

Snake Conservation Coalition of the Western Ghats



Background

Snakes are one of the most misunderstood and persecuted animals in India. They are often killed at sight due to fear or misconception, negating the ecological role they play. With a rich diversity of snakes, Western Ghats is facing increasing human-snake interactions, unscientific protection measures like relocation, and stress from habitat loss & other anthropogenic pressures. This emphasizes on the need to develop a region specific, stakeholder-led conservation action plan for the region to ensure coexistence. The need of the hour is to bring together all the stakeholders to work with each other despite the differences and put away personal opinions and beliefs to forward scientific, evidence-based, systematic approach to conservation of snakes in the Western Ghats. This stakeholder initiative was the brainchild of Dr Sanjay Molur and the participants of 25+ organizations ratified the need for a coalition.

Activities conducted during the reporting period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026

🐍 18–19 April 2025 -- Zooreach conducted a 2-day Scoping Workshop on Snake Conservation in Western Ghats at Lonavala, Maharashtra. The program was funded by the Upadhyaya Foundation and supported by Naturefuture. The workshop was facilitated by Dr Sanjay Molur of the Conservation Planning Specialist Group South Asia & Zooreach, followed by sessions conducted by Gerry Martin, Dr Kartik Sunagar, Dr S.R. Ganesh, Dr Chelmala Srinivasulu, Nachiket Utpat, Lisa Gonsalves, Dr Navaz Sharif, Gnaneshwar Ch, Sumanth Bindumadhav, and Dr Freston Marc Sirur. There were several working groups set up throughout the



A few SCC-WG members in a panel discussion about the Coalition at the India Animal Welfare Forum 2026 in Mumbai.



Dr Sanjay Molur facilitating session at the Snake Scoping Workshop in Lonavala. © Payal Molur



Working group discussion on various threats snakes face in the Western Ghats. © Payal Molur



Working Group discussing on different solutions to conserve snakes.
© Payal Molur

workshop to discuss different related topics.

🐍 8–9 December 2025 -- 2nd workshop called the Snake Rescue Lab was organised in Bangalore, focusing on the development of effective rescue protocols for snake conservation. Again supported by Upadhyaya Foundation, Naturefuture, and Zooreach, the event was facilitated by Dr. Sanjay Molur, who began with an introduction about the objective and the need for the workshop. It was followed by an open conversation among the participants about the present issues and malpractices regarding snake handling.



SCC-WG members launching the Coalition at the India Animal Welfare Forum 2026

There were sessions on legal compliance, decision making, scientific challenges, snake handling, importance of understanding snake physiology for snake bite mitigation and more led by Subhra Sottie, Kedar Bhide, and Gerry Martin. Jose Louise engaged the participants further by explaining about the SARPA app and shared his experience of engaging with snake handlers/ rescuers in Kerala.

Key achievements and outcomes

🐍 At the end of the first workshop the Snake Conservation Coalition of the Western Ghats (SCC-WG) was set up with the vision to 'Ensure conservation of snakes of the



SCC-WG members at the Rescue Lab Workshop in Bangalore. © Sanjay Molur

Western Ghats through multi-stakeholder collaborations and science-based actions through a conservation planning workshop by 2026'.

- 2 The team finalized and launched the SCC-WG logo designed by Aaron Fernandes during the second workshop with all the stakeholders.
- 2 On 31 January 2026, the Snake Conservation Coalition of the Western Ghats website was officially launched with all the stakeholders at the Indian Animal Welfare Conference, Mumbai. The team at present is working towards organizing the Assess-to-Plan and Conservation Action Plan workshops for the snakes in the landscape.

Challenges faced

Fund raising has been the most challenging part. The Secretariat needs support for personnel, infrastructure, and logistics to follow through with various responsibilities and deadlines committed by the coalition members for activities committed.

Key partnerships and collaborations

The Snake Conservation Coalition of the Western Ghats was founded by the following



Working group at the Rescue Lab workshop discussing about the different rescue guidelines for snakes. © Amrin Ansari

organizations: Centre for Wilderness Medicine (Department of Emergency Medicine, Kasturba Medical College), Chameleon Wildlife Organization, Conservation Planning Specialist Group South Asia, Evolutionary Venomics Lab, Humane World For Animals India, India Snakes, Kalinga Foundation, Madras Crocodile Bank Trust, Malabar Awareness and Rescue Center for Wildlife, Mhadei Research Centre, MVR Snake Park & Zoo, Nature future, PfA Wildlife Rescue & Conservation Centre, RESQ Charitable Trust, South Asian Reptile Network, Spreading Awareness On Reptiles & Rehabilitation Programme, Thackeray Wildlife Foundation, The Green Cross, The Last Wilderness Foundation, The Liana Trust, Upadhyaya Foundation, Wildlife Information



Participants of the Rescue Lab Workshop after a successful wrap up. © Sanjay Molur



Participants at the end of Snake Scoping Workshop in Lonavala, Maharashtra.

and Liaison Development, Wildlife SOS, and Zoo Outreach Organisation.

Measurable outcomes

- 2 30+ stakeholders (experts, conservationists, researchers, rescuers, policy makers, and others) from 20+ organisations identified the need for three focused workshops and establishing SCC-WG to lay the groundwork for a comprehensive conservation action plan.
- 2 The Snake Rescue Lab with 24 participants from 19 organisations shared their knowledge, opinions, and ongoing works directed towards compiling a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for scientific snake rescue.
- 2 Seven major working groups formed, and deadlines finalised for their specific tasks.
- 2 Partial funds raised for the Assess-to-Plan workshop in June 2025.
- 2 SCC-WG Secretariat established at Zooreach.

Acknowledgments

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and Upadhyaya Foundation for making sure that all travel, lodging, and project activities could be conducted smoothly.

Future plans/next steps

The Coalition is all set to conduct the Assess-to-Plan workshop in June and the Conservation Planning workshop in the coming months. The team is positive about the impact the planning will play towards snake conservation and human-snake coexistence in the Western Ghats.



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