

# Sanctuary Asia

VOLUME 43 | ISSUE 10 | MUMBAI

OCTOBER 2023 | PAGES 100 | INR 100/-

## **THE FALSE ASHOKA COMPLACENCY (AND OTHER STORIES)**

Restoration projects in India.

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## **CAN REWILDING SAVE THE PARIS AGREEMENT?**

The potential to address climate change in a global context.

# **REWILDING THE PLANET**

Turning theory into practice... the human face of rewilding.

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**PRANAV CAPILA**



*Pranav has been creating, curating and editing content for over 25 years. He was the founding editor of M, a premium lifestyle magazine. Since 2010, he has told stories about wildlife, wild spaces and unsung heroes on the frontlines of conservation.*



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**IAN LOCKWOOD**

*Geographer and environmental educator based in Colombo, Ian has been exploring Sri Lanka's diverse natural and human landscapes for decades. The degree that humans interact and impact these landscapes has been a recurring theme in his documentation and studies.*

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**NEYI JAMOH**



*Growing up in Arunachal Pradesh, Neyi built a close relationship with the forest from an early age. As the Coordinator of Sanctuary's Mud on Boots Project, she visited Vishal Ahuja in Chamba Valley, where she witnessed his dedication towards rewilding.*

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**BHAVYA IYER**

*A wildlife biologist and nature writer, Bhavya is interested in conservation, environmental policy and carnivore ecology. She is an Assistant Editor at Sanctuary Asia and a member of RewildEd, which works to bridge the gap between people and nature through education.*

**Issued in the interest of wildlife**

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## On the cover

Manas National Park is a time machine, each visit transports you to a time before *Homo sapiens* appeared. The cover image, looking like a scene from winter utopia, was actually taken in peak summer. The photographer followed this rhino for weeks until he found it at this spot, which for him encapsulated Manas. The greater one-horned rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis* and its home was once almost wiped out from Manas. Project Tiger's mandate was to rewild with next to no human interference and the late [Sanjoy Deb Roy](#), helped bring the forest back to life through rewilding. Manas represents hope for our troubled planet. This issue of *Sanctuary Asia* brings together rewilding stories from across the globe, ranging from Chile to Australia, and from Nagaland to Kerala.



Photographer: Soumabrata Moulick  
Manas National Park

## 24 Cover Story

**The False Ashoka Complacency (And Other Stories)** There's a deluge of mindless tree-planting raging through India. But ecological restoration of different biomes offers comprehensive, nature-based solutions to restore the subcontinent's biodiversity and stabilise the Earth's climate. **Pranav Capila** spotlights rewilding and restoration projects in India that go beyond mere trees, to restore damaged land to their original status in a geography ranging from Haryana to Kerala, and Gujarat to Nagaland.

## News

- 8 World Scan** Conserving nine species can show us how to achieve our climate goals; a global fund to support conservation; when did animals first appear on Earth?
- 9 India Scan** India's Northeast, a hotspot for the illegal trade in small cat parts; megaport planned at Vadhavan, Maharashtra; grassland restoration on Pune's outskirts; megaherbivores help control invasive species of plants in Indian forests.
- 10 Climate Watch** Higher incomes linked to higher GHG emissions; tiger reserves not faring well on climate action indicators; higher atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> reducing crop nutrition; crop pests pose even more dangers.

## Photofeature

- 12 The 3 'R's: Restoring, Reviving, Rewilding** Rewilding in India, though a nascent phenomenon, runs the gamut of species and landscapes, from carnivores to desert plants. The images on these pages



present some of the incredible efforts being made across India to restore biodiversity.

## People

- 36 Meet Oswald J. Schmitz** Professor at the Yale University School of the Environment, **Schmitz** studies the links between biodiversity and climate.

He speaks to **Lakshmy Raman** about Animating the Carbon Cycle (ACC) and the imperative of restoring biodiversity to survive our climate crisis.

- 84 Remembering Aditya 'Dicky' Singh of Ranthambhore** **Bittu Sahgal**, Editor, *Sanctuary Asia*, pens a tribute to a friend and compatriot who died too soon.