Landscape Partnership Initiative(LPI)

Conservation of breeding populations of Sarus cranes

Final Report

Submitted by

Sustaining Environment & Wildlife Assemblage

(21/03/2026)

I. Progress Against Key Planned Outcomes

Sr. No.	Key Planned Outcome	Progress (Legend)	Progress Indicator (Achievement/Challenge)
1.	Post nesting monitoring		Post-nesting monitoring of Sarus Crane breeding sites was successfully completed. Survival of chicks and breeding pairs was monitored through regular field visits, providing valuable data on breeding success and post-breeding survival.
2.	Farmers meeting in four cluster		Farmer meetings were conducted across all four project clusters. Farmers were sensitized on Sarus Crane conservation, nest protection, and Sarus-friendly agricultural practices. Community participation increased significantly during the project
3.	listing/identification of hazardous pesticides		Hazardous pesticides commonly used in the project area were identified and documented through farmer consultations and field assessments. Safer alternatives and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices were promoted.
4	Farmer meetings in three clusters on Sarus-friendly rice cultivation		Awareness sessions on Sarus-friendly cultivation practices were successfully conducted. Farmers were encouraged to reduce disturbance near nests, avoid indiscriminate pesticide use, and adopt biodiversity-friendly farming methods
5	Block-wise meetings with Agriculture Department for Sarus-friendly rice		Meetings with Agriculture Department officials were conducted to promote Sarus-friendly farming. Coordination with the Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) was initiated to establish Farmer Producer Groups (FPGs) and support the promotion of Sarus-friendly agricultural practices.
6	Explore the potential for labelling and marketing Sarus friendly rice (based on the feasibility, value chain can be developed)		Initial consultations were held with farmers, agriculture officials, and local stakeholders to assess the feasibility of developing a Sarus-friendly rice certification and branding initiative. Baseline information and stakeholder feedback were collected to guide future implementation.
7	Annual Sarus Crane Census		The Annual Sarus Crane Census was successfully conducted across the Gondia–Balaghat landscape. The census recorded 32 Sarus Cranes in Gondia (Maharashtra) and 50 in Balaghat (Madhya Pradesh), providing updated information on population status and distribution for future conservation planning.

I. Describe key achievement or successes, if any:

As part of the project in this duration, we have successfully achieved;

During the project period, the following key achievements were successfully accomplished:

- Successfully conducted post-nesting monitoring of Sarus Crane breeding sites to assess chick survival and breeding success.
- Strengthened community participation by engaging farmers in Sarus Crane conservation and encouraging timely reporting of nests and breeding pairs.
- Conducted farmer meetings across four project clusters to promote Sarus-friendly agricultural practices and reduce disturbance to nesting sites.
- Identified and documented hazardous pesticides commonly used in the project area and initiated discussions on safer, eco-friendly alternatives.
- Collaborated with the Agriculture Department to promote Sarus-friendly farming practices and explore opportunities for integrating wildlife conservation into agricultural extension programmes.
- Improved awareness among local communities regarding the ecological importance of the Sarus Crane, resulting in increased support for nest protection and habitat conservation.
- Developed a strong local conservation network through regular field visits, stakeholder consultations, and continuous engagement with farmers and village communities.

II. DESCRIBE IN DETAIL KEY ACHIEVEMENTS OR SUCCESSES UNDER THE PROJECT

The project made significant progress in strengthening community-based conservation of the Sarus Crane through scientific monitoring, farmer engagement, and collaboration with government departments.

Post-nesting monitoring was carried out in major Sarus Crane breeding areas to assess nesting success and chick survival after the breeding season. Regular field visits enabled the project team to monitor breeding pairs, document survival rates, identify threats affecting breeding success, and collect valuable information for future conservation planning.

Farmer meetings were organised across four project clusters to raise awareness about the ecological importance of the Sarus Crane and its dependence on agricultural landscapes. Farmers were encouraged to protect nests, minimise disturbance during farming operations, and immediately inform the project team whenever nests or breeding pairs were observed. As a result, community participation in conservation activities increased considerably.

The project also documented hazardous pesticides commonly used in the landscape through farmer consultations and field assessments. These findings were shared with local stakeholders, and discussions were initiated on adopting safer alternatives, including bio-pesticides, integrated pest management practices, and environmentally sustainable farming methods that benefit both agriculture and biodiversity.

Meetings were conducted with officials from the Agriculture Department to promote Sarus-friendly farming practices and explore opportunities for incorporating wildlife conservation into existing agricultural programmes. This collaboration laid the foundation for long-term institutional support for Sarus Crane conservation in agricultural landscapes.

Throughout the project, strong relationships were established with local communities, farmers, and government agencies. Increased awareness, improved coordination, and greater willingness among farmers to participate in conservation activities represent important outcomes that will contribute to the long-term protection of the Sarus Crane and its habitat.

III. Future Plans for Project (For the remainder of the Project Duration)

Sr. No.	Key Planned Outcome/Task	Required Support, if any
01	Poster design for unveiling at Sarus Mitra Sammelan	WWF designer team
02	Organize Sarus Mitra Sammelan	WWF team presence
03	Continue Sarus Crane monitoring	Field support
04	Awareness programs with fishing societies, and villages	Educational materials and outreach support

Comments on future plans, support required etc., if any.

- The long-term success and sustainability of the Sarus Crane conservation initiative will depend on continued collaboration and support from multiple stakeholders. Continued technical support from the WWF, Forest Department and Agriculture Department will be essential for promoting Sarus-friendly farming practices through Farmer Producer Groups (FPGs), strengthening farmers' capacity through regular training and demonstrations, reducing the use of hazardous pesticides and chemical fertilizers, and encouraging the adoption of eco-friendly alternatives, integrated pest management, and sustainable agricultural practices that benefit both farmers and Sarus Cranes. In the coming phase, the project will focus on expanding farmer participation, completing the registration and certification of Sarus-friendly rice, developing branding and market linkages to provide economic incentives for conservation-friendly agriculture, and increasing community ownership of conservation efforts. Continued collaboration with the Forest Department, local self-governments, educational institutions, and community-based organizations will further strengthen awareness programmes, habitat protection, wetland conservation, and long-term monitoring of Sarus Crane populations and breeding habitats. Support from the electricity department will also be important for implementing mitigation measures on identified high-risk power lines to minimize collision and electrocution

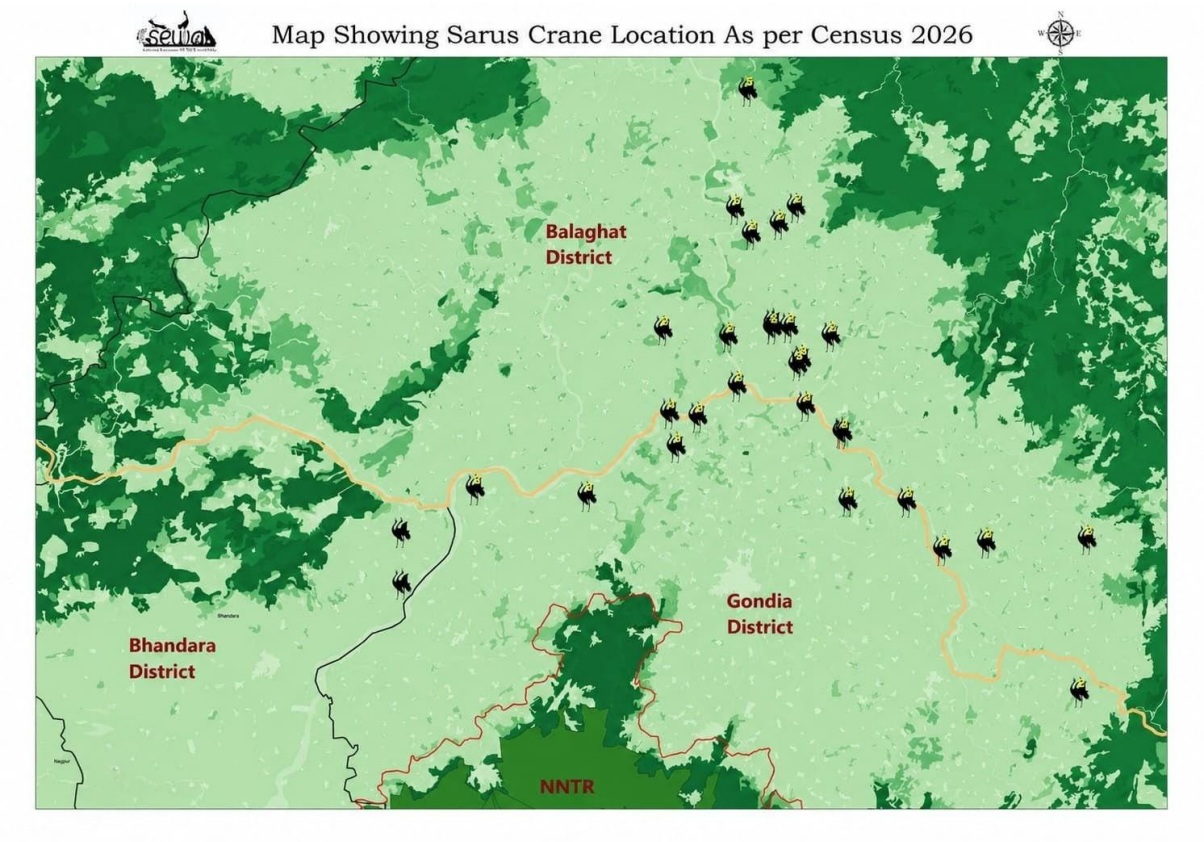
risks. Strengthening the network of Sarus Mitras through periodic training and active community engagement will further enhance local conservation efforts. With sustained technical, financial, and institutional support from government departments and conservation partners, the project has the potential to establish a replicable model of biodiversity-friendly agriculture that improves rural livelihoods while ensuring the long-term conservation of the Sarus Crane and its wetland ecosystem in the Gondia landscape.

- The Sarus Mitra Sammelan is proposed to be organized in July 2026 on a mutually convenient date in coordination with WWF, the Forest Department, local communities, and other key stakeholders**.** The programme will serve as an important platform to recognize the contributions of Sarus Mitras, strengthen collaboration among stakeholders, share conservation experiences and best practices, and promote community-led conservation of the Sarus Crane and its wetland habitats. Continued support for event planning and coordination, technical sessions by experts, participation of government officials and conservation organizations, development of awareness and educational materials, media outreach, and logistical arrangements will be instrumental in ensuring the successful implementation of the programme and in enhancing public awareness and long-term community participation in Sarus Crane conservation.
- Awareness programmes with fishing societies, local villages, and other key stakeholder groups have been planned and will be conducted during the remaining project period. These programmes will focus on promoting the conservation of Sarus Cranes and their wetland habitats, encouraging community participation, reducing anthropogenic threats, and highlighting the importance of biodiversity-friendly livelihood practices. Continued support through the development of educational and IEC (Information, Education and Communication) materials, technical guidance, active participation of government departments and conservation partners, and strengthened community engagement will significantly enhance the effectiveness and long-term impact of these outreach initiatives.
- Regular monitoring and protection of Sarus Crane breeding sites will continue throughout the breeding season with the active involvement of Sarus Mitras, local communities, and the Forest Department. The project will focus on timely nest monitoring, minimizing disturbances, documenting breeding success, responding promptly to potential threats, and promoting community stewardship to safeguard nesting habitats. Continued collaboration among stakeholders will help improve breeding success, strengthen local conservation efforts, and ensure the long-term survival of the Sarus Crane population in the Gondia landscape.

Any other comments, suggestions:

The project has established a strong foundation for community-led Sarus Crane conservation by fostering active participation from local communities and strengthening coordination among key stakeholders. Continued collaboration among local communities, the Forest Department, the Agriculture Department and WWF-India will be essential to sustain the conservation gains achieved during the project period. Future efforts should focus on expanding Sarus-friendly agricultural practices, strengthening community stewardship of wetlands, enhancing habitat protection and long-term monitoring, promoting farmer incentives through certification and market linkages, and integrating conservation objectives into local development and agricultural planning. Long-term support is also needed to complete farmer registration, certification, branding, and market linkage development for Sarus-friendly rice, ensuring that farmers receive economic incentives for adopting conservation-friendly practices. Simultaneously, continued monitoring of Sarus Crane populations, protection of breeding habitats, wetland restoration, community awareness, and mitigation of threats such as power-line collisions and habitat degradation should remain key priorities. With sustained technical, financial, and institutional support, the Sarus-friendly rice initiative has the potential to become a flagship conservation model that integrates wetland conservation, sustainable agriculture, and rural livelihood enhancement while securing the long-term survival of the Sarus Crane across the Gondia–Balaghat landscape.

IV. Photos from the Field/Media Update




ग्राम पंचायत कार्यालय
ग्राम पंचायत घाटेमनी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