



Oh, COFFEE, MY COFFEE

By Helen Lovell-Wayne, MS

An award-winning, highly accomplished ecologist with a successful track record of slashing operating costs and publishing papers, now seeking a new challenge where my skills and track record can be utilized in the environmental sector. I have experience with both non-profit and government environmental organizations. Most proficient at jobs that allow me to be outside with minimal supervision, based in South Burlington, Vermont, United States

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This article is written with the sole intention of informing consumers about the products they may currently be buying. Hopefully, with enough demand from consumers, industries will supply safer and more sustainable products.

The majority of working adults in America drink coffee before going to work. Numerous studies have promoted the health benefits of drinking this beverage (James H OKeefe et al. 2013).

Good or Bad: Specifically, the benefits include reducing the risk of heart disease, diabetes, and cancer (Godos, J et al 2014). Not surprisingly, coffee is the second most traded commodity in the world after petroleum (P. Murthy and Madhava M. 2011).

However, beneath its surface, this seemingly innocent cup of coffee is implicated in the destruction of the world's rainforests. In all likelihood, this is because the goal of the coffee market is to maximize profits and minimize expenditures. In most circumstances, sustainability is not part of the business plan.

The majority of coffee beans are grown on four continents: Africa, Latin America, South America, and Asia. Arabica is often considered superior in taste compared to other coffee species (G. Grosso 2014). Arabica grows best on hillsides between 1000 and 3000 feet above



A cup of coffee, Erica Strolen

sea level (J. Crawford). The coffee plants attain a height of 8-10 feet and begin to bear fruit at two years old (J. Crawford).

Soil loss: Later, at around twenty

years old, the coffee trees' yields substantially dwindle (K. Watson 2001). Consequently, they are useless for the grower, so they clear more rainforests and plant more trees (K. Watson 2001). The soil is



Coffee plantation, Sarangi on Pixabay

usually found on a slope. Therefore, the rains cause the topsoil to run off and the remaining soil to become hard, which makes it difficult to support plant life. In addition their simply aren't enough nutrients to sustain plant life for any length of time in this type of soil (R. Kasongo 2011).

A few non-profits are currently showing coffee growers how to treat the soil in a more sustainable way.

However, without laws, the growers don't tend to have sufficient motivation to change their habits. On the other hand, some farmers have changed their habits and now produce coffee in a sustainable manner.

Alternative: Trees are typically planted in the rainforest (R. Borkhataria et al 2011). Consequently, there is no need to cut down more of the rainforest every 20 years.

This enables the soil to maintain its nutrient levels. Additionally, this type of farming offers an alternative income if coffee prices decline. For instance, the grower could make money from honey, hearts of palm or ecotourism (R. Borkhataria et al 2011). In recent years, American youth have become increasingly aware of the environmental consequences of coffee production.

Nonprofits have emerged to help solve the ecological problems caused by coffee-producing regions. (A. Linton 2007).

Some coffee bean containers now have stickers on them. They say things like Rainforest Alliance, Conservation Intervention, Smithsonian Bird Friendly Coffee, Farm Direct, and Organic (T. Dietsch and Philpott, S. 2008).

Sustainability: These labels suggest that some of the coffee is sustainably grown, but the extent of these practices may vary (T. Dietsch and Philpott, S. 2008). In addition, some of the coffee by-products are used for such products as fuel (S. Nebra 1998) and biopesticides (P. Murthy and Madhava, M. 2012).

The non-profits are not in every country, so some brands don't have the opportunity to obtain the sticker. Plus, small farms usually do not have the money to get the sticker even if they are harvesting in a sustainable manner (T. Dietsch and Philpott, S. 2008).

The driving factor for most products is money. So just buying the coffee with these labels increases the demand.

Thus, it will likely change the grower's behavior even without the laws to back them up.

OF COFFEE & HOME GARDENS

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This e-journal is sailing in its seventh year!

Grateful thanks to all the editors (page 20) who have been contributing regularly. My good fortune to

have interacted with some: Martin Goodman (England), Oishimaya Sen Nag (India), Manoj Sharma (California), Sudin (Belgium) and Mamta Vardhan (Canada), looking forward to host other experts in near future.

Basket-full of narratives with brilliant photographs, the wise editors inject indescribable strength to our desk. We try to present content touching upon diverse habitats, acknowledging conservation measures need to be the shared responsibility of all citizens all over world. This time: Martin tells us how to do gardening, Oishimaya blesses a wild cat, Sudin visits a Danish school, Sassi showcases Kashmir, Alusch H. Amoghly analyses Green Insurance, and Kartik Jindal rides an EV vehicles. Our desk fills in gaps: a Tigress with five cubs in China, 1st Tiger in Kazakhstan, Trillion trees, among others. 'Coffee' is served by Helen Lowell Wayne from the US, a pleasant discovery for us. Dr. Munir Virani has taken us to Mongolia, great reading.

Must I acknowledge our fortune having been brought face to face with Antarctica (Photo Feature on page 18), thanks to generous contribution by Dr. G.S. Bhardwaj. He is Director at Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and a phenomenal expert in wildlife plus photography. I recall having welcomed him as the chief guest at an award giving event at Aurum.

The edition marks two heart-warming festivals: Deepawali during November and X Mas during December. Kindly accept warm greetings for a successful and gainful 2027. ●

Your choice: However, if the consumer likes a brand that does not have any of the stickers, they might want to do some research.

Their preferred coffee brands might be sustainably produced.

If not, they might want to change to a brand that is better for the environment and the health of the planet.

That way, they can enjoy that cup without too much guilt.

For more information on sustainable household products, read **A Tale of Two Papers or The Dish Ran Away With The Spoon.**

INDIAN COFFEE HOUSE MOVEMENT

(From Conservation Times Desk)

For USDollar 2, have lunch/dinner with a cup of coffee and carry back home packed eatables?

Yes, possible at Indian Coffee House (ICH). It is a restaurant chain in India, run by a series of worker co-operative societies, about 400 in run.

The idea of an "Indian Coffee House" chain was formed during late 1890s.

It was started by the Coffee Cess Committee, the first outlet opened in Churchgate, Bombay in 1936.

By 1940s there were nearly 50 Coffee Houses all over British India.

Fresh dishes: During 1950s, the Coffee Houses were shut down.

The workers of the Coffee Board decided to form Indian Coffee Workers' Co-operatives and called the unit as Indian Coffee House. The first co-operative Coffee House began in Bangalore on 19 August



Coffee with snacks, Wikipedia

1957 followed by one in Delhi on 27 December 1957.

There are 13 co-operative societies in the country to run such coffee houses.

They are governed by managing committees elected from the employees. All Coffee Houses have the same menu and price.

They specialize in serving traditional Kerals state dishes: Idli, Sambhar, Vada, Dosa, Uttapam and



A typically traditionally dressed waiter at Indian Coffee House, Wikipedia

serve full meal too besides snacks: Potato chips, Pakoda, Cutlet, Burger, Upma, Pao bhaji, Spring roll, Sandwich, Toast, etc. Egg is served though all such cafes are vegetarian.

While décor may change at each Coffee House, main counter, cutlery, uniform of waiters, etc., remain a standard hall-mark.

These restaurants are popular in India owing to freshly cooked dishes, appetite appeal and being pocket friendly.

Penetration: Coffee culture appears having penetrated all societies all over world.

It refers to the cultural diffusion and adoption of coffee as a widely consumed stimulant.

It became popular meeting place for artists, writers, and socialites, as well as centres for political and commercial activity.

Evidence of knowledge of the coffee tree and coffee drinking first appeared in the late 15th century; the Sufi shaykh Muhammad ibn Sa'id al-Dhabhani, the Mufti of Aden, is known to have imported goods from Ethiopia to Yemen.

By 1414, the plant was known in Mecca, and in the early 16th century was spreading to Egypt and North Africa from the Yemeni port of Mokha.

During the 15th century, coffee was known to be a beverage used in the Ottoman Empire.

Dutch move: In 1658 the Dutch first used coffee cultivation in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and later in southern India. Coffee also came to India from Baba Budan, a Sufi saint who introduced coffee beans from Yemen to the hills of Chikmagalur, Karnataka, in 1670.

Since then coffee plantations have become established in the region, extending south to Kodagu.



A scene at a cafe in France, Wikipedia

COFFEE MAKES POLITICIANS “WISE”

Alexander Pope's famous statement about coffee is:

"Coffee, which makes the politician wise, And see through all things with his half-shut eyes."

It appears in his mock-heroic narrative poem *The Rape of the*

Lock (Canto III, lines 117–118). The lines describe a social gathering where coffee is served after a card game, gently mocking the self-importance of politicians who feel enlightened and sharp after drinking it.

OF COFFEE & COFFEE SPOONS

Coffee has received witty and jovial comments from all over, some are outlined here.

T.S. Eliot: "I have measured out my life with coffee spoons."

Albert Camus: "Should I kill myself, or have a cup of coffee?"

Gertrude Stein: "Coffee is a lot more than just a drink; it's something happening."

Søren Kierkegaard: "At any rate, I have always loved coffee... and it is a great pleasure to me to have it brought to me in a small pot."

HOW TO DO GARDENING AN ENGLISHMAN'S GUIDE

By Martin Goodman

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Eleven acres surrounded the home we built for ourselves in Santa Fe, New Mexico. At 8,000 feet this was semi-arid land complete with black bears and cactus. I decided to plant an orchard.

In they went, the pear, apple and plum saplings. I kept them watered. One by one the trees fell over and died. Gophers, cheeky rodents that



Martin Goodman watering plants

were resident on the land well before I arrived, ran tunnels through the ground. They had nibbled away all the roots of all the trees. Those gophers turned around my notions of gardening.

What land needs: For success, see what type of garden the land is ready to accept. First of all, check in with the land and see what it needs.

Gardening that Santa Fe property turned into trimming deadwood from trees and using that to build a series of dams, to slow down waterflow in times of heavy rains. Topsoil would then bank up instead of being washed away.

And our plantings became of native wildflower and grass seeds, to turn the bare earth green. We would sit on our verandah and look out at healthy lupins. And what was that? Did the lupin move? Indeed it did. First from side to side, and then it vanished, sucked down into the ground. A gopher had chewed off its roots and tugged it down into its burrow, and was surely now packing the plant into its fur-lined cheek pouches. We had to laugh.

Hollyhock beds: The one concession to my English gardening gene were the hollyhocks that grew around the perimeter of our Santa Fe home. Our garden is now a small patch in London, where three hollyhock beds shoot blooms high every summer. The wider area of Hackney, our London borough, is applying a great green vision, expanding its parks along sound ecological principles.

Those principles mean ripping out hollyhocks as they appear: brought to Europe from China in the 1500s, hollyhocks do not count as native plantings. They survive on the edges of our garden for their beauty, but more primarily for the busyness of insect activity that surrounds them. Way into November bees can be found investigating each flower.

Our main intention was to 'garden for birds'. Essentially that means gardening for insects, on which birds can feed. In a patchwork of urban gardens, where fences are patrolled by cats, birds are unlikely to be profuse. But the garden does now buzz with insects, several butterfly and moth species are semi-resident here, and I'm learning to identify different species of hoverflies. This summer bluetits keep zooming in, grabbing snacks

for the chicks in the nest they have built in a neighbour's fig tree.

Now a meadow: The more formal elements of the garden, such as lavender, are kept to the borders. Our lawn is now a wildflower meadow, with a surrounding track of mown grass to make it look deliberate and well managed. As lawns desiccate and turn brown in summer our mini meadow stays green with splashes of colour.

When you garden for wildlife, do you encourage snails? They surely come. My own pattern is to go on a couple of snail safaris each year. I part-fill a bucket with the little creatures and then walk them for release to the wildlife area of a local park – while they crawl from the bucket, up its handle and over my hands. That respite from being eaten gives the flowers and edible plants a chance to flourish.

London is home to many foxes, and one family at least has been raised in our garden. We often tread quietly, so as not to disturb a fox asleep in the centre of our lawn. And we have our own cheeky rodents – grey squirrels.

They roar around the place, dig holes, eat those bulbs you don't plant deep enough.

Lesson from Spider: The biggest moral decision I've faced was one late summer, when a spider built her

web across a lavender plant. We grew the lavender to attract bees, and the plant had become a trap. The first bee I saw caught there I freed and took to the far end of the garden. It dusted off its wings – and flew straight back to the lavender. I learned to release myself from being the garden's moral guardian and let creatures do what they will.

Often, while sitting at my desk and writing, staring out over the garden, I find a statement arise in my head: 'I'd rather be gardening'. And out I go for half an hour.

Gardening has become a matter of controlling growth. Certain plants, such as dandelions, look to dominate and these I classify as weeds and move to the compost pile. Stones and pottery fragments dug from the ground now accumulate in a dark corner of the garden as a home for invertebrates.

Finally the toad: The other night a heavy storm broke through a spell of intense heat. We had left open the doors of our conservatory.

In the morning we found a new guest on its tiles floor – a young toad. It was clearly flourishing in our organic garden, finding shelter in its shrubbery.

In springtime toads lay their eggs in water. That gives me six months to add a small pond to our wildlife garden's mix.



Hollyhocks in London, Wikipedia

RIDING AN “EV” IN INDIA

By Kartik Jindal

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The Decarbonizing Movement, a trip to a place so far, so distinct, so warm, so beautiful, so polluted. What word should I use to describe my home away from home? Many come to mind.

To decide on a single word is a great challenge. One as great as the prevalent issue in India posed by carbon emissions and energy sources. A visitor from one of Canada's major cities, Edmonton, I spend my time with my extended family in India's tourist hotspot, Jaipur.

As an outsider, many differences can be seen between how the two countries deal and take on climate change and all its hurdles.

Good or Bad: This is evident through reading about strategies related to environmental governance and sustainable development in the local newspapers. Reading the newspapers, a very important thought crossed my mind when comparing the two countries. What initiatives or actions is the general population taking to reduce their carbon footprint and choose cleaner energy alternatives?

Recently my family in Jaipur bought a TATA EV following the addition of a set of solar panels on the roof of the house. I learned that my family set up a portable charging station at the end of our driveway, which would be capable of supplying the car with energy directly from the solar panels.

This idea of self sustainability got me curious into reading about how the average Indian household can take actions to mitigate their daily carbon emissions through the insertion of EV's and the acquisition of renewable energy alternatives. So

I visited the TATA EV website to read about how an EV helps alleviate carbon emissions.

Cash saving: Through the TATA EV website, one can play around with an interactive feature which asks about your daily commute in your electric vehicle as well as the price of fuel per litre. The feature outputs data that shows how much an individual could save in money and in tailpipe emissions over the span of five years.

My family's daily commute averages around 45 km and currently the fuel price per litre is marked around ₹110 (\$1.63 CAD).

This means we save around ₹480,000 (\$7130 CAD) and reduce 11.90 million grams of tailpipe emissions over the course of five years. An appealing set of data, that is!

How could you pass on such a win-win situation for your wallet and the environment? Is an EV as good as it sounds? Nothing is too good to be true.

That too problem: That saying applies here too, though the catch is temporary. There is no secret that to manufacture an EV, you must generate high amounts of emissions through the extraction of lithium and



Such e-cars are in demand in India

cobalt to produce the energy intensive battery for the vehicle.

This process involves heavy amounts of chemical processing powered by none other than fossil fuels. What could possibly be temporary about it? Despite the deep environmental debt, EV's eventually override those initial carbon humps the more they get driven.

When compared to a traditional fuel car, EV's take the environmental edge as the emissions are zero and energy efficiency is high since more stored energy is converted into motion.

The further you drive in your EV, the more stagnant the emissions graph becomes, while the same amount of mileage in an internal combustion engine (ICE) car produces a higher rate of tailpipe emissions.

The crossover where the ICE car's aggregate emissions blow past the initial carbon debt of the EV is known as the carbon parity point.

Comparison: Remember, the next time you buy an EV, take it for a race. Race until your buddy in the ICE car thinks he overtook you.



Many prefer a two-wheeler

Does he know about the carbon parity point? There still lies a major issue with electric cars.

It has nothing to do with the car itself, rather its powering practices.

If you were ahead of the game, you might have been able to point out that charging the car requires energy from grids powered by fossil fuels, indirectly leading to emissions from plants. However, a household can completely erase their dependency on fossil fuels

through the addition of solar panels, providing a self-sufficient and an immediate zero emission energy grid for the EV.

Not only is it more viable to group an EV with a solar panel powered energy grid for the local household, but with the majority of India's fuel being imported, targeting cleaner energy alternatives secures self sufficiency throughout the entire nation.

Larger dimension: As I sit in a country struggling with the impacts of pollution caused by emissions from ICE cars and power plants, I also see a country where the average household is capable and willing to acquire an EV and search for greener energy options. It will not just take my family or yours to rise up for India, it will take the entire country and more.

Are we willing to do what it takes when the flood lights are shining bright? I sure am. Together, let us take the run up on that pitch and launch India's ball to clean bowl the wickets of fossil fuels, initiating a new innings where green energy steps up to bat, leading a country towards what we hope will be more than just a century.

URBAN STUDENTS BUSY GARDENING COPENHAGEN'S GROWING MOVEMENT

By Sudin K

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For a fleeting moment, the place felt almost utopian. Bright, hand-decorated cards mounted on wooden pegs, stood at the top of each garden bed. Every card displayed the name of a child and the grade they were in, while each cluster of beds carried the name of a school.

Gardening in city: There were five or six different groups of children, all engaged in tasks like weeding,



Name tags displaying children's creativity and ownership, Sudin

sowing or watering. I could hear their excitement. Each group had a couple of adults moving among them, gesturing, guiding.

The surprising part was not so much seeing children gardening but where they were doing it. Not in a rural farming community, but in the middle of Copenhagen.

I was at the Bispebjerg School Garden, the oldest and largest of the

city's school gardens, to see them in action and meet with the Trine Hansen, their Nature Supervisor and in-charge of communication, who was also leading the day's activities in the garden. I soon found her handing out seeds to a group of eager first and second graders.

Moving around this three-hectare garden space, I came across a group of older children cooking lunch over a wood fire at one of the several fire pits, while learning about the greens they had foraged earlier and were now adding to their pot. There was even a group from a playschool being shown around the School Garden.

The Roots: The School Gardens began more than a century ago when P.W. Lindholm, a Danish teacher, returned from visiting schools in Austria, where he witnessed children learning through gardening. Along with teachers, horticulturalists and others who shared his vision, he helped establish the School Garden Association in 1903. By the 1950s, there were 31 school gardens in Copenhagen and around 200 across the rest of Denmark.

The present model is around 20 years old. Camilla Friedrichen, then a volunteer with the SG Association and today its head, felt the gardens were reaching only families who already knew about them. She worked with the municipality, helped raise funding and pushed for a partnership with Copenhagen's public schools.

The Association now runs eight gardens across Copenhagen. Four have paid staff while the other four are run by volunteers. The paid staff are also supported by volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds, including teachers, gardeners and engineers.

How it Works: The programme is open to every public school in Copenhagen who receive an email from the Association at the start of

the year. Fitting the schools into the programme, Trine mentioned, is a complex exercise involving class sizes, preferred days and available space. The school management decides the grade that will participate.

The municipality of Copenhagen owns the land and the Association is given the right of use. In addition, the Association also receives funds from the municipality for their activities with the public schools. The children outside the public-school programme who wish to participate, can do so with their parents, for a nominal price. Separate days of the week are allocated for them to avoid clash with the school programme.

Growing-Learning: From spring through autumn, schools visit once every week. The children are typically between 3 and 14 years old, although some older children also participate. The Bispebjerg School garden alone sees more than 800 children a week, through its various activities and programmes.

The children prepare the soil, sow seeds, weed, water and finally, harvest what they have grown. As they work, they also learn about compost, earthworms, soil, wild edible plants. They even get to cook what they grow, using the simple outdoor simple outdoor kitchens built around fire grills. The activities do not stop when the growing season ends. During

winter the gardens organize themed sessions on subjects such as cooking, food preservation, birds, bees and making fire, natural colours and so on. And then there are activities related to food production that children might otherwise never encounter, like watching the slaughter of a chicken.

Beyond the Garden: As I sat down to note down my observations, a few children came over to ask why I was there and what I was writing. When I told them I had come to learn about their garden, they wanted me to write down their names. So, I gave them my notebook. There seemed to be a sense of pride in that. Every one of them told me they loved coming to the garden. Getting muddy clearly wasn't a problem. When more and more urban children know food only as something picked off a supermarket shelf, these children are learning what it takes to grow a carrot before they take it home.

My interactions with urban children in another part of the world have often shown me how little opportunity they have to engage with soil, food, and the outdoors and how quickly this can change when such opportunities are presented to them. I feel there is a strong case for taking a leaf out of what the school garden Association and the City of Copenhagen are doing and create such gardens in cities elsewhere. *(With Inputs from Tine Hansen and budding Gardeners--- Axeline, Ella, Siv, Angelina)*



Entrance to Bispebjerg School Garden, Sudin

YOUNG GUARDIANS OF HOWRAH'S FISHING CATS

CHITRAK PRAMANIK & ARIJIT LEADING

By: Dr. Oishimaya Sen Nag

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As darkness settles down over the rural landscape of Bagnan in Howrah, and the villages gradually fall asleep, a silent predator makes its way stealthily through patches of vegetation and past village homes and crop fields towards a local pond to catch a hearty meal.

It waits patiently by the water's edge for the slightest ripple disturbing the otherwise calm waters.

True to name: Its large, close-set eyes with strong night vision are extremely well adapted to detect any signs of movement in the water.

Its quick reflexes and remarkable diving abilities allow it to snatch out its favorite meal, a fish, from the water, and that is how the Fishing Cat gets its name.

Reaching these spots, however, is an “easier said than done” task for this nocturnal being. Natural wetlands in the wilderness that once provided them with a safe shelter and abundant prey are rapidly being engulfed by urban expansion.

Hence, village ponds and poultry farms become desperate targets in their search for food. But such

ventures expose them to the many challenges of human-dominated areas, such as roads, buildings, and, worst of all, an angry human mob.

Retaliation: In recent times, several incidents have occurred in Howrah district (Kolkata, India) in which Fishing Cats have been beaten to death in retaliation for losses caused to poultry or fishing stocks.

In some cases, these small wild cats have been mistaken for Leopards, or sometimes even Tigers, and killed brutally out of fear.

Although only about twice the size of a domestic cat, these felines have been erroneously labeled due to their spotted fur and the general lack of awareness of their identity, even though the Fishing Cat is the State Animal of West Bengal.

Despite the grim situation, hope prevails.

A group of young people from rural Bagnan has taken it upon themselves to turn the tide in favour of this threatened species.

As members of the local organization, Wildlife Environment Saviour Trust (WEST), these youngsters, led by Chitrak Pramanik, are working to rescue fishing cats from various threat situations while also raising awareness among the local communities about the need to conserve them.



Chitrak leading the Fishing Cat conservation event with Arijit Nag and Dr. Oishimaya Sen Nag at the table, Oishi

Road kills: *“In addition to wetland loss and retaliatory killings, road kill is also a major threat to fishing cats in our area. Over the years, our team has recovered the dead bodies of several fishing cats killed in road accidents in collaboration with the local forest department,”* said Chitrak Pramanik, the Founder of WEST.

“With natural prey sources declining, these cats are forced to cross roads in search of food, fish in village ponds, or enter poultry farms. All of this exposes them to a multitude of threats,” he further stated. For Chitrak and others on his team, the Fishing Cat symbolizes a healthy, thriving wetland ecosystem.

Wetlands too: *“Our district, Howrah, is believed to have derived its name from the Bengali word 'haor,' meaning wetland. True to its name, this area has long been replete with wetlands, although they are rapidly disappearing. We all*

know the importance of wetlands in climate change mitigation as carbon-sequestering ecosystems. They also aid in groundwater recharge, filter pollutants, house rich biodiversity, and sustain local livelihoods. Hence, protecting the Fishing Cat is also a way of protecting the wetlands it calls home,” Chitrak added.

In 2026, WEST, in collaboration with the OneWild Collective, an organization working to protect lesser-known species in India, launched “Baghrol Bandhu (Friends of Fishing Cat): One Learns, One Leads,” an initiative to spur local youth to take action to conserve fishing cats.

Through the program, the team is reaching out to schools and communities in areas where fishing cats are found.

Community help: The initiative includes education sessions and a public speaking

contest themed on fishing cat conservation in selected schools. The most promising student speakers are then selected to use their speaking skills to draw public attention to the need to protect these elusive felines during events held in the villages surrounding their schools.

In this way, the “One Learns, One Leads” concept seeks to transform a student from a learner to a leader in conservation and take forward the message of fishing cat protection beyond the classroom and into the wider community.

“We hope to equip the younger generations with the knowledge and the power to lead change in fishing cat conservation. If we can successfully hand the baton of conservation to our younger brothers and sisters, we will be happy. We are already getting a very enthusiastic response from the participating schools' teachers and students. We are very hopeful of success,” said Chitrak.

Youth to take up: Indeed, securing a future for Fishing Cats will depend greatly on the involvement of local youth.

We do hope that this elusive feline predator of Howrah will continue to thrive in the years ahead through conservation initiatives led and sustained by the area's younger generations.



So we rescued a Fishing Cat, community is all smiles with Chitrak sitting on right, Oishi

GREEN INSURANCE

CLIMATE RESILIENT APPROACH

By : Alusch H. Amoghli

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What is Green Insurance? Green insurance refers to insurance products designed to support environmental sustainability, promote climate resilience, or incentivize green practices.

Green insurance plays a critical role in transitioning to a low-carbon economy and managing financial risks related to climate change. It helps shift capital toward sustainable and resilient assets by directing funding and coverage to projects that prioritize environmental sustainability, such as renewable energy infrastructure and climate-resilient buildings.

Solutions: It protects green technologies and projects by covering risks specific to innovative and emerging solutions—like solar panels, wind turbines, and energy-efficient systems—thereby lowering the financial uncertainty for investors and accelerating adoption of clean technologies.

Green insurance incentivizes climate-resilient behaviour by offering financial benefits such as reduced premiums or discounts for homeowners and businesses that implement energy efficiency upgrades, install flood defences, or use wildfire-resistant materials.

Finally, it enables insurers to better manage climate risk exposure by leveraging advanced underwriting and pricing models that incorporate climate data, risk analytics, and scenario analysis.

This innovation allows insurers to accurately assess and price climate-related risks, maintain portfolio



stability, and foster sustainable insurance markets.

Greenwashing risk: Not all green insurance products truly support sustainability. Some insurers may market policies as “green” without robust criteria or impact measurement, leading to misleading claims. This risks eroding customer trust and undermining the credibility of genuinely sustainable products. Clear definitions, third-party certifications, and transparent reporting are essential to prevent greenwashing and ensure that green insurance delivers real



environmental benefits.

How Will the Insurance Business Change in the Future?

Traditional insurance is already retreating from high-risk areas like wildfire zones and floodplains (e.g., in California, Australia, Florida). Premiums will more closely reflect climate and environmental risks — with higher costs for carbon-intensive or vulnerable assets and discounts for resilient, green assets.

Net-zero: Insurers will align investment and underwriting with net-zero and ESG targets under growing regulatory, investor, and customer pressure. New products will emerge to cover green technologies, carbon markets, and climate adaptation infrastructure. Parametric insurance and microinsurance will grow, offering faster, more flexible protection.

Some examples of Green Insurance in practice are being shared here.

Zurich Insurance Group:

Discounts for certified green buildings and renewable energy project coverage.

Allianz:

Insurance for renewable energy installations, integrating climate considerations in underwriting and investments.

AXA: Green home insurance covering solar panels, heat pumps, and energy-efficient tech.

Lloyd's of London:

Products financing climate adaptation infrastructure such as flood defences.

Swiss Re and Munich Re:

Parametric climate risk solutions that pay out based on predefined triggers like drought or hurricanes.

Potential for Impact Underwriting:

Impact underwriting goes beyond traditional risk pricing by encouraging climate resilience and

sustainability. Insurers may offer premium discounts or better coverage to homeowners who invest in flood-proofing or wildfire-resistant measures, reducing both losses and vulnerability.

They can also support community adaptation projects like wetland restoration or firebreak creation, lowering systemic risks.

Additionally, insurers often provide advisory services to help policyholders adopt energy-efficient upgrades and risk-reducing practices.

LLOYD'S

This proactive approach turns insurers into partners in climate adaptation, improving portfolio sustainability, reducing protection gaps, and supporting broader climate goals.

Many insurers have joined initiatives like the **Net-Zero Insurance Alliance (NZIA)** and the **UN Principles for Sustainable Insurance (PSI)** to align their

portfolios with global climate goals. These groups commit insurers to reduce carbon exposure, set science-based targets, and support clients' decarbonization efforts.

Aiming at climate: By embedding ESG factors into underwriting and investments, insurers help shift capital toward sustainable industries, promote resilience, and phase out fossil fuel risks.

These alliances encourage collaboration and innovation, advancing the insurance sector's role in tackling climate change.

CONSERVATION BEGINS NOT ONLY IN RESEARCH LABS & FIELD STATIONS BUT THROUGH CONNECT, COLLABORATE & CARE Sasi. M

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There are places that do not just exist on maps — they live in the heart, in memory, and in the rhythm of nature's quiet breath. Kashmir, often described as Paradise on Earth, unfolded before me as a landscape of contrasts — where snow-dusted peaks meet saffron fields, where the echo of prayer mingles with the call of a Hangul deep in the forests of Dachigam.

Kashmir greeted us like a painting come alive — snow-draped mountains, whispering chinars, and the mirror-like calm of Dal Lake. Attending the 2nd International Conference on Hangul and Other Threatened Ungulates Conservation (IHUC 2025) at SKUAST-Kashmir was more than an academic journey; it was an encounter with nature, culture, and the pulse of conservation itself.

The conference brought together scientists, students, and conservationists from across the world — a vibrant exchange of ideas set against the breathtaking

landscape of the valley. Discussions flowed seamlessly from technology and wildlife management to the shared hope of restoring balance to fragile ecosystems.

Dachigam: Perhaps the most enchanting part of the journey was

our field visit to Dachigam National Park, a landscape that seemed painted in emerald and gold. The morning mist hung low over the mountains as we entered the park — home to the critically endangered Hangul, the pride and symbol of Jammu & Kashmir.

Walking through its forested trails, the air thick with the scent of pine and the whisper of rushing streams, we were guided by Dr. Khursheed Ahmed, whose pioneering work on the Hangul has shaped conservation policy in the region. The highlight was an interaction with Dr. M. K.



Outburst of heaven, Sasi. M

Ranjitsinh, a living legend in Indian wildlife conservation, whose stories carried the wisdom of decades spent protecting India's wild heritage.

Listening to them speak about the delicate balance of high-altitude ecosystems and the resilience of the Hangul population was deeply humbling — a reminder of why science and empathy must walk hand in hand in conservation.

A Living Canvas: Outside the conference halls and park trails, Kashmir unfolded like poetry. Wandering through the streets of Shalimar, I found myself mesmerized by the play of light over the Dal Lake, where shikaras (house-boats) drifted lazily between floating gardens and reflections of snow-capped peaks shimmered on the water's surface. The Shalimar Market buzzed with color — hand-woven pashminas, aromatic kahwa, and the gentle warmth of the people who embody the spirit of the valley.

A visit to the Shankaracharya Temple, perched high above the city, offered a panoramic view of Srinagar — the lake, the gardens, the mosaic of life below. Later, the serenity of Hazratbal Shrine, its



The horizon melts as water and sky become one whispered prayer, Sasi. M

white marble dome mirrored in the calm waters of Dal, evoked a sense of shared divinity that transcended faith and form.

In every turn, every conversation, Kashmir revealed itself as a place where culture and ecology coexist — both equally delicate, both in need of care.

Lessons: As the conference concluded with the valedictory address and heartfelt farewells, I could not help but feel that IHUC

2025 was more than an event — it was a movement. It brought together scientists, students, policymakers, and communities under one banner: the preservation of our ungulates, our forests, and our future.

Leaving Srinagar, as the evening light fell softly on the Dal, I carried with me not just notes and photographs but a deeper conviction — that conservation begins not only in research labs and field stations, but in our ability to connect, collaborate, and care.

“Kashmir reminded me that the wild is not a distant world; it is the heartbeat of our planet. And to protect it is to protect a part of ourselves.”



(My) Immersed soul, Aslam



The guiding signs, Sasi. M

Jam Side Up

THE STEPPE IS NOT EMPTY

By Munir Virani

Munir Virani is Chief Executive of the Abu-Dhabi-based Mohamed bin Zayed Raptor Conservation Fund dedicated to the protection and conservation of threatened birds of prey around the world.

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Ulaanbaatar under an endless blue sky, Munir Virani

I am here for COP17, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, held under a theme so plain it is almost a dare: Restoring Land. Restoring Hope.

Raptor's tale: Thousands of people. Flags. Delegates and scientists and pastoralists and young volunteers in every direction. Our partners at the Mongolian Bird Conservation Center had built a booth telling the story of years of work: Saker Falcons, artificial nests, grassland ecology, and the slow business of making power lines stop killing birds.

The Mongolian Minister for Environment and Climate Change stopped by. Also the UAE delegation from the Ministry of Climate and Change and Environment was there too.

Our team explained to them what happens when science, government and conservation actually pull in the same direction. Dangerous infrastructure modified. Thousands of kilometres of power line made safe. Countless raptors that are alive instead of lying beneath a pole.

Sacred Skies, film: Both the

Mongolian minister and the UAE delegation listened attentively, and expressed their appreciation for the work done so far. The Mongolian Environment minister invited us to his office to continue discussions.

At the IUCN Pavilion we screened our film, *Sacred Skies: The Legacy of X26*. The room included the UAE delegation from the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment. For half an hour we took them out onto the steppe. Into the lives of Saker Falcons. Into the awful simplicity of birds dying on badly designed poles, and the equally simple truth that humans can repair what humans have built badly.

The questions afterwards would not stop coming. Nobody looked at their phone. In 2026 that is practically a standing ovation. No film gets made by one person standing in a field looking pleased with himself. Ours exists because Voices from the Roof of the World and the MBZ Raptor Conservation Fund believed a story about falcons and power poles was worth funding.

Then The Steppe: My co-director Kiran Ghadge of Visions Aquila has an eye I would happily steal and the patience to keep a camera running long after I would have packed up. Andrew Tkatch, our executive producer, kept the whole thing pointed in a sensible direction, which anyone who has met a film crew will recognise as heroism.



The team of the MBZ Raptor Fund and our partners the MBCC, Munir Virani is 3rd from right, courtesy Munir



The screening of our film Sacred Skies, The Legacy of X26 at the IUCN Pavilion, Minir Virani

Aagi's talk was called: The Steppe Is Not Empty.

I had helped him prepare it. That did nothing to prepare me for standing at the back watching this young Mongolian scientist calmly walk an international audience through artificial nests, satellite tracking, rodent cycles, the Landscape of Fear and power line mitigation.

I have watched falcons fledge. It is a similar feeling, with better lighting. Over the days that followed I wandered the Green Zone without much of a plan, which is usually when the good things happen.

Mongolia...? From an aircraft window, Mongolia looks like the world before anyone arrived. Vast, beige, unbothered, blank. Spend a week on the ground and you see how badly that reads.

There are herders and children out there. Voles beneath the grass and falcons above it. Insects, plants, wolves, livestock, and power lines strung across landscapes older than any of them. Scientists following satellite pings.

Kids planting trees in a desert. Families making a living on ground that is shifting under their boots.

I came to Ulaanbaatar to learn about land degradation. Four days in, I am thinking mostly about hope, which is either a sign of progress or a sign of sleep deprivation. Possibly both.

A Saker on steppe: You restore land one patch at a time. You restore a species one nest, one power pole, one young scientist at a time. And somewhere in the middle of it, if you are paying any attention at all, the land starts quietly restoring something in you.

It is three in the morning again. Of course it is. Outside, the sky is already going pale, far too early and with no apology. Somewhere out on the steppe a Saker is awake on a nest we built from scrap metal and stubbornness, and a vole is having the worst morning of its short life.

The steppe is not empty.

Neither, it turns out, is three a.m. It is full of stories, and I am very glad to be here, listening, writing and with some luck, back to sleep.



With UAE delegation at the MBCC booth in Mongolia, Dr. Munir Virani is on right, courtesy Munir

A TIGRESS WITH 5 CUBS IN CHINA BUT WHO SUPPLIES WILD TIGERS?

(From Conservation Times Desk)



Hero Tigress with her cubs, WWF

As a "grey market" in Tiger-parts still continues to meet needs of high-end society in China, news from that region is likely to warm up cockles of Tiger lovers!

A Tigress in wild has been observed with five cubs, each almost as big as the mother. It is in North East China Tiger and Leopard National Park bordering Russia. A video has been released by WWF-China showing the mother walking over a dirt track and all five cubs following her. Some cubs stop to smell a stone slab or rub face against the brother/sister but soon follow her.

The HERO: A photograph is reproduced here (courtesy WWF) of the family though all six could not be framed in one.

She is named as "Hero Tigress." She has raised 13 cubs in 4 litters since arriving in China from neighbouring Russian habitat in 2019! Great Mom! One of her daughters has laid 4 cubs of her own. It is third generation Tiger breeding success in China.

Recovery trend is too obvious. In 2010, China had 20 wild Tigers. The number rose to 72 in 2026. Real time cameras are fixed to monitor movements.

They send instant notifications to Park Rangers' mobile devices who then share it with villagers to avoid human-wildlife conflicts. It indicates China's belief in Tiger conservation in wild.

Tiger, a cuisine: Yet the nation continues with "Tiger Farming." About 200 captive breeding centres are in service maintaining more than 6,000 Tigers: to be bred and culled. Tiger parts are sold in markets.

Restaurants cook them to serve to customers. Wealthy customers have an aggressive appetite for "wild caught Tigers part" over captive born ones.

They believe consuming 'wild Tigers parts' can generate greater male potency.

Who supplies: There had been global hue and cry over such "Farms" and experts at one time almost forced their entry to inspect the culling business. The nation took a decision in 1993 "under pressure". In 2018, another decision was taken. Wrapped in ambiguity?

Did the Farms, at one time, procure wild Tigers from India or Nepal for the culinary delights?

If the wild Tiger dishes still are served to rich customers in Chinese restaurants, from where are they procured?

Is poaching continuing: Has India become complacent enjoying Tigers' success stories in India? Where do the increasing numbers go?

Presumed having migrated to nearby forests and scrub jungles having little prey base, away from watchful eyes of the Park Field Directors and their teams of hundreds of employees?

Do some sub adults fall a prey to poachers? Who to question and investigate?

"Bad coin drives out good coin from the market" -- Gresham's Law applying to Tigers!



The Amur Tiger being released in Kazakhstan, WWF

KAZAKHSTAN NOW HAS A TIGRESS

A NEW EXPERIMENT BY RUSSIA
(From Conservation Times Desk)

Predatorily success in Kazakhstan! Umit is an Amur Tigress, released in Kazakhstan's Ile-Balkash Nature Reserve end July 2016 as part of a programme to restore the animal's population.

More to come: It is one of four Amur Tigers Russia intends to release there. Authorities plan to release more tigers over time, including an adult male currently under observation and two young cubs being raised with minimal human contact

Umit means "hope" in Kazakh—was released in the 450,000-hectare Reserve. It is in southern Kazakhstan.

What relation: The Amur Tiger, brought from Russia, is the closest living genetic proxy to repopulate the region after extinction of Caspian (Turanian) Tiger, which vanished from Kazakhstan around 1948.

It is fitted with a GPS satellite collar. It has already shown positive adaptation signs by successfully hunting a wild boar and a wolf within her first ten days in the wild.

TRILLION TREE PROJECT

(From Conservation Times Desk)



Enhanced steps together through Trillion Trees, Wikipedia

Trillion Trees is for people, nature and climate. Its projects have made significant progress in the last six months. In the West Usambara Mountains, WWF and Friends of Usambara Society have planted more than 21,000 trees across 19 hectares, helping restore critical catchment areas that feed the Uмба River system in Tanzania.

ReForest Fund: Thanks to the generous support of individuals, foundations and companies who have donated to the ReForest Fund, we have supported 29 projects across 21 landscapes so far. Teams have restored 903,745 trees, which are benefitting over 26,700 people. That's more than 395,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide to be sequestered over 20 years!

It is a landscape-based approach, using methods suited to the local environment, and looking for opportunities to improve livelihoods and address the underlying drivers of deforestation. This ensures the efforts make a difference to people's lives, a lasting contribution to reducing carbon in the atmosphere and help preserve critical biodiversity.

Tanzania-Kenya: In the high Andes of Bolivia, Birdlife partner Asociación Armonía has been

working with 55 families from two communities to plant 40,000 saplings and lay 2 km of pipes to transport water to the community's farmland.

Following a devastating landslide and further heavy rains in the Kaptagat landscape in Kenya, Trillion Trees has provided emergency response support, with 36,000 native tree species being planted to help address environmental challenges.

Worldwide: Trillion Trees has projects across worldwide, all in critically important landscapes that need your support to restore degraded forest, work with and benefit local communities and enable the recovery of vital ecosystems.

With your support, it can bring back biodiversity where it has been lost, while also benefitting the climate by removing carbon dioxide as the forests regrow.

At each location, it has continued to build on the successful relationships with local communities and work with them to develop appropriate restoration opportunities for all stakeholders.

Community-help: Support from the ReForest Fund helps these projects expand their efforts on the ground and increase their scale of ambition: growing more trees and restoring more forest.

But there is much more to be done. Help from people will expand the support to more projects restoring forests and tackling the causes of deforestation in some of the world's most biodiverse forest ecosystems.

This means it prioritises the restoration of natural forests with native species; the landscape approach is applied to address the

underlying drivers of forest loss; it is to ensure local people are in control of decision making.

Native species, locally sourced

The projects promote natural regeneration where possible, and source seeds locally when planting is needed to restore natural forest. Community groups are supported to establish nurseries to provide for future plantings.

Consultation and consent

Projects are selected, that have long commitments in landscapes, and have taken the time to develop effective partnerships with local community structures. The funds help projects to develop and deepen these relationships.

Monitoring and verification

The projects are asked to map their restoration sites, so that the eligibility of the land can be independently verified, and so that the success of restoration efforts can be monitored in the future. A custom-built data storage system is used to track the progress of our projects.

With continued support, forests are possible to be restored to protect the future of this planet.

Contact: For further information about Trillion Trees and how you can play a vital role, please contact <action@trilliontrees.org> You can donate directly to the ReForest Fund at <trilliontrees.org/reforest-fund>.



Community-Tree-planting

PHOTO FEATURE

Dr. G.S. Bhardwaj is Director at Wildlife Institute of India (WII), and a senior Indian Forest Service (IFS) officer, having visited wilderness sites around both the Poles. Some of frames clicked by him are reproduced here, welcome to connect: gobindsagarbhardwaj@gmail.com



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Nandita Bhatnagar is a Clinical Biochemist with a passion for writing. Her articles have been published in local newspapers in the Bay Area. She also authors and narrates her stories for a monthly audio magazine "Suhava" published through Rotary Club of Maharashtra for blind school children.



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Martin Goodman is an award-winning writer and publisher based in the UK. His book *Client Earth* told the tale of eco-lawyers on their global battle to save the planet from environmental collapse. He is Emeritus Professor of Creative Writing at the University of Hull.



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Retired as Chairman of Editorial Board (July 25), serving as Editor-emeritus

Ed McCrea is President of Environmental Education and Conservation Global, a US nonprofit conservation organization. Over the last fifty 50 years, he has worked in environmental education and biodiversity conservation at the local, state, national, and international levels.



Dr. Oishimaya Sen Nag

Oishimaya Sen Nag is a conservation storyteller, editor, and science communicator based in India. She serves as the Senior Editor of WorldAtlas.com and is also associated with the Bombay Natural History Society. Her current focus is writing about lesser-known species and community-led conservation.



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Binita Pandey is a researcher in entomology with a keen interest in insect taxonomy, behavior, conservation, and plant preference of pests. She has conducted a Bumblebee research project in Nepal. She is the founder and manager of the Nepal Pollinator Network.



Patil, Amit

Amit is an eco-lover based in Dallas, Texas. Believing that a traveler always starts out in his backyard, Amit traveled extensively across India. He kept his passion for nature alive after moving to North America and has traveled extensively around the continent.



Sharma, Manoj

Manoj Sharma worked for the Indian Statistical Service for 10 years and then immigrated to the USA to pursue graduate studies in statistics. Currently he is the Director of Biostatistics at Grail Inc., supporting the company vision of "Detect cancer early, when it can be cured".



Sharma, Satish

Authored 11 books on forest, wildlife management and biodiversity, specialized in ethnobotany and ethnozoology, did PhDs on Plant life of Weaver Birds (1991) and Study of Biodiversity and Ethnobiology of Phulwari WL Sanctuary (2007), former Forest Officer, based at Udaipur.



Sudin

Sudin is based in Denmark, into regenerative farming and nature education project. A postgraduate in Forestry Management, he holds a Permaculture Design Certificate and has experience across silviculture, natural-resource-based-rural-livelihoods domains in India. He believes in the resilience of a biodiverse ecosystem.



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Rosamma Thomas is a freelance journalist based in Maharashtra, India. She has worked in radio and print journalism. She has only ever lived in cities, despite being a wild creature at heart. She has supported by writing on a unique cause like House Sparrow ex situ breeding initiatives.



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Published for Tourism & Wildlife Society of India (TWSI, email: indianbirdfair1@gmail.com), C 158-A, Dayanand Marg, Tilak Nagar, Jaipur 302 004, India, www.birdfair.org. Design and lay out by Gulshan Saini, Rajapark, Jaipur.

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Note: This is the 27th edition, an e-newsletter for free circulation aiming at education and awareness on environmental conservation. Conservation Times is on worldwide web, like to click: www.econservationtimes.com