

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2019 – 2020



**Address: C/o Keshav Funde, Near Chamat Supermarket, T.B. Toli,
Ramnagar, Gondia, Maharashtra – 441614 or c/o Deepak
Automobiles, Gurunanak Road, Gondia, Maharashtra – 441601.**

Email: sawanbahekar111@gmail.com

Contact no- 09420515041

President message

DEAR FRIENDS,

As a young conservationist, I fell in love with wildlife conservation in central India. We are amazed by the remarkable changes that occurred for SEWA and our partners in 2016-17. It was a year defined by impressive developments and fresh new approaches as we continued to grow our ardent community of conservationists and supporters. It was a complex year, but rooted in the most simple, fundamental truth: we have but one planet and we are privileged to share it with extraordinary wildlife. Whether tigers. Leopards, black buck, sloth bear, wolf, these animals are emotionally sophisticated, deeply intelligent, and essential for healthy ecosystems. Our responsibility to preserving this diversity of life has never been greater and our ability to rise to the challenge has never been stronger. Our strength comes from your support. Because of your commitment to wildlife our partners have been able to make significant impacts: tiger and leopard Conservation in the area has reported a 60% decrease in livestock losses with increasing tolerance toward these animal. We saw a distressing increase in tiger, black buck, sloth bear and leopard poaching, bush snares became a dangerous threat to painted to other important species continued to lose habitat from deforestation. Supported by committed donors, our conservation partners addressed these challenges head on, finding solutions that work for wildlife and people alike. We move ahead with determined optimism, assured that protecting endangered species is not only worth fighting for, it's a fight we intend to win.



I am very much thankful for our team, partners, supporters, colleagues, and the many, many community members we partner with. Together, we are finding the balance * for people and wildlife. Thank you very much,

Mr. Sawan Bahekar

President, SEWA

Athos of the organization

In and around Maharashtra's Gondia district, an NGO called SEWA (Sustaining Environment and Wildlife Assemblage) is helping regenerate tiger habitats, and protecting Sarus Cranes, blackbuck and wolves. Located close to the state borders of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, Gondia is the gateway to Maharashtra from central and eastern India. It is in this central Indian landscape that Gondia-based NGO, Sustaining Environment and Wildlife Assemblage (SEWA), has been working for wildlife since 2014. Since wild animals do not adhere to human boundaries, SEWA works with communities and forest officials to protect forests, organize anti-poaching drives, conduct mass-awareness campaigns, rescue and rehabilitate wild animals, reduce villagers' dependency on forest resources and monitor the dispersal of tigers.

Reducing human-wildlife conflict in villages around the Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve is a key intervention. "We began studying tiger dispersal in 2011 to help improve management practices and policies for the long-term survival of tigers in the landscape. We discovered that the predators move from Nagzira to Kanha-Pench towards the north and towards Umred-Karhandla in the south. Protecting these critical corridors therefore emerged as a vital priority," says Sawan Bahekar, President, and SEWA who was presented with a Sanctuary Special Maharashtra Wildlife award in 2016. He adds, "Political will and administrative resolve can turn this landscape into one of the finest tiger habitats in the country."

Our Core Values

- Social justice and equity
- Integrity and legitimacy
- Transparency and accountability
- Participatory approach in wildlife and bio-diversity conservation.
- Commitment to service of vulnerable people in the corridor villages

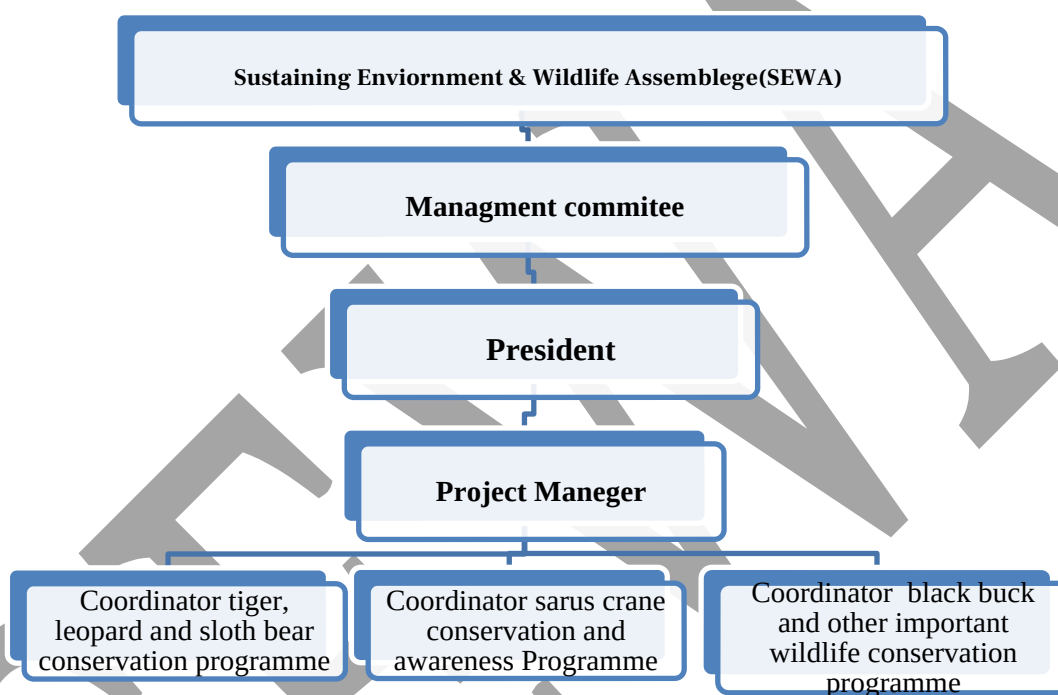
Our Strategic OBJECTIVES

Sustaining Environment & Wildlife Assemblage (SEWA) analyses all the problems using a simple rule that "Problem is like a tree, and every tree has its roots". It assumes reasons for every problem and states that only its effects are visible, not the roots/reasons. So, the first step towards its solution is its understanding, which is done using Problem Analysis.

- To improve service delivery and living conditions of corridor communities through empowerment, good governance and access to information
- To boost economic opportunities in disadvantaged communities through skills development, alternative livelihood opportunity to reduce the pressure of the forest

Governance

The responsibility to achieve the vision of the SEWA, as it appears in the bye-law of the association, rests with the 'Governing Body'. The Governing Body's monitoring role includes engagement of the chief executive, evaluate his/her performance, preparing and approving the strategic plan, review the annual activities and financial plans and approve the annual budget and financial audits. The board generally meets four times in a year.



INVOLVEMENT:

The SEWA team is working apprehensively bearing in mind that “To save nature, you’ve to work in Harmony with Humans”, balancing the natural and manmade habitat is what our efforts are put forward for. The awareness programs, celebrating various natures related days marked in the calendar throughout the year, and covering all the peripheral villages in one activity or the other, our team makes sure that everybody is aware of the constant presence of the Wildlife and hence are on guard when dealing with daily prospects of life. This awareness is created in the form of surveys and workshops or group discussions among the villagers and including the management too. These workshops and programs help the Human race to understand the importance of survival of the Wildlife and henceforth, saving the Mother Nature.

Other programs in which the SEWA team cordially organizes and sometimes actively participates include Plantation programs, drawing and painting programs in school, health camps and blood donation camps in villages etc. The team is always actively participating and involving themselves in activities, programs and workshops organized by the Department.

Whether it is a rescue operation or catching thieves and poachers in the area or simply monitoring the areas with continuous Carnivore movement, our SEWA team is always working effortlessly and in complete coordination with the Dept. Protecting the boundaries of Nagzira WLS, working in coordination with the authorities, creating awareness among the population and keeping an eye out on everything that's going around the area is what the SEWA team is trying to do and at some lengths achieving it too.

Program and Initiatives

A. Sarus Crane survey and conservation programs

The Sarus crane is the tallest flying bird in the world standing 152-156 cm tall with a wingspan of 240cm. It has a predominantly grey plumage with a naked red head and upper neck and pale red legs. Females are smaller, growing to about 35-40kg, while the males grow bigger, up to 40-45kg. It is a social creature, found mostly in pairs or small groups of three or four. Known to mate for life with a single partner, its breeding season coincides with heavy rainfall in monsoon. Nests are constructed on water in natural wetlands or in flooded paddy fields. Usually a clutch has only one or two eggs, which are incubated by both parents for a period of 26 to 35 days. The juveniles follow their parents from the day of birth. Sarus crane is an indicator and flagship species of the wetland ecosystem. The mere presence of breeding individuals is considered as a sign of rich bio-diversity and sound health of the wetland. The main threat to the Sarus crane in India is habitat loss and degradation due to draining the wetland and conversion of land for agriculture. The landscape of its historic range is rapidly changing due to construction of highways, housing colonies, roads, and railway lines. More recently, many deaths have been recorded in Maharashtra due to collision with power lines. Also, due to the increase in agricultural land, Sarus cranes are left with no choice but to forage in these fields, and as a result ingest pesticides, which lead to poisoning. Gondia and Balaghat this two district are most key district where most of the Sarus crane birds and species are sighted in India, and due lack of awareness and law enforcement threats are shown in the local area like - habitat destruction, people hunting for meat, egg stealing, electrocution, cattle grazing, and the agricultural use of pesticides.



The juveniles follow their parents from the day of birth. Sarus crane is an indicator and flagship species of the wetland ecosystem. The mere presence of breeding individuals is considered as a sign of rich bio-diversity and sound health of the wetland. The main threat to the Sarus crane in India is habitat loss and degradation due to draining the wetland and conversion of land for agriculture. The landscape of its historic range is rapidly changing due to construction of highways, housing colonies, roads, and railway lines. More recently, many deaths have been recorded in Maharashtra due to collision with power lines. Also, due to the increase in agricultural land, Sarus cranes are left with no choice but to forage in these fields, and as a result ingest pesticides, which lead to poisoning. Gondia and Balaghat this two district are most key district where most of the Sarus crane birds and species are sighted in India, and due lack of awareness and law enforcement threats are shown in the local area like - habitat destruction, people hunting for meat, egg stealing, electrocution, cattle grazing, and the agricultural use of pesticides.

Team SEWA is conducting Sarus crane census in three district of central India in a month of May we target Winganga, Bagh river of 22 ghat& 24 water body. We are arranging 22 team of 44 individuals at a time including farmers, Volunteers and forest department.

B. Patrolling and monitoring programs

Visit to sensitive area for considering wildlife movement and find out threats which is harmful to wildlife. Patrolling was mainly divided into two parts 1st is day patrolling and 2nd one is night patrolling these two major way is also divided into three parts Bike/car/foot. In entire three year we had done thousands of km patrolling in surrounding area(buffer) of NNTR landscape and covered almost 90% area of corridor area which is called Navegaon-Nagzira corridor. So many time we found various threats like electrocution, snares, forest fire, illegal tree/bamboo felling. For make it effective we had divided the landscape in different five blocks. traps placed in the fields and trails.

- Checking indirect signs of animal presence.
- Direct sightings.
- Sharing knowledge with local informers.
- Target village center and discussion with villagers.

Informers Networking And Information Gathering

In this programme we had focus on information networking in which informer's gave important & sensitive information which is more useful for Conservation and maintain co relation between man and wild animals. These programme had conduct in wildlife sensitive areas.

We are targeted few buffer villages which are sensitive for wildlife as well as humans. To build informer network first of all we have to identify villages which is notorious, where man animal conflict level is very high and also we are target those villages which are involved in poaching case. We always try to felicitate our informer. Now SEWA team working in almost 80 villages of NNTR buffer and NNTR corridor area its very wider level of information gathering network which is very effective to avoid man animal conflict and to identify threats.



D. Black buck and wolf conservation programme.

Since from decade we are working for black buck and wolf conservation in different three landscapes which is the small pockets where good population of Indian grey wolves and their prey black buck found. We are targeted local villagers to protect and conserve the Antelope species. We also help forest department to guide and inform about black buck conservation.

The following small packets where conservation program is running out;

- Dahegoan-monegaen of Amgaon range
- Khamari-Gonditolapowaritola of gondia range
- Ambetaliao-Gidhaddi of Goregon range.
 - Regular monitoring of blackbuck & wolf packs.

We are doing regular foot patrolling and bike patrolling in that three landscape within a week we targeted 2 days to working in this landscape we also take regular meetings with villagers of surrounding area and beat guard of that range.

- Conduct orientation & sensitization of local committee members, farmers and field staff.

E. RECUES PROGRAMMES

SEWA team has always been a Nature's Guide and a Nature's friend. Keeping in mind that every species of animal be it a reptile or bird or herbivore or carnivore, it should stay in its natural habitat and that it does not disturb the balance, our team works effortlessly in the rescue and release of mostly snakes and birds in their natural habitat with utmost care and precision.

Rescuing bird from roads to fallen trees to poachers, our SEWA team tries with all their might to keep the species safe till they release it in their natural habitat.

Rescuing Snakes is an easy task as long as we see it from a distance, but actually catching a snake alive from a populated area and then releasing it in wild safely and carefully so as not to temper those delicate reptiles, it is our SEWA team that does all the rescue with a smile intact and duties fulfilled to the mark. Rat Snake to Cobra, Indian Rock Python to Checkered Keelback, Sand Boa to Banded racer, all the snakes were rescued from different adjoining areas of the park and were released again in the wild carefully. The other rescued species include Barn Owl and Shikra Bird not only birds and other important species but also sewa has



rescue tiger, leopard, wolf, bisons, nilgai, wild boars, warthogs and help and forest department for rescue this important species.

- We had work on wildlife (animals ,birds,snakes) rescue since past years.
- We work in Navegaon –Nagzira tiger reserve landscapes- We are specially focused on Snake, birds and mammal rescue in the NNTR landscape because of suitable climate and forest area so many animals was trapped in unfamiliar condition so it's our responsibility make them secure from inhuman activity.
- In many major reserve of wild animals, we had help to forest department. We also help forest department for carnivore rescue in this two year we had rescue two leopard and 5 black bucks from forest and safely release them into the forest.



F. Annual waterfowl census

As well Sarus crane and black buck conservation Gondia district Had a great Gift of Nature which is the beautiful lakes it will become haven at the time of winter t 54 different species of migratory birds which is comes from different countries are stayed and rest three month in that lakes. In the entire period we also give attention to protect birds and try to make their habitat safe for the future. We had conduct annual waterfowl census in 15-20 Lake of Gondia district in 2 phases.

First phase in end-December and second phase is in mid-January. By using volunteers and SEWA team we conduct this census in 20 lake



G. Camera trap monitoring survey

To identify the specific landscape and biodiversity of a particular landscape it required that a proper study it depends on scientific way and traditional way. We had done various type of monitoring In NNTR landscape which is divided into three types.



- 1) **Trap camera monitoring** – In entire two year time span we had done almost two trap camera monitoring in different two blocks which is corridor section of NNTR and buffer area of old Nagzhira. In this monitoring period we had installed almost 20 trap camera for 2 month in the sensitive area where we found very good wildlife movement picture.
- 2) **Kill base monitoring**- in the NNTR landscape we are doing kill base monitoring since from eight year. In entire two year we had done almost 15 kill base monitoring with forest department to find out the presence and animal behavior.
- 3) **Tiger migration monitoring**- SEWA team has been identified various migration path of tigers which is the result of Tiger migration monitoring. SEWA team successfully identified and study three to four migration from NNTR to peanch, NNTR to UKPWS, NNTR to Balaghat and Balaghat to NNTR.



H. Awareness programme & capacity building programme

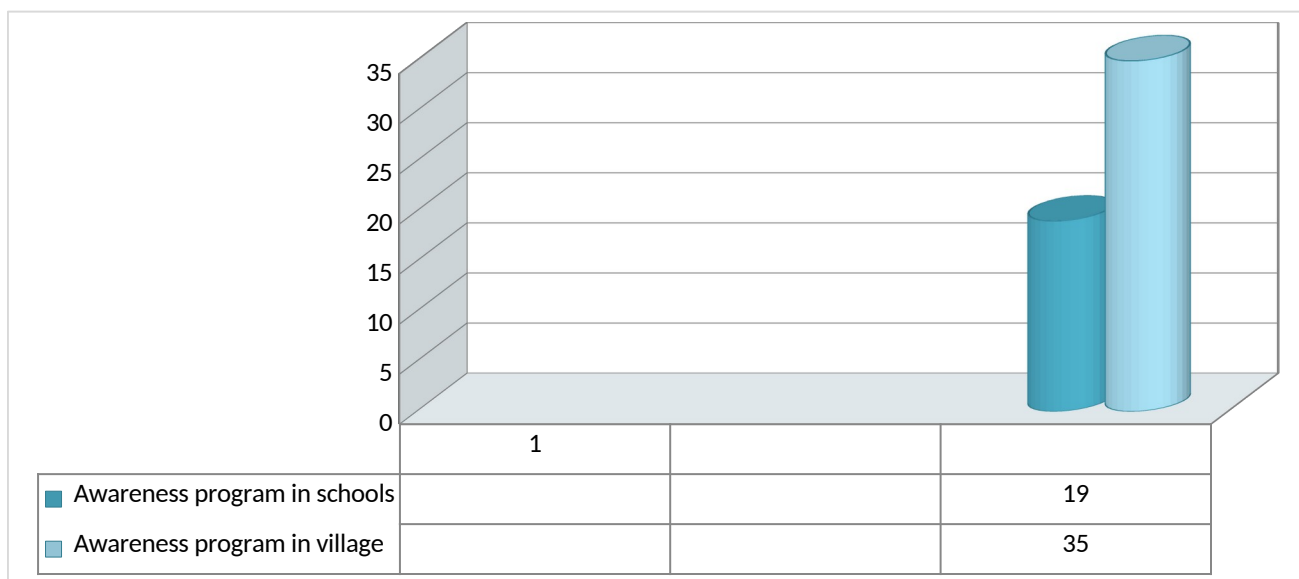
An organizing structured awareness programme describing significant of its nature and component has been conducted in 7 villages till now. Which include the several documentaries of wildlife shown, a mass gathering and discussion with coordinators?

Awareness programme in wildlife sensitive village & areas Awareness programs is totally related to information gathering and informers networking. It is a first step to gather or attract interested people from mob. Especially we'll take awareness programs throughout the year in summer and winter season by using projector and slides. In the presentation we'll speak about preventive measures about man animal conflict, crop raid issues and how to get compensation from forest department. Awareness programs which build a capacity between local communities we also try to help them to make a Self-Hand Group for village development and to decrees dependency of forest.

Awareness program specially divided in two categories

- 1) Awareness program in school/collages- 19
- 2) Awareness program in villages- 35.





I. Livelihood Activities

We did livelihood activities in ruler & tribal areas. We selected almost 13th villages where we started livelihood program to make villagers self-dependent and the main motto behind this program is to decrease dependency of forest. We also improve their mind and thinking about wildlife and why it is important to protect them. We are making Self hand groups in these 13th villages we are helping them to improve their crop pattern and we also help them to directly connected to various frame producer company.

Till now we have register 15 SHGs with the company for trade. One stand SHGs comprise of 7-10 members which is term around of 130-150 members each coming from different family



Benefited from this scheme and can boost their economic condition.

SEWA then went to discuss the same criteria with the farmers and Goods Company named “chirag patil” and established and can link up to the SHGs and company for better stretched market. The farmed producer company linked with SHGs link and has got a mobile vending cart which is permitted by the state government which can be reach through-out any place of the state, thus the SHGs has got an assistance as well.

Man – animal conflict

In awareness programs and workshops our main motto is to avoid Man animal conflicts situation. We discuss with people about animal movement pattern does and don't into the forest area.

Anti-poaching activates and anti-electrocution movement

In NNTR landscape Poaching and electrocution is the biggest threat. People using electric current for killing wild animals most of the time they use electric current fencing to protect their crop from wild herbivore but unfortunately it's a big fact that not only herbivore but also carnivore animals and various time humans are also lose their life. It's a very big issue for NNTR landscape. Our team is frequently working for solving this big issue. We seized and caught various electrocution cases in this two year.



Photo gallery



Two Sarus create hope of rise

■ District Correspondent
GONDIA, July 22

SARUS Crane, the tallest living flying bird, has given a new identity to Gondia district. The birds are found only in Gondia and neighboring Bhandara district in entire Maharashtra and also in Balaghat area of neighbouring Madhya Pradesh. However, there has been a decline in the population of the birds over the last two decades and wildlife enthusiasts are therefore trying to stop further fall in their numbers.

In this backdrop, the two recent 'congregations' of Sarus cranes in Gondia gain importance. Two



A congregation of Sarus cranes. Flocks of 12 and 13 were recorded near

Students participate in bird study tour to mark birth anniversary of Dr Salim Ali

■ District Correspondent
GONDIA, Nov 15

THE birth anniversary of renowned bird researcher Dr Salim Ali was celebrated with great zeal by Sustainable Environment and Wildlife Assemblage (SEWA).

The organisation organised study tour for the students to famous Paraswada lake where they were guided on various bird species and the need for environment, habitat conservation.

Former Wildlife Warden and SEWA President Sarwan Babekar

threw light on the life of Dr Salim Ali and his dedication in studying the birds. Noted bird lover Bharat Jasani told the students that the books written by Dr Ali were still used by the bird lovers to study the birds and their species. Ali is the inspiration for many to get them attracted towards study of bird. Dr Ali earned identity as Bird Man of India, he added.

The students were told about the various species of migratory and local birds and how to identify the bird species.

They saw Sarus, Purple Moorhen, Common Coot, Lesser Whistling Duck, Pintail, Jacana, Open Bill Stork, Gadwal, Gargani, Northern Pintail, Northern Showler, Grey Lac Goose, Marsh Harrier, Common Pochard and others. Munesh Gautam, Jalaram Budevar, Delendra Harinkhede, Sarpanch Jalpal Thakur (Paraswada), Shashank Ladekar, Dushyant Akre, Salim Sheikh, Ratiram Kalitragur, Dinesh Harinkhede, Trayambakeshwar Harinkhede, Vikas Farkunde, Gaurav Bopche, Anurag Shukla, Rahul Bhawe and others worked for the success.



Rice City of Gondia is fast being known for the presence of Sarus Cranes in the district. To glorify the fact that the tallest animal is found only in this part of the State, the district administration has installed statues of a pair of cranes near Collectorate in Gondia. (Pic by Nilesh)



Students along with the activists of Sustainable Environment and Wildlife Assemblage organisation.

