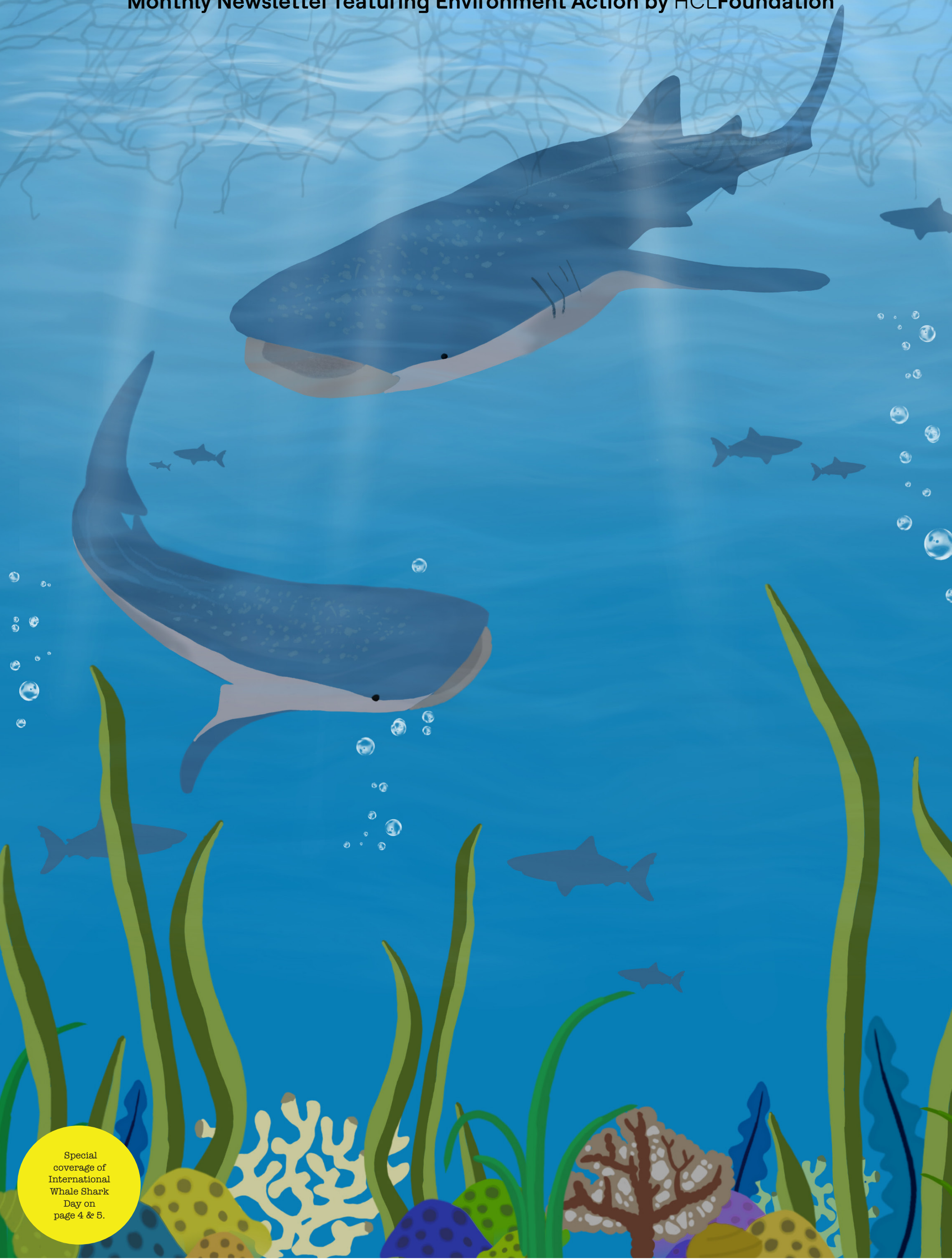


Sept-Oct, 2023

HARIT KHABAR

Monthly Newsletter featuring Environment Action by HCLFoundation



Special coverage of International Whale Shark Day on page 4 & 5.



Celebrating the fascinating world of migratory birds

World Migratory Bird Day is a worldwide campaign devoted to bringing issues to light about migratory birds and the necessity for global collaboration regarding avian conservation on the second Saturday in May and the second Saturday in October, annually. These two days reflect the consecutive migration cycle of the birds in a year.

This year, the theme of World Migratory Bird Day was “Water: Sustaining Bird Life”.

PAINFULL KILLERS

— APARNA PUJAR

The water crisis threatens migratory birds.



Photo: iStock

Water is essential to the survival of migratory birds. From breeding to resting and refuelling, migratory birds rely on water and its associated habitats, such as wetlands, lakes, ponds, etc., for migration, breeding, and wintering. However, in the last few decades, rampant degradation of the environment and increased pollutant levels have threatened their ecosystems and jeopardised the life cycle and migration of birds. The State of India's Birds 2023 report, released on August 25, stated that out of the 142 species witnessing a decline, 64 were witnessing a rapid decline. 189 species were more or less stable, and 28 species were increasing. The report also identified that 178 species of birds needed immediate priority for conservation (high priority).

The longest-travelling raptor has arrived in Manipur!

Amur falcons, the world's longest-travelling raptors, have begun to arrive in Manipur's Tamenglong district. Locally known as Akhuaipuina, they travel up to 22,000 km to arrive in Manipur in mid-October from their breeding grounds in south-eastern Siberia and northern China. For the first time, the Manipur forest department will carry out a census of Amur falcons in Tamenglong.



Photo: iStock

‘Nature ki Patshala’ with migratory birds



Photo: WCI



Photo: WCI

World Comics India, in collaboration with the HCLFoundation, successfully organized an educational event titled “Nature ki Pathshala” on October 14th, 2023, at the Okhla Bird Sanctuary. The event witnessed the active participation of 24 participants from four other organizations, including Rasta, United Way Delhi, ISST, and AFD. Mr. Ravi Sharma, a wildlife expert from HCLFoundation, provided valuable information about the diverse species of birds, explaining their distinctions

based on calls, colours, habitats, sizes, and appearances. Throughout the event, participants were engaged in various educational activities. They had the opportunity to sketch the natural scenery, participate in a bird-themed bingo game, and concurrently learn about the birds they encountered.



Photo: WCI



Photo: iStock

World Environment Health Day was created on September 26th, 2011 by the International Federation of Environmental Health (IFEH) to spread awareness about how the health of the environment is fundamentally linked with the health of humans.

It follows a new theme every year, with this year’s theme being ‘Global Environmental Public Health: Standing Up to Protect Everyone’s Health Each and Every Day’.

Environmental public health focuses on the relationships between people and their environment. Ecological wellbeing plays a huge role in the wellbeing and health of the public, which connects the thread between individuals and their environment, improves human wellbeing and prosperity, and creates safe and healthy communities. (American Public Health Association).

Why environmental health matters?

Due to climate change, the environment is changing too quickly, and not only are our bodies not able to adapt to the drastic changes in the environment, but the environment itself is being damaged. Apart from worsening the health of our planet and its inhabitants, climate change is also aggravating the effects of extreme weather events, such as floods, landslides, earthquakes, droughts, forest fires, tsunamis, hurricanes, heat, and cold waves. To tackle the problem, a holistic public health approach needs to be adopted that takes into account the risks and hazards associated with climate change.



Photo: iStock

Investing in the health of planet and its people

India has industrialized rapidly in recent decades and has become the fifth-largest global economy. But this growth has also seen India become the world’s third-largest polluter after China and the U.S.A. The country has been taking various steps to combat the ill effects of climate change. For example, in 2023–24, the Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change was allocated rupees 3,079 crore, a 24% increase over the revised estimates of 2022–23. However, the National Health Accounts (NHA) for 2019–2020 estimated India’s health expenditure at 1.35% of GDP. It also estimated out-of-pocket expenditure to be 52% of the current health expenditure, as against the world average of 18%. Therefore, generous investment in public health and green initiatives will be beneficial for the country in the long run in combating climate change.

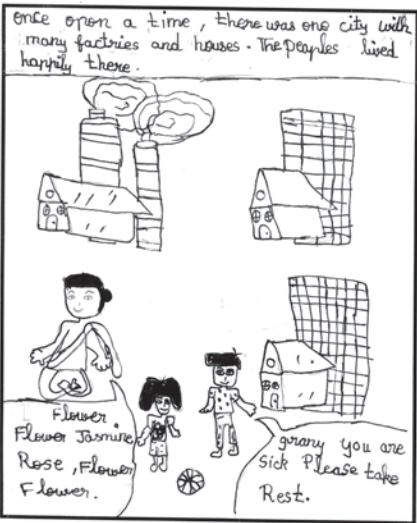


Photo: iStock

Right to health

Article 21 of the Constitution of India guarantees a fundamental right to life and personal liberty, and the right to health is inherent to a life with dignity. This means that everyone is entitled to live in a healthy and hygienic environment, in an environment that does not adversely affect their quality of life.

INDUSTRIAL POLLUTION



S.Sahithya
Vx

Creating a new habitat for diseases and viruses?

Changes in climate create new habitats and, thus, new diseases that would not have otherwise thrived. Recent research has discovered that climate change is rapidly facilitating the spread of viruses from animals to humans. Many African regions are hotspots for the cross-over of such viruses. Countries like China and the Philippines, which are facing overpopulation, are at risk of such diseases spreading quickly. India, a blend of both, is capable of both developing and spreading such viruses and their variants at a swift rate, as was seen with the COVID-19 pandemic. A review article on Frontiers details how climate change has not only affected the spread of COVID but also how it has adversely affected the health of humans and their lowering immunity to such diseases.



Photo: iStock

Interesting fact:

Using the data from the Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries, and Risk Factors Study (GBD) published in 2015, the Lancet Commission of Pollution and Health, in 2017, analyzes that pollution was to blame for an estimated 9 million deaths, i.e. 16% of all deaths worldwide. This is three times more deaths than from AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria altogether, fifteen times more deaths than from all wars and other forms of conflicts, violence, and economic losses, adding to \$46.6 trillion.

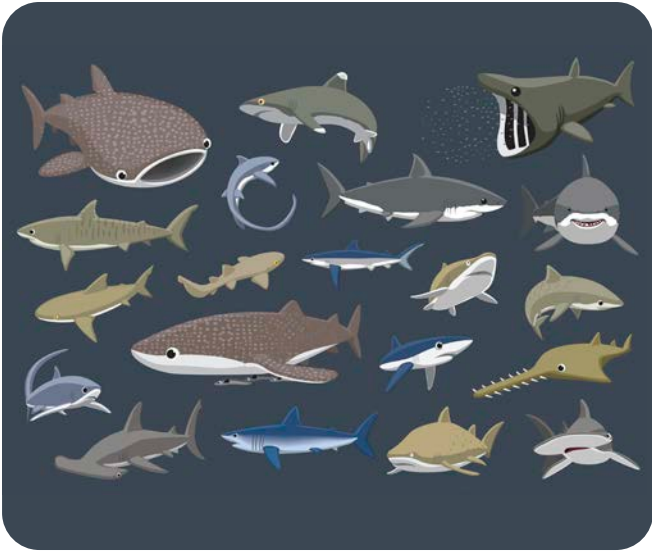
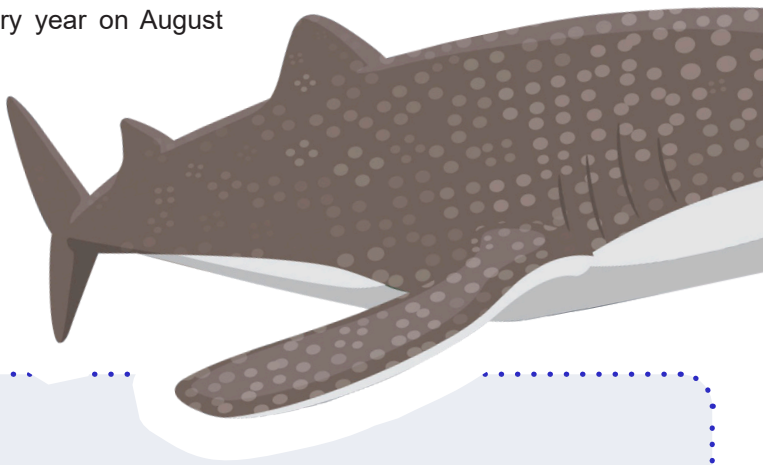


Photo: iStock

Whale Sharks: Gentle Giants of the Ocean

The magnificent and awe-inspiring gentle giant of the ocean is the largest fish in the world. In spite of having a huge size, it is no threat to humans. However, their serene presence is threatened, pushing them towards the verge of extinction.

Global Whale Shark Day is celebrated every year on August 30, which was brought into the limelight in 2012 to bring awareness of the importance of whale sharks in the oceans and catalyze the effort for its conservation



Why is it necessary to protect the whale sharks?



Photo: iStock

The Whale Shark contributes vastly to the marine ecosystem as a filter feeder, plankton and small fish consumer. While regulating plankton populations, it plays a vital role in balancing the marine ecosystem. Tragically, it faces multiple threats questioning its existence. Trawler fishing with its nets threatens the life of sharks. Furthermore, boat strikes, water contamination by oil spills and toxins, disrupt the distribution and abundance of sharks.

Earlier, whale sharks were considered as commercially valuable, leading to unregulated fishing degrading their population. In Gujarat, in the year 1982, 40 sharks were hunted mercilessly for their liver oil and meat. Shockingly, between 1900 and 2000, approximately 1027 whale sharks were hunted for exportation.

Currently, the whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*) is listed as “Endangered” under the IUCN Red List of Species. In India, it is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Five sharks were found in the Indian Ocean.

Blue Shark: The curious and open-ocean predator, Blue Shark inhabits across the globe in both inshore and offshore waters, swimming up in the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans.

Bull Shark: The name Bull Shark is for its rounded snout, destructive attitude with an affinity to headbutting the prey before going after. It is found in the Ganges, Bramhaputra, Mahanadi, and other rivers in India.

Ganges Shark: Among all six species of River Sharks found across the globe, the Ganges Shark (*Glyphis gangeticus*) is endemic to India. It resides on the Hoogly river in West Bengal, also in the rivers of the Ganges, Brahmaputra, and Mahanadi in Bihar, Assam, and Orissa.

Oceanic WhiteTip Shark: The Oceanic whitetip shark is a huge bodied shark having a stocky structure with a unique mottled white mark on the tip of its dorsal, pectoral, and tail fins.

Tiger shark: Nocturnal and aggressive hunter, the tiger shark is commonly found in shallow coastal water. They are also known for attacking other sharks.

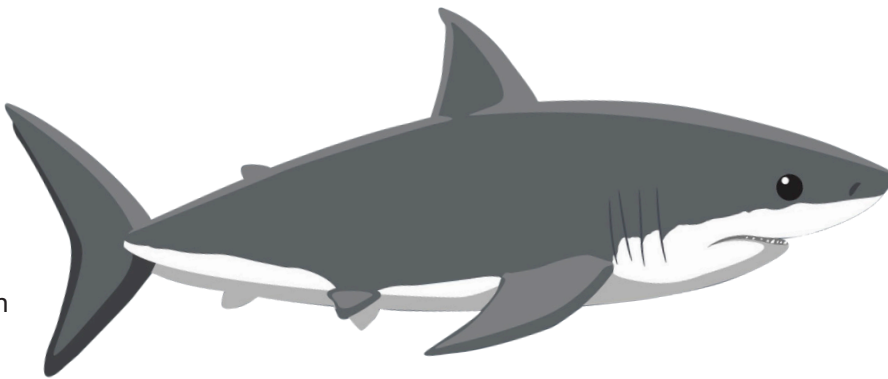


Photo: iStock

‘Guardians of the Ocean’ under threat

It is challenging to record the specific number of sharks killed every year. Nevertheless, the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), one of the biggest charities for animal welfare and conservation around the globe, estimates that over 100 million sharks are killed every year due to commercial fishing.

The demand from China and Vietnam for the regional delicacy, shark fin soup, and the global demand for shark meat and oil accelerate the overkill of sharks. As per report by Nature, 50 years of global decline in the population of oceanic shark rays; especially the 70% decline in the population of sharks over the last 50 years worldwide. As per a 2015 report by CMFRI, India comes second after Indonesia in shark fishing in the world.

For the protection of sharks, Whale Sharks were the very first species to be included under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act of India, 1972. As of now, 10 species of sharks and rays are included under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

Whale Shark Conservation Project

Saving whale sharks—one fish at a time

The “Save the Whale Shark Campaign” was a successful whale shark conservation project in the state of Gujarat, which later got extended to different parts of the eastern coast of India. Now, WTI is campaigning in Kerala, Karnataka, where similar threats are faced by whale sharks. The team likewise plans to take the mission to the Lakshadweep Islands, where the threats to the high congregation of whale sharks are still unaddressed.

Neelankarai Coast, June 9–10, 2023:

A person wearing a blue cap and a purple shirt is in the foreground, taking a photo with a smartphone. In the background, a whale is breaching the water, creating a large splash. The scene is set on a body of water with a city skyline visible in the distance.

Panaiyur Coast, June 16, 2023:

A photograph of a whale breaching the water surface. A red circle highlights the blow of the whale, which is a small, dark, vertical spout of water. The whale's body is visible above the water, and the water is splashing around the blow.

Photo: TREE Foundation

The sighting of the juvenile whale shark is a positive sign for the conservation of these gentle giants. The sightings of these whale sharks off the Chennai coast are a reminder that these animals still need protection and increased awareness of their continued existence in the wild, and that we need to do more to protect them.

- ◆ Although they are called 'whale sharks', they are not actually whales but filter-feeding sharks, often referred to as "gentle giants". (WWF.org).
- ◆ Whale sharks have been known to measure up to 60 feet in length and weigh up to 30 tonnes. However, most specimens don't reach more than 13 feet.
- ◆ Whale sharks are filter feeders. They consume food by swimming towards it with their mouths open, engulfing the prey that enters their mouth.
- ◆ They are ovoviviparous, meaning the female carries her eggs until birth as opposed to dropping them in the ocean like other species of fish.
- ◆ They are sometimes hunted for their meat and fins, which are used in traditional Chinese medicine and as luxury food items.



Let me swim – Two friends go out into the sea and are enchanted by its captivating beauty! They come back after a year to find it full of filth and garbage. Reflecting on the situation, one of them tells the other that this is the result of people throwing garbage into the sea. Next day, they find all the fish throwing the garbage back at them as if pleading with humans to allow them to swim!

Animal Warriors Conservation Society

Santoshi Jaddu, Harit Champion



Photo: AWCS

Santoshi Jaddu has been an ardent animal lover since her childhood. She volunteered with animal welfare organizations in Hyderabad and used to rescue and foster stray animals around her community. She and her teammates have rescued more than 10,000 animals and counting. She has been with Animal Warriors Conservation Society (AWCS) since its beginning in 2019 and has worked in different roles and capacities, contributing immensely to the organization's growth. She also played a major role in shaping up the AWCS Bird Rehabilitation Centre with support from the HCLFoundation.

She never felt any boundaries that stopped her from saving animals in distress. She bravely gets into wells and climbs trees and towers to save animals that are trapped or stranded. She also played a key role in coordinating rescue teams for disaster relief efforts during the Kerala floods, Hyderabad floods, and Bhadrachalam floods. Santoshi is often referred to as the 'mother' of the Animal Warriors Conservation Society, as she takes care of all the members and is known for her fostering skills with abandoned and injured animals. She also takes care of orphaned chicks at the AWCS centre and raises many wild birds and releases them back into the wild.



Photo: AWCS

She believes gender is never a boundary when saving animals from extremely difficult situations. "With good team support and skills, one can save animals from distress and disasters," she says. She has been an inspiration to many women. A compression passage about the story of Santoshi and Pradeep and their association with Animal Warriors Conservation Society was also published in the 1st year English text book of the Telangana State Board of Intermediate Education.

Animal Warriors Conservation Society is a non-profit organisation working towards the conservation of nature and protecting wildlife from unnatural threats by engaging communities.

Bilal Habib Khan and Akash Ghanashyam Shahu

NGO Aroha, Harit Champion

Photo: Aroha



Bilal Habib Khan and Akash Ghanashyam Shahu are the students of Dattatray Nagar High School, Nagpur. Both of them come from difficult backgrounds, but that did not become a hurdle in their pursuit of a better world. They have been actively participating in Aroha's environmental programmes and are associated with the organization since the last two years (that is, from the beginning).

Akash's father expired a few years ago, and his mother works as a house-help to support him and his three elder sisters. His commitment to the environmental education programme has been very commendable and is best reflected in his enthusiasm for green initiatives and tree plantation. When asked whether

he feels the need to grow more trees, he said, "If our generation and the next generations need pure and healthy air, then more and more trees need to be planted." He has also gained a deep interest in kitchen gardening at his school and believes that kitchen gardens not only add aesthetic value to the school but also teach students about growing organic vegetables and the importance of consuming residue-free food.

Similarly, Bilal Habib Khan belongs to a family of 12 members, and his father is a fruit seller. He has been actively participating in all the activities conducted by NGO Aroha and has also experimented with things that he learned through the environmental programmes run by the organization. At home, he has been experimenting with bird nests, a kitchen garden, and seed balls. He says he wants to pursue agriculture in the future, and for his vision, he gives credit to Aroha's environmental education programme. He said, "Since food is the basic need for all, it will never go out of business, as Covid has also taught us. Both Akash and Bilal have not only learned new life skills but are also implementing them.

NGO Aroha views itself as a voluntary organization with a holistic approach which will help rural, tribal, and underprivileged urban women in their endeavour for sustainable livelihood by development of their skills and capacities.



Photo: Aroha



Photo: Aroha

It's time to hear from you!

It gives us immense joy to share with you that Harit Khabar will be completing two years of publication soon. In these two years, we have published more than 20 issues of Harit Khabar (in English and Hindi) and covered a multitude of topics related to the environment and climate change.

We would like to use this opportunity to thank all the partner organizations who have helped us in this journey by sharing their wonderful work and interventions.

We also request that you all please fill out this short feedback form by scanning the QR code provided. As a token of appreciation, we would send a set of two books to the first 10 responders to the feedback form. Your feedback would not just help us improve Harit Khabar but will also help us see it through our readers' eyes.



Environmental campaign in Sorkha



Photo: WCI

to accelerate the campaign activities at Sorkha through the involvement of past and new participants and volunteers and introduce new initiatives under the campaign.

A comic exhibition on various environmental topics and issues was also on display for the participants to engage with. The previous comic creators also read their comics for the participants and explained to them the issues that their comics highlighted. Meanwhile, copies of Harit Khabar were also distributed amongst the participants to broaden the scope of discussion, topics, and issues.

World Comics India (WCI) organised a grassroots comics workshop at Harit Upvan, Sorkha, and Noida in collaboration with the HCLFoundation and Give Me Trees Trust (GMTT) on October 15, 2023. The workshop witnessed the participation of 45 school students, children, and youth from Sorkha. It was part of WCI's efforts to build a long-term school and community engagement intervention that would take the shape of an environmental campaign to raise awareness as well as action to address environmental issues.

Similarly, a number of exhibitions, workshops, and field activities have already been conducted to build an environmentally conscious community around the Harit Upvan site in Sorkha. The objective of this workshop was



BOOK REVIEW

MOVIE REVIEW

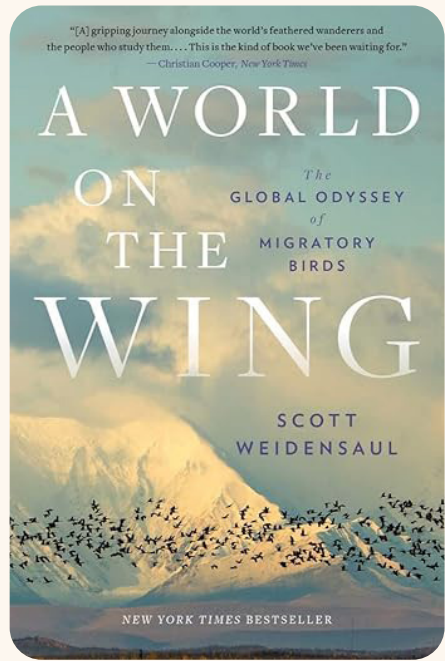


Photo: Amazon

A World on the Wing : The Global Odyssey of Migratory Birds by Scott Weidensaul

The book is a wonderful, inspiring album of the experiences of nature's writer. The story revolves around ten different migratory birds across the globe – starting from the residence in the shore of the Yellow Sea, spoonbills to the inhabitants of the forests and canyons of Nagaland, the Amur Falcon.

The book draws the attention of the readers to the emergency migratory birds are facing because of climate change, introducing the readers to researchers, experts and bird lovers trying to safeguard global migratory patterns facing a climate crisis.

Movie Recommendation of the Month

David Attenborough: A Life on Our Planet is a British film of 2020 about natural history, David Attenborough's life and legacy. David narrates the valuable moments of his career and indicators of how the world has changed over his lifetime.

While the eventual fate of our planet might look grim, he brings hope and vision for reestablishing our planet.

Sir Attenborough is a famous natural historian, climate change campaigner, and broadcaster popular for writing and presenting programs inspiring the modern format of nature documentaries. He is well known for his groundbreaking educational television programs, particularly the nine-part Life series..

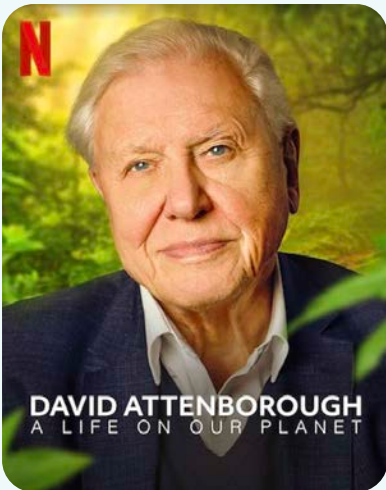


Photo: Netflix

Climate Awareness Month

Visiting waterbodies in Madurai



Photo: CEE

During the 'Climate Awareness Month' activities organized by the Centre for Environmental Education (CEE) under the Generation for Climate Action (GenCAN) initiative, over 62 schools from 16 different states participated in an online climate literacy quiz and climate awareness campaign.

Approximately 350 young climate action leaders conducted climate assemblies, video screenings, nukkad natak, competitions, etc., and over 27,000 students, teachers, non-teaching staff, and the community were covered during this campaign. The Generation for Climate Action (GenCAN) is a sustainability and climate change Education initiative of CEE, which is supported by the HCLFoundation.

An HCLFoundation team, comprised of Mr. Vinith Jain and Mr. Ankit, visited the DHAN Foundation and spent three days visiting waterbodies in Madurai Urban that were restored over the past four years.

They also gave their valuable inputs for better maintenance, upkeep, and greening of the waterbodies through community and volunteer engagement. The team visited Kundrangkadu, Poigai Vanam, and Adavi-Urban Sacred Grove and examined the progress in the grove extension and nursery establishment.



HCLFoundation

47th HCL Day
Plantation Event



47th HCL Foundation Day

To celebrate the 47th anniversary of the HCL Group, a mega plantation drive was organised in Bengaluru, Chennai, Coimbatore, Hyderabad, Lucknow, Madurai, Nagpur, Vijayawada, Hardoi, Thoothukudi, North and South 24 Paraganas and Noida. HCLFoundation planted 47000+ saplings of different native species at government schools, forested areas, HCLTech campuses, and designated lands dedicated to mass afforestation, engaging nearly 700+ HCLTechies and families, NGO partners, school students, women's groups, community volunteers.

Established in 2011, HCLFoundation, delivering the corporate social responsibility agenda of HCLTech in India, is a value-driven, not-for-profit organisation that contributes to national and international development goals, impacting lives of people and communities through its long-term sustainable programs.

A few glimpses of the plantation driven by HCLFoundation are shared here:

Sundarbans



The Development Research Communication and Services Centre (DRCSC) celebrated the 47th HCL Foundation Day by planting 5,000 mangrove saplings of different species in Hingaljanj and Patharpratima blocks of the Sundarbans. The plantation drive began on the International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem (July 26, 2023) and was carried out until HCLFoundation Day (August 11, 2023).

Hyderabad

HCLTech and NGO partners of Hyderabad planted 65 fruiting and nectar plants at ADTC Campus, Hyderabad, towards the pledge to plant 47,000 plants across the country on the occasion of the 47th HCL Day.



Nagpur



The 47th Foundation Day of HCL was celebrated by planting 100 saplings at IIIT Nagpur by HCL officials, volunteers, IIIT officials, NGO partners, and team AROHA, Nagpur. A total of 1000 saplings were planted in one week to mark the day.

Coimbatore

HCLFoundation and Siruthuli celebrated the 47th HCL day in Coimbatore with CRPF officials and planted 2500 native trees and 300 palm seeds at the CRPF campus in Coimbatore.



Lucknow



Around 350 saplings were planted in Lucknow on the occasion of HCL's 47th Foundation Day. The event took place in the presence of HCL volunteers, schoolchildren, and the Give Me Trees Trust team. Children who participated in the event also took part in a seed ball-making workshop.

Chennai

Thuvakkam celebrated the 47th HCL day by planting 200 saplings and conducting eco-walk sessions in Patel Park, Kundrathur. The event saw the participation of 150+ volunteers, including HCLTech volunteers, school students, and scout students.



Wildlife Week was observed with the Harit Club children.



To raise awareness about the significance of wildlife conservation among the younger generation, Gorakhpur Environmental Action Group (GEAG) and HCLFoundation observed a Wildlife Week (2–8 October) with the Harit Club children in police lines, GB Nagar, Noida. Children were oriented on crafting face masks resembling wild animals and were also

engaged in face painting and other activities to understand the importance of maintaining biodiversity and its contribution to balancing the food chain. This initiative served as a reminder of our collective responsibility to protect and preserve our natural world.

World Rabies Day

Team Humane Animal Society (HAS), in collaboration with the HCLFoundation, vaccinated a total of 585 dogs in the last week of September, culminating on World Rabies Day (September 28). The response was overwhelming, and it underscored the need to organize these drives frequently in different parts of the city during the year. The purpose of World Rabies Day is to highlight the progress made in eradicating rabies and to raise awareness of rabies prevention.



About the publication

HCLFoundation and World Comics India's collaborative initiative 'Harit Khabar' is a monthly newspaper that aims to educate people on environmental issues and challenges and raise community participation towards the cause of the environment. This publication has been launched to provide a platform to various partner organizations working in collaboration with the HCLFoundation's distinct flagship programme Harit - The Green Initiative to showcase their work and accomplishments and also to create a network between them. Through Harit Khabar we aim to stir meaningful debates on critical issues concerning our environment and ecosystem, accessibility to environmental education and public participation in decision-making processes in the country.

About HCLFoundation

HCLFoundation delivers the corporate social responsibility agenda of HCLTech in India through its flagship programmes and special initiatives. It is a not-for-profit organisation that strives to contribute towards national and international development goals, bringing about lasting positive impact in the lives of people, through long-term sustainable programmes.

About World Comics India

Advancing Grassroots Comics as an alternate tool of communication to local communities, World Comics India has been continuously working for the past 20 years. Many successful mass campaigns have also been organized using this medium of communication.

Issue – 23, Year – 2, Sept-Oct. 2023
(Private circulation only)

We are grateful to Harit partners for their significant contribution to this publication.

Editorial Board: Dr Santanu Basu, Hitesh Sitaram Jalgaonkar, Ravi Kumar Sharma, Aishwarya Balasubramanian, Esha Mitra and Jagjit Singh

Editor: Sharad Sharma

Cover Page Illustration: Garima Sharma

web: www.hclfoundation.org | www.worldcomicsindia.com
email: hclfoundation@hcl.com | wci.hcl@gmail.com
Twitter: HCL_Foundation | Facebook: HCLFoundation