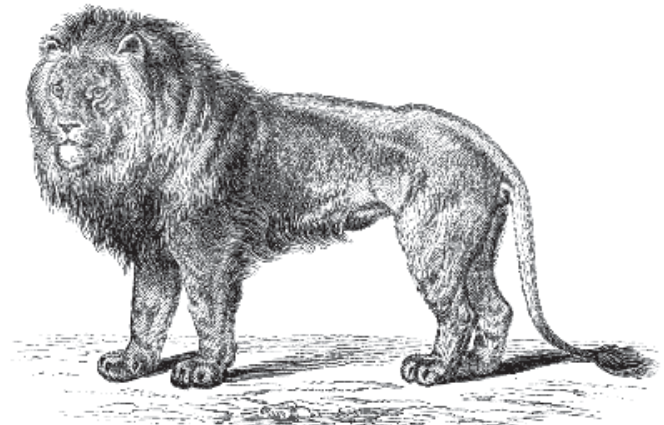


NGO's and the Asiatic Lion

NGOs are taking concrete steps for Asiatic Lion protection

Non-governmental organizations are all geared up to save the Asiatic lion in Gir in their own ways. Hundreds of NGOs are taking concrete steps to ensure that this Critically endangered species does not become history. The steps may be confined to spreading awareness, assisting the forest department in conducting camps or even barricading the open wells in the region, but more or less their contribution can not be overlooked. Take the example of Ambuja Conservation Foundation, functional from last 15 years which plans activities for safeguarding these wild beasts as required.

Their activities consist of water conservation needed in the forest and mending walls on open wells to reduce incidental falling of animals. The NGO has already made 275 such wells 2-3 years back and is again planning to do the same. Another example of such NGO opting for mending the walls for lion's protection is Mumbai based VHF. Though these are the NGO who are practically making the changes, yet there are others who are leading these changes by modifying the mindset of the people through education camps, and also conserving the Asiatic lion by giving right information to the forest department at the right time, thereby building a nexus between forest department, local people and themselves. Among such NGOs are the Junagadh based Rachna Nature Education Foundation working in this direction since last 20 years and Gondal based Forest Youth Club. The initiation from this NGO to carry out the work in Barda Sanctuary by persuading the department has really done wonders as the forest department has started with the work of developing the sanctuary and presently projects for water conservation is going on in Barda. The Diu based *Sinh Darshan* is a unique example of an NGO who along with spreading awareness conducts condolence for the dead animal and "Yagna" praying for their betterment. This NGO also published 95 books related to lion conservation and a *Sinha Chalesa*. The question arises if 100s or more NGOs are really working towards saving the Asiatic lions then why still we often hear about poaching incidents of lion. The answer here is given by an expert who says that before 10-15 years, the forest department used to attend the NGOs well and encouraged them to take essential steps with the department to save the lions but now-a-days that spirit is lacking from the department side, and as a result enthusiasm in all the NGOs except few is also declining day-by-day.



Gujarat is a great state for NGO's, particularly wildlife NGO's. Sri P. P. Raval, late and much beloved DFO Gir & Superintendent, Sakkarbaug Zoo is said to have been instrumental in starting hundreds of nature clubs and encouraging many more wildlife loving individuals and organisations.

Some of the wildlife NGO's which seem to be focusing exclusively or more extensively on Asiatic lion and the individuals who run them are listed below. We will profile a few from time to time. The list below was provided by Kishore Kotecha.

- ◆ **Sky Nature Youth Club**, Keshod 9; Revtubha Rayjada. Mobile: 91 94274 24589. (One of P.P. Raval's clubs)
- ◆ **Nature Education Foundation (NEF)**, Dhari; Dr. Manubhai Bharad. Phone: 02897-222135.
- ◆ **Nature Education Foundation (NEF)**, Junagadh; Narendra Bharad. Mobile: 91 99795 53565.
- ◆ **Sinh Darshan**, Diu; Ramesh Rava. Phone: 02875-252903.
- ◆ **Gir Nature Youth Club**, Khambha, Amreli Dist, Gujarat; Amit B. Jethava, President. Mobile: 91 94269 38812; e-mail: <amitjethava@hotmail.com>.
- ◆ **Forest Youth Club**, Gondal; Hitesh Dave. Mobile: 91 98255 16499.
- ◆ **Ambuja Cement Foundation**, Haribhai Mori. Mobile: 91 98337 40820; e-mail: haribhai.mori@ambujamail.com.
- ◆ **Vanishing Herds Foundation**, Bombay; Anil Juwarkar. Mobile: 91 98923 99580; e-mail: ajuwarker@yahoo.com and Arrow Sinha Roy. Mobile: 91 98210 92698; e-mail: absinroy@yahoo.com.
- ◆ **Asiatic Lion Protection Society**, 128, Star Plaza, Phulchhab Chok, Rajkot; Amlash Adhiya and Kishore Kotecha. Mobile: 91 98240 62062; web: www.asiaticlion.org; e-mail: info@royalenclave.com.
- ◆ **Wildlife Conservation Trust (WCT)**, Kishore Kotecha. e-mail: kotecha_kishore@yahoo.co.in and info@royalenclave.com.
- ◆ Others: there are other broad based NGO's such as Wildlife Protection Society and Wildlife Trust of India who are also helping with lions.