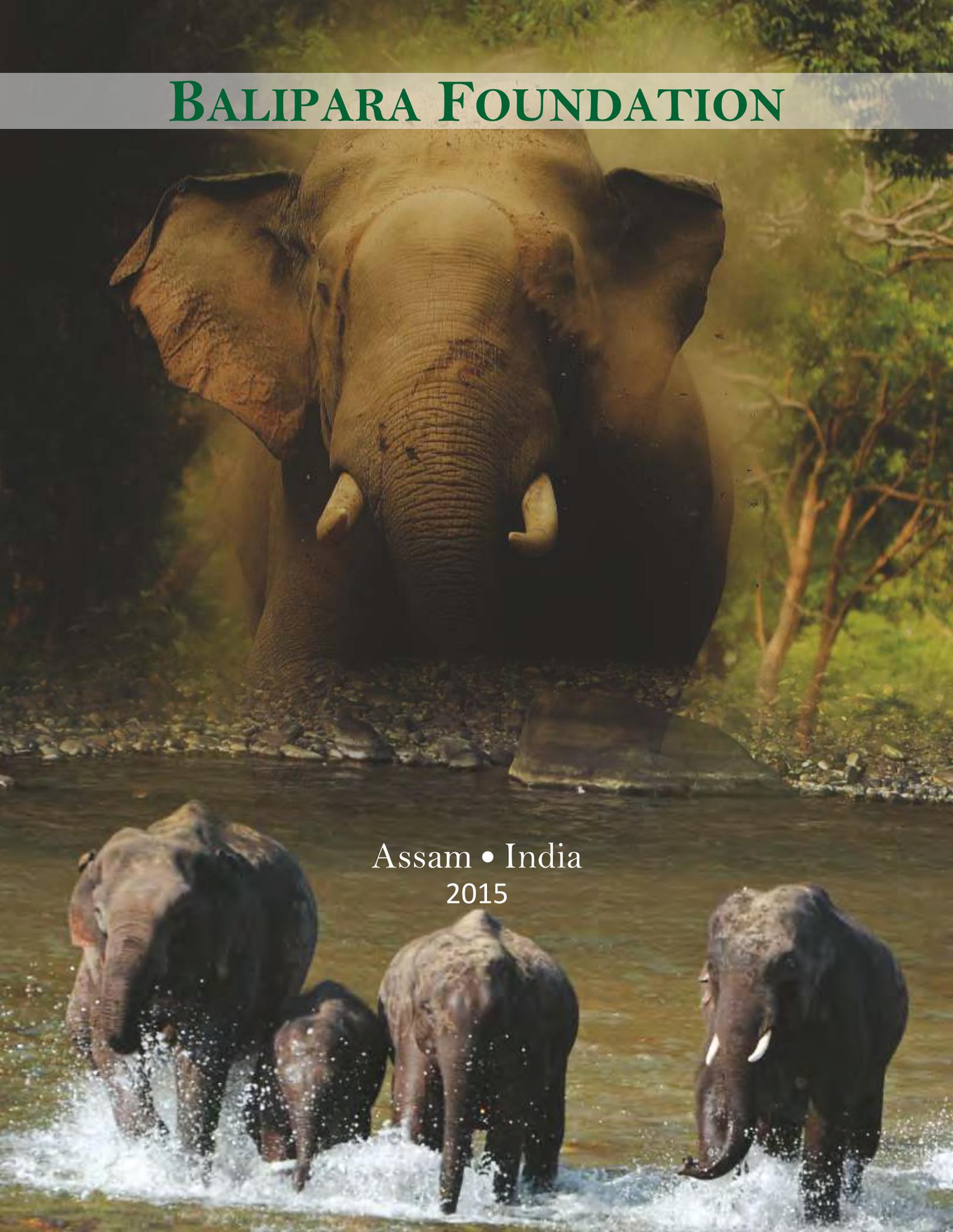


BALIPARA FOUNDATION

Assam • India
2015



This booklet was specially compiled to capture the spirit of Balipara Foundation & two key events – ‘Elephant Talk: Asian Elephants in the Wild’ and the ‘Balipara Foundation Awards 2014’.
Designed and compiled by
Balipara Foundation.

Acknowledgements

Balipara Foundation Team comprising of Sanjid Dutta, Robin Eastment, Nitu Kumar Kalita, Pragyan Sharma, Gautam Baruah, Sagar Shringarpure, Sangeeta Menezes and Kenrick Ferns.

Balipara Foundation acknowledges the contribution of Bittu Sahgal, Daanish Shastri, Anirudh Nair, Gaurav Shirodkar

REGISTERED OFFICE:

Navin Enclave, A1, 1st floor,
Mother Teresa Road, Zoo Narengi,
Guwahati – 781021, Assam, India.
www.baliparafoundation.com



BALIPARA FOUNDATION

Assam • India

CONTENTS

BALIPARA FOUNDATION: AN INTRODUCTION	5
BALIPARA FOUNDATION PROJECT SUMMARY 2015-16	8
ASIAN ELEPHANTS IN THE WILD: A DIALOGUE	10
BALIPARA FOUNDATION AWARDS 2014	16
MARK ROLAND SHAND – ELEPHANT MAN, WRITER AND CONSERVATIONIST	24
SAXE’S ELEPHANT!	26
TEN WAYS TO SAVE ELEPHANTS	34
BIJLI PRASAD - AN ASSAM ICON	39
A BUCKET LIST FOR ELEPHANT AFICIONADOS	40
GENTLE GIANTS ON THE MOVE	44
BALIPARA FOUNDATION AWARDS 2013	48
ANNOUNCING ASIAN ELEPHANTS IN THE WILD: ELEPHANT TALK - 2015	51
ANNOUNCING BALIPARA FOUNDATION AWARDS 2015	52



Though I have spent the last three decades of my life in the concrete and steel cities of India and a few places around the world, my childhood couldn't have been spent in a more contrasting ambiance. The Northern Eastern Region of India (NER) back then was painted green with sights and sounds that soothed the senses. Every time I came back here, which were short visits but fairly frequent, I found the hues lighter, the sounds quieter and the sights rarer. A lot was said back then about how development was going to catch up with the NER, as it always invariably did. Though I would prefer the NER to remain exactly as it was, say, 40 years ago, I know that one would have to be very naive to think that way. The changes of development are upon us and one can't deny change. But we can surely change the course of change. Mankind has demonstrated this ability frequently enough to be able to do so again.

When we founded the Balipara Foundation, almost eight years ago, we did so with the belief that we could make a difference. We didn't aim to be experts in any particular area. We aspired to facilitate change & transformation. We have strived to securitize assets around land, water, energy and biodiversity resources. We have promoted organic agriculture and renewable energy, implemented water harvesting and animal husbandry; initiated elephant conservation projects, set up a native plant conservation center, instituted the Balipara Foundation Awards and organized an international Asian Elephant Conference. We have had more downs than ups but have managed to consistently grow over the years. In many ways we feel that we have just started.

This booklet was conceived to bring to light the twin-events we organized on the 6th & 7th of November 2014.

ELEPHANT TALK & BALIPARA FOUNDATION AWARDS 2014

It was one of the weeks following the sad day when I first heard of the unfortunate demise of my close friend Mark Ronald Shand... I then conferred with my team led by Robin, Sanjid & Nitu from Balipara Foundation and Nicholas Claxton & Khyne U Mar and together we charted out our plans for the Dialogue - Asian Elephants in the Wild, supported by Vivek Menon and Sandeep Tiwari of WTI. We thought collective wisdom of experts from various domains of knowledge from all over the world could provide a platform in search of solutions to secure the future of Asian Elephant Populations. The primary objectives being to promote a collaborative spirit between government and non-government agencies to chart out a roadmap for addressing key issues and challenges and act as a springboard to facilitate and accelerate Trans-boundary partnerships to protect vital habitats, secure migratory routes and diffuse man-elephant conflict in the region.

The dates for the Dialogue, 6th & 7th of November 2014, coincided with the 2nd Balipara Foundation Awards, our annual commitment of earth heroes of the eastern himalayan region. It was perhaps the most vibrant gathering of environmental organizations & knowledge partners (IUCN, WWF, WTI, WPSI, Aaranyak, APPL Foundation, Development Alternatives, Bhutan Foundation, Sanctuary Asia, Elephant Family, National Geographic, Nature Conservancy, Rhino Foundation and Club of Rome), educational institutions (Center for Ecological Studies, Research & Information System for Developing Countries, University of Canterbury, University of Chiang Mai, Mahidol University, University of Sheffield, Tezpur University and Guwahati University), besides strong participation from the Governments of Myanmar, Bhutan, India & States of India – Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Assam.

The key outcome of the conference was the 10 Point Resolution that emerged out of the many deliberations, discussions and arguments. The Resolutions were driven by a Panel of Experts comprising of Proff Raman Sukumar, Dr Ajay Desai, Dr Vivek Menon, Mr Ravi Singh, Ms Belinda Wright, Mr Nicholas Claxton & Dr Khyne U Mar.

Last, but not the least, I have to thank our sponsors that included APPL, TATA Global Beverages, SHREI, WTI, Hindustan Unilever for their extraordinary effort in support of the Dialogue & Awards.

We are hopeful that we will be able to live up to the resolutions we have made this year and promote a collaborative spirit among organizations committed to the future of the Asian Elephants.

Ravindra Bhatnagar

Founder and Managing Trustee,
Balipara Foundation

BALIPARA FOUNDATION

Assam • India

INTRODUCTION

Instituted on July 4, 2007, the Balipara Foundation has been a leading advocate of the principles of Naturenomics™, both in theory and in practice. The Naturenomics™ model seeks to bring the objectives of economics in line with the imperatives of nature. Located in the state of Assam, North Eastern Region of India, and being part of the Indo-Myanmar Biodiversity Hotspot, the location has inspired its vision of creating a Biodiversity Knowledge Bank. The foundation is firm in its belief that “interdependence is of greater value than independence” will strive to create interdependencies between all life forms and natural systems with the objectives of conserving and preserving our natural heritage.

Naturenomics™ - A Differentiated Approach to Capital Formation

Naturenomics™ relates to capital formation for a region or an organisation through the creation of ecologically ‘compliant’ assets in a sustainable manner. The current model of economic development forces us to make a choice between development and sustaining natural resources. Contrary to this belief, Naturenomics™ believes that this need not be a choice, and in fact we can have economic development while sustaining our natural resources.

Naturenomics™ addresses capital formation through the recognition of ecological assets - ‘Nature Capital’. A Naturenomics™ based economy attempts to secure 4 key natural assets - food, water, energy and environment. Practically, this means:

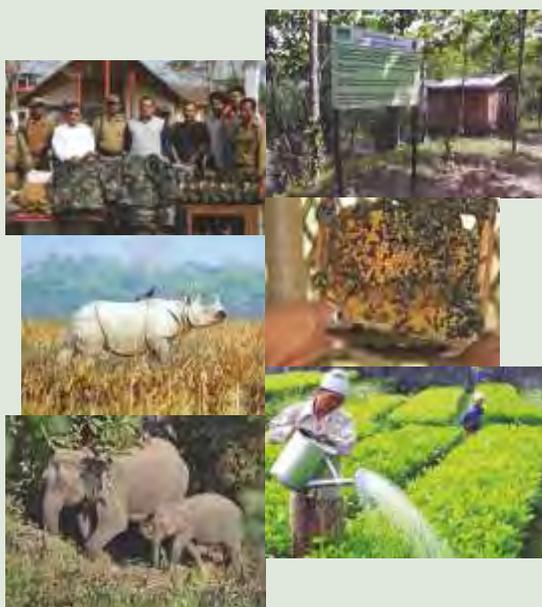
- Deriving our food and water needs through effective land and water resource management.
- Satisfying our energy needs through hydrogen and solar based fuels rather than carbon based fuels.
- Meeting our ever active consumer appetite by increasing reuse and recycling and avoiding extraction.

Unlocking Naturenomics™: Verticals and Projects

- Biodiversity Conservation**
 - Biodiversity Parks
 - Afforestation
 - Endemic Plant Conservation
 - Biodiversity Inventories
- Conservation Alternatives**
 - Waste Management & Recycling
 - Water Portability
 - Renewable Off-grid Energy
- Research & Publication**
 - Naturenomics™ Series
 - Organic Growth
 - Rainfall & Climate Research
 - Biodiversity Guide Books
 - Aruna Assam - Trans Boundary Corridor Connectivity
 - Indo-Myan Biodiversity Park
- Events & Conferences**
 - Annual Balipara Foundation Awards
 - Annual Asian Elephant Conference



Background: Biodiversity Conservation



Wildlife Conservation:

- Engaged in wildlife protection at Kaziranga National Park (KNP) since 1988.
- Facilitated grants & donation worth 10 million INR to KNP.
- Campaigned for relocation of illegal commercial establishments from the core areas of KNP.
- Campaigned for relocation of illegal human settlements from the Addition Areas of Kaziranga National Park.
- Donated patrolling gear and motorized land & water vehicles in aid of Forest Protection Rangers.

Plant Conservation:

- Created & collated taxonomical database of 1,100 species of endemic plants of Assam, including 400 medicinal plants and 247 wild edible plants.
- Plantation projects on MAP, bamboo & endemic tree varieties.
- Endemic Nursery Project for 1 million saplings initiated.

Conservation Alternatives

Balipara Foundation Experimental Station:

- Organic Farming Initiative with 1,000 farmers, in partnership with Morarka Foundation & OneCert Asia.
- Vermicompost & Biofertiliser Production Center.
- Model Dairy, Poultry & Fishery Units.
- Training Center for Organic Cultivation, Solar & Biogas Applications, Water Harvesting & Solid Waste Management.
- Developed PoPs for Organic Agriculture, Input production, Dairy & Fishery Management for Amalgamated Plantations Pvt. Ltd.



Extension:

- Rural Tourism Partnership with six ethnic communities. Experienced by more than 300 travelers over the last three years.
- Fishery development with the tea industry.
- Introduced the “Lifesaver” Portable Water Filter across Assam.

- > The Balipara Foundation Experimental Station at Wild Mahseer Resort was declared an “organic” campus in 2008 by OneCert Asia Organic Certification Agency.
- > The Experimental Station was also awarded the NatureSecure Certificate for Land Sustainability.

Publications

Subjects Covered:

- Ecological Balance ● Expanding Human Footprint ● Reflections on Managing WATER, Earth’s Greatest Natural Resources ● Green Accounting
- Food Security ● Low Carbon Future ● Global Warming & Climate Change
- Green Travels ● Sustainable Economics ● Sustainable Urban Designs
- Low Carbon Energy & New Energy Economy ● Harvesting Water ● Waste & “Garbage”- Rethinking Resource ● Urban Air Quality Management ● Forest, Carbon, Climate Change ● Green Industry ● Green Events ● Green Manufacturing ● Green Jobs ● Sustainable Mining ● Rainfall & Temperature Analysis Study ● Aruna Assam - Trans Boundary Wildlife Corridor Connectivity in Assam & Arunachal Pradesh ● Indo-Myan Biodiversity Park ● Community Climate Change & Mitigation

Contributors:

- California Environmental Associates ● Lester R Brown ● Indira Khurana
- Harvard Business Review ● Tilburg University ● Robert Gilman ● World Bank ● WWF ● GMS ● Naturefirst ● Redefining Progress ● University of Vermont ● Content University ● Sanctuary Asia ● ANICMR Bulletin ● Nicholas Stern



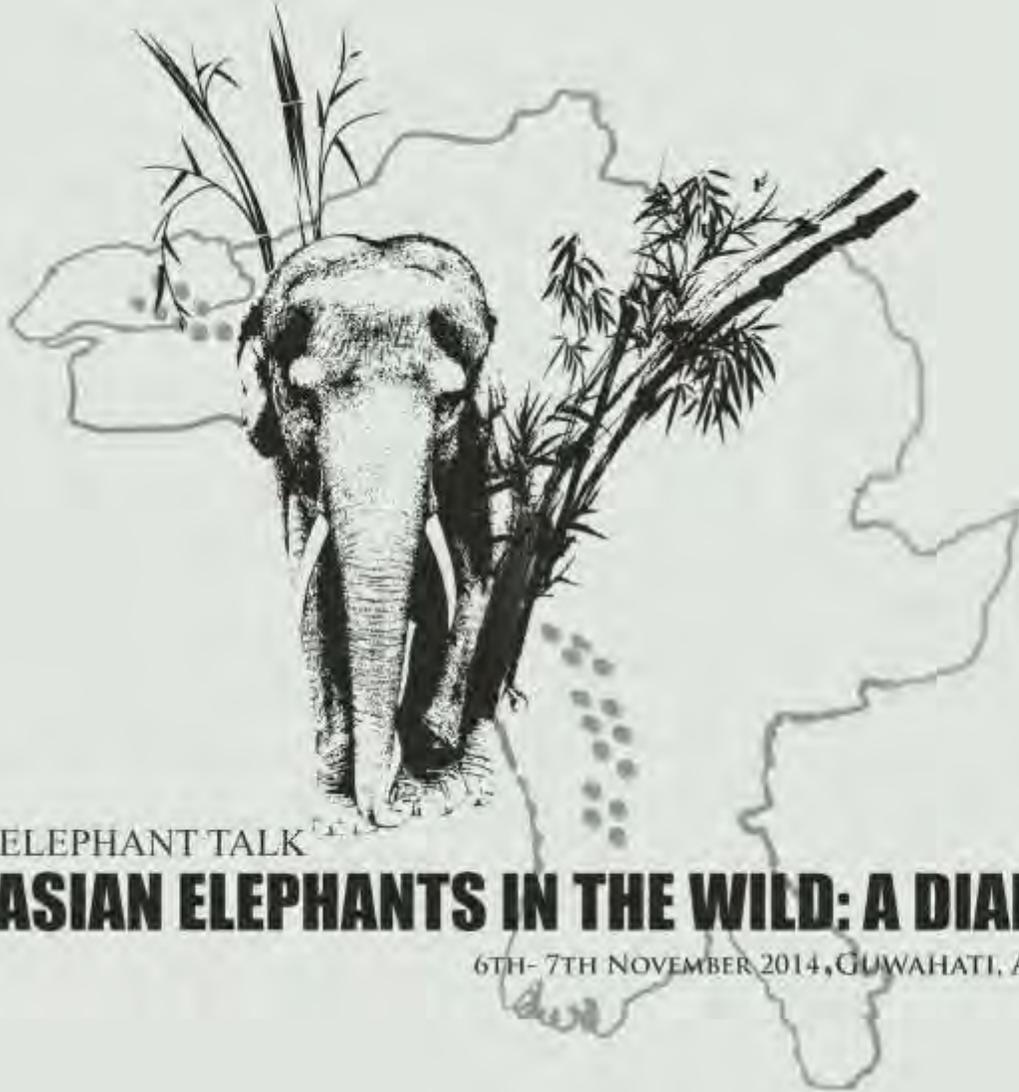
BALIPARA FOUNDATION

Assam • India

Project Summary 2015-16

Verticals	Projects	Overview	Investments in 2015-16 (Million INR)
Biodiversity Conservation	Plant Conservation Center Assam, India	<p>The objectives of the initiative is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Create a collection of 1 Million plant saplings of rare & ecologically valuable species. ➤ Develop a Seed Bank & Herbarium of local plant species ➤ Undertake small & large scale afforestation programmes for creating plant banks in multiple locations across the North Eastern Region of India. 	4
	Elephant Movement Mapping in the Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong Landscape Assam, India & Bhutan	<p>Partnered by WCS-India Program & APPL Foundation, the Project will undertake the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Create a mapped database of Elephant movement between ➤ Kaziranga National Park and Karbi Anglong Hills. Identify passages “most used” and “under threat” ➤ Submit Report & Recommendations to Park Authorities and Forest Department of Assam ➤ Launch campaign for “action-ing” recommendations 	3
	Human-Elephant Conflict in Nameri Assam, India	<p>The Project will involve the following initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Research on Elephant Movement & Conflict Regions District on the fringe areas of Nameri National Park and in the Hattigor Region 	3
	Human-Elephant Conflict in Hatigor Assam, India & Bhutan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Document existing methods and Develop practical models of Human-Elephant Conflict Management ➤ Document behavioral impacts of conflict on both humans & elephants 	3
Naturenomics Alternatives	Lokhra Bazaar Assam, India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The objectives of the Project would be to create the “cleanest” rural market in the North Eastern Region of India. ➤ The scope of the Project would include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Waste Management. ➢ Sanitation & Facilities. ➢ Renewable Alternatives. ➢ Smart Landscape & Structural Design. ➤ The Balipara Foundation will form collaborations with expert organizations (Developmental Alternatives, TU and the likes) for delivering the scope of the Project. 	2

Verticals	Projects	Overview	Investments in 2015-16 (Million INR)
Naturenomics Alternatives	Naturenomics Store Assam, India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Based out of the Site Office in Wild Mahseer, Balipara, the Naturenomics Store will offer the following products: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Plants, Saplings, Seed Collections, Herbarium Sheets ➤ Recycled Memorabilia ➤ Framed Wildlife and Plant Photos ➤ Maps ➤ Local Handicraft ➤ Bamboo, Cane & Wood Items ➤ Books ➤ The Store will design its own product portfolios and generate customized products through a network of local producers. 	1
Events	Asian Elephants in the Wild: A Dialogue 2015 (AEIW 15) Assam, India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop an “experience-sharing” platform for AEIW 15- building upon the momentum generated through AEIW 14 ➤ The purpose of the Elephant Talk would be for organizations & people to come together and talk about their experiences in Elephant Conservation and therefore catalyzing the process of knowledge sharing. ➤ Ensure participation from all stakeholder groups including communities, governments, corporate, NGOs, Research & Conservation groups, policy makers. ➤ Integrate site visits to Balipara Foundation & other Elephant Conservation Projects as post-event activity. ➤ Date of Event 5th & 6th Nov'15 	4
	Balipara Foundation Awards 2015 (BFA 15) Eastern Himalaya: West Bengal, North Bengal, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura & Assam, India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Now in its 3rd Edition, the objectives of BFA 15 would be to honor grassroots environmentalists & conservationists that have contributed towards the protection of biodiversity in the eastern himalayan region. ➤ The purpose of the awards is to highlight successful & innovative case-studies towards a sustainable future with the aim of knowledge & experience sharing. ➤ Date of Event 6th Nov 15 	5
	Pakke Paga Conservation Festival Arunachal Pradesh, India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Festival has been initiated primarily to tell the story of the local Nyishi Community in conserving Hornbills in and around the Pakke Tiger Reserve in Arunachal Pradesh. ➤ Conceptualized around the objectives of promoting tourism and community based conservation. 	3
Publication	Naturenomics Series Volume 5 Global	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Following up on Naturenomics Volume 5 that presents a global viewpoint on the subject of Water, Volume 6 will bring into focus the “problem of waste” and the opportunities around it. 	2
TOTAL INVESTMENTS			30 Million INR



ELEPHANT TALK

“ASIAN ELEPHANTS IN THE WILD: A DIALOGUE”

6TH- 7TH NOVEMBER 2014, GUWAHATI, ASSAM

- The human population stands at seven billion, increasing by 65 per cent over the last 100 years.
- The Asian elephant population stands at approximately thirty thousand, decreasing by 90% over the last 100 years.

“Elephants don’t acknowledge borders that divide forest, but as forests

become fragmented and migratory routes disappear, how do we sustain elephant populations in the future? Fragmented habitats and disappearing migratory routes have led to a catastrophic shrinkage of elephant populations and geographic range and have left remaining populations struggling in isolated pockets”.

‘Asian Elephants in the Wild: A Dialogue’ was conceptualised by the Balipara Foundation to chart out a roadmap for transboundary conservation between the countries of Bhutan-India-Myanmar, with the Asian elephant as the flagship species. These countries are home to approximately 15,000 Asian elephants, almost 50 per cent of



Chief Minister Assam, Shri Tarun Gogoi (center) along with Founder & Managing Trustee, Shri Ranjit Barthakur and Dasho Paljor J. Dorji at the inaugural session of the conference



From left : Mike Pandey, Dr. Khyne U Mar, Nicholas Claston, Ranjit Barthakur, Robin Eastment addressing a press conference

the entire Asian elephant population. The conference will bring together thought leaders, conservationists, environmental activists, green gurus, sociologists, anthropologists and geographers from both governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to address, deliberate and offer viable and actionable solution on wildlife corridor management, human-elephant conflict mitigation and habitat sustainability mapping.

The discussions and deliberations will revolve around three technical sessions and will attempt to not just highlight key related issues, but more importantly, will look for solutions in a set of resolutions that will be adopted for future initiatives and action. Some of the key topics to be discussed are as follows:

- Establishing the concept of transboundary conservation as a critical tool for wildlife and habitat conservation.
- Focusing on transboundary partnership for the survival of Asian elephant populations.
- Highlighting the opportunities in Bhutan-India-Myanmar.
- Looking at successful models established worldwide.
- Discussing opportunities and challenges.
- Understanding the technologies and expertise available.
- Formation of a working committee.
- Potential areas for transboundary migrating route for elephants.
- Focusing on proper survey/study of Asian elephant populations and proposed migratory route bordering Bhutan-India-Myanmar.
- Habitat and sustainability mapping of Bhutan-India- Myanmar Border Regions.
- Pledge for funding.



Deepak Atal, Chairman APPL Foundation at the Conference

Nicholas Claxton, *WOW Media Co*: Nicholas Claxton is the co-founder, commercial and strategic director of WOW Media Co - a branding and communications company which is being launched in Dubai in January 2015. With a strong working knowledge and proven experience of the Middle East, Nicholas has also been spearheading the editorial and commercial strategy for the launch of a 24X7 satellite TV Channel and is the former managing director of Elaph Publishing - one of the largest and respected online daily newspapers in the Arab world. He is also an award-winning documentary film maker with an extensive track record and credits as an executive producer, director and producer with the BBC, ITV, Channel 4, National Geographic, Discovery, A&E Network, Disney, among many others.



Khyne U. Mar, *University of Sheffield*: As a trained vet, Khyne has spent years studying captive working elephants throughout Southeast Asia. Her work is dedicated to helping find ways to improve the breeding rates and survival of the world's largest captive population of elephants. Currently she is affiliated to the University of Sheffield as a Postdoctoral Research Associate. Popularly known as the Elephant Lady of Myanmar, the major aim of her research project is to provide Myanmar Government with better strategies to conserve the endangered wild population of elephants in Myanmar.

Prof. Raman Sukumar, *Center for Ecological Studies*: Raman Sukumar is a professor and the chairman of the Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science (IISc.) His field of specialisation is Ecology and Conservation Biology with a focus on Asian elephant ecology, population dynamics, wildlife-human conflict and tropical forest ecology.



Dasho Paljor J Dorji, *National Environment Commission, Government of Bhutan*: J. Dorji, popularly known as 'Benji' has served the Royal Government of Bhutan in a number of capacities. Currently he is the Special Advisor, National Environment Commission, Royal Government of Bhutan. He has been involved in or initiated most of Bhutan's Environmental programs and is the Founder of the Royal Society for the Protection of Nature in Bhutan (RSPN), Bhutan's First Environmental NGO and is the Founder President of the Bhutan Ornithological Society as well as the Bhutan Ecological Society.



THE KAZIRANGA INHERITANCE, Anish Andheria: Elephants have a tightly-knit family structure, with herds led by a matriarch, generally the most experienced female. Other members include younger females, sub-adult males and calves of varying ages. The young are extremely well-protected and generally flanked by adults. Elephants share their home with rhinos, which can attain great speeds, despite their bulk.

Dr. Jagdish Kishwan, WTI: Dr Jagdish Kishwan is an internationally acclaimed climate change and forestry specialist with interest in wildlife and agroforestry. He is a distinguished member of the Indian Forest Service, and has held important assignments including that of the Director General, Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), the prestigious forestry research organisation of national and international repute, and the Head of Forestry Force, Jammu and Kashmir State. He retired on September 30, 2012, as Director Wildlife Preservation, Government of India. Presently he is Chief Advisor - Policy with the Wildlife Trust of India, a well-known NGO working for conservation of wild animals and their habitats.



Piers Locke, University of Canterbury, Department of Sociology and Anthropology: Piers trained in South Asian Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, and in Anthropology at the University of Kent. He is a lecturer in anthropology at the University of Canterbury. He is a social anthropologist whose main research interests focus on human-animal relations, (particularly captive elephant management), embracing issues of indigenous knowledge, apprenticeship learning, religious practice, history, and identity. He also has interests in the ethnography of occupational communities and academic life in the contemporary university. His primary area of regional expertise is Nepal. Piers' doctoral research entailed living with and apprenticing as an elephant handler in the government stables of the Chitwan National Park. This included production of an ethnographic documentary called Servants of Ganesh, which focuses on the practical training and ritual initiation of a juvenile elephant and his handler.



Belinda Wright, Wildlife Protection Society of India: Belinda is the Executive Director of the Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI). Working with state forest and police officials, she has been responsible for hundreds of seizures and raids on poaching gangs. Under her leadership, WPSI also works with communities in the Sundarbans to promote conservation efforts. Wright has been a wildlife photographer and filmmaker for the National Geographic Channel and has also won two Emmy Awards and 14 other major international awards for her National Geographic film Land of the Tiger. She has also been conferred with the Carl Zeiss Wildlife Conservation Award in 2005.



SESSION 2



Ajay Desai, IUCN: Ajay A. Desai is the Co-Chair of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Asian Elephant Specialist Group and a Member of the Steering Committee of Project Elephant, MoEF (Government of India). He is also a member of the Task Force set up by the Karnataka High Court to advise on the conservation of elephants and management of human-elephant conflict. After obtaining his Masters' in Marine Biology in 1983, Ajay moved on to doing research on elephants for the past 30 years. Being an animal lover, Ajay has also working with other wildlife such as giant squirrels, tigers, leopards, wild dogs, deer and gaur, and has conducted a range of research in South India, and South East Asia.

Dr. Rathin Barman, WTI: A wildlife biologist by training, Dr. Rathin Barman has been associated with the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) since 2001 when he joined as a manager. He has been instrumental in the organisation's growth in the Northeast and is currently Coordinator for WTI projects in the region. In 1998, he was awarded a doctorate for his research on "An ecological analysis of the wetlands in relation to waterbird diversity of Brahmaputra Valley, Assam". At WTI, Rathin works with a team of wildlife biologists on projects such as elephant corridor securement, human-animal conflict mitigation, and wildlife rehabilitation.



Dr. Sonali Ghosh, Manas National Park: Dr. Ghosh is one of the most dynamic IFS Officer in the North Eastern Region of India. Currently serving as Deputy Director of the political conflict-riddled Manas National Park, Ghosh has had first-hand experience of the many challenges that haunt conservation initiatives in many parts of the region. She has presented a paper on 'Armed conflict and its impact on wildlife habitat: a case study from the Manas Tiger Reserve and World Heritage Site, India'- a first of its kind report from Assam. The paper was subsequently presented before the Royal Geographical Society 2012 Annual Meeting. She also plans to open a captive elephant and mahout training centre in Assam in the near future.

Varun Goswami, Wildlife Conservation Society, India Program: Varun is a Senior Research Fellow at the WSC-India Program. A PhD in Interdisciplinary Ecology from the University of Florida, he has researched and written extensively on habitat management, animal conflict, occupancy estimation and modelling and geographical ecology. He currently leads WCS India's research and conservation projects on Asian elephants.



Dr. Parntep Ratanakorn, Mahidol University: Dr. Ratanakorn is an Associate Professor and also a Director in the Monitoring and Surveillance Center for Zoonotic Disease on Wildlife and Exotic Animal (MoZWE). He gained his Masteral in Pathobiology at Mahidol University in 1980. He is one of the Executive Board of VPAT, Executive Board Member of Zoological Park Organisation under Royal Patronage and an Executive Board Member of the Veterinary Council of Thailand. He has 13 publications and has released seven books.

SESSION 3

Vivek Menon, *Wildlife Trust of India*: Vivek Menon is a conservation biologist who has worked on the conservation of a number of endangered species including the elephant and rhino. He is the author or editor of eight wildlife books including the bestselling Field Guide to Mammals of India, scores of technical reports and more than a hundred articles in various scientific and popular publications. Vivek serves on a number of governmental and non-governmental boards and committees, most recently as a member of the Elephant Task Force of the Ministry of Environment and Forests that suggested a complete revamp of India's elephant conservation strategy.



a snap shot of dialogue delivery by the delegates during the conference



from left: Ajay Desai (IUCN), Belinda Wright (WPSI), Dr. Khyne U. Mar (Sheffieled University) and Ranjit Barthakur (Balipara Foundation)

BALIPARA FOUNDATION

Assam • India

KEY RESOLUTIONS

Elephant Talk 2014.

6th & 7th of November 14

1. ASIAN ELEPHANTS THINK TANK

Establish a regional Think Tank with a nodal officer from Bhutan, Myanmar and India to drive the implementation of the major recommendations of Elephant Talk 14

2. RESOURCE/KNOWLEDGE CENTRE

To establish a resource/knowledge centre for elephants in order to preserve the rich legacy of elephants in culture and nature of the region.

3. ELEPHANT SCIENCE

Bring back the focus on the managed Elephant range as a cornerstone for Wild Elephant Conservation through good science tempered with inclusive sociology, adaptive management and pragmatism.

4. MEASURABLE TARGETS

Clearly defined objectives with measurable targets and systematic monitoring for achieving elephant conservation

5. TRANS-BOUNDARY PROTECTION

Enable trans-boundary protection and maintenance of biological diversity, of natural and associated cultural resources and the promotion of peace and cooperation by the formation of bilateral Peace Parks with the Asian elephant as a flagship species

6. CAPTIVE ELEPHANT

To promote the welfare of captive elephant and its management, establish a training centre for mahouts, and wildlife managers and veterinarians

7. ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Coordination of enforcement agencies in India and with other countries to bring down illegal wildlife and elephant derivative trade (new trends observed by traffic) request by representation to both state and central governments

8. WILDLIFE PROTECTION ACTS

Harmonise wildlife protection acts of India, Bhutan and Myanmar for elephant conservation to the extent possible

9. GREEN CORRIDORS

Protect, augment and strengthen green corridors at the Indo Bhutan and Indo Myanmar borders including using innovative tea garden management strategies.

10. GENERATION NEXT

Involve Generation Next in already existing programmes eg. A south Asian Elephant Youth Conference to sensitize them.

BALIPARA FOUNDATION AWARDS 2014

7th November, Guwahati, Assam



REWARDING ENVIRONMENT: SALUTING ECO CHAMPIONS FROM THE EASTERN HIMALAYAN REGION

The Balipara Foundation Awards was instituted to bring into focus conservation case studies and real life champions of the Eastern Himalayan Region. Last year in April, the Balipara Foundation honoured and recognised outstanding efforts towards biodiversity conservation across 10 categories. The award categories included a Naturenomics™ Award, Green Guru Award, Green Legal Award, Ecological Restoration Award, Eastern Himalayan Conservation Award, Food for the Future Award, Nature Conservancy Award, Young Naturalist Award, Annual Balipara Foundation Award and Lifetime Service Award.

Carrying forward that legacy and seeking inspiration from environmental leaders, the Balipara Foundation Awards 2014 once again chronicled stories about environmental stewardship in the Eastern Himalayan Region. Besides the 10 annual categories, the Awards will also paid tribute to the irrepressible “Mahout”, the Late

Mark Roland Shand. The special ‘Mark Shand Mahout Award’ will paid homage to a group of people that share a most matchless relationship with the magnificent Asian elephant. The Awards also featured a special photo exhibit by National Geographic, Elephant Family, Sanctuary Asia and IUCN, four of the 14 partner organisations.

Nicholas Claxton, Director WOW Media, U.K, one of the chief mentors of BFA 14 said, “These awards will help to inspire future environmental leaders and keep alive the hope of sustaining the fragile and unique ecosystem of the Eastern Himalayan Region.” The Awards was also graced by Dr. Khyne U. Mar, affectionately known as the ‘Elephant Lady of Myanmar’. Her internationally respected work has been described as “material to the very survival of the Asian elephant”. The Awards also featured prominent personalities like renowned filmmaker Mike Pandey, Dasho Paljor J. Dorji, Special Advisor National

Environment Commission of Bhutan, Ajay Desai, Co-chair Asian Elephant Specialist Group and more.

The Balipara Foundation Awards 2014 was supported by Sanctuary Asia, India’s leading wildlife and nature conservation magazine and Aaranyak, the premier biodiversity conservation group in the Northeast. The Awards were guided by the foundation’s Naturenomics™ mandate, which stipulates smarter natural resources management to enhance the quality of human life even as the natural capital base itself is enriched. It is time that the public too is made aware of the connections upon which their own quality of life and security depends and the 2nd edition of the Balipara Foundation Awards sought to bring these matters to the forefront. The event, besides throwing light on successful and inspiring conservation stories, also served as a platform for like-minded people to share views and raise awareness on critical environmental conflicts of the day.

BALIPARA FOUNDATION YOUNG NATURALIST AWARD

This award will be presented to an individual whose curiosity is stimulated by the beauty and intricacies of our natural surroundings. Anyone between the age group of 18-30 with particular interest in documenting, studying and researching the biodiversity of a region.



On behalf of Tongam Rina receiving award from Malaya Goswami, Eminent Film Artist

TONGAM RINA

Tongam Rina is currently the Associate Editor of The Arunachal Times, the largest selling daily in the state. Despite her youth, she has already achieved much. In a chequered career graph, Tongam has been a school teacher, led the

Hunger Project's State Unit and worked on issues of local selfgovernance and gender and taught communication at the State University. As a journalist, she has written about the prevalent corruption among local authorities, the questionable construction of dams, and numerous environment scandals. In 2012, she was near-fatally shot, in what is believed to be attempted murder in connection to her journalistic work. Tongam received the 2014 Prize for the Freedom and Future of Media awarded by the Media Foundation of Leipzig, Germany. More recently, she received the 'Courageous Journalism' Popular Choice Award in Arunachal Pradesh.

BALIPARA FOUNDATION NATURE ACTIVIST AWARD

This award will be presented to an individual who has demanded change & tirelessly campaigned to bring forth issues and raise



questions that are deemed critical to biodiversity conservation. individual who has demanded change



Saipari Sailo receiving award from Dr Raman Sukumar, Center for Ecological Studies

SAIPARI SAILO

Saipari Sailo has been tirelessly and actively involved in the field of conservation since 2004, and since then has gone on to earn a PhD for her research on the ecology and biology of Annandale's frog *Clinotarsus alticola*. Passionate about herps, she is presently studying the effect of pesticides on the development of *Fejervarya sp.* in the East Khasi Hills of Meghalaya as the Principal Investigator of the project.

BALIPARA FOUNDATION YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR AWARD

This award will be presented to an individual who seeks to develop leadership potential through community based sustainability projects. The contender will be judged on his or her work in the areas of environmental, education and natural resource management.

BANO HARALU



Bano Haralu receiving award from Jagjeet Singh Kandal, MD APPL

Bano Haralu is a path breaking television journalist from Northeast India. She has been involved with conservation issues in Nagaland since she returned to her home state in 2010. Bano pioneered a bird and wildlife survey for the government that led to the publishing of the 'Birds of Nagaland'. She also formed the Nagaland Wildlife Biodiversity Conservation Trust (NWBCT) in 2013 and serves as its managing trustee.

FOUNDATION WILD LIFE CONSERVATION AWARD

Diversity is the soul of planet Earth. This award will be



presented to an individual, community or organisation that has significantly and successfully worked to protect the wildlife or wildernesses by striving and going 'above and beyond'.



Aparajita Dutta receiving award from Jitesh Khosla, Chief Secretary, Govt. of Assam

APARAJITA DUTTA

Aparajita Datta is a wildlife biologist with the Nature Conservation Foundation in Mysore and has established a community-based conservation program for Namdapha that addresses the needs of the region's indigenous Lisu people. She has spent many years in the rainforests of Arunachal Pradesh, studying hornbills for her doctoral thesis and has also been involved in wildlife surveys that resulted in finds of mammal species in India not known before. Having earned her PhD. in Wildlife Ecology, she has worked with the likes of National Geographic as a wildlife biologist.

BALIPARA FOUNDATION SPECIAL AWARD MARK SHAND MAHOUT AWARD

Instituted in memory of the Late Mark Shand, this award will be presented to an individual who has made an

outstanding contribution towards the well-being of the Asiatic elephant population.



PURNA CHANDRA RABHA (Manas National Park)

Purna Chandra Rabha’s life as a mahout began in 1945. The then young Purno began his service as an assistant to a trainer mahout and had a passion for learning the art of handling and interacting with elephants. Since then he has been a dedicated and passionate mahout and has contributed immensely to the conservation of the Asiatic elephants by serving the Assam Forest Department and Department of Environment and Forests, Assam.



Purna Chandra Rabha receiving award from Parbati Baruah, Queen of Elephants

BHUMIDHAR DEKA (PABITORA)



Bhumidhar Deka receiving award from Dr Khyne U Mar, University of Sheffield

Bhumidhar Deka, a skilled forest worker, has been serving as a mahout in the Pabitora Wildlife Sanctuary since 2011. Deka, who is an expert in reading rhino behaviour, started working in Pabitora Wildlife in 1993. During this period, he recovered three rhino horns from the sanctuary premises and handed them over to the field office. He has greatly contributed to rhino protection and maintains a very good rapport with the community people and has helped in returning many a strayed rhino back to the Protected Areas from where they may have wandered.

MONGAL GHATOWAL (Kaziranga National Park)



Though now retired, Mongal Ghatowal is still highly respected and known for his love of elephants. He started off working as a grass cutter with the Forest Department, but his passion and talents saw him being appointed as a mahout. His courage and knack of taking charge of “difficult” elephants have been much applauded.



Mongal Ghatowal receiving award from Richard Leitch, Special Advisor, Balipara Foundation

KIRON RABHA (Kaziranga National Park)

Kiron Rabha was born into a family with a legacy of capturing wild elephants and has an inherent understanding of these giants. He grew up in an environment where he learned all tricks of mela shikar, traditional

medicines and training of wild elephants. Kiron joined the Forest Department as grass cutter on December 1, 1990 and was later promoted to the rank of mahout in 1999. For the last two decades he has been in charge of an elephant named “Kartik” who is impossible to handle without Rabha.



Kiron Rabha receiving award from Aditya Patankar, Eminent Wild-Life Film Maker

SUKLA DAS (Nameri Tiger Reserve)

Sukla Das was born and brought up in Potasali Forest village of Balipara Reserve Forest, adjacent to the beautiful Jia-Bharoli river. He is not merely a mahout, but also a repository of traditional

knowledge. Sukla Das knows the ins and outs of the Nameri National Park like none other and is an expert boatman, guide and story teller.



Sukla Das receiving award from Dr Gautam Baruah, Director IIIT, Ghy

BALIPARA FOUNDATION HABITAT CONSERVATION AWARD

Natural habitats are critical to natural diversity. This award will be presented to an individual or organization that has spearheaded efforts to conserve critical ecosystems.

KASHMIRA KAKATI

Dr. Kashmira Kakati is a distinguished wildlife biologist with over 17 years of research experience. Her doctoral thesis was on the hoolock gibbon and for this she primarily worked in the rainforests of upper Assam. She has since then been committed to these forests. It is her untiring work that led to the Jeypore-Dehing



Mrs Kakati receiving award on behalf of Kasmira Kakati from Ravi Singh, WWF

rainforests gaining international recognition as a place with the world's largest diversity of cat species living in a single remote rainforest. She is currently facilitating an anti-poaching patrolling programme in these forests and is also assessing mammal presence in Meghalaya, amongst much else.

BALIPARA FOUNDATION CONSERVATION THROUGH INNOVATION AWARD



Binod Bora receiving award from Mike Pandey, Eminent Wild-Life Film Maker

This award will be presented to an individual who exemplifies the spirit of “innovation as a fuel for change”.

BINOD BORA

Binod Bora (Dulu) is a daredevil member of the Green Guards Nature Organisation. Dulu has single handedly rescued and released dozens of wild animals with whom he shares an inherent bond. He is also instrumental in mitigating human-elephant conflict in the Karbi-Anglong area and has spearheaded the implementation of a ‘Community Elephant Fodder Plantation Project’. Dulu is an articulate communicator and regularly reaches out to students and communities on the importance of biodiversity.

THE BALIPARA FOUNDATION ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION AWARD



This award will be presented to an individual or organisation working in climate change mitigation, afforestation and adaptation in the Northeast.

TANA TAPI, TAKUM NABUM AND THE GHORE ABHE SOCIETY



Tana Tapi & Takum Nabum receiving award from Belinda Wright, WPSI

Tana Tapi, the legendary DFO of Arunachal Pradesh's Pakke Tiger Reserve is a persistent man. He and his team work in near impenetrable forests, against all odds, to protect this vital park and its wildlife. For six years now, he has been setting up anti-poaching infrastructure including 32 RCC camps, 65 km. of patrolling paths and 41 km. of rough motorable

roads. Under his command the department has grown from 25 people to 140 skilled staff members. His efforts are reflected in the increasing tiger density of Pakke.

The hard work of Takum Nabum and his team from the Arunachal Pradesh Forest Department, the Ghora-Aabhe and the Nyishi tribe has resulted in Pakke becoming a haven for hornbills. Not only have the Nyishi tribals transformed from hornbill hunters to hornbill protectors, the team has also conceptualised a 'Hornbill Festival' to celebrate these birds as a flagship species of the region. The festival is held in Seijosa (Pakke Tiger Reserve), the epicentre of the conservation efforts.

BALIPARA FOUNDATION NATURENOMICS™ AWARD

The Naturenomics™ Award will be offered to an individual who practically epitomises the spirit of Naturenomics™, thereby creating an example of inter-dependence between nature and economics.



NEIHUNUO SORHIE



Neihunuo Sorhie receiving award from Hemendra Kothari, Chairman WTI

In 2007, Neihunuo Sorhie received a national award for tribal textiles and deservedly so. With 60 tribal weavers under her guidance, Neihunuo has developed a vast range of products, including shawls and purses that showcase exquisite Naga craftsmanship. Not only does she provide the yarn and the designs to the weavers, she actually gives the finishing touches to the products herself. All together her works have been showcased in 90 different exhibitions in India and abroad and she continues to develop her craft.

BALIPARA FOUNDATION ANNUAL AWARD

The inter-disciplinary Annual Award will be presented to a government or non-government organisation, whose contribution to the



protection of wild nature has gone beyond the call of duty and which has displayed demonstrable success in the arena of nature conservation.

PANGTI VILLAGE COMMUNITY & FOREST DEPARTMENT OF NAGALAND

Over the past couple of years, the Pangti Village Council has been instrumental in leading its villagers towards a conservation oriented lifestyle. Most recently they have been involved with the conservation of the Amur Falcons that arrive at their village in the thousands. The Council has also assisted the Forest Department in implementing a multi-pronged strategy of conservation awareness creation, strict enforcement of laws and alternate livelihood opportunities for people in the village.



Pangti Village Community representative & Lokeshwar Rao Madiraju receiving award from Vijay Singh, Former Defense Secretary & Director TATA Sons

BALIPARA FOUNDATION LIFETIME SERVICE AWARD

The Lifetime Service Award is for an individual of legendary proportions. Someone who has inspired a generation of aspiring legends. We looked for a wise individual renowned as an encyclopedia of natural knowledge.

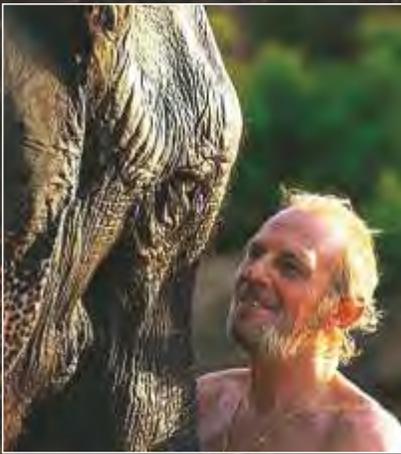
DASHO PALJOR J. DORJI

J. Dorji, popularly known as 'Benji' has served the Royal Government of Bhutan in a number of capacities. Currently, he is the Special Advisor, National Environment Commission, Royal Government of Bhutan. He has been involved in or initiated most of Bhutan's Environmental programs and is the founder of the Royal Society for the Protection of Nature in Bhutan (RSPN), Bhutan's First Environmental NGO and is the Founder President of the Bhutan

Ornithological Society as well as the Bhutan Ecological Society.



*Dasho Paljor J Dorji receiving award
from Honorable Chief Minister of Assam Sri Tarun Gogoi
& Sri Ranjit Barthakur, Fonder & Managing Trustee, Balipara Foundation*



June 28, 1951 – April 23, 2014

MARK ROLAND SHAND

Elephant man, writer and conservationist.

By Bittu Sahgal

This handsome, driven, wildlife hero spent his entire life in defence of the wild creatures he loved. Brother of Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, he was also Chairman of Elephant Family, a wildlife trust he co-founded along with Lord Robin Russell, Nicholas Claxton, Caroline Casey and Dugal Muller.

UNREAL

Writing about Mark like he was never going to walk through the door again is downright unreal. To a person, anyone who truly knew him would agree: "Mark was a pure heart." He had a family in virtually every heart he touched. He was part of Sanctuary's soul.

I first met Mark decades ago in London with Nicholas Claxton, documentary filmmaker, and Teddy Goldsmith, legendary editor of *The Ecologist*. Inside of five minutes this affable, warm human had me shaking my head in wonder trying to figure out what quirk of convergent experience gifted us such a conjoint sense of wonder, purpose, fear (for the natural world) and our visceral love of elephants, tigers, whisky and forest silences.

Numbed on hearing he had died, Nicholas Claxton said wistfully: "Mark was a complete one off who lived life to the full. His can-do philosophy, tireless passion and commitment to the plight of the Asian elephant were

qualities I greatly admired. He was one of my closest and dearest friends and I will miss him deeply.”

Ranjit Barthakur of the Balipara Foundation and more than a mere friend to Mark said nothing for more than a stunned moment when I called him late at night and said: “Mark has gone. He died three hours ago.” Then, after a hoarse “Are you sure? When? How?” we both began coming to terms with the finality of it all. Mark travelled over 1,000 km. across India on his elephant, Tara, (as a mahout, not a passenger!), swum in crocodile-populated rivers, rafted down India’s Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers, was threatened by shadowy ivory traders and walked in tiger country without a care in the world. It seems grossly unfair therefore that he should be taken from us on account of an accidental fall and head injury outside the Gramercy Park Hotel in New York of what the Chief Medical Examiner described as a “blunt-impact head trauma with skull fracture and subdural haematoma.” He had been dealing with high blood pressure and probably blacked out on account of medicine-related postural hypotension. He had successfully raised just under two million U.S. dollars for Elephant Family only moments before he died.

Born to Major Bruce Shand and Rosalind Cubitt, he studied at Milton Abbey in Dorset, U.K. and found himself promptly expelled on account of his love for cannabis, which he nevertheless continued to worship through his life on his many sojourns to India.

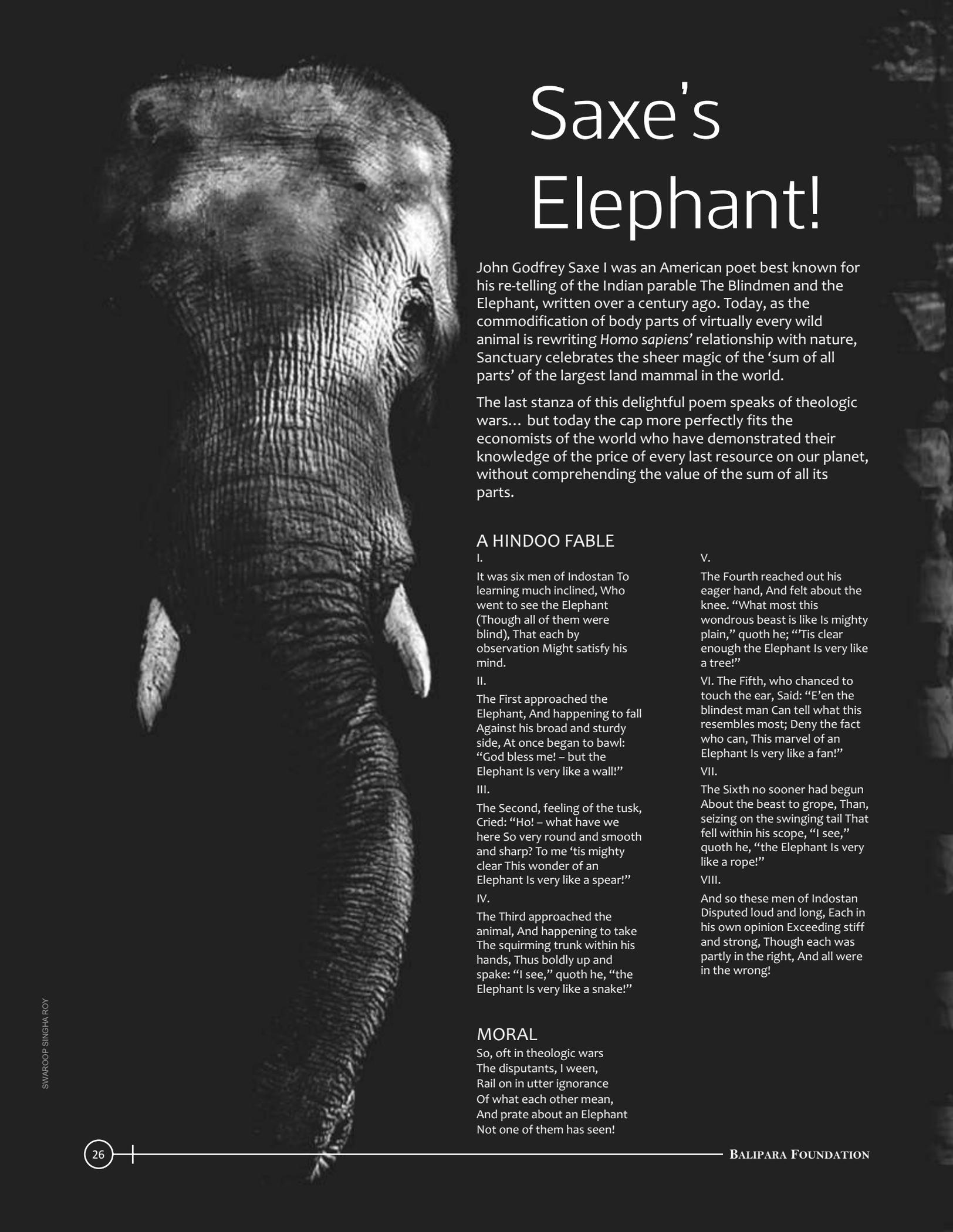
India flowed in his veins. Here he would happily ditch his black tie and dinner jacket for a lungi and sit back in some distant jungle puffing charas (hashish, cannabis) and watch the night fall over his precious wild elephants. On his playboy image and ability to cut out the black tie bunch that financed his charities, he once famously said: “In the end I'd rather be a whore for elephants than a whore for business.”

In one of his last interviews to Olivia Parker of The Telegraph, his dismay at a changing India, mirrored the dismay many of us feel: “I love visiting, but India itself I can't recognise any more. The money there is unbelievable, and not in a good way. People spend \$30 million on weddings and you see sons of tycoons bribing the police to keep the roads clear so they can race their Ferraris. The corruption is unbelievable.”

As we come to terms with his passing, our thoughts are with his family that will surely find it hard to adjust to life without the lovable, adventurous, irreverent Mark Shand.

A promise then to Mark and to Elephant Family: “Sanctuary is a part and parcel of Mark's on-going mission. Keep us central to your work for, unknown to all, Mark sits quietly in our hearts and monitors our every beat. And we will work for the elephants that were Mark's compass. 🐘

Full text and more images at www.sanctuaryasia.com



Saxe's Elephant!

John Godfrey Saxe I was an American poet best known for his re-telling of the Indian parable *The Blindmen and the Elephant*, written over a century ago. Today, as the commodification of body parts of virtually every wild animal is rewriting *Homo sapiens'* relationship with nature, Sanctuary celebrates the sheer magic of the 'sum of all parts' of the largest land mammal in the world.

The last stanza of this delightful poem speaks of theologic wars... but today the cap more perfectly fits the economists of the world who have demonstrated their knowledge of the price of every last resource on our planet, without comprehending the value of the sum of all its parts.

A HINDOO FABLE

I.

It was six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the Elephant
(Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.

II.

The First approached the Elephant,
And happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl:
"God bless me! – but the Elephant
Is very like a wall!"

III.

The Second, feeling of the tusk,
Cried: "Ho! – what have we here
So very round and smooth
and sharp? To me 'tis mighty clear
This wonder of an Elephant
Is very like a spear!"

IV.

The Third approached the animal,
And happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands,
Thus boldly up and spake:
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
Is very like a snake!"

V.

The Fourth reached out his eager hand,
And felt about the knee. "What most
this wondrous beast is like
Is mighty plain," quoth he; "'Tis clear
enough the Elephant
Is very like a tree!"

VI. The Fifth, who chanced to touch the ear,
Said: "E'en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most;
Deny the fact who can,
This marvel of an Elephant
Is very like a fan!"

VII.

The Sixth no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope,
Than, seizing on the swinging tail
That fell within his scope, "I see,"
quoth he, "the Elephant
Is very like a rope!"

VIII.

And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
And all were in the wrong!

MORAL

So, oft in theologic wars
The disputants, I ween,
Rail on in utter ignorance
Of what each other mean,
And prate about an Elephant
Not one of them has seen!



The trunk, or proboscis, is a fusion of the nose and upper lip. It is the longest nose in the animal kingdom with over 40,000 muscles that enables the elephant to feed, drink, defend itself and interact with family members . It is also used as a sensory organ.



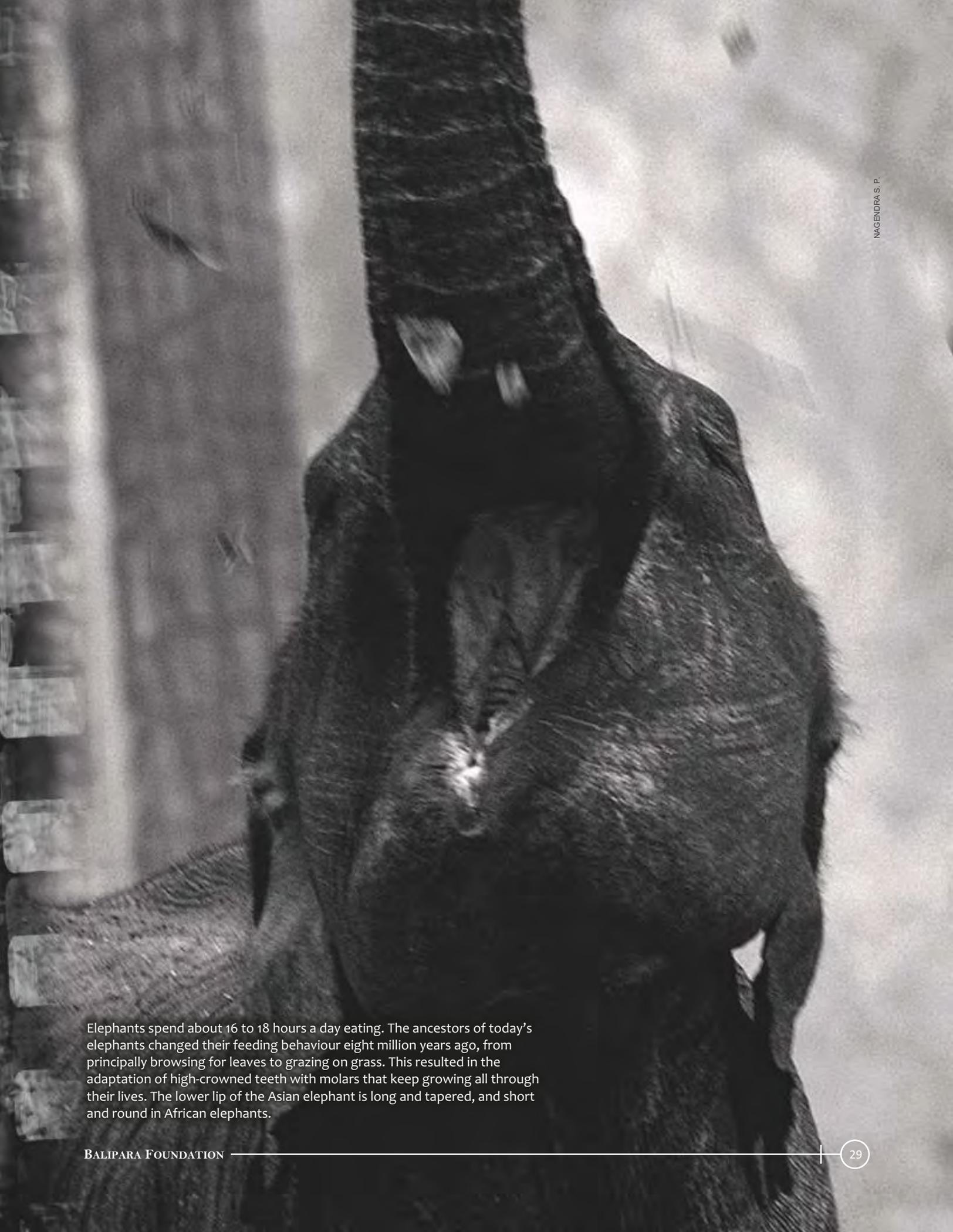
Given their high body-volume to skin -surface ratio, elephants must guard against heat loss, something their sparse hair helps them do. This works in exactly the opposite way than hair does for, say, the musk ox or polar bear.



The African elephant's ear is three times the size of an Asian elephant's ear and they help regulate the huge animal's body temperature through an extensive network of capillaries. The ears can also pick up infrasound waves over remarkably long distances.



The infamously-prized ivory tusks of elephants are merely the second upper incisors that grow throughout the life of Asian male elephants and African male and female pachyderms. Tusks of African elephants can grow to over three metres.



Elephants spend about 16 to 18 hours a day eating. The ancestors of today's elephants changed their feeding behaviour eight million years ago, from principally browsing for leaves to grazing on grass. This resulted in the adaptation of high-crowned teeth with molars that keep growing all through their lives. The lower lip of the Asian elephant is long and tapered, and short and round in African elephants.

Ivory poaching is driving rapid evolution in elephants with scientists suggesting that in the last 150 years, the world's elephant population has evolved much smaller tusks. The average size of both African and Asian elephant tusks has gone down by half. In fact, isolation of the subspecies *Elephas maximus maximus* in Sri Lanka has resulted in divergent evolution with most bulls being tuskless. It is believed that the killing of most bulls with large tusks for ivory has resulted in fewer large-tusked off spring.



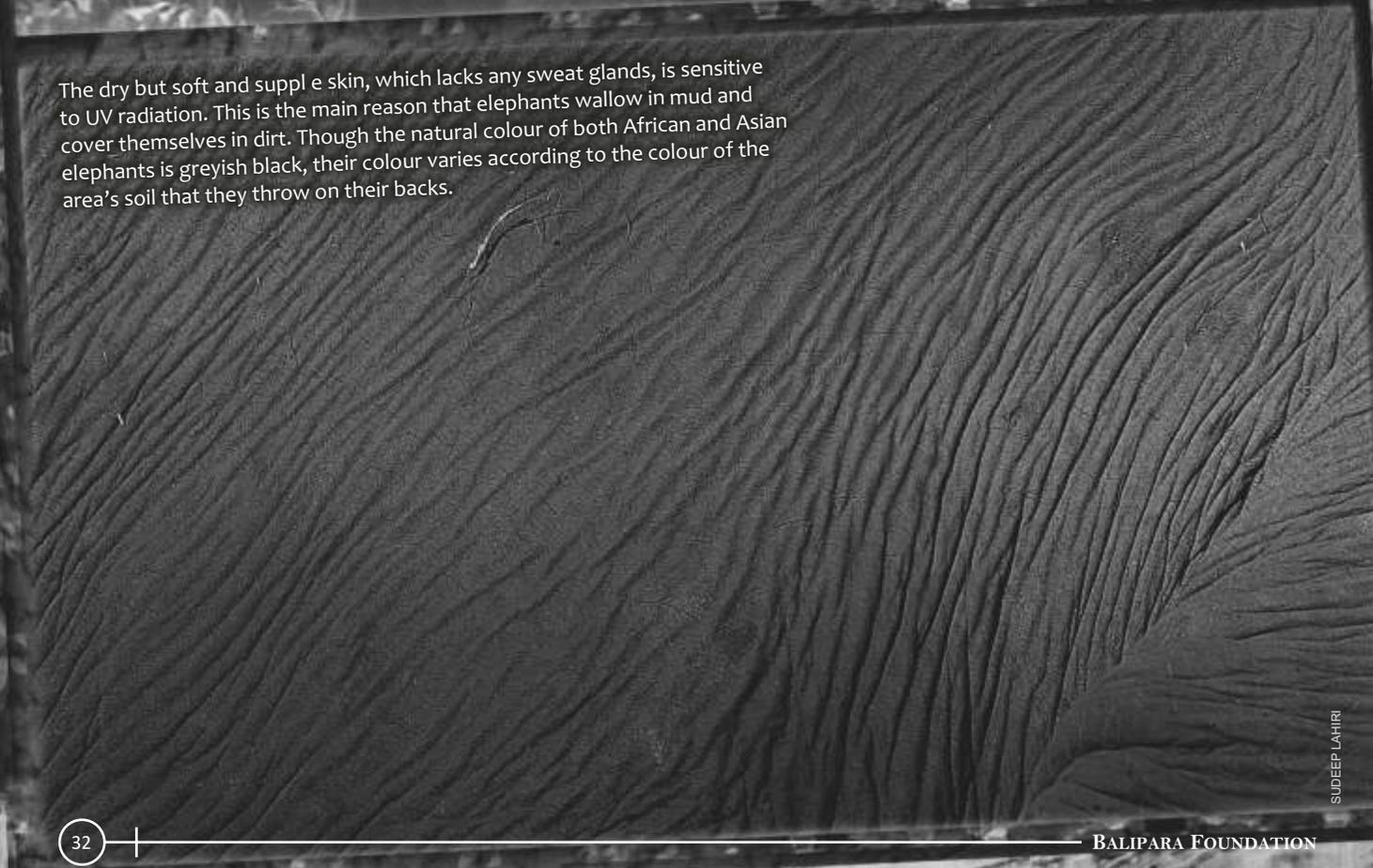
Elephants have exceptionally small eyes and poor eyesight . Males have a temporal gland on each side of the head between the eye and the ear which produce a heavily-scented secretion. This is often seen trickling down the side of the face of males in heat.



Elephants walk on their toes. The spongy, elastic cushion that encases their feet enables them to walk silently and helps them to dig up roots, create holes to collect water and move across harsh landscapes. An elephant's foot circumference suggests the size of the animal. The feet are also believed to help in detecting infrasound and vibrations transmitted underground.



For an animal whose body is virtually devoid of hair, the elephant's tail has remarkably long hair, sometimes reaching a length of as much as 100 cm. In almost continuous motion, the tail is used to dislodge flies and insects and also as a handle by elephant calves to hold on to when seeking security, or guidance from older animals when the herd is on the move.



The dry but soft and supple skin, which lacks any sweat glands, is sensitive to UV radiation. This is the main reason that elephants wallow in mud and cover themselves in dirt. Though the natural colour of both African and Asian elephants is greyish black, their colour varies according to the colour of the area's soil that they throw on their backs.



Though the elephant's brain is the largest of the land mammals, it occupies a small area at the back of the skull and the brain-to-body ratio is low. The temporal lobes give the elephant excellent senses of touch, smell, hearing and memory. Since large mammalian brains are associated with complex social structures and mental capabilities, it is not surprising that elephants are among the most social and intelligent species on our planet.

TEN WAYS TO SAVE ELEPHANTS

VIVEK MENON, CONSERVATIONIST EXTRAORDINAIRE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CEO, WILDLIFE TRUST OF INDIA, AND ADVISOR, INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR ANIMAL WELFARE (IFAW), LISTS 10 WAYS TO SAVE THE LARGEST LAND ANIMAL ON PLANET EARTH.

Elephants have lived through millennia. They, and their now extinct proboscidean ancestors, have undergone droughts, famines, floods, earthquakes, prehistoric hunting, capture, enslavement, tribal conflict, modern slaughter and climate change. They have spanned the earth from the humid swamps of Al Fayyum in Egypt, through the deserts of the Sahel and Namib, through most of today's temperate Europe and tropical Asia. They must, as survivors, know a million ways to defeat adversity. I have no access, however, to their wisdom and must confine myself to what we, another species with a very different kind of giant footprint, think they want, believe they must feel or know they need in order to survive. These imperatives are vast in scope and broad in concept but are the most critical. For if these are not done by us, then, three, or maybe four species of the world's largest land creatures will no longer roam terra firma. For them, and for us, these are the top 10 actions we must take to protect the elephant.

VAST AND CONNECTED HOMELANDS

It is only fair that the largest creatures on land require a wee bit of undisturbed space to park themselves and lead their incredibly complex social lives. Given their vast size, they need large quantities of food, and this inevitably translates to vast homelands. Luckily, they are not very selective in their forage and eat a number of plant species ranging from coarse grass to tender shoots. Their herds need to be mapped and adequate (this word is so geographically tied-down that I am

not attempting an approximation) habitat must be protected as elephant reserves in order for them to roam. The elephant is not selfish in this want, for under the canopy of its mega charisma can live a million other beasts, large and small that share temporal and ecological niches with it. These vast savannah-woodlands could also be a nation's natural tourism basket in which humanity can view these gentle giants and other creatures in the wild. These would also be, due to their size, the source of water, air and flora that have their own importance and implications for

It is only fair that the largest creatures on land require a wee bit of undisturbed space to park themselves and lead their incredibly complex social lives.

our natural world. Elephant homelands must necessarily be interconnected and to know why, we must move on to the next point.

RIGHT OF PASSAGE

Unlike many other mammals, elephants are nomadic in habit. They have to move peripatetically as the food around them is exhausted. It is a tryst that this beast has with the land that it forages on. It moves seasonally, allowing the land to regenerate and revisits its former range only when the bounty of nature is replenished. As it moves, human habitation, linear infrastructure such as highways, irrigation canals, railway lines and the many other cemented symbols of human civilisation intervene. These millennia-old travel routes have then to be abandoned by them, new ones learnt, unfamiliar terrain explored, all of it bringing

undesirable interaction between man and a nervous, irritable giant. This would be totally avoidable if these old paths and tracks were respected and left alone, and connecting vital habitats created that provide them long-term security. The right of passage, if denied, to a mostly gentle giant, culminates inevitably in tragedy. Confining them completely is like settling a human nomadic tribe and the challenges of perennially providing food and water to a hungry tenant who has never known how to own or manage land for living. That leads to other tragedies. The best, but perhaps looking at human pragmatism, not the simplest solution is to give them the right of passage.

SECURITY BLANKET

The killing of elephants may have started in the Neanderthal times. Reasons were and are varied including human security, food, trinkets, medicine and ornamentation. The animal possesses one of the most stunning pairs of incisors that the animal world produces, tusks that man has considered white gold. The illegal poaching of elephants for their tusks has fuelled an incessant and increasing slaughter of animals making many, if not most populations of elephants insecure. For the populations to survive, the slaughter must disappear and a new feeling of security must emerge. The

FACING PAGE Elephants have to move peripatetically as the food around them is exhausted. This elephant belonged to a herd of six that strayed into a village in the Thiruvannamalai District and was later moved away safely towards Mudumalai and Topslip.



01

THIS SPREAD

- 01 Only long-term studies can lead to better understanding of clan and kin behaviour among elephants. Intervention that removes individual animals against the will of elephant society, or translocates groups into unfamiliar terrain splintering their kinship boundaries could result in trauma for the animal and failure.
- 02 Watching animals is the best form of non-consumptive utilisation. But such tourism must be conducted in a way that the goose (or in this case the elephant; in others the tiger, or gorilla) that lays the golden egg is not killed in the process. Careful planning of tourism whether conducted by the government or private parties, by analysing impacts is key to its long-term success.



ANURADHA MARWAH

01



ABHISHEK SHARMA

02

forest elephants (see page 50), a recently described species of western and central Africa, seem the most threatened in a conservation sense as the killing might even cause its extinction. In other places, closer to home, selective killing is skewing sex ratios, as only Asian males, and only males with larger tusks (highly non-Darwinian selection) is rendering population after population unviable. This one measure is immediate and its short-term urgency precedes every other one in determining the survival of the species.

REDUCE HUMAN CONFLICT

As human dwellings and livelihoods creep inexorably towards and into wild lands, the encounters between humans and elephants are bound to increase. Under such conditions, man-elephant interaction is more often than not termed man-elephant conflict. In India alone, more than 400 people and 200 elephants die on account of each other, each year. Such is the scale of this conflict, that in some areas of the world, humanity is no longer tolerant of the elephant and in others do not even wish its continued survival. Conflict or

revenge killings are overtaking poaching in many parts of the elephant's range. Three actions need to be taken quickly: 1. Rapid, immediate solutions to ease issues in high conflict areas; 2. Innovative and technological implementation as required for medium-term conflict mitigation and 3. Landscape planning at a national and trans-boundary level to manage long-term conflict. Giving grain-for-grain as relief to small farmers affected by elephants is an example of the first kind of mitigation; using electronic surveillance mechanisms to warn



SAJID ABOOBAKER

THIS SPREAD

- 01 *Capture and enforced enslavement is a brutal, inhumane and often unnecessary source of suffering – whether of humans or elephants!*
- 02 *Elephants cannot be studied in sterile seclusion and one must follow the path-breaking efforts of scientists such as Dr. Iain Douglas-Hamilton who, in the 1960s, forsook the English vales and made African elephant habitats his home. Long-term studies of elephants can yield a wealth of information, for managers in particular, and for civilisation as a whole.*



ANURADHA MARWAH

01

02

trains of approaching elephants on tracks is a form of the second; and the vast trans-boundary Protected Areas of southern Africa, an ideal for the third.

RECOGNISE THEIR SOCIETIES

Elephants are big, intelligent and nomadic. They are also highly social beings. Any human-led management effort that attempts to alter such societies and kinships among elephants is bound to fail. Only long-term studies can lead to better understanding of such clan and kin behaviour and thus informed

management. Intervention that removes individual animals against the will of elephant society or translocates groups into unfamiliar terrain splintering their kinship boundaries could result in failure. Keeping animals in solitary captivity is worse than death, and that brings us to the next point.

END THEIR ENSLAVEMENT

Intelligent beings such as Homo sapiens consider capture and enforced enslavement as a brutal, inhumane and often unnecessary source of suffering. Elephants must

consider it quite similarly, even if they do not possess the language in which they can convey this to the human species. Several studies have noted exceptional consciousness, cognitive abilities, memory, grief, trauma and joy amongst elephants in the wild and in captivity. There is no reason to believe that they do not undergo pain, suffering and grief. Solitary confinement, which is their lot in many captive situations, is worse than death. Confinement of any sort is undesirable in such a highly emotionally-functioning animal and must be avoided whenever possible.

UNDERSTAND THEIR NEEDS

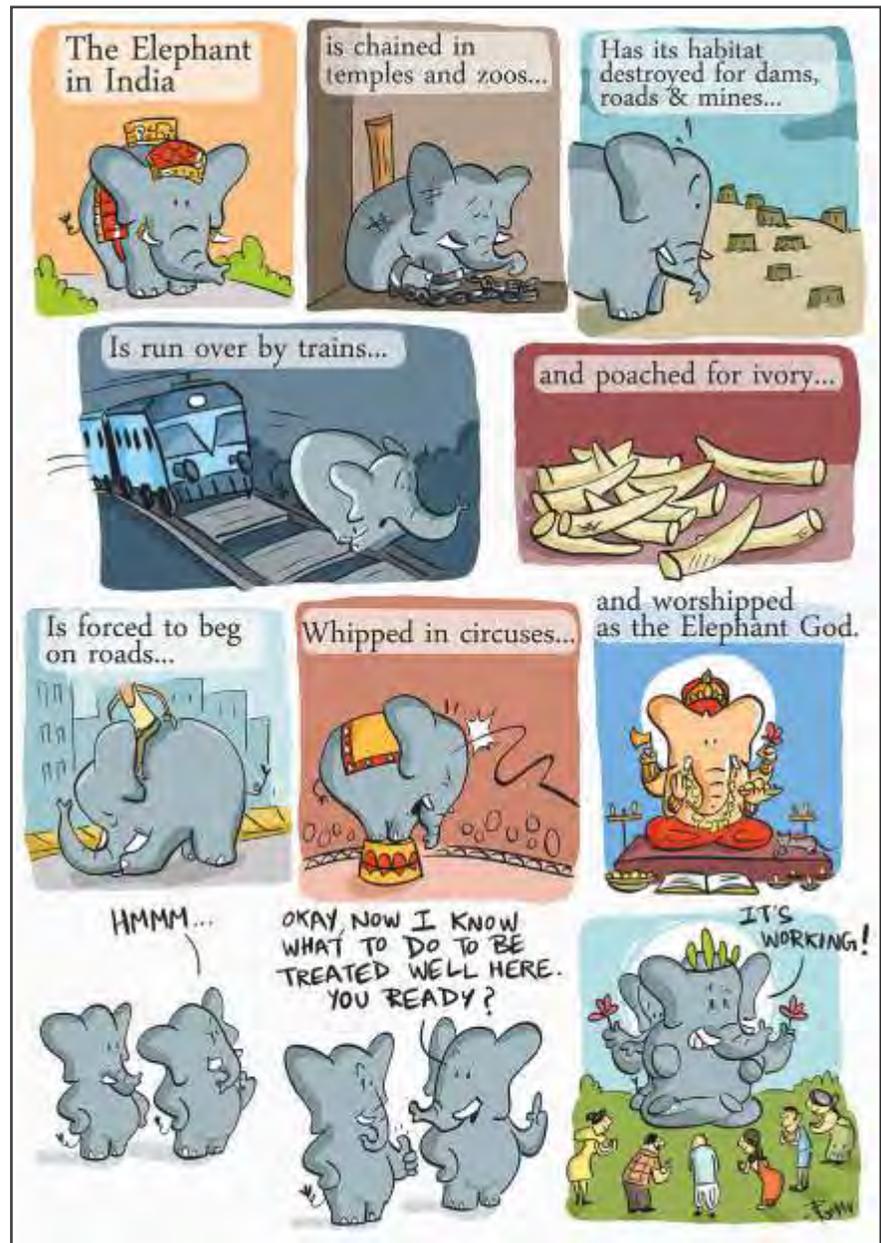
Elephants are not laboratory mice to be studied in sterile seclusion (this does not imply that mice should be used for testing) and one must follow the pathbreaking efforts of scientists such as Dr. Iain Douglas-Hamilton who, in the 1960s, forsook the English vales and made elephant habitats his home. Longterm studies of elephants can yield a wealth of information, for managers in particular, and for civilisation as a whole. Other than what one can learn in order to save the species itself, one may learn things that may save us. How elephants regulate their own numbers in natural populations, their adaptations to climate change, their infra-sonic communication and their management of societies may have several lessons for the human race.

EDUCATE OURSELVES

Those who are fortunate to go closer to these beings and learn the secrets of their lives are bound under a natural contract to share it with other human beings. Communicating effectively about elephant lives, elephant traumas and the joys of having elephants among us is vital. Celebrating the latter fact is never done and must be encouraged to rid humanity of the negativity that has in the recent past started surrounding the elephant. Trying out innovative mechanisms of bringing the elephant physically closer to those who don't live in elephant habitat, and emotionally closer to those who do is key to our ongoing communication.

ADMIRE WITHOUT HARMING

If wildlife can only be saved if they are used, as certain philosophies go, then watching animals must surely rank as the best form of non-consumptive utilisation. Watching elephants comes with its own additions of incredulous wonder (especially for the youngsters) and gaining serenity (more for the older ones amongst us). This great creature can, through its charisma, draw revenue to the most remote lands acting as a social disbursement



ROHAN CHAKRAVARTY

agent of wealth. But such tourism must be conducted in a way that the goose (or in this case the elephant; in others the tiger, or gorilla) that lays the golden egg is not killed off in the process. Careful planning of tourism whether conducted by the government or private parties, not necessarily by prefacing with epithets such as 'eco-tourism', but by analysing each action and its impact on the animal and its ecosystem is key to its long-term success.

RESPECT THE ELEPHANTS

I come, personally, from a culture

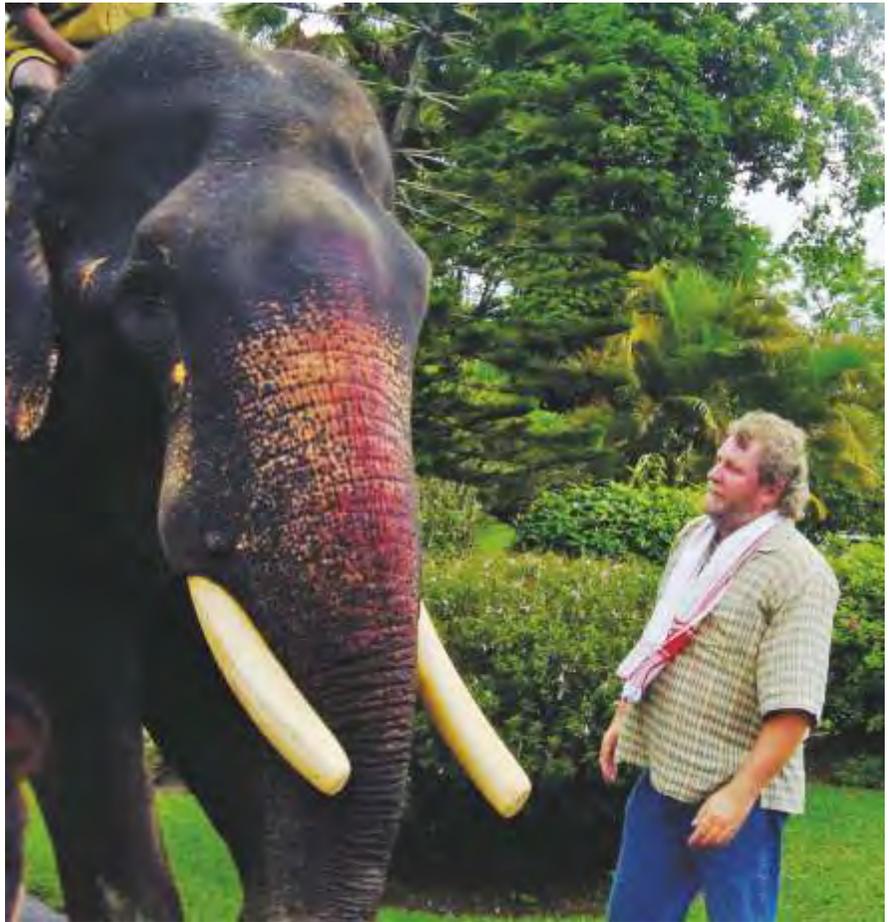
that worships the elephant. There are many other cultures that do not. I have rarely come across any culture though, that in its tradition does not respect the elephant. I do not think that in their origins, any culture could have afforded to, the elephant being the largest, most omniscient and perhaps most threatening animal that lived around them. It is only in the last century or two that patent disrespect for the animal has taken shape. If we bring back respect for this most gargantuan and wondrous of nature's creations, it could, in itself, guarantee a future for both man and elephant. 🐘

BIJLI PRASAD AN ASSAM ICON

RICHARD LEITCH - SPECIAL ADVISOR, BALIPARA FOUNDATION

I was born in Calcutta January 15 1958 and was taken to Assam when I was three weeks old. We flew from Gauhati to Dufflaghur in the company Auster flown by the then company pilot and factory assistant Mihir Chaudhury. I was raised there until 5 years old and was then sent to St Andrews School in Darjeeling. I was sent to boarding school in the UK from the age of eight but continued to return to Assam on holiday until the age of 15. It was during this time that Bijli Prasad and I got to know each other and made this special bond. He would take me into the jungle and I would get to know the wildlife and the ways of the jungle. I learned to ride him as a mahout and was taught by his mahout at the time, 1970 I think, I was 12 at that time. It was after almost 30 years that Ranjit persuaded me to return to Assam with my wife Jackie and two daughters Samantha and Katie. I was reunited with Bijli again in 2004 pictures. There was no doubt he remembered me, it was a very emotional meeting!! Since then I became an active part of RJB as a Director and have made regular trips to Assam with family & friends since then. I have also been involved in the Balipara Foundation as an inspiration by coming up with ideas in ways to better the North Eastern Region of India. I have been working in the oil, gas and geothermal business for almost 38 years where I have been involved in conservation and reforestation projects.

Bijli was bought I believe in 1968 by the Bargang Tea Company, under the



instruction of my father, who was the General Manager and Area Superintendent at that time, and used for uprooting old tea and other such work. My father put him on a salary, which was most unusual at the time, and from that salary the wages for the Mahouts was cut, his food and medicine paid for and a pension started. All most unusual at this time, maybe even to this day. Since his retirement his pension now

pays his Mahouts that look after him and for his food and medicine etc. He is also the McLeod Russell / Williamson Magor company logo and mascot.

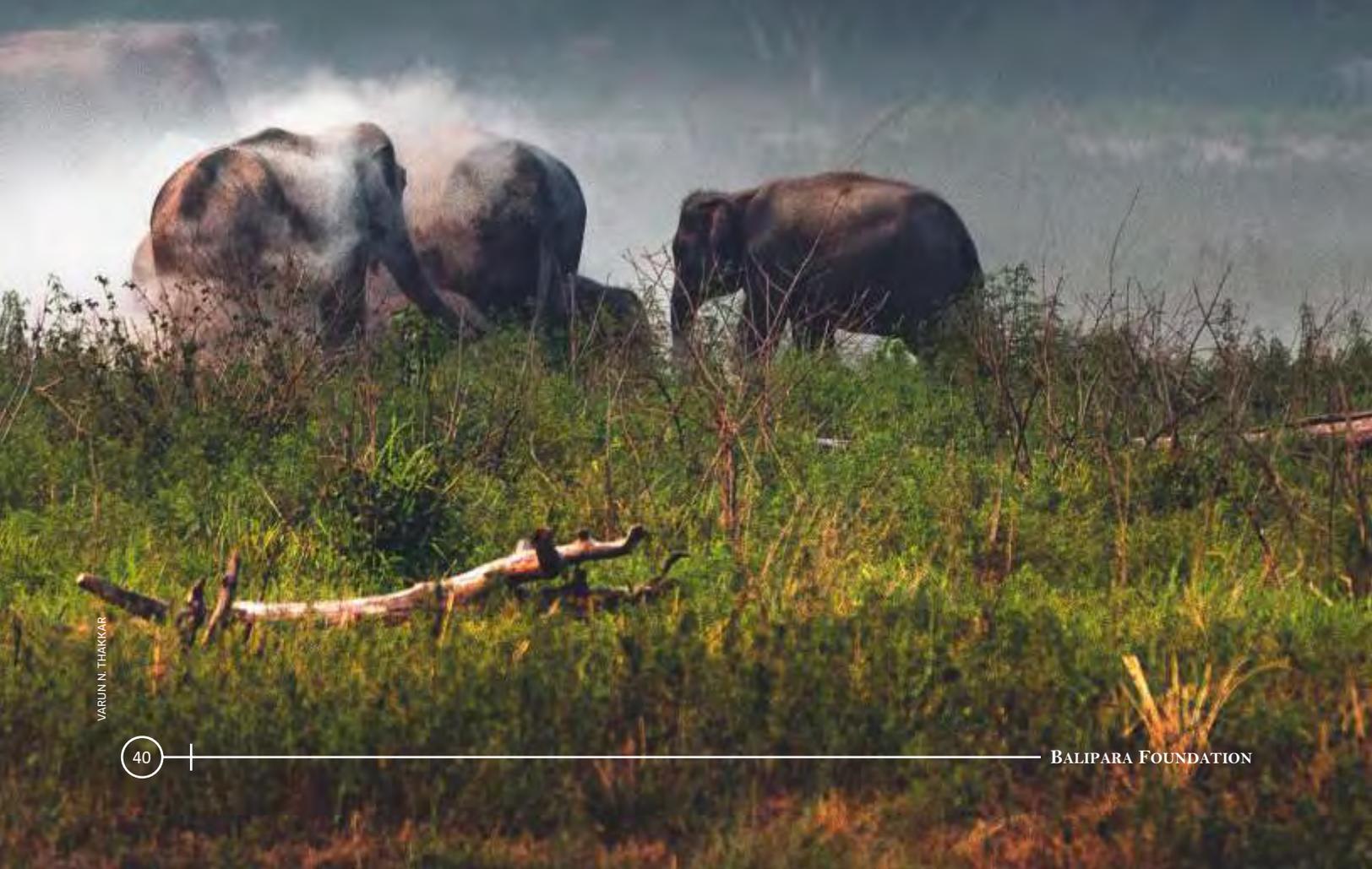
It would be such a great shame if these magnificent beasts were to fade away. I believe we have the capacity and compassion to not let that happen.

A BUCKET LIST FOR ELEPHANT AFICIONADOS

By Sheren Shrestha

"I can watch elephants (and elephants alone) for hours at a time, for sooner or later the elephant will do something very strange such as mow grass with its toenails or draw the tusks from the rotted carcass of another elephant and carry them off into the bush. There is mystery behind that masked grey visage, and ancient life force, delicate and mighty, awesome and enchanted, commanding the silence ordinarily reserved for mountain peaks, great fires, and the sea."

– Peter Matthiessen, *The Tree Where Man Was Born*





Cycling along a fire line in the Bardia National Park, Nepal, after checking on camera traps placed for a tiger estimation, I sighted a small herd of elephants in the near distance on the fringes of the grassland I was then traversing. Clearly, they were watching me too.

I slowed down, wondering whether to stop, or try my hand at photography on the move. I stopped. But even before I could get my camera out, the entire herd flipped around and vanished into the trees. I waited, hoping they would return. Silence... that was all there was; no evidence whatsoever of them grazing just moments ago.

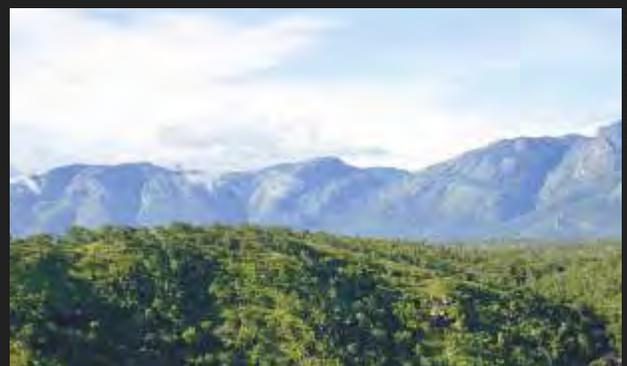
Skittish animals, I have often missed opportunities to photograph elephants, but each experience remains indelibly imprinted on my mind. And the call of the elephant continues to lure me to habitat after elephant habitat in search of the peaceful giants that have so much to teach us about social life and living in harmony with the earth.

Across the world the lure of elephants magnetically draws millions of humans to the last few remaining wildernesses capable of supporting these enchanting pachyderms. In such landscapes it is still possible to see, in some measure, the magic that once prevailed on a planet now so thoroughly dominated and embossed by our imprint.

For the benefit of Sanctuary readers, here are seven elephant refuges that, in my view, should be on the bucket list of all those who love, are fascinated by and wish to be in the proximity of elephants, the largest land mammals in the world.

THE NILGIRIS LANDSCAPE

Sprawled across 12,000 sq. km. in the south Indian peninsula in the three states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka, the Nilgiris landscape harbours an estimated 10,000 wild Asian elephants – the largest contiguous population of the species anywhere in the world.



YATHIN S. KRISHNAPPA

FACING PAGE Corbett is one of the most important Asian elephant breeding habitats in the world. Elephants are generally seen around Corbett's Ramganga valley between November and June. When the rains arrive, they migrate to the adjoining Sonanadi Wildlife Sanctuary, which is now part of the tiger reserve area.

THE RAJAJI-CORBETT LANDSCAPE (SHIVALIK ELEPHANT RESERVE)

Located in the northern Indian, Himalayan state of Uttarakhand, the Rajaji-Corbett landscape falls within the Shivalik Elephant Reserve that supports roughly 1,500 Asian elephants. It also supports more than 50 species of mammals and over 500 species of birds.



SAURABH SAWANT

OKAVANGO DELTA, BOTSWANA

Touted as one of the world's largest inland deltas spread over 15,000 sq. km. (even bigger during the wet seasons), Okavango, located in northern Botswana, just southwest of Chobe National Park, supports 31,000 African bush elephants.



JOACHIM HUBER/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

SERENGETI – MASAI MARA ECOSYSTEM, TANZANIA – KENYA

Covering a trans-boundary, 30,000 sq. km. in northern Tanzania and southwestern Kenya, the Serengeti-Masai Mara ecosystem presents one of the most magnificent wildlife experiences in the world. Meaning 'endless plains' in Swahili, the Serengeti is home to over 70 species of large mammals and nearly 500 species of birds, and has a population of over 2,700 African bush elephants.



RANJAN RAMCHANDANI



RUDI DELVAUX

Kinabatangan flood plains, Borneo, Malaysia

Located in Sabah in the eastern island of Borneo in Malaysia, the Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary (page 34) spreads over just 270 sq. km. along the Kinabatangan river – the second longest in the country. The area is home to around 1,500 Asian pygmy elephants that are less than 2.5 m. tall.



YATHIN S. KRISHNAPPA

Etosha National Park, Namibia

Located in Northwestern Namibia, the Etosha National Park spreads over a nearly 23,000 sq. km. area. The eastern part of Etosha is covered in salt pans, created by the drying up of the massive Kunene lake fed by the Kunene river. It has a population of around 2,500 African bush elephants.



HARVEY BARRISON/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Kruger National Park, South Africa

Spread across a nearly 20,000 sq. km. area in two provinces in northeastern South Africa, the Kruger National Park supports an estimated population of over 24,000 African bush elephants. It is one of the largest national parks in the world and a part of the Vhembe Biosphere Reserve under the UNESCO Man and Biosphere Programme.



SURENDRA VARMA

GENTLE GIANTS ON THE MOVE

By Surendra Varma

The tracker was in front of me, a thin cotton towel wound around his head. My olive green shirt was soaked with sweat, but we kept on climbing the steep path. When we had started at 7.36 that morning, my digital watch provisioned with an altitude programme had revealed a height of 225 m. I had instructed my field tracker that we should take a break every 15 minutes and during the interval, he would need to identify the local name of a plant species and the age of the elephant signs we encountered. His only reply was a shy smile. We encountered our first elephant sign at 7.42 a.m.; the altitude was the same (225 m.). At 8.39 a.m. we had climbed to 852 m. and my tracker rattled out the names of local plants – *vengai*, *naval*, *pali*, *povam*, *thadachi* and *pooni*. We also spotted another dung pile that he guessed to be a week old. Around



DR. K.G. AVINASH

Indefatigable, the tracker accompanying the author knew both elephant behaviour and their food plants like the back of his hand.

six hours later, at 1.43 p.m., we had reached 1,080 m. and were now in open grassland; the climb even steeper and the heat of the afternoon sun unbearable.

To escape the heat, we moved to the edge of the *shola* grasslands where dry deciduous forest elements and a mix of grass species made it cooler. We saw more dung piles. Perhaps the elephants, too, preferred the shade of tree and canopy cover and were waiting for the temperature to drop before exploring the grasslands. When we reached the top of the hill (1,100 m.), the tracker showed no sign of exhaustion after the grueling climb – he seemed like he was out on a casual stroll – while I was sweating and panting. Once again, he described local plants and their names – *thadachu*, *unni*, *teak*, *neli*, *vengai*, *naval*, *kole* and so on – names rolling off his tongue

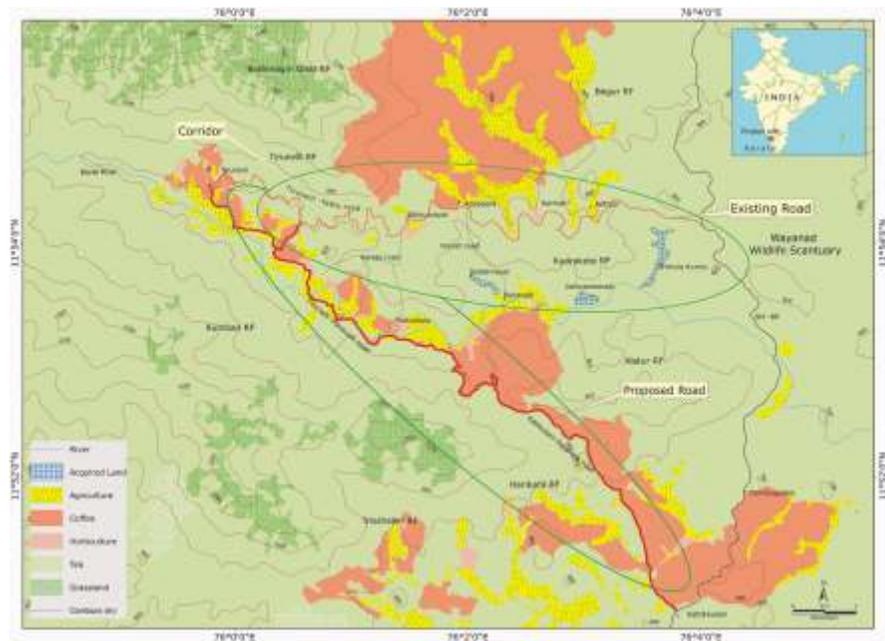
with an assured knowledge that would be the envy of any botanist.

Motivated by his sustained interest, I began noting down elephant signs, most of it two-week-old dung piles with a few more than three months old. We theorized that elephants may have moved into this habitat three months ago and had continued to use it until recently.

UNIQUE LANDSCAPE

Having done what we had set out to do, I sat on the grass, supporting my back on a big rock admiring the view of the landscape below. The green mosaic of the Wyanad, Nagarahole, Bandipur and Mudumalai forests stretched out to create a unique landscape design. In Wyanad, many small valleys are surrounded by mountains and small hills. At the top of these and along their slopes, grasslands occur. Where there is a depression – when two mountain slopes meet – *shola* evergreen forest canopy occurs. These forests invariably have streams or water runoff. Moist deciduous forests occur along the edges and foothills of the mountains. These forests are encircled by small patches of succulent, fertile swampy grasslands. Such moist deciduous forests penetrate through Wyanad North, the Wyanad Wildlife Sanctuary, and the Nagarahole National Park and continue up to small parts of the Bandipur and Mudumalai Tiger Reserves. Both these tiger reserves are dominated by dry deciduous forest followed by tropical thorn forests that extend up to the foothills of the Nilgiris. Together, the entire region occupies around 3,000 sq. km.

This forest complex supports one of the highest densities of Asian elephants in the world, due to plentiful food, shade and water. Although grasslands are suitable feeding grounds, they do not provide adequate shade during hot hours of the day for the poorly thermo-regulated bodies of elephants (see Photofeature page 12). Closed forests provide shade, but may not provide palatable food. Dry deciduous forests, on the other hand, with their scattered trees and grasslands, provide



Overall, the land between the south of Thettu-Thirunelli road (from Thettu road junction up to Ediyurwayal and north of Bavali river from Begur Tribal colony to Pothamula) needs to be treated as a sensitive or critical corridor zone and no settlement, development activities, new roads or upgrading of existing forest roads should be permitted.

reasonably good canopy cover. And their trees, scrub and grass species create ideal habitat for elephants. Unfortunately, these resources are not permanently available to elephants in a dry deciduous forest. During the dry seasons, trees in such forests shed their leaves and shade is lost. Grass becomes fibrous and water levels go down (both the water content of plants as well as water sources). This triggers movement of elephants toward landscapes where shade, food, and water are all available.

MIGRATORY CORRIDOR

In my experience, during the first wet season, elephants are scattered throughout the dry deciduous forest areas. During the second wet season, the quality of available food begins to deteriorate; when grass becomes coarse and unpalatable, elephants move east toward thorn forests and west toward moist deciduous forests. During hot summers when shade is fully lost and grass becomes fibrous and loses its nutrient value and water content, they confine themselves to browsing in dry thorn and moist deciduous forests. Elephant movement occurs, then, to meet needs in an appropriate habitat. When elephant habitat is cut off by human activities – roads, railway tracks or

other developmental activities, their habitat is literally cut and connectivity is lost. Though the forest, outwardly, appears to be big, it is not suitable for elephants' movements in their quest to meet their physical needs.

Setting my ruminations aside, I looked at the landscape again – the forest stretched up to the Nilgiri mountains, but they were fragmented and broken. The scenery was misleading as it appeared that the entire landscape was available for elephant use. Vast areas under tree cover below, near the foothills were not forests but coffee plantations. A major proportion of the infinite stretch of moist deciduous forests had been converted into eucalyptus and teak plantations. The succulent fertile swampy grasslands were paddy fields. The edges of coffee plantations and human settlements had coconut, areca nut, jackfruit and mango trees growing all around.

The truth is, elephants have lost their habitat and corridors among different forest types. Added to this is extensive crop cultivation and human habitation along and within its habitat. This attracts elephants and results in human-elephant conflict issues.

However, the good news in this bad situation is that, in certain cases biological corridors exist between

these isolated habitats. These are linear landscapes that structurally connect patchy and isolated habitats thereby alleviating the negative effects of habitat fragmentation by aiding in movement between them. To allow wildlife movement across such landscapes, non-forest land that facilitates such movement must be acquired and given protected status.

THE THIRUNELLI CORRIDOR

Several years ago, R. Sukumar (see book review page 94), professor at the Centre for Ecological Science, Indian Institute of Science, and founder trustee of the Asian Nature Conservation Foundation (ANCF), while visiting the Thirunelli forests in Wyanad (Kerala)-Brahmagiri (Kerala and Karnataka) area along with forest officials from the Central and State governments, had suggested that this forest may provide a vital link for elephant movement between Wyanad, Coorg and Nagarahole. He asked me to explore this area. My initial explorations confirmed this assumption, but the link was narrow, and the connection or corridor had a number of human settlements within it, as well as a road with relatively high vehicular traffic.

I felt then that the task of understanding this corridor, elephant movement, consolidating the habitat and augmenting the corridor would be

a never-ending job, one that would require consistent and continuous efforts. Two-and-a-half decades later, my interest in working on the same species has not waned. I often jokingly introduce myself thus: I work on one species, under one boss and have used one email id for the past 24 years. Exploring the Thirunelli forest and the corridor that connects important elephant habitats has been one of my long-time assignments.

In addition to understanding the corridor, we are keen to learn more about the species, their seasonal movements, habitat and corridor usage pattern. We explored this landscape several times and every time we ventured into the elephant habitat, we diligently studied every single elephant sign that was encountered. During my exploration of this landscape, Vivek Menon, Executive Director, Wildlife Trust of India (WTI), joined me on many trips. It is always rewarding when you work with like-minded people, and the trips were thought-provoking and exciting. Dr. P. S. Easa of the Kerala Forest Research Institute, former Director, Conservation, WTI shared his vast and advanced experiences of this landscape. Professor Sukumar acted as a devil's advocate. It was an excellent mixture of brilliant minds and experience. Now, every bit of the landscape in this region has been

explored. The assessment of elephant habitat, developing spatial maps of elephant usage patterns, interactions with the local community, investigation of the status of human-elephant conflict has taken us in a promising direction. We know elephant densities, how the animals are distributed, and their movements, which habitats need to be interconnected, and which lands have to be purchased to facilitate elephant movement and augment elephant corridors. In all our explorations in this landscape across several years, we found elephant signs to a height of 1,200 m., with elephant dung encountered frequently in grasslands close to forests. Moist deciduous forests, teak and eucalyptus plantation on the foothills also showed the frequent presence of elephants. Interestingly, there were very few elephant signs encountered in the middle layers (above the foothills and below the grasslands at the top of the mountains). I believe this may be due to the fact that the middle layers along the slopes of the mountain range have no forage ground cover since the trees are tall and dense and steep slopes may make it difficult for elephants to navigate.

We found that only two layers, the foothills and the grasslands on the top, may be available to elephants. However, as mentioned earlier, the open grasslands in the higher reaches may be unsuitable for elephants because of high temperatures during summer daylight hours, and the foothills have settlements, coffee estates and road networks. Conversion of swampy grasslands into paddy cultivation and moist deciduous forests into plantations has further reduced habitat in the foothills. Prominent settlements such as Ediyurwayal, Appapara, Karmat, Kottiyur, Thirulukunnu, Valliya Emmadi, Pannavalli, Suldarvayal and Pothamula are located within the corridor. An important place of religious worship, Thirunelli is also situated on the northern extremity of the corridor, attracting a large number of devotees from Kerala via Kartikulam, Tetu Road and Appapara, the road that passes through the corridor.

Elephants have lost their habitat and corridors among different forest types. Added to this is extensive crop cultivation and human habitation along and within its habitat. This attracts elephants and results in human-elephant conflict issues.

DR. K.G. AVINASH

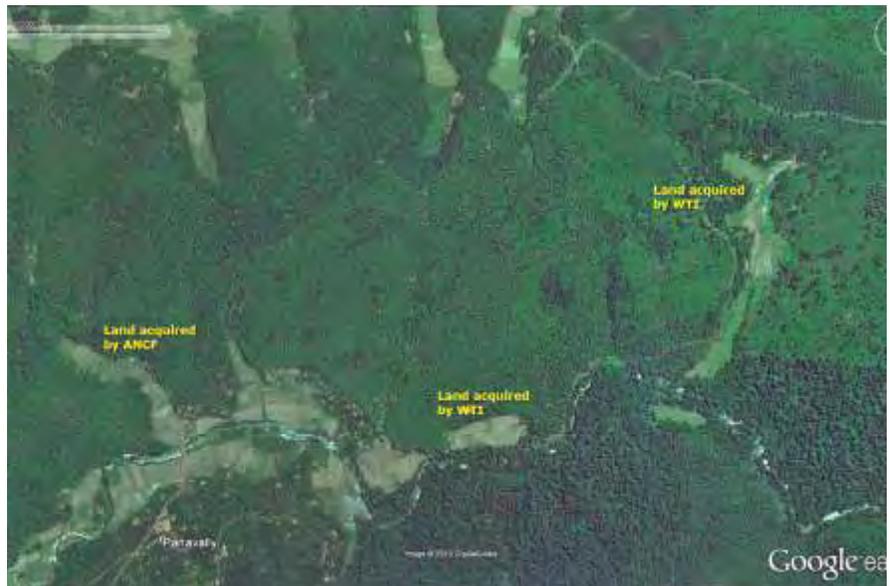


ACQUIRING THE CORRIDOR

These interesting and important findings motivated both ANCF and WTI to consolidate their experiences, knowledge and resources to acquire the human settlements within the moist deciduous and teak plantation belt. It was initially proposed that privately owned land around the settlements of Pulliangoli, Thirulukunnu, Valliya Emmadi Edayur, Suldarvayal and Kottapady be acquired for the consolidation of the corridor. The lands in question were primarily under agriculture with coffee, pepper, ginger, paddy, banana and coconut being the major crops. However, none of these crops are financially viable for several reasons, damage by elephants being one of them. Because of this, almost all the residents and land owners, with very few exceptions, have come forward to sell their lands and relocate from the area.

It was found, however, that tribal residents of the area would face a challenge in relocating. They would not be able to purchase alternate land elsewhere even when remunerated adequately. Relocating away from a forested area could also be a cultural disaster, since most of the tribal residents depend on forest produce or forestry-related work and do not have the skills to obtain other modes of employment. The best available option adopted by WTI was to relocate them to the fringes of existing settlements that abut the forest boundary.

After several years of coordinated efforts between ANCF, WTI and Kerala State Forest Department, settlements such as Suldarvayal, Thirulukunnu, Valliya Emmadi, Pulliangoli have been successfully relocated. This was a wonderful example of institutions coming together for a common cause. ANCF took responsibility for negotiating and acquiring land from Suldarvayal settlement that was exposed to severe human-elephant conflict issues. WTI took charge of the assignment of other settlements. Negotiations for relocation are on in Ediyurwayal, Karmat and Kottiyur. Decisions on relocation of villages southeast of Suldarwayal and Pannavalli region (North of Bavali River) are underway.



After several years of coordinated efforts between the ANCF, WTI and Kerala State Forest Department, settlements such as Suldarvayal, Thirulukunnu, Valliya Emmadi and Pulliangoli have been successfully relocated and the land acquired to consolidate the Thirunelli corridor.

Other than the relocation of settlements, one vital need is to develop alternate routes for devotees visiting the Thirunelli temple. Vehicular traffic must be reduced along the Thirunelli-Thettu road. We have often seen elephants crossing this road, often near the Akoli Coffee Estate, to enter forests on the other side. The potential for alternate routes exist. Upgrading the existing road from Thirunelli to Kartikualm via Meladi, Pothamula, Polodi, Sarvani, Russell's coffee estate and Panduranga and Kartikulam must be considered. This road primarily runs through settlements and may actually reduce the distance by about 15 km.

Overall, the land between the south of Thettu-Thirunelli road (from Thettu road junction up to Ediyurwayal and north of Bavali river from Begur Tribal colony to Pothamula) needs to be treated as a sensitive or critical corridor zone and no settlement, development activities, new roads or upgrading of existing forest roads should be permitted. There is still much to learn on elephant movement and usage of this corridor. We have also had some setbacks – there has been some encroachment and cultivation on land we purchased for our elephant corridor. Fortunately, the elephants visited their new land, damaged the huts and reclaimed their landscape.

THE RETURN

Knowing it would begin to pour any instant, the tracker alerted me to make a move. We had a long way to go – a fourhour walk to reach the Karnataka border. Our plan was to stay in the Narikal Guest House at the top of the hill and proceed down to Iruppu and Kutta in Karnataka. As we began walking, the rain came down. But I did not want to give up on looking for dung piles or plant species at 15-minute intervals and made mental notes, given that I could hardly make notes in the downpour.

The rains were actually a reprieve from the sweaty morning. The tracker made a delightful cap using a teak stem that allowed the rain to drip along its protruding stem. Just as I was beginning to enjoy the shower, I began to itch. Leeches! They were all over my legs. The tracker was not disturbed by any of this. He calmly used the lower edge of the sickle to tease out the leeches. It was a learning experience to watch his survival skills.

How could I complain? The rain was a blessing for this land I explore often. Water run-off from the forests enters the mosaic of grasslands and becomes a vital source of water, even for cultivated lands. If we allow these forests to be lost, every species including humans will be the poorer. 🐘

BALIPARA FOUNDATION AWARDS 2013

12th April, Guwahati, Assam

The Balipara Foundation Awards in association with **Sanctuary Asia** and **Aaranyak**, honoured some of the Northeast's most dedicated eco-warriors to draw focus to their work and encourage others to follow their path.

Naturenomics mandate, which stipulates that natural resources be managed so as to enhance the quality of human life even as the natural capital base itself is enriched.

Dhriti, he introduced modern product enhancement and marketing support to small units producing plates from areca nut leaves. Today, his enterprise reaches out to markets across the Northeast as well as major cities like Kolkata and Delhi and will soon be exporting microwaveable plates overseas. He has secured the livelihoods of thousands of young people by offering them working capital loans, advice and management expertise.

Mr. Dasgupta received the award from Ms Nandini Dutta, Chairperson Crafts Council of Assam.



Winners of Balipara Foundation Awards 2013

The Balipara Foundation, has been documenting, analysing and promoting the concept of Naturenomics for over a decade now. It seeks to bring the objective of economics in line with the imperatives of nature. In recent years, the Balipara Foundation has been encouraged by the fact that the ideologies expressed by us decades ago, have won acceptance among economists and corporates globally. It is time that the public at large too is made aware of the connections upon which their own quality of life and security depends.

To take the lead in supporting the green heroes of the Eastern Himalayas and Assam, Balipara Foundation instituted the **Inaugural Balipara Foundation Awards on 12th April 2013**. The awards have been guided wholly by the Balipara Foundation's

MEET THE WINNERS OF THE BALIPARA FOUNDATION AWARDS 2013

The Balipara Foundation Naturenomics Award



ARINDAM DASGUPTA

Shocked by the amount of plastic waste being produced from disposable plates, he began finding ways to develop biodegradable plates for the food industry. Through

The Green Guru Award



UTTAM TERON

From humble beginnings in Pamohi, he rose to establish a not-for-profit institution called the Parijat Academy, which provides free education and boarding to children from as many as 14 tribal villages. Working a private tutor, he raised a modest Rs. 800 to build his first school, which consisted of a tin roof and bamboo walls. Today, his Parijat Academy caters to 500 students, largely children of quarry workers, in whom he is planting seeds of nature appreciation for a greener tomorrow.

Mr. Teron received the award from Ms Sentila Yanger, Padmashree Award Winner & Founder Tribal Weave.

The Green Legal Award



GAUTAM UZIR

A practicing lawyer of the Guwahati High Court and a member of the State Board for Wildlife in Assam, he has consistently helped check encroachments in Assam's forests and has pushed for the installation of environment-friendly waste management systems in Guwahati. A popular guest lecturer at Assam's forest schools, he virtually wrote the Assam Forest Manual and routinely conducts legal orientation camps for forest officials to help them understand how to build strong cases to fight wildlife crimes.

Mr. Uzir received the award from Mr Debojit Saha, Music Artist.

The Ecological Restoration Award



JADAV PAYENG

He has worked tirelessly to restore Ouna Sapori, the Brahmaputra sandbar on which he lives. Sleeping only three hours a night, he spends his time afforesting his island to restore its biodiversity by planting endemic species of bamboo and trees. He also introduced different species of ants to rejuvenate the island's soil. Today, Google Earth has recognised his island as one of

the greenest in the Brahmaputra, a fact corroborated by the many wild animals that now call it their home.

Mr. Payeng received the award from Mr Prabhat Dey, Nature Architect & Entrepreneur.

The Eastern Himalayan Conservation Award



DR. ANWARUDDIN CHOUDHURY

He has more experience with the diverse fauna of entire Northeast India than almost any other individual today. Fondly referred to as the Birdman of Assam, he was the first to consistently produce books and monographs on the birds of the Northeast. Many of today's wildlife sanctuaries and elephant reserves were originally surveyed by him and he also contributed to the ground work that led to the upgradation of Dibru-Saikhowa to National Park status. He was also the originator of the proposal to have the fabled White-winged Wood Duck declared as the state bird of Assam.

Dr. Choudhury received the award from Dr. Pratip Banerjea,

The Food for the Future Award



NEELAM DUTTA

He founded the Lakshmi Agriculture and Multipurpose Project which promotes ecologically-sound agricultural and farming practices. What started as a small project covering paddy farming and fish rearing has grown today into a successful, large twelve-hectare organic farm on which fisheries, vermiculture, free-range dairy, vegetables and paddy combine to yield a rich harvest of produce that hopes to reach thousands of families across Assam.

Mr. Dutta received the award from Mr Bhaskar Barua, former Secretary to Govt. of Assam.

The Nature Conservancy Award



KARBI ANGLONG POLICE DEPARTMENT

Under attack from militants and poachers, they work outside the periphery of Kaziranga in the Karbi Anglong arena to protect rhinos, elephants and our irreplaceable natural inheritance. Going far beyond the call of duty, they risk their lives daily even as they work to create an inter-dependent working culture between communities, and the forest and agriculture departments. They have made critical arrests, seized weapons and collated incriminating evidence that has helped to build legal cases to win speedy convictions.

Mr. N K Vasu, IFS, former Director Kaziranga National Park presented the award to Karbi Anglong Police Department.

The Young Naturalist Award



MUNJALI TOKBIPI

Born and brought up in Karbi Anglong, she coordinated the first-ever ecological study in Karbi for Panthera, an international wildlife organisation working for big cats. She was also nominated as the Youth Icon of 2013 by the Karbi Cultural Society. Spending most of her time in the thick jungles of Karbi Anglong, she works to garner the support of communities for the vital task of protecting our endangered wildlife.

Ms Tokbipi received the award from Mr Naba Kr. Das, former Chief Secretary to Govt. of Assam.

The Annual Award



WILLIAM OLIVER

Way back in the late seventies and eighties, he created and guided the process of reintroducing the endangered pygmy hog into the

wild. This was the first successful captive breeding programme of its kind and serves as a case study for the world on captive breeding and reintroduction in original habitats. Despite the many hurdles he faced from the government and private sector, he persevered and today, the ambitious project he started is being used as a foundation to secure the future of the pygmy hog. His efforts have enabled at least 18 wild pig species obtain formal recognition and his work has benefited a wide range of species from threatened fruit bats to cloud rats.

Mr Oliver received the award from Mr Jahnu Barua, Eminent Filmmaker.

The Lifetime Service Award

ANNE WRIGHT

Her childhood spent in the wildernesses of Madhya Pradesh and the guidance of E.P. Gee set the foundation for a lifetime of conservation action. She helped set up the World Wildlife Fund in India in the late 1960s and was one of the most trusted advisors of the late Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, who in 1970 appointed her as a member of her elite Tiger Task Force. She served on the Indian Board for Wildlife for 19 long years

and from Great Indian Hornbills to Pygmy Hogs, she has worked tirelessly to protect them all. Today, she Chairs the Rhino Foundation and continues to nurture organisations such as Aaranyak, championing the cause of wildlife protection in Assam.



Anne Wright receiving the Lifetime Service Award 2013 from Sri Tarun Gogoi, Honorable Chief Minister of Assam & Sri Ranjit Barthakur, Founder & Managing Trustee, Balipara Foundation

Announcing Elephant Talk: Asian Elephants in the Wild

5th & 6th November 2015

Carrying forward the objectives of securing the future of the endangered Asian Elephant Population in the Wild, AEIW 15 will aim to establish an experience & knowledge sharing platform for the North Eastern Region of India. NGOs, Forest Departments, Research Institutions and, most importantly, communities settled on the fringes of forest reserves will contribute experiences, successes and failures in their quest for peaceful co-existence. The Conference will look for answers to the following sets of questions:

1. How well are we able to identify the existing migratory routes of Elephants and assess threats to their future?
2. Facing the prospects of a rapidly increasing human population and the resulting encroachment of forest areas, how can the critical migratory routes of Elephants be yet secured?
3. Is it possible for human communities settled on the fringes of forest reserves to hope for peaceful co-existence with Elephants? Or is it an unending war?
4. What are the drastic measures that need to be adopted for landscape management?
5. What are the only solutions available for mitigating human-elephant conflict situations?
6. What are the major policy changes immediately required?
7. How can the efforts of multiple organizations, all working for the same cause, be better coordinated to facilitate experience & knowledge sharing?

Each of the above questions will be addressed by a yet to be decided authority on the topic, which in turn will form the basis of discussions and debates. By the end of the 7th Question, we will have achieved the goal of setting up the “NER Elephant Council” to progress the objectives of AEIW 15.

To lay the ground work for discussions leading up to AEIW 15, two preliminary conferences will in held in April 15 and August 15 in Balipara, Assam.

ANNOUNCING BALIPARA FOUNDATION AWARDS 2015

6th November, Guwahati, Assam

AWARD CATEGORIES

The Annual Balipara Foundation Award: This is a nominated award, which will be presented by the Balipara Foundation Board to a government or non-government organization, whose contribution to the protection of wild nature has gone beyond the call of duty and which has displayed demonstrable success in the arena of nature conservation.

The Naturenomics Award: The current model of economic development forces us to make a choice between development & sustaining natural resources. Contrary to this belief, Naturenomics believes that this need not be a choice, but the only choice to have economic development alongwith sustaining our natural resources. This award will be presented to a green entrepreneur whose financial and ecological success has proven to be sustainable in wealth formation through the securitisation of natural assets such as food, water, energy and environment.

The Green Legal Award: We are in search of a lawyer or and organisation that has used the courts to win justice for wildlife or for communities living in or around ecologically fragile wildernesses.

The Eastern - Himalayan Conservation Award: We are in search of an individual, community or organization that has significantly and successfully worked to protect the wildlife or wildernesses of the Eastern Himalaya upon which millions of people depend for their sustenance.

The Green Guru Award: We are in search of a green teacher whose purpose in life is to inspire young people to respect, learn about and protect nature. The individual should have leadership qualities, including missionary zeal, passion and dedication so that others may seek to emulate his or her example.

The Young Naturalist Award: We are in search of a young boy or girl in the age group 15 to 25 whose life has been dedicated to the protection of nature. The individuals we seek are agents of change and thought leaders of tomorrow and may be students, researchers, employees, or villagers.

The Food for the Future Award: We are in search of a visionary individual, who might be a scientist, NGO, villager or entrepreneur who has made a significant contribution to the promotion of organic food, or has demonstrated alternative farming methods that increase yields using ecological principles that have brought about replicable change.

The Nature Conservancy Award: We are in search of a community or organisation, government or non-governmental that has restored a parcel of non-forest land or deforested land to protected, biodiversity-rich forest status for posterity.

The Lifetime Service Award: We are looking for an individual whose life has been devoted to the ecological welfare of the people of the Eastern Himalayas and whose philosophy and purpose have been guided by the need to protection, restore and care of nature. We are in search of a true hero; an Indian woman or man who is an inspiration to all.

Special Award: Forest Guard Award: This award will be presented to forest staff of Forest Departments for their exemplary service towards the protection of Fauna and Flora in National parks and reserve forest of the Eastern Himalaya.

Announcing

3rd Rabindra Nath Barthakur Memorial Lecture

6th November, 2015

GUNTER PAULI

Gunter Pauli (born 1956 in Antwerp, Belgium) is a self styled "serial entrepreneur", author and initiator of The Blue Economy. Le Point, The Huffington Post and The Tasmanian Times have called him "**The Steve Jobs of Sustainability**". In 1979 he graduated as "Licencié en Sciences Economiques" from Loyola's University (today University of Antwerp) in Belgium and obtained his masters in business administration from INSEAD in 1982 at Fontainebleau, France thanks to a scholarship from the Rotary International Foundation. During the time he was studying, he held the most diverse jobs in order "to sustain family, education and to save money, which permitted extensive traveling during the summer holidays". In 1978 he was elected as national president of the students' union AIESEC

He was the founder and Chairman of PPA Holding and of more than 10 other companies, founder and CEO of the European Service Industries Forum (ESIF), Secretary General of the European Business Press Federation (UPEFE), founder and president of the Foundation "Mozarteum Belgicum", Chairman and President of Ecover, and advisor to the Rector of the United Nations University in Tokyo (Japan).

His entrepreneurial activities span business, culture, science, politics and the environment. Under his leadership, Ecover pioneered an ecological factory in 1992, featured on CNN Prime Time News. He founded the "Zero Emissions Research and Initiatives" (ZERI) at the United Nations University in Tokyo, and subsequently established The Global ZERI Network as a foundation, redesigning production and consumption into clusters of industries inspired by natural systems.

He is dedicated to design and



implement a society and industries, which respond to people's needs using what is locally available. His visionary approach supported by dozens of projects on the ground landed him an invitation to present his cases at the World Expo 2000 in Germany. There he constructed the largest bamboo pavilion in modern days presenting 7 breakthrough initiatives.

It became the most popular pavilion with 6.4 million visitors. Unfortunately, the pavilion was destroyed after the Expo. However the original built in Manizales, Colombia still stands as a symbol for the Coffee Region. His latest initiatives include the redesign of mining operations and the development of a novel concept of transparent investment banking.

He has been visiting lecturer and professor at universities in on all continents, and Member of the Board of NGOs and private companies in Asia, USA and Latin America. Since 2009 he has taken responsibility for the design of an economic development concept based on GNH (Gross National Happiness) principles and values as

part of his advisory role in designing an economic development strategy for Bhutan.

He is a Fellow of the World Academy of Arts and Sciences (San Francisco, USA), a creative Member of the Club of Budapest (Hungary), Member of the Club of Rome, moderated the Roundtable of Nobel Science Laureates hosted by HM King of Jordan State and obtained a Doctorate from the Italian Government in systems design. He has been awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the University of Pécs, Hungary.

Gunter has published 19 books (written 15 - edited 4), which have been printed in +30 languages and 36 fables bringing science and emotions to children. Over 17 million copies have been distributed worldwide. One of his fables "The Strongest Tree" is available in over 100 languages. His next book "The End of Globalization" will be forthcoming in 2012. He is father of four sons, one daughter (adopted) and married to Katherina Bach. Fluent in seven languages and having resided on 4 continents, he is a world citizen.



ELEPHANT TALK

7th November, 2014





THE RECIPIENTS OF THE BALIPARA AWARDS 2014 WITH SHRI TARUN GOGOI, CHIEF MINISTER OF ASSAM

BALIPARA FOUNDATION

AWARDS 2014

Conservation of the Eastern Himalayan Region

Lifetime Service Award



Dasho Paljor J. Dorji (Benji)
Bhutan



*Nature
Activist Award*

Saipari Sailo
Mizoram



*Young
Entrepreneur
Award*

Bano Haralu
Nagaland



*Young Naturalist
Award*

Tongam Rina
Arunachal Pradesh



*Wild Life
Conservation
Award*

Aparajita Dutta
Assam



*Ecological Restoration
Award*

Dr Kahmira Kakati
Assam



*Balipara Foundation
Naturenomics
Award*

Neihounuo Sorhie
Nagaland



*Balipara Foundation
Annual Award*

Pangti Village Council
Nagaland



*Mahout Mark
Shand Award*

Kiron Rabha
Assam



*Mahout Mark
Shand Award*

Purna Chandra Rabha
Assam



*Mahout Mark
Shand Award*

Bhumindhar Deka
Assam



*Mahout Mark
Shand Award*

Sukla Das
Assam



*Mahout Mark
Shand Award*

Mongal Ghatowal
Assam

BALIPARA FOUNDATION

Assam • India

Contact:

Registered Office: A1, Navin Enclave, Mother Teresa Road, Guwahati -781021, Assam, India
Site Office: Balipara Division, Addabarie Tea Estate, PO- Lokra, Sonitpur, Assam 784102, India
Project Office: Basa Gaon, Golaghat District, Kaziranga National Park, Assam 785109, India

 www.baliparafoundation.com

✉ robineastment@baliparafoundation.com | sanjiddutta@baliparafoundation.com

☎ +91 99548 30436, +91 94351 99831

Our Partners:

