by media and attribution to climate change.  | <b>Sahana Subramanian</b>       |
| • Pond Centric Urbanism Towards the conservation of Historical and natural Essence of Rajshahi City  | <b>Md Mashuk Alam</b>           |
| • Commoning coastal Odisha - an assessment of a participatory mapping initiative on governance of commons in Purnabandha Ganjam                    | <b>Vineetha Venugopal</b>       |
| • Ecological correlates of Blackbuck Sociality at Point Calimere Southern India  | <b>Subhasish Arandhara</b>      |



# Student Talk and Poster Awards

The presenters were evaluated on the originality and creativity of their topics, the logical presentation of their research ideas, familiarity with subject matter, clarity of objectives and the talks' relevance to conservation as a whole. For posters, the evaluation parameters were the same as talks, with the addition of clarity and effectiveness of the e-poster.

No ranks were designated, instead, two **Best Talks** were announced:

- **Amlan Aditya Goswami (Research scholar, Cotton University):** Spatio-temporal change in distribution of large mammals and their relation with the changing land use and land cover of Guwahati
- 
- **Debby Ng (PhD Student at Centre for Nature-based Climate Solutions National University of Singapore):** Dogs in the Himalaya: Management and risk of disease spillover to wildlife

The two **Best Poster Presentations** were:

- **Amrutha Rajan (Student, Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Tirupati):** Establishing a detection framework for the Forest Owlet using Automated Recording Units
- **Gargi Sharma (Deputy Program Manager, Counter Wildlife Trafficking, Wildlife Conservation Society-India):** Saving rhinos amidst ethnic conflict in Karbi Anglong



# Workshops

Since this would be the second consecutive time SCCS-Bengaluru was going to be held virtually, the conference team decided to alter the workshop formats to adapt to an online format. Instead of long and short workshops, we decided to have a uniform 2 hour Zoom workshop format with an attendee limit set at 25 people. This decision was taken to deliver an immersive, useful and personalised workshop experience.

The workshops were broadly categorised into technical workshops, conservation workshops, natural and social science technique workshops, writing workshops and taxa-specific workshops. The list comprised well received workshops from previous editions of SCCS-Bengaluru as well as newly accepted proposals.

A minimum of 6 workshops ran concurrently on all 4 days of the conference between 2:30PM - 4:30PM.





# Workshops

## Workshop

- Writing for Researchers
- Know-hows of popular qualitative data analysis software
- The nitty gritty of writing and presenting research
- Bioacoustics in conservation
- Basics of Ant Taxonomy & Ecology
- Language & Ecology – Communicating Nature Through Local Languages
- Writing Successful Grant Applications
- Social Science Method in Conservation Research
- Every object tells a story
- Looking beyond human-wildlife conflict
- Basics of tree identification and phenology

## Resource Person

Kartik Ram

Medha Nayak

Yateendra Joshi

Anand Krishnan, Samira Agnihotri,  
Viral Joshi, Isha Bopardikar

Pranoy Baidya

P Jeganathan

Andrea Phillott

Rajkamal Goswami,  
Ovee Thorat, Anushka Saikia

Vikram Sridhar

Saloni Bhatia & Panel

Sayee Girdhari,  
Geetha Ramaswami,  
Swati Sidhu



# Workshops

## Workshop

## Resource Person

- The challenge of coordinating conservation for Asia's Critically Endangered Vultures: Lessons and application for other conservation examples
- The why, how and what-next of doing a PhD in conservation science, ecology and wildlife biology: you ask the questions, our experts answer them!
- Bridging Animal Cognition with Conservation Biology
- Butterfly conservation from your backyard
- Making effective presentations
- New-age Mechanisms to Achieve Non-Protected Area Focused Conservation
- Writing grants and fellowships in ecological sciences
- Participatory research methods: Why and How?

Chris Bowden

Akshay Surendra + Panel

V.V. Binoy

Souparno Roy

Yateendra Joshi

Anand Pendharkar & Amruta Padgaonkar

Sabuj Bhattacharya & Monica Kaushik

Nayana Udayashankar,  
Bhuvana Balaji,  
Revati Pandya



# Workshops

## Workshop

- Building LGBTQIA+ inclusive spaces in conservation and field ecology - Sharing Circle
- Linear infrastructure development & solutions for connectivity conservation
- Indian Herpetology- is there anything beyond Taxonomy?
- Study design in ecology and conservation
- Conservation story-telling with photography
- The study of Animal behaviour and its applications for conservation

## Resource Person

Milind Pariwakam

Varad Giri

Kavita Isvaran

Kalyan Varma

Samira Agnihotri,  
Nishant Srinivasaiah,  
Devica Ranade

# Panel Discussions

## Decolonising Conservation







As climate change and the conservation of different ecosystems become mainstream action points, it is important to recognise that indigenous knowledge has revealed facts and solutions that the global north's conservation framework has not been able to formulate. Who do we include in the equation when we talk about conservation issues? And when we talk about conservation issues, do we always keep the humans of those places in our considerations? Conservation cannot progress if it is not inclusive and equitable. The world today is witnessing a never before seen resistance towards imperialism. Localisation of conservation efforts and movements is replacing the 'centralised' power dynamic. Using these thoughts and questions as jumping off points, we decided to explore deeper with this panel discussion [that can be viewed on Youtube.](#)

# Panel Discussions

## Careers in Conservation

**Careers in Conservation Panel**



					
<b>Abhijit Paul Zacharia</b>	<b>Anish Andheria</b>	<b>Cara Tejpal (Moderator)</b>	<b>Pooja Gupta</b>	<b>Pramod Krishnan</b>	<b>Shivani Jadeja</b>
Program Manager & lead - Sustainability & Education initiatives - Wipro Foundation	President, Wildlife Conservation Trust (WCT) & Photographer	Conservationist, Writer, Commissioning Editor - Sanctuary Asia & Lead - the Mud on Boots Project	Multimedia artist & Science Communicator	Chief Conservator of Forests - Kerala Forest Department	Ecologist & Assistant Professor of Biological Sciences at KREA University

Looking for a job (especially mid-pandemic) is no easy task, and a career in conservation is definitely not a straight line. We crowd-sourced questions and concerns about embarking on a career in conservation and this discussion was the exploration of the different approaches to, pathways and options. The panel addressed breaking into conservation roles sans science backgrounds, describing several routes while also not shying away from the question of financial viability of roles in conservation. The discussion touched upon the various hats that each panelist wears to thrive in their careers and closed with notes from each highlighting useful skills that have helped and worked for them in their journeys and their advice for the attendees.

The panel discussion [can be viewed on the SCCS-Bengaluru Youtube channel.](#)



# Who's Who in Conservation

Who's Who is aimed at introducing the conference attendees to a range of institutions and initiatives working in the field of conservation and for organisations to connect with the next generation of conservationists. This segment of SCCS allows participants to interact with organisations and understand their work, identify areas of mutual interest as well as identify potential career opportunities. In keeping with the format of the conference this year, Who's Who was carried out on Slack.

Each registered organisation with their representatives, was provided with its own thread, on which conversations, interaction and engagement ensued.

The organisations represented at Who's Who this year were:

1. A Rocha India
2. ATREE Academy
3. Coastal Conservation Foundation
4. Current Conservation Magazine
5. Centre For Wildlife Studies (CWS)
6. Dakshin Foundation
7. Keystone Foundation
8. Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF)
9. Nishand's Photo Ark
10. R Ladies Bangalore
11. Swadha Pardesi Illustration
12. Symbiosis University Biodiversity Cell
13. Vidhi Centre For Legal Policy
14. Wildlife Conservation Society - India
15. Wildlife Research and Conservation Foundation - Kashmir
16. Wildlife SOS
17. Youth For Nature Magazine

# Financials

SCCS-Bengaluru has been developing long-term relationships with many of its donors and is glad to be supported by a diverse set of institutions. Nature Conservation Foundation managed the finances for 2021.

## Income

Owing to the generosity of our donors, we were able to raise **INR 10,10,000/-**. We gratefully acknowledge the financial support we received from the donors listed below:



We also received in-kind support from **Fauna & Flora International**, who generously provided the four prizes for the best student talk and poster winners.

Thanks to these generous donations we were not only able to cover the costs of SCCS 2021 (as outlined in the table on the next page) but also last year's conference for which we did not fundraise given the ongoing pandemic and the pressure on organisations for funding.

Apart from the **INR 10,10,000/-** donated by the institutions listed above, we also raised **INR 1,83,500/-** through conference registrations. These funds from registration fees are set aside towards emergency expenses for future conferences or events.

# Financials

## Expenditure

SCCS-Bengaluru 2021 incurred a total expenditure of:

Particulars	Amount in INR
• Bank Charges & other miscellaneous expenses	1,564
• Consultancy to Conference Manager (March - November)	3,69,000
• Website Design & Maintenance (including GST)	2,36,000
<b>Total =</b>	<b>6,06,564</b>



# People Behind the Conference

## Conference Team

### **Organising Committee**

- Marianne Manuel - Dakshin Foundation
- Nupur Kale - Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) - India
- Samira Agnihotri - Indian Institute of Science (IISc)
- Siddhartha Krishnan - Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE)
- Srinivasan Kasinathan - Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF)
- Suhel Quader - Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF)
- Umesh Srinivasan - Indian Institute of Science (IISc)

### **Conference Manager**

Sara Mahdi

### **Website and Conference Logistics**

**Alpcord Network Events and Conferences Management Company Private Limited**

- Aditya Singh
- Chetan Mansharamani
- Gulshan Singh
- Niranjana Krishnamurti
- Ritesh Yadav
- Saurabh Sharma
- Sumant Kumar
- Tarun Mahajan

### **Financial Management**

**Nature Conservation Foundation**

- Smita Prabhakar
- Vinay Hedge

# People Behind the Conference

## Conference Team

### **Advisory Board**

- Asmita Kabra, Ambedkar University
- Firoz Ahmed, Aaranyak
- Kamal Bawa, University of Massachusetts & Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology
- KV Devi Prasad, Dept. of Ecology and Environmental Sciences, Pondicherry University
- Ravi Bhalla, Foundation for Ecological Research, Advocacy and Learning
- Rhys Green, SCCS - Cambridge
- Sejal Worah, WWF-India
- Shomita Mukherjee, Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History, Coimbatore
- VB Mathur, Wildlife Institute of India

### **Advisory & Welfare Committee**

- Arshiya Bose
- Hari Sridhar
- Jayashree Ratnam
- Kavita Isvaran
- M D Madhusudan

# People Behind the Conference

## Working Groups

### **Abstracts**

- Divya Ramesh
- Devathi Parashuram
- Seshadri KS
- Venkat Ramanujam

### **Plenaries**

- Anand Osuri
- Bittu Kaveri Rajaraman
- Madhuri Ramesh
- Munib Khanyari
- Ranjini Murali

### **Workshops**

- Elrika D'Souza
- Mousumi Ghosh
- Muralidharan M.
- Navendu Page

### **Pre Conference Module**

- Krishnapriya Tamma
- Nitin Rai
- Vena Kapoor
- Vidyadhar Atkore

### **Slack**

- Akshata Pradhan (Citizen Science Conference)
- Amith Kumar (Citizen Science Conference)
- Priti Bangal (Symposium on Bird Monitoring)

# People Behind the Conference

## Abstract Reviewers

Aarthi Sridhar  
Abhijit Das  
Abi Tamim Vanak  
Advait Edgaonkar  
Ajit Menon, MIDS.  
Anant Pande  
Anindita Bhadra  
Anindya Sinha  
Ankila Hiremath  
Anuj Jain  
Aparajita Datta  
Aparna Sundar  
Aravind NA  
Ashwin Vishwanathan  
Ashwini V Mohan  
B.C.Choudhury  
Bejoy Thomas  
Bharath Sundaram  
Budhaditya Das  
Chinta Sidharthan  
David Smith  
Devcharan  
Divya Karnad  
Divya Mudappa  
Divya Vasudev  
G Umapathy  
Ganesh T  
Ghazala Shahabuddin

Gopal Khanal  
Gopi G.V.  
Gopi Sundar  
Gururaja KV  
Harikrishnan S  
Harini Nagendra  
Hita Unnikrishnan  
Iravatee Majgaonkar  
Nirmalya Chatterjee  
Nisarg Prakash  
Nitin Sekar  
Prachi Mehta  
Pradip Krishen  
Pranav Chanchani  
Praveen Bhargava  
Praveen Jayadevan  
Preeti S Virkar  
Priyadarshanan Dharmarajan  
Priyanka Jamwal  
Purnima Barman  
Rajah Jayapal  
Ravi Jambhekar  
Riddhika Kalle  
Rishi Kumar Sharma  
Rohan Arthur  
Rohit Naniwadekar

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## Abstract Reviewers

Ronita Mukherjee  
Sanjay Sondhi  
Sanjeeta Sharma  
Pokharel  
Seena K  
Shashank Dalvi  
Shrinivas Badiger  
Siddappa Shetty  
Sneha Dharwadkar  
Sreedhar Vijayakrishnan  
Subbu Subramanya  
Subramanian KA  
Sudip Banerjee  
Suhel Quader  
Sumanta Bagchi  
Suniti Bhushan Datta  
Jagdish Krishnaswamy  
Jahn timer Joshi  
Kartik Shukul  
Killivallavan Rayar

Krushnamegh Kunte  
Kulbhushansingh Suryawanshi  
Kumar Paudel  
Manju Siliwal  
Meghana Krishnadas  
Meghna Natesh  
Mewa Singh  
Murali M  
Nachiket Kelkar  
Nandini Rajamani  
Nandini Velho  
Narayan Sharma  
Sushma HS  
Trishant Simlai  
Uttara Mendiratta  
Vardhan Patankar  
Veena Srinivasan  
VV Binoy  
VV Robin

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## Workshop Resource Persons

Akshay Surendra  
Amruta Padgaonkar  
Anand Krishnan  
Anand Pendharkar  
Andrea Phillott  
Bhuvana Balaji  
Chris Bowden  
Devica Ranade  
Geetha Ramaswami  
Isha Bopardikar  
Ishika Ramakrishnan  
Kalyan Varma  
Karthik Ram  
Kavita Isvaran  
Medha Nayak  
Milind Pariwakam  
Monika Kaushik  
Nayana Udayashankar

Nishant Srinivasaiah  
Ovee Thorat  
P Jeganathan  
Pronoy Baidya  
Rajkamal Goswami  
Revati Pandya  
Sabuj Bhattacharya  
Sahil Nijhawan  
Saloni Bhatia + Pankaj  
Sekhsaria  
Samira Agnihotri  
Sayee Girdhari  
Souparno Roy  
Swati Sidhu  
V.V. Binoy  
Varad Giri  
Viral Joshi  
Yateendra Joshi

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## Student Presentation Judges

### **Talks:**

- Dipani Sutaria
- Saloni Bhatia
- Shivani Jadeja

### **Posters:**

- Joyshree Chanam
- Meghna Agarwala
- Sahil Nijhawan

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## Volunteers

Abhishek Jamalabad  
Ankitha Manohar  
Anurag Rokade  
Chahat Yadav  
Chandana Pusapati  
Manasvi CM  
Deepika Sharma  
Dhanush Shetty  
Dhwani Dave  
Hitesh ND  
Karan Deshpande  
Kavin D  
Pooja Saravanan  
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## Day 1

### Monday, September 27, 2021



Time	Segment		
9:30 AM - 10:00 AM	Conference Opening		
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Plenary Session - <b>Asha De Vos</b> <i>The power of being local</i>		
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	TALKS		
	Talk Title	Presenter	Institute/Affiliation
11:00 AM - 11:15 AM	Factors influencing the habitat-use of owls in a mosaic landscape in Garo Hills north-east India	S Sangeeth Sailas	Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History (SACON)
11:15 AM - 11:30 AM	Making' Homes: Biopolitics of sharing resources in the grasslands of Manas National Park	Anasuya Borah	Samaj Pragati Sahayog
11:30 AM - 11:45 AM	Assessing the potential of the Eastern Ghats landscape to support global tiger ( <i>Panthera tigris</i> ) recovery efforts	Rohit Subhedar	Wildlife Conservation Society-India
11:45 AM - 12:00 PM	Dogs in the Himalaya: Management and risk of disease spillover to wildlife.	Debby Ng	Centre for Nature-based Climate Solutions National University of Singapore
12:00 PM - 1:10 PM	POSTER PRESENTATIONS		
	Poster Title	Presenter	Institute/Affiliation
12:00 PM - 12:10 PM	Saving rhinos amidst ethnic conflict in Karbi Anglong	Gargi Sharma	Wildlife Conservation Society
12:10 PM - 12:20 PM	Establishing a detection framework for the Forest Owlet using Automated Recording Units	Amrutha Rajan	Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) Tirupati

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12:20 PM - 12:30 PM	Fuelling Change: A holistic community-based conservation initiative for the people wildlife and forests	Ashritha Anoop	Nature Conservation Foundation
12:30 PM - 12:40 PM	An innovative approach for assessing habitat connectivity of a flagship species in human-dominated landscapes	Rajashekhar Niyogi	IISER Kolkata
12:40 PM - 12:50 PM	Globally vulnerable small-clawed otter in northeast Bangladesh: Activity pattern of a newly discovered population in a human-dominated riparian mixed-evergreen forest	Muntasir Akash	Department of Zoology, University of Dhaka
1:10 PM - 2:30 PM	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
2:30 PM - 4:30 PM	WORKSHOPS	WORKSHOPS	WORKSHOPS
	Writing for Researchers (Karthik Ram)	Know-hows of popular qualitative data analysis software (Medha Nayak)	The nitty gritty of writing and presenting research (Yateendra Joshi)
	Bioacoustics in conservation (Anand Krishnan + Samira Agnihotri + Viral Joshi + Isha Bopardikar)	Basics of Ant Taxonomy & Ecology (Pranoy Baidya)	Language & Ecology – Communicating Nature Through Local Languages (P Jeganathan)
4:30 PM - 5:00 PM	Tea ☕	Tea ☕	Tea ☕
5:00 PM - 6:00 PM	Plenary Session - <b>Paula Kahumbu</b> - <i>Wildlife filmmaking as a conservation tool</i>		

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## Day 2

### Tuesday, September 28, 2021



Time	Segment		
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Plenary Session - <b>Arjun Srivathsa</b> - The dog and the funny bone		
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Panel Discussion - <b>Decolonising Conservation</b>		
12:00 PM - 1:10 PM	<b>POSTER PRESENTATIONS</b>		
	<b>Poster Title</b>	<b>Presenter</b>	<b>Institute/Affiliation</b>
12:00 PM - 12:10 PM	Does the benefit outweigh the cost of inhabiting areas close to human settlements for some wild animals?	Avantika Thapa	Zoological Survey of India
12:10 PM - 12:20 PM	Species and habitat-specific detection framework using Automated Recording Units: A case study on the Critically Endangered Jerdon's Courser ( <i>Rhinoptilus bitorquatus</i> )	Chiti Arvind	PhD Student at Indian Institute of Science Education and Research- Tirupati
12:20 PM - 12:30 PM	Assessing poaching threats to Tigers using Spatial Monitoring And Reporting Tool (SMART) in the Kawal-Tadoba corridor, Central India	Harsh Vardhan Gujja	Wildlife conservation Society- India
12:30 PM - 12:40 PM	Estimating population density of Wayanad Dancing Frog <i>Micrixalus saxicola</i> (Jerdon 1853) by Spatial-explicit capture-recapture in Wayanad	Abhijith Vijay	Centre For Wildlife Studies Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University Pookode
12:40 PM - 12:50 PM	Status of Alpine Floristic Diversity at Rohtang Pass Kullu Himachal Pradesh under COVID-19 scenario	Simran Tomar	G.B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment Himachal Regional Centre
12:50 PM - 1:00 PM	Identifying threats and perspectives of rural communities towards wildcat conservation at Knuckles mountain range Central highlands of Sri Lanka	Chathuranga Dharmarathne	Felidae Carnivora Project (FCP) Abimana Development Foundation

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1:10 PM - 2:30 PM	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
2:30 PM - 4:30 PM	<b>WORKSHOPS</b>	<b>WORKSHOPS</b>	<b>WORKSHOPS</b>
Writing Successful Grant Applications (Andrea Phillott)	Social Science Method in Conservation Research (Rajkamal Goswami + Ovee Thorat + Anushka Saikia)	Every object tells a story (Vikram Sridhar)	Looking beyond human-wildlife conflict (Saloni Bhatia + Pankaj Sekhsaria)
	Basics of tree identification and phenology (Sayee Girdhari + Geetha Ramaswami + Swati Sidhu)	Conservation story-telling with photography (Kalyan Varma)	The study of Animal behaviour and its applications for conservation (Samira Agnihotri + Nishant Srinivasiah + Devica Ranade)
4:30 PM - 5:00 PM	<b>Tea</b> ☕	<b>Tea</b> ☕	<b>Tea</b> ☕
5:00 PM - 6:00 PM	Plenary Session - <b>David Borchers</b> - Ecological inferences from sparse data		

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## Day 3

### Wednesday, September 29, 2021

Time	Segment		
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Plenary Session - <b>Radhika Govindarajan</b> - <i>Paltu-Jungli: The fluidity of wildness in contemporary Uttarakhand</i>		
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Panel Discussion - <b>Careers in Conservation</b>		
12:00 PM - 1:10 PM	<b>POSTER PRESENTATIONS</b>		
	<b>Poster Title</b>	<b>Presenter</b>	<b>Institute/Affiliation</b>
12:00 PM - 12:10 PM	Where to stop-over? Identifying Amur Falcon Falco amurensis refuelling sites across Northeast India	Amarjeet Kaur	Wildlife Institute of India
12:10 PM - 12:20 PM	PREY AVAILABILITY AND PREDATION PATTERN OF TIGERS (Panthera tigris) IN SUB-OPTIMAL HABITAT OF CENTRAL INDIA	Rajasekar Rajaraman	Wildlife Institute of India
12:20 PM - 12:30 PM	The 2018 and 2019 Kerala Flood: Reportage by media and attribution to climate change.	Sahana Subramanian	Azim Premji University
12:30 PM - 12:40 PM	Pond Centric Urbanism Towards the conservation of Historical and natural Essence of Rajshahi City	Md Mashuk Alam	Urban Design and Landscape Division, Department of Architecture Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET)
12:40 PM - 12:50 PM	Commoning coastal Odisha - an assessment of a participatory mapping initiative on governance of commons in Purnabandha Ganjam	Vineetha Venugopal	Dakshin Foundation
12:50 PM - 1:00 PM	Ecological correlates of Blackbuck Sociality at Point Calimere Southern India	Subhasish Arandhara	AVC College Mayiladuthurai
1:10 PM - 2:30 PM	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>

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2:30 PM - 4:30 PM	WORKSHOPS	WORKSHOPS	WORKSHOPS
	The challenge of coordinating conservation for Asia's Critically Endangered Vultures: Lessons and application for other conservation examples (Chris Bowden)	Tips and Tricks to apply for PhD programs in ecology, wildlife biology and conservation science (Akshay Surendra + Panelists)	Bridging Animal Cognition with Conservation Biology (V.V. Binoy)
	Butterfly conservation from your backyard (Souparno Roy)	Making effective presentations (Yateendra Joshi)	New-age Mechanisms to Achieve Non-Protected Area Focused Conservation (Anand Pendharkar + Amruta Padgaonkar)
4:30 PM - 5:00 PM	<b>Tea</b>	<b>Tea</b>	<b>Tea</b>
5:00 PM - 6:00 PM	TALKS		
	<b>Talk Title</b>	<b>Presenter</b>	<b>Institute/Affiliation</b>
5:00 PM - 5:15 PM	Understanding people's perception and attitudes towards elephants in Thadagam Valley Tamil Nadu.	Shweta Madgulkar	
5:15 PM - 5:30 PM	En-Gendering's Human-Wildlife Conflict and Implications to Conservation	Sayan Banerjee	National Institute of Advanced Studies
5:30 PM - 5:45 PM	Spatio-temporal change in distribution of large mammals and their relation with the changing land use and land cover of Guwahati.	Amlan Aditya Goswami	Cotton University
5:45 PM - 6:00 PM	Trade-offs in management of Tendu leaf production in community forest rights areas of Gadchiroli District Maharashtra	Anuja Date	ATREE, MAHE

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## Day 4

### Thursday, September 30, 2021



Time	Segment		
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Plenary Session - <b>Ambika Aiyadurai</b> - Wildlife researchers and local communities: Politics of Encounter		
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	<b>TALKS</b>		
	<b>Talk Title</b>	<b>Presenter</b>	<b>Institute/Affiliation</b>
11:00 AM - 11:15 AM	Wildlife crime prosecution: Understanding why wildlife crime cases fail in court	Shubhra Sotie	Wildlife Conservation Society
11:15 AM - 11:30 AM	Evaluating the efficacy of metabarcoding versus hair-based microhistology to determine the diet of tigers in Ranthambore Tiger Reserve.	Sarang Mishrikotkar	National Centre for Biological Sciences
11:30 AM - 11:45 AM	Angling for conservation: Citizen contributions to monitoring freshwater fish	Naren	Wildlife Association of South India
11:45 AM - 12:00 PM	Avenue figs and associated bird communities in urban landscape of Delhi	Prakhar Rawal	Centre for Ecology Development and Research
12:00 PM - 1:10 PM	<b>Who's Who</b>		
1:10 PM - 2:30 PM	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>

2:30 PM - 4:30 PM	WORKSHOPS	WORKSHOPS	WORKSHOPS
	Writing grants and fellowships in ecological sciences ( <b>Sabuj Bhattacharya + Monica Kaushik</b> )	Participatory research methods: Why and How? ( <b>Nayana Udayshankar + Bhuvana Balaji + Revati Pandya</b> )	Building LGBTQIA+ inclusive spaces in conservation and field ecology
	Linear infrastructure development & solutions for connectivity conservation ( <b>Milind Pariwakam</b> )	Indian Herpetology- is there anything beyond Taxonomy? ( <b>Varad Giri</b> )	Study design in ecology and conservation ( <b>Kavita Isvaran</b> )
4:30 PM - 5:00 PM	<b>Tea</b> ☕	<b>Tea</b> ☕	<b>Tea</b> ☕
5:00 PM - 6:00 PM	<b>Closing Ceremony</b>		

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