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Featured here are some peacemakers in the man-animal conflict for whom wildlife conservation is more of a mission than hobby. Be it a website, awards, trusts or employee initiatives...caring about nature is second nature to them

Text by Rajiv Tikoo

PEOPLE FOR

ANIMALS



NAINA LAL KIDWAI

GROUP GM & COUNTRY HEAD, HSBC, INDIA

Conservation in DNA

In the NGO world in India, HSBC is probably known more for its work for the environment than in banking. Naina Lal Kidwai, group general manager and country head of HSBC in India, says, "The environment is at the core of our business. We see it as something that permeates our business and culture. For us to have a sustainable business, our customers need to follow sustainable practices. And if we can help our customers have sustainable practices, it's better for them and us in the longer run. This philosophy drives our work."

The bank has a rather well spread out corporate social responsibility (CSR) portfolio in wildlife too. Its work ranges from supporting the Wildlife Protection Society of India to spreading awareness amongst local communities and fisher folk on the need to protect the endangered Olive Ridley Turtle to an employee awareness pro-

ject, which engages bird watchers to conduct bird census in ten cities. Kidwai explains, "Conservation is part of our long-term growth strategy. We are making it a part of our DNA."

HSBC is also supporting a reef watch marine conservation in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to study the sea cow (Dugong dugong), and efforts to establish a Mangrove Wetland Centre near Mumbai. From time to time, the bank has supported the publication of wildlife books and even wildlife and environment film festivals.

Kidwai herself takes time out to engage with such initiatives. She interacts with NGOs, at times gets involved at the conception stage to develop projects and also makes on-site visits. The reasons are too compelling. She says, "Responsible companies can make a difference in nature conservation... and for their own survival."

DILIP D KHATAU

CHAIRMAN, CCI

Business + passion

WHEN HE set up Conservation Corporation of India, chairman Dilip D Khatau summed up the essence of his business of conservation in its name itself. Though the Mumbai-headquartered holding company came up in 2009, development and operationalisation of various properties preceded it. The first wildlife resort, Tiger Tops Corbett Lodge, which is now known as Infinity Corbett Wilderness, was set up on the bank of Kosi River on the outskirts of Corbett National Park in 1991.

He followed it up by setting up the Corbett Foundation in 1994. The public charitable Trust undertakes conservation and development of forests. Khatau says his business and the Trust are two sides of the same coin. He has sim-

ply married his principles of conservation with his business interests and profitably. The turning point was when he went to Africa to look after the family business there. "I got actively involved with wildlife conservation after that."

Getting a good response from Tiger Tops, Khatau followed it up with Infinity Rann of Kutch resort in Gujarat in 2008 and Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh in 2009. Next destinations include Kanha Tiger Reserve (MP) and Kaziranga Tiger Reserve (Assam). He sees a lot of potential in wildlife tourism. "If controlled and properly managed, wildlife tourism has every opportunity to flourish in India, as in many East and South African countries. The catch is to do it in a sustainable way," he says.



HEMENDRA KOTHARI

CHAIRMAN, DSP BLACKROCK INVESTMENT MANAGERS

A holistic approach

WHEN HEMENDRA Kothari was chairman of DSP Merrill Lynch, he was instrumental in rallying a who's who of India Inc, including the Tatas, Birlas, Godrej, Piramals, Munjals and Mahendras to issue a statement pledging protection to wildlife. After retiring in 2009 and taking over as chairman of asset management firm DSP BlackRock Investment Managers, he himself is walking the talk.

As founder-chairman of the Wildlife Conservation Trust (WCT), which is dedicated to protect forest ecosystems and mitigate climate change, and founder-chairman of Hemendra Kothari Foundation, which works for environment and wildlife conservation, he is stepping up the pace of his work. He says, "Most people in the corporate world are passionately interested in wildlife. I am trying to set an example for myself and other corporates."

ly involved in the cause by either me or launching their own initiatives." WCT is active in 17 national parks and sanctuaries in 10 states. It supports the conservation work by providing well-equipped vehicles, rapid response teams, integrated charging systems, trapping and transportation cages, immobilisation-cum-tranquillisation units, forest patrolling kits. The air scale up activities to cover more national parks and sanctuaries to protect wildlife corridors, connect forest and wildlife corridors, contribute to forest and wildlife conservation also interest corporate donors. The work of WCT is complemented with the activities of the foundation. He explains, "Saving national parks and sanctuaries is itself not enough. We need to save the surrounding areas and empower neighbouring communities, too. We have a holistic approach."