



ANNUAL REPORT

2025-2026



Designer: Teerath Rawat
Editors : Maithreyi M. R. and Anita Arjundas
Design and Editorial Inputs: Jaya Peter
Photo Credits: ATREE Staff



Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) is a globally recognised non-profit organisation focused on environmental conservation and sustainable, socially just development. ATREE engages in the generation and dissemination of rigorous interdisciplinary knowledge that informs and is informed by the needs of grassroots communities, policymakers and the wider public. It prioritises education and capacity-building for producing the next generation of environmental scholars and leaders.

ATREE works across landscapes on issues pertaining to biodiversity conservation and restoration, water security, sustainable resource use, livelihoods and human well-being, and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Contents

About ATREE

Our Mission	06
Chairperson's Message	08
Executive Director's Message	11
Founders and Board of Trustees	12
Publications	14
Recognitions	16
Our Impact	18
Our Presence	21
Media Coverage	23
Partners	24
Key Research Papers	26

Our Programmes

Biodiversity Monitoring and Conservation Planning	33
Ecosystems and Human Well-being	43
Forests, Governance and Livelihoods	51
Resilient Urbanscapes	57
Water and Society	65

The Himalaya Initiative	70
Our Community Conservation Centres	
Agasthyamalai	76
Biligiriranga Hills	82
Darjeeling	86
Male Mahadeshwara Hills	90
Vembanad	94
Centre for Policy Design	99
Academy for Conservation Science and Sustainability Studies	105
Communication	113
TN Khoshoo Memorial Award	120
Our Donors	122

Our Mission

ATREE's mission is to generate rigorous interdisciplinary knowledge for achieving environmental conservation and sustainable development in a socially just manner, to enable the use of this knowledge by policymakers and society, and to train the next generation of scholars and leaders.

To deliver on our mission, we work across issues like biodiversity and conservation, climate change mitigation and development, land and water resources, forests and governance, and ecosystem services and human well-being.





Chairperson's Message

It gives me immense pleasure to write this note at a moment when ATREE stands proud at thirty years. Throughout these years, it has sought to bridge research and action, generating knowledge that advances science, informs policy, and strengthens local livelihoods and community stewardship.

ATREE's work, though organised under different programmes, is deeply interconnected. The projects intersect, informing and feeding into each other, as this annual report demonstrates.

It is profoundly satisfying to see so many students of ATREE Academy making their mark in India and abroad, winning honours such as the 2026 Tyler Prize Student Ambassadorship and the Hasmukh Shah Memorial Award.

Much of this inspiration comes from ATREE's faculty and researchers, who continue to play significant roles on regional, national and international platforms. From addressing issues of just transitions and sustainable development pathways to ecosystem health and policy conversations with ministries and international bodies, ATREE's work is rooted in partnerships that uphold local knowledge alongside science. We are grateful to the communities who have welcomed us into their landscapes.

It is these moments that also draw focus to the cherished support of our donors and well-wishers, whose trust keeps us motivated to pursue ambitious, long-term work. The years ahead will demand even greater collaboration and partnership to ensure biodiversity thrives alongside human well-being.

The TN Khoshoo Memorial Award and Lecture this year introduced the Bengaluru audience to two remarkable individuals — Dr Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka from Uganda and Mr Anirudhkumar Vasava from Gujarat — whose work shows what it means to place biodiversity and human well-being on equal footing.

We hope this report offers not just a glimpse into our work over the year, but a promise of a sustainable, resilient future.

P. Balaram
Chairperson, ATREE





Executive Director's Message

Each passing year is a fresh reminder that our environmental challenges cannot be addressed in isolation. Climate change, biodiversity loss, water insecurity, public health, and livelihoods are deeply interconnected, and cannot be treated as separate from each other.

Addressing them requires more than science alone. It calls for collaboration across disciplines and meaningful partnerships with communities and institutions. At ATREE, this philosophy has been our long-standing guiding principle, and this annual report reflects that enduring commitment.

Across geographies, we continued to co-design conservation and restoration models that respond to the ecological and social realities of each landscape. Whether supporting community-based enterprise at BR Hills, facilitating drinking water security in Kuttanad, or improving human-wildlife coexistence in the Himalaya, our approach continued to place communities at the core of our conservation efforts.

Our research programmes continued to not only assess environmental challenges like invasive species, urban lake degradation, and zoonotic diseases, but also to inform policy — recognising and prioritising India's Open Natural Ecosystems, strengthening Community Forest Resource Rights in central India, and supporting collaborative action to build resilient landscapes and livelihoods.

We are proud of the new discoveries this year yielded — *Cycloryx rohiniae*, *Dicharax umashaankeri*, *Dicharax ganashaiahi*, a new assassin bug from Karnataka, two rare plant species from Sikkim, and more. Another stride has been in integrating technology with conservation: multilingual community platforms like GrammaMitra, decision support tools like LakeRevive, and integrating drones into the mapping of urban tree diversity are some examples of how technology has been leveraged in the last year.

None of this work would have been possible without the dedication of our researchers, field teams, staff, students, and community and institutional partners, including government bodies. We remain indebted to our donors and well-wishers, whose trust and encouragement has sustained these efforts.

As ATREE marks thirty years, we carry forward our work with a clear sense of purpose. The challenges ahead are real, but so is the strength of the partnerships, science, and community trust we have built to meet them. We look forward to the year ahead with optimism and resolve.

Anita Arjundas
Executive Director

Founders

Kamaljit S. Bawa

Founder and President Emeritus, ATREE;
Distinguished Professor Emeritus,
University of Massachusetts, Boston

K. N. Ganeshaiah

Founder and Distinguished Honorary
Fellow, ATREE

R. Uma Shaanker

Founder and Trustee, ATREE; Former
Professor, University of Agricultural
Sciences, Bangalore

Board of Trustees

Dr P. Balaram

Chairperson, ATREE and fmr. Director,
Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore

Prof Darshan Shankar

Vice-Chancellor, The University of
Trans-Disciplinary Health Sciences and
Technology

R. Uma Shaanker

Founder and Trustee, ATREE; Former
Professor, University of Agricultural
Sciences, Bangalore

Mr Rahul Matthan

Founder Partner, Trilegal

Mr Ravi Venkatesan

Business Leader, Author and Social
Entrepreneur

Ms Rohini Nilekani

Chairperson, Rohini Nilekani
Philanthropies

Mr Sandeep Singhal

Co-founder and Managing Director,
WestBridge Capital Partners

Ms Shruti Shibulal

CEO and Director, The Tamara Leisure
Experiences

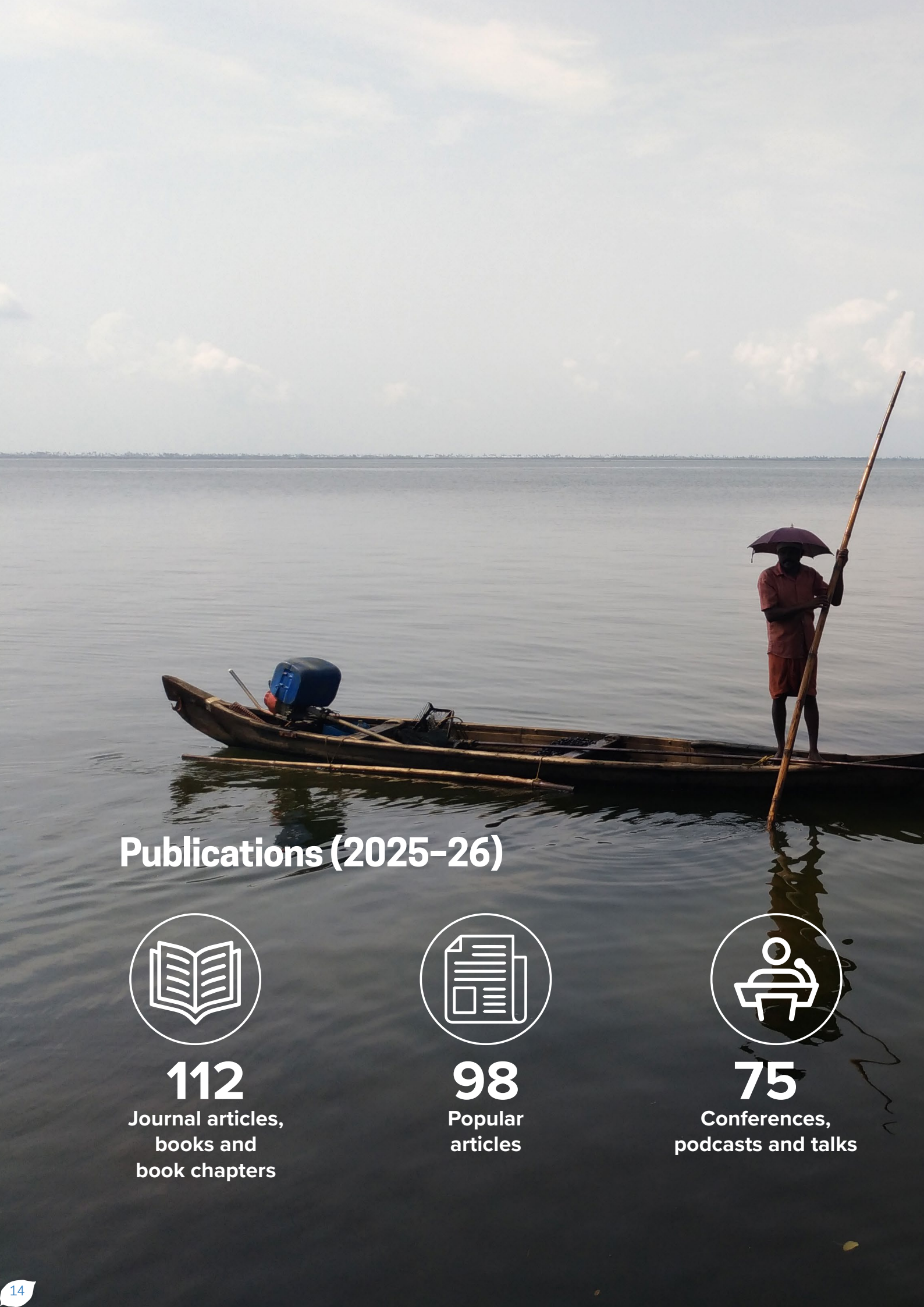
Dr Sowmya Swaminathan

Chairperson, M. S. Swaminathan
Research Foundation and Principal
Advisor, National Tuberculosis Elimination
Programme

Ms Vandita Sharma

Retd. Chief Secretary to Government of
Karnataka





Publications (2025-26)



112

Journal articles,
books and
book chapters



98

Popular
articles



75

Conferences,
podcasts and talks



135

Events and
webinars



3

Policy and
policy inputs



2

Comics

Recognitions

32 new species, including **two rare plant** species, discovered in the past year

Asmita Sengupta selected as an **INSA Young Associate**

Deepanjana Saha and Sneha Shahi receive the **2026 Tyler Prize Student Ambassadors honour**

Dr Kamal Bawa receives the **Royal Society Yusuf Hamied Visiting Fellowship**

Eklabya Sharma elected President of the **International Society for Tropical Ecology**

Mathivanan M. appointed to Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board's **Expert Committee on Biodiversity Heritage Sites**; receives TN Forest Department's **Community Conservation Leadership Award**

Nobin Raja awarded the **Hasmukh Shah Memorial Award for Ecological Studies** (Research Category) 2025

Siddappa Shetty receives the Karnataka State **Indira Priyadarshini Environment Award 2025** and EMG-SSM Trust's **Lifetime Achievement Award**

Soubadra Devy appointed Associate Editor of **People and Nature**

Two ATREE films, **Gattu: Walking With the Herd** and **I Am Carbon**, receive a Jury Special Mention and Certificate of Excellence at the **5th Children's, Science, Nature & Wildlife Film Festival**



Our Impact Over the Years

Biodiversity Science

- 125+ species and 11 genera new to science
- 158 species considered for IUCN assessment
- 600+ species DNA barcoded
- 437 species covered under long-term monitoring
- 4000+ species across taxa represented in the reference collection
- 850+ peer-reviewed publications

Sustainable Livelihood

- 3000+ farmers trained in climate-resilient agriculture
- 60% of BR Hills' NTFP-dependent residents practise sustainable harvesting
- 30,000 + livelihoods improved through sustainable initiatives
- 8,000+ collectors see 20% income boost from clam relaying in Vembanad
- 2500+ people supported in Individual Forest Rights claim-making process

Education and Capacity Building

- 50000+ students experience place-based nature education
- 200+ CSOs and community institutions supported
- 100+ doctoral scholars and 100+ graduate students, including alumni, mentored by ATREE Academy

Conservation and Restoration

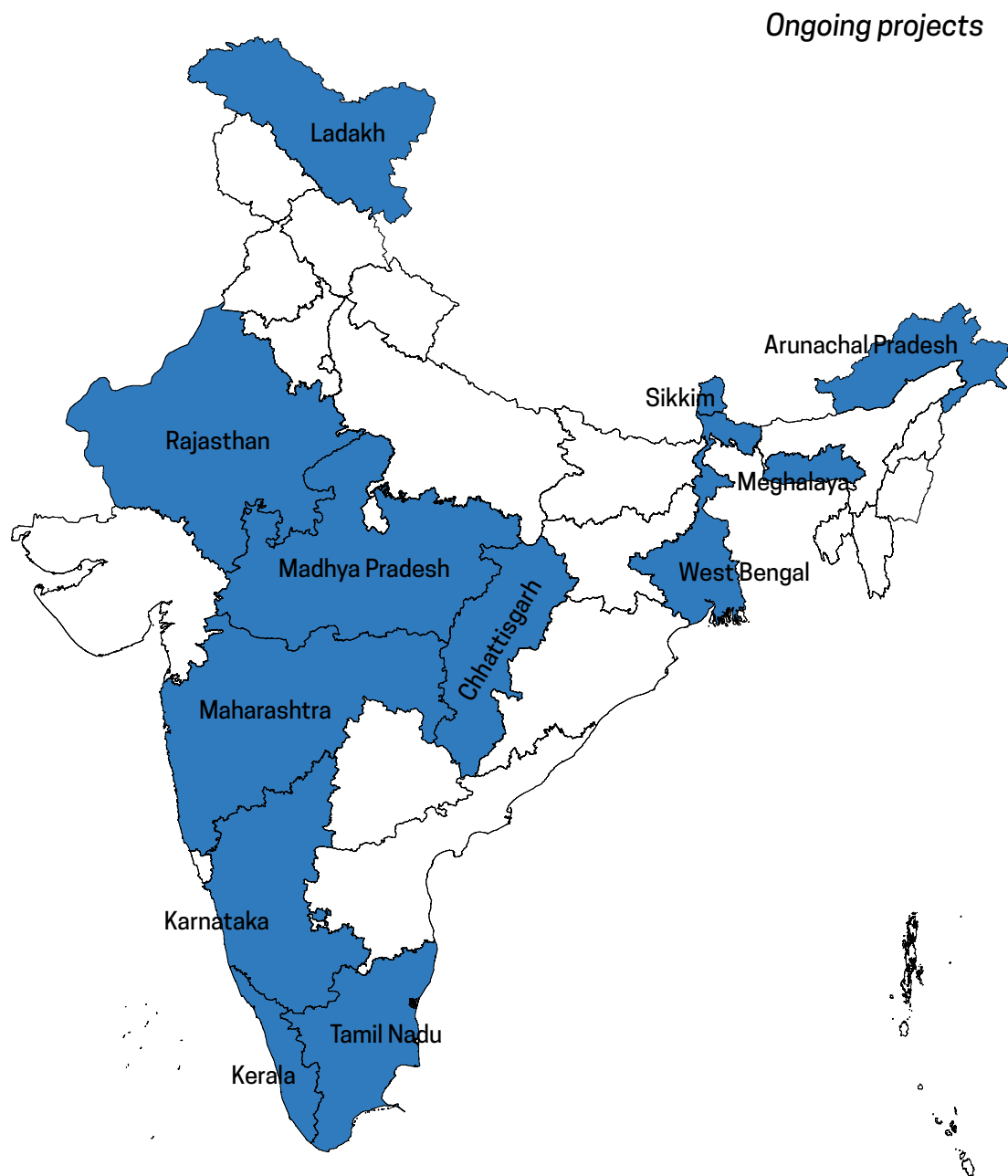
- 750+ ha under active restoration and invasive species management across forests, grasslands and wetlands
- 10,000+ ha under active conservation planning and action
- 165,000 ha of community forest rights secured, benefiting 30,000+ people
- 40% reduction in Lantana invasion across 2800 ha in MM Hills

Policy Engagement

- Contributed to the enactment of the Forest Rights Act that has led to the recognition of over 7 million ha of community rights
- Supported the development of India's Wetland Rules, covering 16 million ha of wetlands
- Supported the designation of the Western Ghats as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, covering 795,000 ha



Our Presence



source: www.surveyofindia.gov.in/pages/outline-maps-of-india



Media Coverage (2025-26)

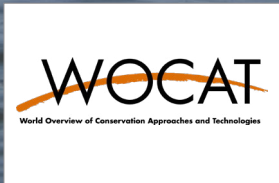


Partners

Partnerships and collaborations lie at the core of translating our vision into reality and fulfilling our mission at ATREE. We firmly believe that addressing complex environmental and developmental challenges requires a collective effort that transcends boundaries and disciplines. Through partnerships with diverse stakeholders, research institutions, educational bodies, government agencies, outreach platforms and philanthropic organisations, we amplify our impact and extend the reach of our initiatives.

The synergy achieved through collaboration not only broadens the scope of our work but also enriches it with a variety of perspectives, expertise and resources. By working hand in hand, we harness the power of collective wisdom to devise innovative solutions, shape informed policies and inspire transformative actions.





Key Research Papers

Technopolitics of water appropriation: How Mumbai claims hydrological dominance in its metropolitan region

Sachin Tiwale

Political Geography
14 February 2026

The paper advances scholarship on water appropriation by examining the appropriation process at the metropolitan scale, foregrounding inequities in intra-metropolitan water distribution, and applying the lens of technopolitics. It illustrates how technical decisions, such as adopting a river basin development approach and framing the diversion of water originally reserved for irrigation to Mumbai as a temporary and emergency measure, were strategically employed to legitimise appropriation as a natural, depoliticised process.

Secondary seed dispersal by migrant harriers in India

Anoop N. R., Thalavaipandi S., Selvakumar, M. B. Prashanth, Arjun Kannan, T. Ganesh

Oikos Journal
24 October 2025

The study identified seeds in 670 (21%) of the 3216 pellets collected from pallid harrier *Circus macrourus* and Montagu's harrier *Circus pygargus* winter roosts between 2016 and 2023 across three key wintering regions in India. The analysis revealed that harriers secondarily disperse intact seeds from 137 plant species across 23 families, including 64 monocots and 73 dicots.

Six New Additions to the Indian Butterfly (Lepidoptera) Fauna From Upper Siang, Arunachal Pradesh, India

Monsoon Jyoti Gogoi, Rajkamal Goswami, Seena N. Karimbumkara, Agur Litin

Entomon
22 October 2025

This paper reports six new additions to the butterfly fauna of India, based on photographic evidence from the community forests of Simong Village in Upper Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh, India.

No Longer Standing Alone: the Systematic Position of Apollonias Arnottii in Lauraceae

Nabasmita Malakar, R. Ganesan

Phytotaxa
14 October 2025

Apollonias is one of the taxonomically understudied genera of the family Lauraceae, which consisted of two disjunct distributed species, Apollonias barbujana from the Canary Islands, Spain and A. arnottii from Western Ghats, India. The key characteristic of the genus is the presence of bilocular anthers compared to other genera of Lauraceae.

Prevalence of monogamy at the level of flowers in plants

*Kamaljit S. Bawa, Namratha Tiwari,
K. Nagaraju Shivaprakash*

Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A
4 August 2025

Different types of genomic conflicts are possible in plants with multiovulate ovaries that produce multiseeded fruits: between the maternal plant and its offspring, among developing seeds, between paternal and maternal genomes over seed development, and among paternal parents if different parents sire seeds within an ovary.

Blackbuck Conservation in Fragmented Landscapes: Evaluating Habitat Use in and Around a Conservation Reserve

*B.R. Manoj Kumar, T. Ganesh,
K.S. Seshadri*

Journal for Nature Conservation
26 July 2025

Savanna-grassland ecosystems cover approximately 17% of India's landmass, and only a small proportion of them are protected. Savanna-grassland habitats are critical for the survival of endemic taxa such as the Blackbuck (*Antelope cervicapra*). Once widespread, Blackbucks now occur in fragmented populations, and ongoing efforts to conserve them have resulted in the creation of protected areas that are often small and isolated.

Marketing of NTFPS by Forest-dependent Communities in Maharashtra, India: Alternative Models for State Support

*Anuja Anil Date,
Sharachchandra Lele*

**Forest Policy and Economics
29 July 2025**

Studies show that forest dependent communities (FDCs) can improve economic outcomes through community-based forest enterprises (CFEs) based on timber harvest and sale. In India, since FDCs do not have rights to timber even under decentralization laws, they must rely on unpredictable non-timber forest product (NTFP) markets for economic benefits. Additionally, their enterprises would have to compete with pre-existing well-funded state-assisted NTFP marketing institutions.

Detour Migration to Circumvent the Himalayas in the Montagu's Harrier *Circus Pygargus*

*Arjun Kannan, M. B. Prashanth,
Abhishek Samrat, Raymond H. G.
Klaassen, T. Ganesh*

**Movement Ecology
16 June 2025**

Migrating birds do not always travel along the shortest possible routes between breeding and wintering sites. Rather, detours are a common phenomenon in response to availability of foraging habitats, generic wind patterns, predation risk, and ecological barriers. The Himalayas are a formidable ecological barrier within the Central Asian Flyway (CAF), but hitherto research has focused on high-altitude flights of species that cross the Himalayas, and thus information on species that circumvent this mountain range is lacking in this understudied migration system.

Rediscovery and phylogenetic position of *Moringua hodgarti* Chaudhuri, 1913 (Synbranchiformes: Synbranchidae) from the Siang Valley of Arunachal Pradesh, India

*Nilanjan Mukherjee, Rahul
G. Kumar, Surya Narayanan,
Aravind N. A.*

**Zootaxa
27 May 2025**

For more than a century, there have been no records of *Moringua hodgarti*, first collected during the Abor Expedition of 1911–1912, and subsequently described by Chaudhuri in 1913 as a species of moringuid eel. We report the rediscovery of this species after 110 years, and provide a re-description based on freshly collected specimens. Morphology and molecular analysis confirm that *M. hodgarti* is a species of synbranchid eel of the genus *Ophichthys* as previously hypothesized.

**IPBES Transformative
Change Assessment:
Chapter 4. Overcoming the
challenges of achieving
transformative change
towards a sustainable world**

Asmita Sengupta

Zenodo
17 April 2025

The unprecedented loss of nature over the past few decades has induced a call for transformative change towards socially just biodiversity conservation worldwide. However, transformative change can be impeded by five overarching challenges that are systemic, pervasive, and persistent: relations of domination over nature and people, especially those that emerged in colonial eras and have persisted since; economic & political inequalities; inadequate policies & unfit institutions; unsustainable consumption & production patterns; and limited access to clean technologies alongside uncoordinated knowledge & innovation systems.

**Bringing Back From the
Brink: a New Initiative to
Prevent the Extinction of
Critically Endangered Tree
Species in the Wild**

*Ganesan Balachander, E. M.
Muralidharan, G. Ravikanth,
B. R. Ramesh, Uma Shankar,
Kamal Bawa*

Current Science
10 April 2025

We live in what many consider the Age of Anthropocene, where *Homo sapiens* has become the dominant species on Earth. Human activities have significantly altered ecosystems, impacting biodiversity and ecosystem processes. The scale and speed of these changes, largely driven by anthropogenic factors, are unprecedented. These include: Land and sea use change; Direct exploitation of species for food, fuel, timber and medicines; Pollution; The introduction of invasive alien species.

**Trophic interactions of two
aquatic anurans from the
mid-elevation evergreen
forests of the Western
Ghats, India**

K. S. Seshadri, Preeti Saryan

Journal of Natural History
1 April 2025

The dietary ecology of anurans has been extensively studied in the Neotropics. However, our knowledge from parts of South and SE Asia is limited. Here, we study the dietary ecology of two anurans, belonging to ancient families (*Micrixalidae* and *Nyctibatrachidae*) from a riverine ecosystem of the wet-evergreen forests of the Western Ghats, India.

Our Programmes

ATREE's Programmes are housed within the S M Sehgal Foundation Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation and the Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies Centre for Environment and Development. Adopting research, implementation, policy outreach and capacity-building pathways to their work, ATREE's five programmes cover a spectrum of environmental challenges, from water security and forest rights to species conservation, habitat restoration and human-animal interactions.





1 Biodiversity Monitoring and Conservation Planning



2 Ecosystems and Human Well-being



3 Forests, Governance and Livelihoods



4 Resilient Urbanscapes



5 Water and Society



Programme

Biodiversity Monitoring and Conservation Planning

This programme aims to build a deeper understanding of biodiversity and the effect of threats such as climate change and large-scale development. It includes key areas such as documenting and monitoring species over time, studying human-wildlife interactions and planning conservation strategies.

Highlights

84

Journal articles
and book
chapters

24

Popular
articles

17

Conferences
and talks

44

Events and
webinars



Exploring Rhododendrons and their pollinator diversity in Arunachal Pradesh

The project, based in the Eastern Himalaya, studies the trait diversity and assemblage patterns of *Rhododendron* species across different elevations of western Arunachal Pradesh. It also involves recording pollinator diversity at survey sites. Together, these efforts aim for a better understanding of the genus *Rhododendron* in lesser-known regions of Eastern Himalaya and the capacity building of *Rhododendron* researchers.

To support the conservation of *Rhododendron* habitats in the Eastern Himalaya, the project will convene workshops and other stakeholder engagements, bringing together researchers, community leaders, practitioners and policymakers. These discussions will focus on conservation, ecotourism, sustainable bioresource use and long-term habitat monitoring.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ *Assemblage patterns of Rhododendron species across elevations*
- ✓ *Pollinator diversity documentation*
- ✓ *Workshops and stakeholder engagements*

Recovering and conserving Gomalas

The semi-arid savannas and grazing commons (*Gomalas*) of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, once central to pastoral livelihoods, biodiversity and ecological resilience, have been severely degraded by invasive *Neltuma juliflora* (*Prosopis juliflora*), recurrent fires, unsustainable biomass extraction and declining community stewardship.

To address these challenges, ATREE launched a project that uses an integrated restoration approach, combining invasive species removal, biochar production, native grassland and wildlife recovery, soil and water conservation, community-led fire management and participatory governance.

Between January of 2024 and March of 2026, the project restored 15 hectares of degraded savanna-grazing commons by uprooting *Neltuma juliflora* and other invasive shrubs and herbs. The biomass was converted into 170 tonnes of biochar produced and distributed to 114 farmers across 10 villages, helping reduce reliance on chemical fertilizers while providing additional benefits.

Ecological monitoring recorded a 90% increase in native grasses and a 50% increase in herbaceous species, alongside improved regeneration of shrubs and trees. Fire management interventions and enrichment planting with native species further improved an additional 110 hectares of grazing commons. The project established India's first Savanna and Deccan Thorn Forest Nursery. In 2026, local stewardship was strengthened through the establishment of the Village Commons Conservation and Livelihood Trust.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ 15 hectares of savanna commons restored in 2 states
- ✓ 170 tonnes of biochar produced and distributed to 114 farmers
- ✓ Set up India's first Savanna and Deccan Thorn Forest Nursery
- ✓ Facilitated stewardship via Village Commons Conservation and Livelihood Trust

Combating scrub-typhus

Scrub typhus is a re-emerging vector-borne zoonotic disease caused by *Orientia tsutsugamushi* and transmitted to humans through the bite of infected larval mites (chiggers), which are commonly associated with small mammals, particularly rodents.

ATREE's project integrates wildlife ecology into disease surveillance. Fieldwork in the Darjeeling and Sikkim Himalaya includes interviews with families affected by scrub typhus to understand the disease's health and economic impacts, alongside surveys of small mammal diversity, mite infestation

and *O. tsutsugamushi* infection rates in high-incidence areas.

The project examines the social and environmental drivers of disease transmission, including human behaviour, cognitive understanding of the environment, access to healthcare, local health infrastructure, land-use change and climate variability. The findings will provide deeper insights into biodiversity–human–environment linkages and support the development of more effective public health strategies, conservation planning and intersectoral collaboration.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Integrates wildlife ecology into scrub typhus disease surveillance
- ✓ Examines social and environmental drivers of disease transmission

Pangolin conservation in the Khangchendzonga landscape

ATREE's work on pangolin conservation began in 2014 in the tea plantation landscapes of Darjeeling and then expanded across the Khangchendzonga Landscape, India, including North Bengal and Sikkim. The project integrates research, community outreach, trade mitigation, capacity building, sustainable livelihood initiatives and transboundary engagement.

Our work in the Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary culminated in a publication, *"Burrows of Biodiversity: Faunal associations with Chinese Pangolin habitats in the Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary, West Bengal, India* in 2026.

The publication demonstrates that pangolin burrows significantly enhance habitat complexity and support a wide range of faunal species. This highlights the broader significance of pangolins as key contributors to ecosystem processes through the creation and maintenance of microhabitats.

One research study concluded in Buxa Tiger Reserve, and the findings were presented to the Forest Department, Government of West Bengal and West Bengal Biodiversity Board, Kolkata.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Tracking significance of pangolins as key contributors to ecosystem process
- ✓ *Burrows of Biodiversity* published in 2006
- ✓ Research findings from Buxa Tiger Reserve submitted to Forest Department

Monkeys in a metro

This project examines how bonnet macaques (*Macaca radiata*) persist in urban environments by studying their behaviour, space use and interactions with people in and around the Sanjay Gandhi National Park.

The project recommendations were submitted to the forest department. Outreach events were held at the Veermata Jijabhai Bhosale Zoo during the International Macaque Week, which included posters for creating awareness among the visitors about the detrimental impacts of feeding macaques. Workshops focusing on creating awareness and managing macaques were held for residents and 30 forest department officials. *Monkeys in a Metro*, a short film done as part of the collaborative study with Wildlife Society of India, is available on YouTube.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Project recommendations submitted to Forest Department
- ✓ A short film on the project

A framework for human-wildlife coexistence

This project is embedded within the CONNECT (Conviviality Network for Nature, Environment, and Communities Together) working group and seeks to co-develop an evidence-based and context-sensitive framework for human-wildlife coexistence. Even though human-wildlife interactions unfold within diverse ecological, cultural, historical and political contexts, prevailing conservation and policy approaches often narrow down coexistence to conflict mitigation or species persistence. The approach obscures its relational, dynamic and lived dimensions.

The project seeks to co-develop an inter- and transdisciplinary, bottom-up framework to engage more deeply with ideas of coexistence. Working collaboratively with communities and practitioners, the study attempts to integrate empirical evidence, diverse knowledge systems and lived experiences to produce a context-sensitive decision-support tool that can inform grounded conservation practice and policy.

During the year, stories of human-wildlife coexistence were documented from across India, and a draft perspective paper addressing contemporary debates on coexistence was completed.



A tapestry depicting *Waghoba* (a deity representing a big cat) and the *Warli* community that worships it. Artwork by our students Snigdha, Priyanka, Deeksha, Kishore, and Sanjana

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Archiving stories of human-wildlife coexistence
- ✓ Draft paper addressing contemporary debates on coexistence

Mapping invasive alien species fishes and their impact on Ramsar wetlands

Invasive Alien Species are one of the biggest threats to global biodiversity hotspots. They affect multiple trophic levels and stimulate negative ecological cascades. Recent studies have shown the presence of invasive alien fishes (IAF) in freshwater lakes conserved under the Ramsar Convention. India, with a large number of Ramsar sites, is highly vulnerable to the negative impact of IAF.

ATREE's project focuses on selected Ramsar sites in east and northeast India, where it monitors and maps IAF. The study assesses their dietary impact on the local flora and fauna. It employs a non-invasive eDNA approach to investigate IAF impact on Ramsar sites.





So far, the project has achieved in collating distribution records of IAF, developing species distribution models to identify invasion hotspots and prioritise field sites, standardising an eDNA extraction workflow, building a portable eDNA sampler and creating awareness about IAF through popular science articles.

Citizen science forms a key component of the study's proposal to monitor invasive species.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ *Distribution models of invasive alien species*
- ✓ *Portable eDNA sampler built*
- ✓ *Engaged citizen science to monitor invasive species*



Programme

Ecosystems and Human Well-being

This programme seeks to explore, understand and explain how ecosystems benefit us and relate to our well-being, focusing on environmental justice and sustainable ecosystems. A key emphasis is on a participatory approach involving stakeholders who rely on these ecosystems for their livelihood and well-being.

Highlights

6

Journal articles
and book
chapters

4

Popular
articles

6

Conferences
and talks

1

Webinar

Reconnecting fragmented multi-functional landscapes

This restoration initiative is part of the Resilient Himalaya (RE-HIM) project and the Mountains to Mangroves collaboration. It addresses fragmentation, unsustainable land use and the impacts of climate change across Sikkim and the Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts of West Bengal. It adopts a participatory, science-based approach that integrates biodiversity conservation with livelihood security. Its goal is to reconnect fragmented habitats. The initiative follows a nine-year framework, including four years of active restoration and five years of ecological monitoring.

ATREE has developed a structured 10-step restoration methodology that begins with satellite-based identification of degraded sites, followed by ecological assessments of reference areas to guide restoration.

So far, the initiative has restored 113.5 hectares, planted over 135,000 native saplings, supported the natural regeneration of over 22,700 plants, established six community nurseries and engaged 457 local community members, generating over 8,000 person-days of employment.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ *Integrating biodiversity conservation with livelihood security*
- ✓ *Restored 113.5 hectares across Sikkim, Darjeeling and Kalimpong*
- ✓ *Established nurseries, generated 8000+ person-days of employment*



Building opportunities for Yak pastoralists

The project is being implemented in Lachen and Lachung in Sikkim's Mangan district, where Yak herding communities have traditionally sustained alpine ecosystems through seasonal pastoralism.

It seeks to promote nature-based livelihood opportunities for herders and smallholder communities living around snow leopard habitats and strengthen

community capacity and local institutions for biodiversity conservation.

A consultation workshop in September 2025 led to the establishment of the Sikkim Yak Herders Association and advanced the formation of Yak Herder Federation of India. Women-centred livelihood initiatives held skill development training in yak and sheep wool, rug weaving, product innovation and market linkages.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Regional collaboration with ICIMOD, WWF, KCC, Government of Sikkim and community institutions
- ✓ Contributed towards International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists preparations
- ✓ Expanding to Yuksom–Dzongri and Singalila National Park

Traditional agroforestry systems for climate resilience

Traditional Agroforestry Systems (TAFs), shaped by indigenous ecological knowledge and long-standing land management practices, are multifunctional socio-ecological systems capable of simultaneously supporting biodiversity conservation, climate resilience and rural livelihoods. Despite their ecological and cultural significance, TAFs across the Indian Himalaya lack formal recognition, legal protection and a structured ecological framework to guide their conservation, restoration and enhancement.

This project seeks to address these gaps by recognising, evaluating and

strengthening TAFs as sustainable nature-based climate solutions in the Sikkim-Darjeeling Himalaya. Extensive field assessments marked the initial phase of the project, with surveys completed across 168 landscape grids (2 km × 2 km each), covering diverse agroecological settings.

A farm typology classification was developed to identify representative agroforestry systems for intensive ecological and socio-economic studies. Outreach activities were organised to raise awareness about the importance of biodiversity within agricultural landscapes.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Extensive field assessments to evaluate and strengthen Traditional Agroforestry Systems
- ✓ 168 landscape grids surveyed and 353 geo-referenced point locations documented
- ✓ Framework to identify and guide ecologically sustainable agroforestry practices
- ✓ Outreach programmes to promote agro-biodiversity

Community-centric place-based chat bots

Scientific and traditional knowledge systems are vital for restoring degraded habitats and enhancing biodiversity-based livelihoods. However, the loss of traditional ecological knowledge due to gaps in intergenerational transmission and the failure to translate scientific knowledge in accessible terms hinder community resilience and conservation efforts.

Generic information platforms may provide vast data but often fail to reflect the specific contexts of individual communities. ATREE is addressing this challenge through site-specific, AI-enabled WhatsApp chatbots: GramaMitra for the Biligiriranga Hills landscape in Karnataka and GaonSahayog for the Sikkim–Darjeeling landscape in the Eastern Himalaya. Their content is tailored to local crops, livelihoods, conflict mitigation, languages, and other community needs.

These chatbots bring together scientifically curated information, expert insights and locally relevant knowledge in an accessible conversational format. They enable users to access concise information in their preferred language. Importantly, these are evolving knowledge systems where community questions, feedback, expert input and field experiences help identify knowledge gaps and continuously improve content, strengthening connections between scientific and community knowledge.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ The GramaMitra chatbot was launched on 17 June 2026 to provide communities and local stakeholders with accessible, locally relevant knowledge.
- ✓ The GaonSahayog chatbot was piloted in Sittong village, Darjeeling, in May 2026, with users onboarded and feedback collected to further refine the platform.

Fruit resources for ecological sustainability and human health (FRESH)

India is home to hundreds of indigenous edible fruit species, many of which are harvested from forests as Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) or from semi-domesticated systems. Traditionally, local communities have relied on these wild fruits for sustenance, medicine, and supplementary income. In addition, we have a diverse array of cultivated fruit trees. Perennial fruit trees, both native and introduced, present a valuable opportunity for resilient farming, yet their full potential remains largely underutilised.

ATREE is developing strategies to improve fruit access among marginalised communities across four pilot landscapes in Karnataka, Sikkim–Darjeeling and Madhya Pradesh. The goal is to develop a comprehensive database of lesser-known wild and cultivated fruit species, their suitability and cultural and management practices.

Households will be trained in sustainable fruit cultivation and fruit-based agroforestry across designated pilot sites. Knowledge products and decision-





support tools will be developed to help practitioners integrate fruit species into conservation, restoration and sustainable development programmes. The project will disseminate policy briefs and field-level learnings to support the scaling of fruit-based interventions at the state and national levels.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ *A new project that looks at localising strategies to improve fruit access among marginalised communities*
- ✓ *Knowledge products and decision-support tools are being planned to help practitioners to integrate fruit species into restoration and sustainable development programmes*



Programme

Forests, Governance and Livelihoods

The programme focuses on interdisciplinary research, action and policy outreach efforts to enhance community livelihoods and strengthen democratic, equitable forest governance. It looks at building capacities and supporting grassroots groups in securing their rights and managing Community Forest Resource areas.

Highlights

7

Journal articles
and book
chapters

9

Popular
articles

22

Conferences
and talks

25

Events and
webinars



Strengthening community-led conservation in Arunachal Pradesh

ATREE is engaged in strengthening community-led conservation across the Siang, Dibang and Kameng valleys. These landscapes support globally important biodiversity and sustain the livelihoods and cultural identities of indigenous communities, but face growing pressures from infrastructure development, changing land-use systems, weak recognition of customary rights and increasing human–wildlife conflict.

This project adopts an integrated socio-ecological approach. A major milestone was the initiation of three Community Conserved Areas – one each in West Kameng, East Siang, and Lower Dibang Valley, with the first community resolutions signed at all three sites.

The project convened discussions with indigenous leaders, researchers, community organisations and government representatives on implementing the FRA in Arunachal Pradesh. It initiated market surveys to better understand the contribution of wild bioresources to local livelihoods and identify priority species for sustainable conservation and management.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Initiated three Community Conserved Areas (CCAs); community resolutions signed at all sites
- ✓ Convened multi-stakeholder dialogues on Forest Rights Act (FRA) implementation
- ✓ Initiated market surveys on wild bioresources and livelihoods

Action-research, training and policy outreach in Chhattisgarh

The project moves beyond merely claiming community tenure to fostering community-led sustainable livelihoods, forest management and governance.

In Bastar district, the project supports 22 gram sabhas at various stages of planning and implementation activities after receiving community titles, including preparation of CFR management plans and capacity building for management committees, with a special focus on gender inclusion. Seven gram sabhas have begun to implement various activities, such as planting native tree species on degraded land and collectively selling food-grade Mahua flowers.

A significant achievement was Tiriya gram sabha receiving an Honorable Mention, ranking among the top 15 for the 2025 Collective Action Awards by the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI).

ATREE assisted gram sabhas in opening bank accounts, secured state seed funding for 21 villages and supported 11 gram sabhas in obtaining Rs.50,000 each for implementing CFR management plans. Training programmes were conducted for civil society organisations and gram sabhas on how to develop forest management plans. Guidelines were drafted for the state tribal development department on various aspects, like how to recognise active gram sabhas and fund them.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Supported 22 gram sabhas in Bastar with CFR-related activities
- ✓ Tiriya gram sabha gets 2025 Collective Action Awards
- ✓ Developing community forest management plans
- ✓ Drafted guidelines for the state tribal development department

Enabling community forest resource rights in Madhya Pradesh

This multi-year project, involving action-research, training and policy outreach, supports forest-dwelling communities to claim their full set of forest rights under the Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006 in Madhya Pradesh, specially focusing on the densely forested region of Baiga Chak (Dindori and Mandla districts) with Adivasi majority.

During the year, the project facilitated the submission of 20 Community Forest Resource Rights (CFRR) claims and supported communities in understanding and monitoring the process of conversion of Forest Villages to Revenue Villages.

The team imparted training to more than 20 NGOs and government officials in the CFRR claim-making process, contributed to the publication of an FRA manual, enabled public access to 2005 satellite imagery for rights claims and completed a study on decentralised tendu leaf trade under the FRA.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ 20 CFRR claims' submission facilitated in Baiga Chak
- ✓ 20 NGOs and government officials trained in the CFRR claim-making process
- ✓ FRA manual published
- ✓ Study on decentralised tendu leaf trade completed



Strengthening community-led forest governance in Karnataka

To support the implementation of the Forest Rights Act, 2006, and co-management planning in Yelandur, Chamarajanagar, Hanuru and Kollegal taluks of Karnataka's Chamarajanagar district, the community-led project organised over 100 meetings. The Gram Sabhas and the Forest Rights Committees processed claim applications for individual forest land rights (134 families), community and basic rights (279 claims), disputed lands (659 families) under Section 3(1) (m) and site rights (1,804 families).

Meanwhile, workshops were conducted for Forest Rights Committees across eight Podus (villages). Community Forest Resource Conservation and Monitoring (CFRCM) plans were finalised for all eight committees, while CFRCM Committees were constituted in seven Podus through gram sabha consultations. The planning process engaged 881 community members and leaders, and the co-management plans are now in the final stage of registration.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Over 100 meetings held for various stakeholders focusing on FRA
- ✓ Workshops conducted for Forest Rights Committees across 8 podus
- ✓ CFR Conservation and Monitoring plans finalised



Programme

Resilient Urbanscapes

The programme focuses on identifying adaptive strategies and exploring pathways for promoting climate resilience and green infrastructure in urban planning. Community engagement forms the fulcrum of the programme, whether in restoring urban ecosystems or promoting sustainable urban agriculture.

Highlights

2

Journal articles
and book
chapters

3

Popular
articles

3

Conferences
and talks

1

Event

Nature-based solutions and community stewardship at Venkateshpura Lake

The project significantly advanced evidence-based approaches to urban lake restoration in Bengaluru. A key outcome was the development of lake health benchmarks that provide a scientific framework for assessing ecological condition and guiding restoration planning and monitoring. These benchmarks are intended to support practitioners, researchers and government agencies in evaluating restoration effectiveness and prioritising interventions for urban lake ecosystems.

At Venkateshpura Lake, the project piloted nature-based solutions (NbS), focusing on the installation of floating islands, constructed using bamboo and other natural materials. Beyond serving as demonstration pilots, these floating islands showcased the feasibility of deploying sustainable, locally adaptable and environmentally sensitive restoration technologies. Broader climate co-benefits of lake restoration interventions were examined by estimating the carbon sequestration potential of the floating islands and associated vegetation.





The interventions contributed towards improving ecological conditions within the lake while also generating insights into the role of NbS in urban water restoration. It has helped in strengthening the evidence base for scalable and ecologically sustainable lake restoration strategies in peri-urban Bengaluru.

The project also enhanced participatory lake stewardship. Local stakeholders continued their involvement through activities such as planting native species, observing and documenting local flora and fauna and participating in regular monitoring efforts.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ *Developed a scientific framework for assessing lake health*
- ✓ *Assessed climate benefits of floating islands and native plants*
- ✓ *Strengthened participatory lake stewardship*

Greening urban food systems

This project integrates pollinators and other forms of urban biodiversity in garden spaces, aiming to create healthy ecosystems that offer multiple benefits to city-dwellers. As part of this, the Pollinator-Linked Urban Multifunctional Ecosystems (PLUME) programme was initiated to explore the role of urban agriculture in enhancing ecosystem services and social well-being.

The project was launched across six pilot sites in Bengaluru, including home gardens, a public school and a public lakeside space, where multifunctional pollinator-friendly interventions, such as edible gardens, bee hotels, stingless bee colonies and composting systems, were established. Baseline ecological data was generated through bee diversity assessments, vegetation surveys and monitoring of pollinator occupation in bee hotels, documenting pollinator species across urban sites.

The project promoted community engagement and awareness by involving homeowners and school children in gardening and pollinator observation activities. Resources developed under this project include the PLUME website, educational material on beneficial insects and garden pests, and a public outreach video on pollinator-linked urban agriculture. The project also contributed to two policy briefs developed with the Indian Institute of Human Settlements (IIHS). A manuscript on biodiversity-friendly urban roofscapes is underway.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ *PLUME programme launched across six pilot sites*
- ✓ *Baseline data on vegetation, pollinator species across urban settings*
- ✓ *Biodiversity activities for homeowners and school children*
- ✓ *Outreach resources, policy briefs, research outputs*

Landscape effects on pollinators

The project examines how changes across the city's urban gradient influence pollinator communities and the pollination services they provide.

Different habitat types were assessed for variations in pollinator diversity, abundance and floral resources. Overall, the research shows that supporting pollinators is central to creating liveable, ecologically resilient cities and provides actionable knowledge for urban planners, farmers and citizens alike.

During the year, one of the first city-wide assessments of urban bee communities was conducted across Bengaluru city, covering green spaces of varying sizes and highly built-up areas. A biodiversity dataset was generated comprising 1,425 bees representing 33 bee species across multiple social and solitary taxa.

The study provided important evidence for pollinator-sensitive urban planning and habitat conservation. The team documented strong seasonal variation in bee communities between pre- and post-monsoon periods, highlighting the need for year-round pollinator support and adaptive conservation strategies.

A citizen-science initiative focused on cavity-nesting bees through the installation of bee hotels and creation of a mobile application for monitoring bee activity and habitat features. The project resulted in scientific outputs advancing urban pollinator ecology and ecosystem services research, including two manuscripts in preparation and a peer-reviewed publication in the *Journal of Applied Ecology*.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Conducted one of Bengaluru's first city-wide bee surveys
- ✓ Generated evidence for pollinator-sensitive urban planning
- ✓ Advanced research and citizen science activities

The wayside commons

The Wayside Commons project is a first step in transforming how Bengaluru values and protects its urban forest. Moving beyond simple tree counts, ATREE is leveraging citywide drone imagery and advanced Artificial Intelligence to map the precise extent and height of Bengaluru's tree canopy.

Over the past six months, the team has been conducting tree surveys in Jakkuru ward, as well as testing a dashboard and a mobile app to map trees. The study will leverage the naturalist network in Bengaluru to contribute to the database by empowering residents to document tree health, track growth and report physical environmental threats.

To protect trees, it is important to know where they are, how many there are and what aspects of the law can be effective. The project's goal is to consultatively develop frameworks for urban tree protection by integrating technology with governance.

AI-driven canopy assessments are being translated into actionable policy recommendations to modernise tree protection policies in the state. Ultimately, this project provides a data-driven, community-led blueprint for enhancing urban climate resilience and green infrastructure.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Study combines technology, citizen-science and governance
- ✓ Initiated tree surveys in Jakkuru ward and piloted a dashboard and a mobile app to map trees
- ✓ Community-led blueprint for enhancing urban climate resilience and green infrastructure.

Restoring Kannamangala Lake

This project achieved an important milestone with the successful commissioning of an aerated wetland system designed to improve water quality and enhance ecological functioning within the lake.

The intervention combines engineered aeration with wetland-based treatment processes, demonstrating the potential of hybrid nature-based solutions for restoring polluted urban water bodies. Continuous maintenance and

performance monitoring of the system are currently being undertaken to ensure its long-term operational efficiency and ecological effectiveness.

To support sustainability and replicability of the intervention, the project team developed a comprehensive Operations and Maintenance (O&M) manual along with detailed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Aerated wetland system for improving water quality
- ✓ Hybrid nature-based solutions
- ✓ Operations and Maintenance manual and SOPs



Programme

Water and Society

The programme attempts to understand the trends and factors influencing change in the water sector while developing practical policies to ensure everyone has fair access to sufficient and clean water. It focuses on issues pertaining to wastewater irrigation, water access in drought-prone areas, urban lake degradation and centralised canal irrigation systems.

Highlights

11

Journal articles and peer-reviewed publications

9

Popular articles

22

Press coverage

39

Events and webinars



Antimicrobial resistance and waste water reuse

The project addresses the growing challenge of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) associated with wastewater reuse in peri-urban agricultural systems. It examines pathways of AMR exposure in agricultural fields irrigated using groundwater, untreated wastewater and treated waste, generating evidence to support safer and sustainable wastewater reuse practices.

Sampling locations were identified and finalised across different irrigation settings to support systematic field investigations. In parallel, the microbiology laboratory infrastructure at ATREE was upgraded to enable advanced AMR-related analyses and strengthen institutional research capacity in this emerging area of environmental health.

The project is a part of the larger multi-country Rurbanity project that explores how urban ecology and biodiversity are actively shaped through the movement of plants, materials, species and cultural practices across interconnected rural and urban landscapes.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Study paves way for safer wastewater reuse practices
- ✓ Lab upgraded to support advanced antimicrobial resistance research

Reviving and co-managing a peri-urban lake

In the 2025–2026 period, the Baiyappanahalli Lake Restoration Project in Bengaluru moved from the planning phase into active on-ground restoration. With the baseline surveys completed and a Detailed Project Report (DPR) in place, the project received the necessary approvals from the Panchayat.

During the year, restoration interventions included lake cleaning, strengthening and stabilising the lake bunds and developing pathways to improve accessibility and stewardship of the lake landscape. Ecological restoration mainly focused

on enhancing native biodiversity. A dedicated nursery within the lake premises is being used to propagate native plant species.

The LakeRevive tool, developed as part of the project, secured third prize at the FES Code4Nature contest, while the project received accolades at national and international forums. Stakeholder engagement activities, such as the “Lakes for Life” programme for government school children, strengthened community participation and long-term stewardship.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ *Baseline surveys, DPR, panchayat approvals*
- ✓ *Restoration activities to establishing native plant nursery*
- ✓ *LakeRevive tool wins recognition*
- ✓ *‘Lakes for Life’ for long-term community stewardship*



Understanding water governance and impact on environment and society

The project intends to unpack the wastewater irrigation policy and practice in Karnataka.

Wastewater reuse projects are envisaged to address the twin problems of water pollution and water scarcity. Framed by themes such as the circular economy and sustainable reuse, the large-scale, centralised reuse interventions often do not impact everyone equally.

This project looks at how using wastewater for irrigation affects society and the environment. Its goal is to improve how we understand and manage wastewater irrigation, with a strong focus on equity and sustainability.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Analysis of wastewater irrigation policies
- ✓ Social and environmental impacts of wastewater interventions



Equity perspectives for irrigation

Pipe Irrigation Network (PIN) is being promoted as a modernisation strategy to address water losses, inequitable distribution and land acquisition challenges associated with canal irrigation systems. This project, seeking to create knowledge and capacity for socially inclusive and ecologically sustainable irrigation water management, examines the Gurukunj Lift Irrigation Scheme, one of the recently completed PIN projects, part of the Upper Wardha Irrigation Project located in the Amravati district of Maharashtra.

The project looks at how the PIN system operates and delivers irrigation services by studying two Water User Associations (WUAs). It also analyses the planning, design and operational challenges associated with implementing and managing the piped network system in the command area.

The interim findings of the project were presented to the Secretary, Water Resources Department, Government of Maharashtra, along with recommendations to improve the performance of the PIN system. The findings were also shared with farmers through a workshop.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Pipe Irrigation Network performance and challenges
- ✓ Findings shared with the Maharashtra Water Resources Department and farmers

The Himalaya Initiative

The aspiration of The Himalaya Initiative (THI) is to build resilient socioecological systems for a sustainable Himalayan future. THI delivers on-the-ground impact through biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and community resilience.

THI has made significant progress in building partnerships, securing funding and strengthening institutional capacity. These efforts lay a strong foundation for achieving the Initiative's long-term goals in conservation and climate resilience.



The ten-year initiative is guided by a five-year implementation plan – Action for Mountains and Peoples – across three key landscapes: Khangchendzonga (Sikkim and Darjeeling Hills), Arunachal Pradesh and the Trans - Himalaya (Ladakh). The focus is on addressing biodiversity loss, restoring multi-functional landscapes and reducing vulnerabilities of mountain communities in the Indian Himalayan Region.





Strengthening community resilience through partnerships in the Trans Himalayan landscape

In the high-altitude rangelands of Ladakh, GRAZIER (Greater Resilience in Arid Zones through Innovation, Exchange and Research) builds on the knowledge systems and adaptive practices of pastoralist communities to strengthen ecosystem resilience and community wellbeing, using a rights-based, biocultural approach. It is implemented in partnership between ATREE, Achi Association India, the French National Institute of Sustainable Development (IRD), and the University of Massachusetts Amherst, alongside local communities and institutions.

In 2025, the project initiated several key interventions. Predator-proof corrals were scaled across households in Chibra (Changthang), enhancing livestock security and reducing conflict. In Phey, the revival of the traditional rantak (watermill) reconnected cultural heritage with contemporary water governance. Wool-based value chains progressed, supporting livelihood strengthening.

HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Reconnected cultural heritage with contemporary water governance
- ✓ Enhanced livestock security, reducing conflict
- ✓ Over 100 hours of folklore recordings archived

The programme deepened knowledge co-production through community workshops, audio-visual outputs and the transcription and archiving of over 100 hours of folklore recordings (ongoing). Across all efforts, GRAZIER centres marginalised voices, particularly women and youth, positioning pastoralism as a dynamic, evolving system central to sustainable futures in the Trans-Himalaya.

Conserving biodiversity and restoring forests in the Khangchendzonga landscape

During the year, implementation scaled across three selected landscapes of Khangchendzonga, where 28 long-term monitoring sites were established, 300+ citizen scientists were involved, and capacities were built via internships and training.

Livelihood initiatives in Darjeeling included climate smart agriculture, bio-briquettes/black soap production pilots and improved cook stoves.

Place-based education was piloted in five Darjeeling schools. Digital commons initiatives advanced through the Himalaya Biodiversity Information System.

Community-led conservation in Arunachal Pradesh

Across three valleys - Siang, Dibang and West Kameng - work on Community Conserved Areas (CCAs) advanced through meetings, agreements, surveys and participatory planning. More details about the project are available on **page 52**.

Building capabilities across landscapes

Capacity building supported two PhDs, four MScs, two fellowships, seven immersions, seven internships, three youth fellowships and 33 trainees.





Our Community Conservation Centres

ATREE's action-oriented research on community-based conservation is anchored in its Community Conservation Centres (CCCs) located in different parts of India. The CCCs facilitate a mutual exchange of knowledge between local stakeholders and researchers, anchor the doctoral research of our PhD students and provide support for the long-term monitoring of socio-ecological systems. Our CCCs:

- 1. Agasthyamalai**
- 2. Biligiriranga Hills**
- 3. Darjeeling**
- 4. Male Mahadeshwara Hills**
- 5. Vembanad**

Agasthyamalai Community Conservation Centre (ACCC)

The Agasthyamalai Community Conservation Centre (ACCC) is dedicated to addressing biodiversity and conservation issues in the unique and culturally diverse Agasthyamalai landscape of southern Tamil Nadu. In addition to developing conservation and management strategies, the centre also focuses on community engagement by promoting awareness, empowering educators and fostering environmental stewardship.



Advancing adaptive restoration in the Agasthyamalai landscape

The Agasthyamalai Sustainability Project for Integrated Restoration of Ecosystems (ASPIRE), focuses on three of the five ecosystems that mark the Agasthyamalai landscape in Tamil Nadu: Kurunji (mountains draped in evergreen forests), Mullai (lowland scrubby and grassland vegetation) and Marutham (agricultural ecosystem dominated by paddy fields).

ASPIRE's work has been informed by ATREE's three decades of ecological research in the Agasthyamalai region. Over the last one year, the project expanded from understanding the ecological and social conditions across the ecosystems to designing and testing tailor-made restoration strategies for each landscape. The climate education component of ASPIRE is in the process of establishing three Climate Smart Schools that integrate climate monitoring into everyday learning and school culture.



Forest ecosystems

In 2025–2026, the focus was on addressing critical barriers, such as limited seed dispersal, habitat degradation and the spread of invasive species, while also strengthening ecological recovery in abandoned tea plantation landscapes. ASPIRE, together with the Forest Department, initiated a suite of experimental interventions, the insights feeding into the Detailed Project Report aimed at restoring abandoned plantations.



Agricultural ecosystems

Work has involved examining the ecological functions that biodiversity supports, particularly in pest regulation and crop resilience. The project is also assessing the ecological and economic implications of transitions toward natural farming systems, with a focus on sustainability and farmer viability.

HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ *Experimental interventions for tea removal and forest species recovery across restoration sites*
- ✓ *Supporting pest regulation and crop resilience*



Grassland ecosystems

Restoration activities involved field-based experimentation and community-led management approaches. Besides emphasising on invasive species management, grazing dynamics and the restoration of ecological functions within degraded semi-arid grasslands, the project focused on understanding soil carbon dynamics and recovering the unique biodiversity associated with these grassland ecosystems.



Tank ecosystems

The Integrated Tank Ecological Index was developed to assess ecological health of tanks, alongside social and institutional readiness. This helped to prioritise the tanks that require restoration. The assessments revealed emerging ecological and social conflicts linked to lotus cultivation expansion, which is beginning to affect the tank ecosystem and shared water use within the community.

HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ *Invasive species management and recovering grassland biodiversity*
- ✓ *Restoration across interconnected tank systems*
- ✓ *Setting the stage for Climate Smart Schools*

Long-term monitoring of Agasthyamalai landscape

ATREE has been conducting long-term monitoring across the connected ecological systems of the Agasthyamalai hills and Tamiraparani basin in Tamil Nadu for 30 years. These include forests, riverscapes and associated wetlands, grasslands and human-dominated ecosystems.

Forests

Long-term monitoring of tropical forests has revealed how flowering and fruiting are reduced only under strong El Nino events while changes in local weather patterns controls tree reproduction in normal years .

Faith, festivals and biodiversity

Seventeen years of monitoring have shown that temple tourism has a significant negative effect on wildlife and habitats within protected areas but engagement with multiple stakeholders has enabled reducing this impact and developing a scalable conservation model that balances pilgrimage and biodiversity conservation.

Sacred spaces as biodiversity refuges

Twelve years of monitoring have highlighted the irreplaceable role of ancient temples as biodiversity refuges in human-dominated landscapes. Their structures along the Tamiraparani River provide roosting sites for seven bat species which forage in the surrounding agriculture landscape and may contribute to natural pest control. A recent initiative at the intersection of faith and conservation has been the revival of nine temple gardens, or Nandavanams, featuring plant species that support biodiversity and ritual needs.



Conserving grasslands to sustain harrier migration

Ten years of monitoring Montagu's harrier and Pallid harrier provided new insights into their migration and ecology. The study of their habitats highlighted the ecological importance of native grasslands and grazing commons for biodiversity and pastoral livelihoods contributing to the allocation of 52 hectares of government land for native grassland restoration in Nanguneri taluk in Tamil Nadu.

Riverscapes

Fifteen years of citizen based monitoring has demonstrated the Tamiraparani basin as an important freshwater landscape supporting migratory and resident waterbirds. The more recent Tamiraparani Fish Count has identified relatively intact river reaches and emerging threats. These have informed a number of restoration activities that integrate biodiversity, water security and local livelihoods. These efforts have also helped identify sites with potential for designation as Biodiversity Heritage Sites or Other Effective Conservation Measures (OECMs).

Building stewardship

Community engagement as active participants has been part of biodiversity monitoring and conservation. Communities have contributed to documenting moth, fish, waterbirds and harriers in the Tamiraparani basin. This has generated valuable ecological data at a scale that would not have been possible through ATREE researchers alone, while enabling communities to understand ecological change, contribute to conservation action and build stewardship across generations.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Long-term ecological monitoring to understand landscape change
- ✓ Evidence-based restoration and conservation of diverse ecosystems
- ✓ Community-led conservation integrating biodiversity, livelihoods and culture

Biligiriranga Hills

The Community Conservation Centre at Biligiriranga Hills (BR Hills) has been working with the Soliga community towards the conservation of biodiversity, enhancement of livelihoods and protection of community rights.



Strengthening ADAVI

During the year, the community-based enterprise initiated by ATREE with support from MSME grant generated a revenue of Rs.1,00,05,864. Around 160 government officials visited ADAVI for orientation on its operations, honey processing and relevant legislation. ADAVI's products were showcased at several regional events, strengthening market visibility. The enterprise distributed a share of profits among its shareholders (honey collectors and farmers).

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ *Adavi generated a revenue of over one crore*
- ✓ *Access to markets efforts strengthened*



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Awarded scholarships worth Rs. 15 lakh for students from disadvantaged communities
- ✓ Over 250 Adivasi students pursued studies from pre-university to PhD level

Empowering tribal youth

ATREE and SAMATVA Trust have jointly supported higher education for economically disadvantaged students from the Soliga, Betta Kuruba and Jenu Kuruba communities in Chamarajanagar district for the past 18 years. Under the project, over 250 Adivasi students pursued studies from pre-university to PhD level during 2025–2026. A one-day motivation workshop and scholarship distribution programme awarded scholarships worth Rs. 15 lakh to support their educational journeys.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Piloting scalable solutions for removing invasive shrubs and restoring native habitat
- ✓ Ten experimental blocks targeted

Tackling lantana in tiger and elephant habitats

This collaborative project by ATREE, WWF, NCBS and the Shola Trust has been piloting scalable methods to remove the invasive shrub *Lantana camara* and restore native habitat in the BRT Tiger Reserve for the past four years. Various combinations of lantana removal, controlled burning and native grass seeding were carried out in ten experimental blocks, alongside untreated controls. Initial results showed a strong negative impact of lantana on grass biomass and species richness. Removing lantana significantly promoted native vegetation recovery and increased sightings of key herbivores such as elephants, gaur and deer. However, the benefits of seeding and burning were not significant, likely due to limited seed availability and the small number of burnt plots.

Experiential learning and research engagement

The CCC organised a three-day course for around 30 graduate students from The Echo Network, introducing them to ATREE's work in research, conservation, livelihoods and governance through indoor sessions and field visits to Podus, agricultural lands and other important sites.

Thirty-four school students from the Centre for Learning (CFL) visited the CCC in two batches to learn about the Soliga community's lifestyle, biodiversity and indigenous tribal traditions. The field station also hosted researchers from ATREE, the World Wide Fund for Nature, the Botanical Survey of India (Pune), Black Baza and other organisations. Around 200 college students attended orientation programmes, with some undertaking internships at the CCC.

Bridging cultures

As part of the Indigenous Cultural Knowledge Exchange Programme between India and Australia, funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and supported by the Centre for Australia-India Relations, Indian participants joined a 12-day exchange programme.

Visits to Charles Darwin University, Ramingining and Kakadu National Park provided insights into collaborative conservation, including Indigenous participation in biodiversity governance, fire management and carbon credit sharing. The exchange highlighted the active role of Indigenous people in forest management, government support for their welfare, and the protection of sacred sites.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Three-day course for around 30 graduate students
- ✓ Hosted school students and researchers from ATREE and other organisations.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Indigenous Cultural Knowledge Exchange Programme between India and Australia
- ✓ Gained insights into collaborative conservation

Darjeeling

The CCC conducts place-based action and research in Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts in the Eastern Himalayan range to address environmental challenges. It works towards developing sustainable models to tackle issues related to agriculture, water, tourism, livelihoods and forests that directly affect local people. It also prioritises engaging with young people.



Orchard development and allied livelihoods

The project is enhancing the livelihoods of 252 tribal farming households in Sittong III GPU through ecologically sustainable orchard development and diversified livelihood interventions under TDF-60, WADI. It promotes a multifunctional, climate-resilient agricultural landscape, targeting a 20% increase in household income and 15% reduction in youth migration, while offering a replicable model for sustainable development in the Himalayan region.

Addressing the challenges facing mandarin orange cultivation, the project has established 80 hectares of orchards. Farmers are adopting integrated orchard systems by cultivating seasonal vegetables and floriculture crops such as amaryllis lily, improving land-use efficiency and diversifying incomes. In addition, 50 landless households are being supported through apiculture, backyard poultry, vermicomposting and vegetable cultivation. A mustard oil extraction unit has also been established to promote local value addition and strengthen rural livelihoods.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Established 80 hectares of mandarin orange orchards
- ✓ Supported livelihoods of 50 landless households

Towards human-elephant coexistence

ATREE, with support from the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, has been working closely with communities along the Indo-Nepal border in Naxalbari block, Darjeeling district, to address long-standing human-elephant conflict.

Twelve strategically erected wildlife-monitoring watchtowers now enable the early detection of elephant movement. Rapid Response Team (RRT) members from India and Nepal share real-time information, track elephant herds across borders and gently steer them away from farms. This has helped nearly 300 households secure over Rs 3.5 lakh in savings from reduced crop loss.

The strength of this collaboration was evident during the Mechi River floods of October 2025, when two elephant calves were swept away from their herd. RRT members, with forest departments and local communities on both sides, rescued one calf each in Nepal and India.

These efforts are not without risk — on 20 March 2026, a dedicated RRT member lost his life in an encounter with a tusker.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ 12 monitoring watchtowers set up to enable early detection of elephant movement
- ✓ Rapid Response Team shares real-time information, enabling the rescue of two stranded elephant calves

Malai Mahadeshwara Hills

The Community Conservation Centre at the Malai Mahadeshwara Hills (MM Hills) engages with local communities on the importance of forest restoration, sustainable use of non-timber forest products and the ecological threats posed by invasive species. It conducts awareness programmes emphasising environmental protection and forest conservation.



Lantana craft centre

The Lantana Craft Centre (LCC) is transforming an invasive weed into opportunities for restoration, livelihoods and innovation. As a living lab for sustainable enterprise, it brings together handicrafts, research, experiential learning and entrepreneurship.

Through the Weeds to Wealth initiative, local employment has increased by around 20%, with lantana-based products reaching local, regional and urban markets. Research under

Understanding the Lantana Control Efforts and Their Implications in MM Hills found that two decades of community harvesting reduced lantana cover from nearly 70 to 40 in an area of 2800ha with minimal ecological disturbance

LCC also serves as a hub for design and skill development. Students from Azim Premji University, CMR Institute of Design, Srishti Manipal Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Sparsh Orphan Residential School and Poorna Learning Centre trained alongside artisans, creating innovative lantana products and learning sustainable design practices.



In partnership with 1000 Islands Hotels, the CCC built a 1,200 sq. ft. lantana façade at Gir National Park, creating livelihood opportunities for local youth. The centre also hosted 34 state government officers to showcase its model for invasive species management and community enterprise.

Under the NABARD Skill Development Programme, 30 women successfully completed training and received certification, contributing to the generation of Rs. 26.79 lakh in revenue during 2025–26.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Research findings show lantana reduction from 70 % to 40 % in 2800 ha over two decades
- ✓ A 1,200 sq. ft. lantana façade built at Gir National Park
- ✓ Rs. 26.79 lakh revenue generated in 2025–2026 period

Vembanad

The Vembanad Community Conservation Centre, also known as the Community Environmental Resource Centre (CERC), focuses on wetland conservation, sustainable livelihoods and climate action. It works towards enhancing the capacity and institutional networks of local communities and stakeholders for the sustainable management of wetlands.



Upcycled life jackets for fishing communities

To address safety concerns arising from unpredictable weather patterns linked to climate change, a community-driven initiative was undertaken to design and produce upcycled life jackets using discarded plastic sacks and bottles.

Produced by women trained at the Social Innovation Centre, the jackets combine environmental sustainability with livelihood generation. Thirty-five jackets were field-tested under local fishing conditions and proved to be functional, durable and

suitable for everyday use. Following the successful trials, they were distributed through inland cooperative societies to reach fishing communities. The initiative strengthens climate resilience, creates livelihood opportunities for women and promotes the productive reuse of plastic waste. Plans are underway to scale up production in the coming years.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ *Livelihood generation through upcycled life jacket manufacture from discarded items*
- ✓ *Successful field testing of thirty-five jackets under local fishing conditions*

Solving the drinking water crisis in Kuttanad

The SUJALAM project, implemented by ATREE CERC in Kuttanad, has entered its fourth year, benefiting around 3030 families and 13500 individuals in 12 panchayats so far. The project has promoted rainwater harvesting as a sustainable solution to chronic drinking water shortages.

Over the past three years, 860 rainwater harvesting systems have been installed. These efforts are supported by 26 Jala Samrakshana Samitis, registered community user groups established across the participating panchayats.

ATREE CERC, along with the Samitis, also conducted a range of information, education and communication (IEC) activities and training programmes to strengthen awareness about water conservation and encourage sustainable water-use practices, laying the foundation for long-term community stewardship of water resources.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Benefited around 3,030 families and approximately 13,500 individuals across 12 panchayats
- ✓ 860 rainwater harvesting systems were installed over the past three years



Centre for Policy Design

The Centre for Policy Design (CPD) at ATREE was enabled through the long-term commitment of Westbridge Capital to strengthen the science-policy-practice interface on environment in India. Drawing on ATREE's deep expertise, CPD advocates for evidence-based, ecologically sound sustainability and conservation policies, through close collaboration with governments and civil society partners.

Highlights

34

Popular
articles

15

Featured
articles

1

Policy
brief

2

Policy inputs

19

Events

5

Podcasts

Partnerships to strengthen ONEs in India

Open Natural Ecosystems (ONEs), including grasslands, savannas, scrublands, wetlands and deserts, support unique biodiversity and pastoral livelihoods. Yet, they are misclassified as ‘wastelands’. CPD has focused on strengthening the recognition and governance of grasslands, wetlands and integrated land-use systems. Working across scales, CPD combined national policy engagement with on-ground pilots and collaborative research.



Rajasthan

CPD, in partnership with ICFRE-AFRI, convened Rajasthan’s first state-level consultation on the management of ONEs in September 2025, contributing to national discussions on grassland integration under Government of India’s WDC-PMKSY. Key priorities included co-developing a comprehensive, science-based and community-led governance framework for ONEs. The event brought together representatives from government departments, research institutions, civil society organisations, and pastoralist communities. CPD released its policy brief, *“Sands and Grasses of ‘Gold’: Valuing Rajasthan’s Open Natural Ecosystems for People, Climate and Biodiversity,”* to guide discussions.

Evidence-backed policy advocacy

CPD implemented large-scale grassland restoration pilots across Rajasthan and Maharashtra, covering over 140 hectares, focusing on restoring degraded grasslands through ecological science and community engagement. In Maharashtra, over 2.5 lakh native grass saplings were planted across sites including Supe, Kendur, Rehekuri and Karmala. In Rajasthan, restoration efforts included seed dispersal across 80 hectares in Deshnok Oran and planting of 55,000 sevan grass slips in protected areas. Activities also included ecological baseline surveys, herbivore assessments, fire and grazing experiments, invasive species management, and assisted natural regeneration.

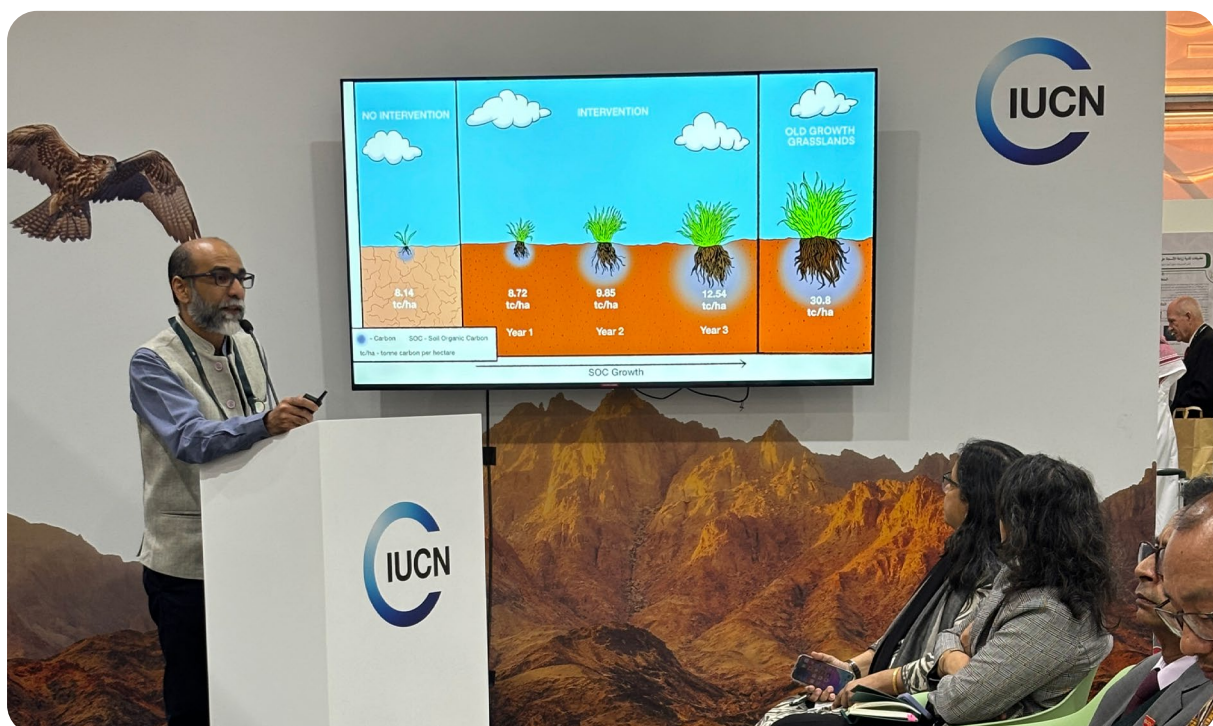


Policy engagement

Strengthening implementation of Forest Rights Act

CPD, through policy analysis and engagement, supported ATREE's Forest, Governance and Livelihoods (FGL) programme in strengthening the implementation of Community Forest Resource (CFR) rights under the Forest Rights Act, 2006 (FRA). The team contributed to a training workshop on post-rights CFR management for FGL's BR Hills team, providing technical inputs on co-management strategies. It also participated in exploratory efforts by FGL's Arunachal team on CFR implementation in the state.

Following a government-led civil society consultation co-hosted with the Chhattisgarh Tribal Development Department in January 2025, the team continued working with the department to advance policy recommendations for post-rights CFR management and strengthen district-level convergence. The team's multi-state study on errors in CFR titles informed a policy note to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, contributing to October 2025 official directive to states recommending the adoption of a formal correction process.



Partnering on wetland conservation in Tamil Nadu

CPD facilitated a partnership between ATREE and the Tamil Nadu Wetlands Authority, and to develop Integrated Management Plans (IMPs) for three wetland ecosystems: Longwood Shola Reserve Forest, Sakkarakottai Bird Sanctuary and Kazhuveli Bird Sanctuary.

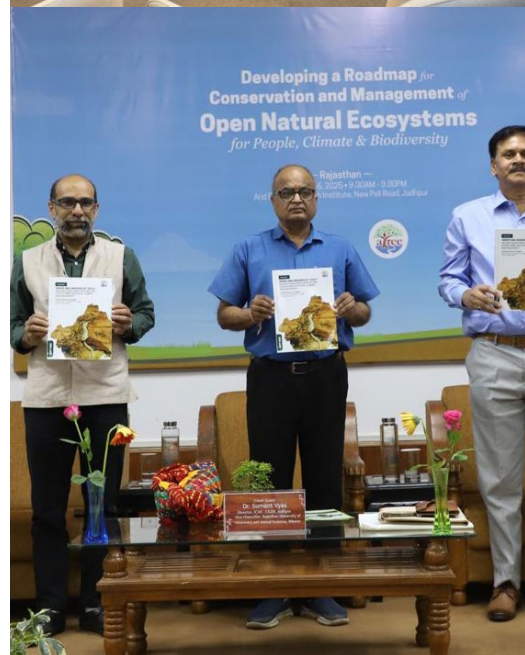
The initiative aligns with the Wetlands Rules, 2017 and the National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems. The project adopts a landscape-scale approach combining ecological science, stakeholder engagement and policy support.

Policy Desk for the Ecological Restoration Alliance

The Ecological Restoration Alliance (ERA), India is a collective of research institutions and practitioners engaged in working to advance restoration of diverse ecosystems in India, with a strong emphasis on evidence-based approaches, community engagement and policy relevance. ATREE's CPD hosts the policy desk for the alliance with over 500 members.

ATREE has supported the alliance's policy and practice goals promoting ecosystem restoration through research, communications and engagement with government and civil society actors.

A key thrust of this work was the development of accessible policy knowledge products, including Demystifying Forest Restoration Policy in India, a white paper on Land-based restoration and Livelihoods in Maharashtra and policy briefs on Open Natural Ecosystem across Maharashtra, Karnataka and Rajasthan.





Academy for Conservation Science and Sustainability Studies

The Academy for Conservation Science and Sustainability Studies at ATREE offers a doctoral programme, a master's programme and certificate courses. They are designed to help researchers and practitioners develop interdisciplinary skills and gain experience in environmental conservation and sustainable development.

Highlights

9

Students
enrol for PhD

48

Students
pursuing PhD

53

PhD students
graduated as of
March 2026

24

Students
enrol for MSc

46

Students
pursuing MSc

62

MSc students
graduated as of
March 2026

Student publications

5

Journal
publications

9

Articles

3

Awarded for best
poster and talk

PhD programme

ATREE is a recognised centre of the Manipal Academy for Higher Education (MAHE) doctoral programme – the institution that awards the PhD degree.

As a recognised centre of the Manipal Academy of Higher Education doctoral programme, ATREE offers a PhD in Conservation Science and Sustainability Studies that integrates perspectives from ecology, economics, sociology and climate science. The corpus of doctoral work produced so far highlights the value of interdisciplinary approaches in addressing environmental challenges and contributing to conservation science, climate resilience and sustainable development.

ATREE's PhD selection process follows an affirmative action policy. Women make up 78% of the cohort, reflecting the programme's commitment to gender diversity in environmental research.





MSc programme

The MSc in Environmental Studies (Conservation Practice), jointly offered by ATREE and The University of Trans-Disciplinary Health Sciences and Technology (TDU), continued to attract students from across India. Since its launch in 2021, the programme has enrolled 108 students across five cohorts.

To encourage student diversity, students are selected from various disciplines including Life Sciences, Environmental Science, Engineering, Geography, Public Policy, Architecture, Journalism, Mass Communication and Fashion Design. The programme places a strong emphasis on encouraging applications from women and students from minority communities.





Certificate courses

The Academy also expanded its non-degree offerings through interdisciplinary certificate courses for students, practitioners, policymakers and researchers. Two new courses—Bioregionalism: Learning from the Sundarbans and Introduction to Ecology and Development—were developed to bridge ecology, development and place-based learning.

The Bioregionalism course was successfully conducted in the Sundarbans in February 2026 in collaboration with Jadavpur University, Kazi Nazrul University and DRCSC, while preparations were underway for the launch of Introduction to Ecology and Development.

Environment education

The S.N.A.I.L. (School of Nature, Action, Inquiry and Learning) Network, India's first digital commons for K-12 environmental educators, relaunched in June 2025, has succeeded in reaching diverse stakeholders.

So far, its reach extends to 14,000 stakeholders nationwide, including educators (30%), curriculum experts (29%), conservation professionals (14%), publishers (13%), parents (10%), and children (4%). By April 2026, the repository had doubled its resource base. S.N.A.I.L. has also collaborated with five major national teacher networks: Conservation Education, Wipro Earthian

Teacher Network, Teachers Against Climate Change, Teach For India, and the Climate Educators Network (CEN).

Community-based engagement models were designed together with two public libraries and two educator ecosystems in Bengaluru. Contributions included two open-access environmental education workbooks in English and Kannada and the expansion of place-based educational initiatives in Darjeeling. SNAIL mentored two MSc internships and an MSc immersion group across three field sites. Preparations are underway for a collaborative Place-Based Education Massive Open Online Course.





Immersions

The Academy hosted the SAGE (Sustainability Ambassadors Global Exchange) Programme by Echo Network, a short-term exchange programme (STEP) for Indian and Nordic Master's or PhD students. Thirty-one Indian and Nordic students visited ATREE's Community Conservation Centre at BRT.

They spent time in the Adivasi villages and NTFP processing units, acquainting themselves with the local culture and livelihood initiatives. They also learnt about the importance and challenges of the Forest Rights Act, 2006.



Student annual seminar

The seventh Student Annual Seminar (SAS), held on 6–7 January 2026, provided a platform for 20 doctoral students to present their annual progress and outline their research plans for the coming year. The seminar enabled students to engage with faculty beyond their doctoral advisory committees, fostering critical discussions on concepts, methodologies and field-, laboratory- and archive-based analyses.



Communication

Communication seeks to enhance ATREE's visibility and promote an understanding of its interdisciplinary conservation knowledge. Key highlights include strengthening institutional profile and building awareness on ATREE's work that integrates scientific research and community-led conservation, bridging research and policy through targeted communications, building strategic collaborations and communicating impact to funders and stakeholders.

Highlights

4

Films

3

Books

2

Comics

3

Apps

2

Workshops

1

Film festival

3

Events

9

Collaterals

- ATREE comms launched The Step-by-Step Lake Restoration Story Map (www.lakerestoration.atree.org) at the 13th Biennial Conference of INSEE, held at IIT Mandi, Himachal Pradesh.
- Two ATREE films, Gattu: Walking With the Herd and I Am Carbon, received the Jury Special Mention and Certificate of Excellence at the 5th Children's, Science, Nature & Wildlife Film Festival held in Hyderabad.
- A new partnership with Science Gallery was forged with a year-long exhibition as well as 6 well attended talks.

Films



CFR mapping in central India



CFR management in central India



Bridge over troubled waters,
Vembanad, Kerala



Grasslands management in
Bagepalli, Karnataka



Master's programme outreach



Rainwater harvesting, Vembanad, Kerala

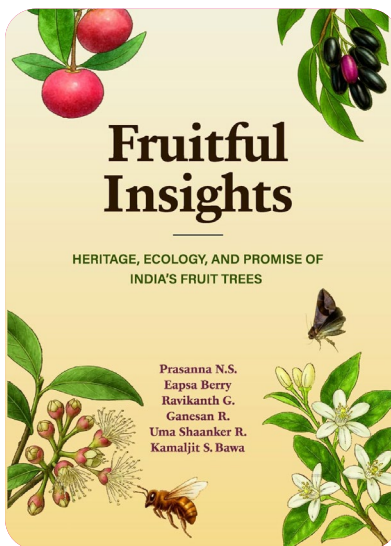
Print media

Regular bulletins provide updates on ATREE's work.

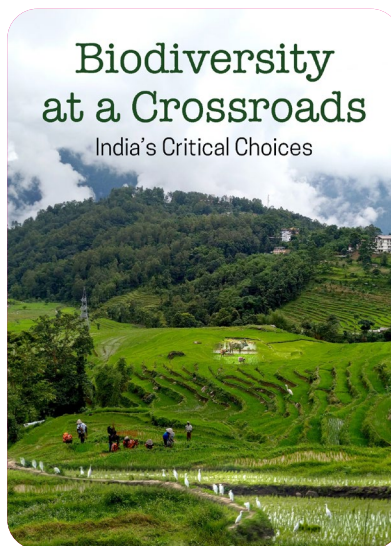
Branches is a quarterly bulletins that highlights our ongoing projects across diverse landscapes.

The Week That Was is a weekly bulletin that provides a peek into ATREE's work as reported in the mainstream media, our publications and our participation in events, talks and conferences across the globe.

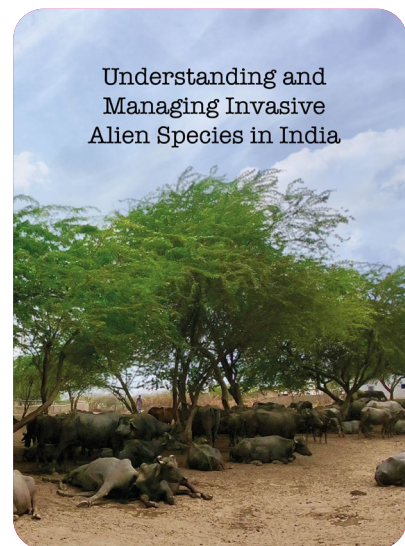
Books



This book seeks to present a comprehensive account of fruit trees in India, with a special focus on those that bear fleshy fruits. It brings together perspectives from natural history, ecology, nutrition, economics, and conservation to offer an integrated view of their significance and the challenges they face.

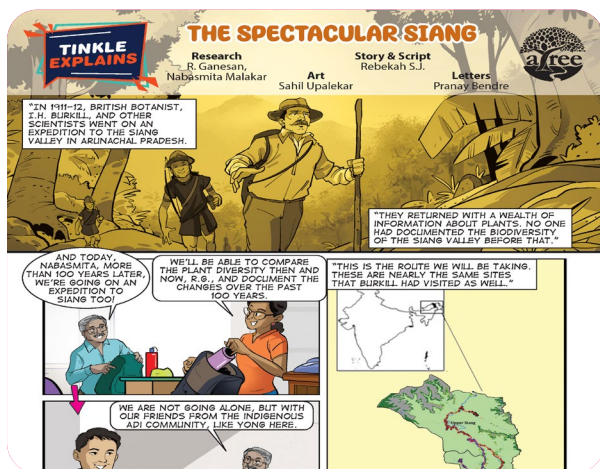


The book is an effort of the Biodiversity Collaborative, a group of institutions working on biodiversity science and conservation, to demonstrate and highlight the connections between conservation, sustainable use of biodiversity, and human well-being.



Invasive alien species are a rapidly escalating yet under-recognised threat to India's biodiversity, economy and human well-being. This book, an effort of the Biodiversity Collaborative, highlights how costs of inaction are mounting, eroding ecosystems, undermining rural livelihoods and jeopardising development goals.

Creative collaborations



ATREE-Tinkle partnership

Two comics were published during the period: The Spectacular Siang and The Eighth Continent. Another, on Yak Pastoralism, was commissioned during 2025-2026



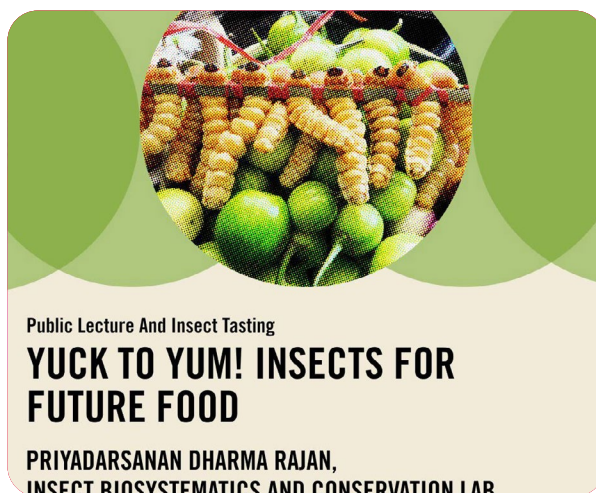
ALT EFF

Environmental film festival: In collaboration with ALT.EFF, ATREE showcased groundbreaking environmental films from across the globe over two days, under the themes Celebrate Life and Seek Resilience.



Green literature festival

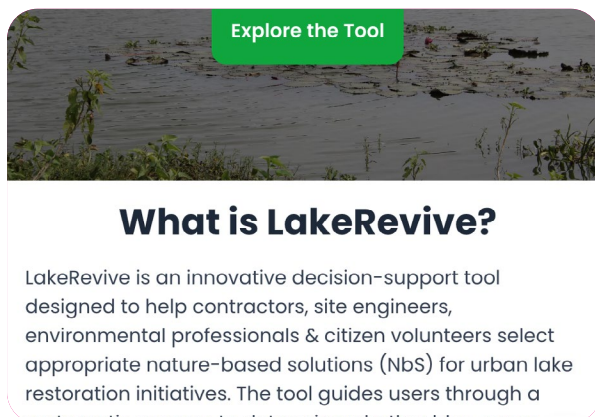
Gattu: Walking with the herd, an animation film was screened, accompanied by an interactive session.



Science gallery

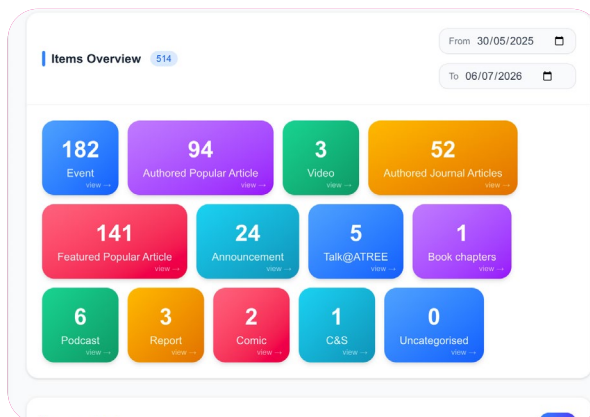
ATREE was part of the exhibition Calorie, where it showcased two displays: Ingesting Insects and Munching Molluscs, besides public talks by our researchers.

Apps



LakeRevive

This innovative decision support tool helping users check lake health and select appropriate nature-based solutions for urban lake restoration saw users from India, Brazil, US, France, Ireland, UK, Nepal and Singapore.



CommsCal

Calendar created in-house to organise the publications, assign tasks and follow up, archive publications, events and announcements at ATREE, displayed on a monthly basis.

Social media

ATREE's social media (SM) plan is aligned with its strategic plan and streamlined with the various programmes at ATREE. Periodic bursts of focused campaigns like the master's programme, the wildlife week, mountain week, water week, International Forest Day, Women's Day and Mother's Day have increased our traction and improved our outreach numbers.



49.8 K



25.5 K



13.7 K



14.0 K



3.4 K



492

Storymap: Exploring a new format

ATREE has 30 years of on-ground experience working with India's ecosystems, and restoration has been an integral part of this work. The goal is to create a blueprint for this work across ecosystems under www.restoration.atree.org. Using a novel form of narration, Story Map, which facilitates layered storytelling, the team rolled out ATREE's lake restoration work at Venkateshpura Lake in Bengaluru.

Over the next 5 years, www.restoration.atree.org will feature the restoration of grasslands, Myristica swamps, forest corridors, spring sheds, wetlands and riparian areas.



Donor communication

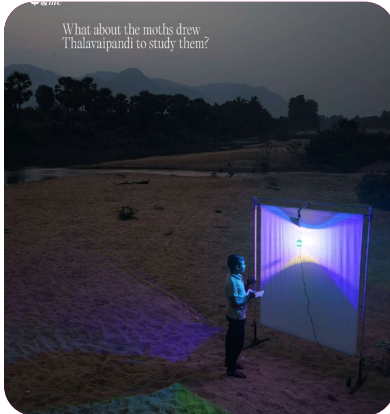
Created donor engagement films and collateral showcasing ATREE's work. Organised a Donor meet in January, attended by Bangalore-based HNIs, which featured a theme-based panel culminating in a Manganiyar music concert.

Developed communication strategy for AMP Himalayas. Undertook project campaigns for donor-supported projects.



Outreach

The events synchronised/coincided with occasions focusing on conservation and biodiversity awareness, and catered to both ATREE staff and the general public.



Moth Week



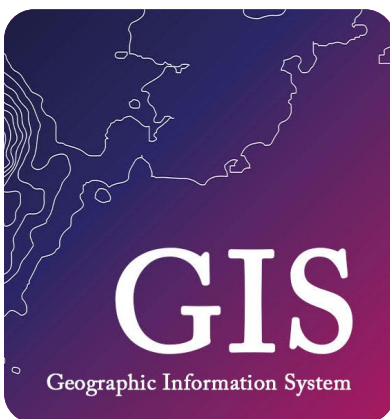
Student Conference on Conservation Science (SCCS) Bengaluru



Walk/Workshops

Biodiversity walk, photography and Cyanotype workshop

Internal communication



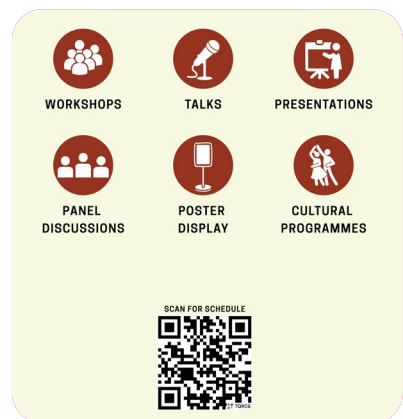
GIS Day at ATREE

A series of quick presentations, talks, and GIS-themed games that tested participants knowledge of the states of India.



Spill it

Celebrated World Water Week through speed talks, dance recital, immersive story map and more.



AWS

ATREE Work Seminar included presentations on ATREE's diverse work, panel discussions, workshops and cultural events.

T N Khoshoo Memorial Award and Lecture 2025



The 2025 T N Khoshoo Memorial Award and Lecture was held at the Bangalore International Centre on 3 December, focusing on the theme 'Sharing Space in a Shrinking World'. The recipient of this year's award was Gujarat's Voluntary Nature Conservancy (VNC), for its work in the Charotar region where wetlands are dominated by crocodiles, promoting human-animal coexistence. VNC Executive Director Anirudh Vasava accepted the award on behalf of his organisation.

Dr Gladys Kalema-Zikosuka, wildlife veterinarian and founder of Conservation Through Public Health in Uganda, delivered the memorial lecture.

A film screening on the unique human-animal relationship in Charotar and a puppet show by ATREE students were the other highlights of the event.



Our Key Donors Over the Years

We are immensely grateful to our generous donors from the public and private sectors, including government bodies, corporates, foundations and bilateral agencies. Their unwavering support has enabled us to make meaningful contributions towards environmental conservation and socially just development through innovative research, community-led action, policy engagement and capacity building.

Bilateral Agencies

- DBT/Wellcome Trust India Alliance
- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Companies

- Antrix Corporation Limited (Antrix)
- Brakes India Private Limited
- Development Credit Bank Limited (DCB Bank)
- HSBC India
- LIC Housing Finance Limited
- Mastercard Technology Pvt Ltd
- NatWest Digital Services India Private Limited
- Norton Lifelock Software Services India Private Limited
- Oracle India Private Limited
- Rubrik India Private Limited
- Sundaram Finance Limited
- Sundaram Home Finance Limited
- Tata Elxsi Limited
- Westbridge Advisors LLP

Foundations/Institutions

- AJWS
- Alliance Bioversity & CIAT (CGIAR)
- American Friends of Edelgive Foundation (AFEF)
- Arghyam
- ATREE USA
- BARR Foundation
- British Asian Trust
- Conservation International Foundation (CI)
- Dhanam Foundation
- Eicher Group Foundation
- Ford Foundation
- Global Conservation
- IHE Delft Institute for Water Education
- Indian Micro Enterprises Development Foundation (IMEDF)
- INR Wellcome Trust
- International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)
- Keystone Foundation (KF)
- London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM)
- Narayanan Family Foundation
- National Geographic Society
- Oak Foundation
- Patrick J McGovern Foundation
- Rainforest Trust
- Rainmatter Foundation
- Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies
- Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI)
- Rural India Supporting Trust
- S M Sehgal Foundation

- Samatva Trust
- Shibulal Family Philanthropic Initiatives
- Surgo Foundation
- Tata Trusts
- The Habitats Trust
- The Rufford Foundation
- United Kingdom Research and Innovation, Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH)
- University of Kassel
- World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) UK

Government

- Department of Biotechnology (DBT)
- Department of Science and Technology (DST)
- Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE)
- National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)
- National Mission on Himalayan Studies (NMHS)
- Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India
- Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB)

Individuals

- Andy Kalambi
- Anita Arjundas
- Ari Daman
- Chitra and Vasudev Rao
- Chris and Sharon Davidson
- Devdutt Yellurkar
- Dilip Wagle and Darshana Shanbhag
- Ganesan Balachander
- Jeffrey Morgan
- Kamaljit Bawa
- Killough Household
- Kitty Agarwal
- Kumari Shibulal
- Raj Khoshoo
- Ranidalbair Chaudhary
- Rathna Girish Mathrubootham
- Rohini Nandan Nilekani
- Sandeep Singhal
- Trevor Price
- Umesh Maheshwari



www.atree.org