

**Name of the Centre** : ENVIS Center on “Avian Ecology & Inland Wetlands”

**Host Organisation** : Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), Mumbai, Maharashtra

**Contact Person** :

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**Year of Establishment** : 1996

### About Host Organisation

The Bombay Natural History Society is one of the largest non-government organisation (NGO) in the Indian subcontinent engaged in the research on endangered species and conservation of nature and natural resources. In the 120 years of its existence, its commitment has been, and continues to be, the conservation of India's natural wealth, protection of the environment and sustainable use of natural resources for the balanced and healthy development of future generations. The Society's guiding principle has always been that conservation must be based on scientific research - a tradition exemplified by its late president, Dr. Sálim Ali.



### Activities of the Center

The ENVIS Centre at the BNHS deals with information on 'Avian Ecology and Inland Wetlands'. The primary activity of the Centre is to collect, collate, store and disseminate environmental information to various user groups, including policy planners, decision makers, researchers and the layman. A database on Avian Ecology & Wetlands was developed by the Center and continually been updated. A total of more than 10656 references on Avian Ecology and 5424 references on Indian Wetlands are available at present with the Society's ENVIS Centre. This database is updated regularly by indexing the research papers

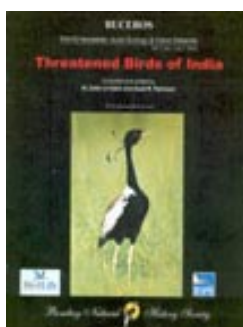
which appear regularly both in national and international Journals on the avian ecology and inland wetlands of India. The Society has a very well managed library with more Journals and periodicals on the subjects related to nature and nature conservation. Besides, these the Society itself publishes its own Journal called the Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society which has successfully brought out its 100 volume recently. The Society also publish a popular magazine HORNBILL.

- **Collection:** The Society has a collection of specimens of over 26,000 birds, 20,000 mammals, 7,500 reptiles and amphibians, 50,000 insects and 8,000 plants. The collection is recognised for both its quality and antiquity, and has been recognised as a National Heritage collection and one of the best in the whole of Asia. Several extinct species are represented in the collection.
- **Library:** The library at Hornbill House has a large collection of books and scientific journals on wildlife and the environment, including century-old books on shikar and rare natural history lithographs that are not available elsewhere.
- **Nature Education:** The Society's Nature Education Wing reaches over 10,000 students each year. With recent tie-up with the Overseas Development Administration, U.K., environmental education activity has taken off with the launching of major innovative programmes aimed at building participative support of the local people in solving environmental issues.
- **Conservation:** The Sálím Ali Nature Conservation Fund (SANCF) creates awareness among target groups. Training programmes are conducted for officers of the Indian Army, IAS, IFS, journalists, etc. It also funds conservation oriented research projects.

## ENVIS Publications

### ○ ENVIS Newsletter

- ◆ The Centre publishes “Buceros” newsletter thrice a year. The word *Buceros*, to those unfamiliar, with it, is the generic name of the Great Pied Hornbill (the Society's logo). It was first published in 1996. So far 7 volumes of “*Buceros*” comprising 18 issues have been published. About 500 copies of newsletter are being published at present and circulated to various institution and individuals in India and outside of India.



## Services

### Query Answer Services

- ◆ This service is being provided and will continue. Number of queries answered every year averaged at 350.

### BNHS website (<http://www.envisbnhs.org>)

- The Center has developed ENVIS dedicated website on Avian Ecology and Inland Wetlands. The website gives a brief introduction to ENVIS & BNHS as ENVIS Center. List of 25 ENVIS centers along with small paragraph on each center is online. All the issues of Newsletter – “*Buceros*” have been uploaded. Inquiry form and Membership forms are also available online for those who are interested.



## Future plans

- Next issue (*Buceros*) highlighting the reasons behind the sudden decline in the vulture population in the whole of the Indian Subcontinent is planned.
- Indexing of the “Hornbill” - the popular natural history magazine of the BNHS will continue.
- Centre will collect and disseminate information related to environment and in particular about birds and wetlands to universities, NGOs, State Govt. Deptt./Organisations

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- Bibliographic database of published work related to Avian Ecology and Inland Wetlands will be created. This will access information from scientific papers, notes, project reports, theses, books, bulletins and popular publications.
  - A database of organisations (governmental and non-governmental) related to work on Avian Ecology and Inland Wetlands, including a database of scientists in these organisations and their areas of specialization will be developed.
  - Newsletters, reports and scientific papers pertaining to Avian Ecology and Inland Wetlands will continue to be published.