

Godawan Saga

Newsletter
of

Godawan Community Conservation Program

Vol. I Issue 01



ERDS Foundation

The ERDS Foundation
(Ecology, Rural Development & Sustainability Foundation)

About Us

The Ecology, Rural Development & Sustainability Foundation (The ERDS Foundation) is a registered non-government organization, with a group of dedicated field biologists and community workers of Thar Desert. The team is working in the field of conservation of natural resources and sustainable development since 2 decades. Thar Desert is one of the most populous deserts of the world with a population density of around 100 per sq. km. It comprises of 12 districts, in the western side of Aravalli hill range.

It is also rich in biodiversity point of view, with many rare and threatened animals still find refuge in the vast landscape as well as rare flora can be seen in *Oran* or village pasture lands around villages.

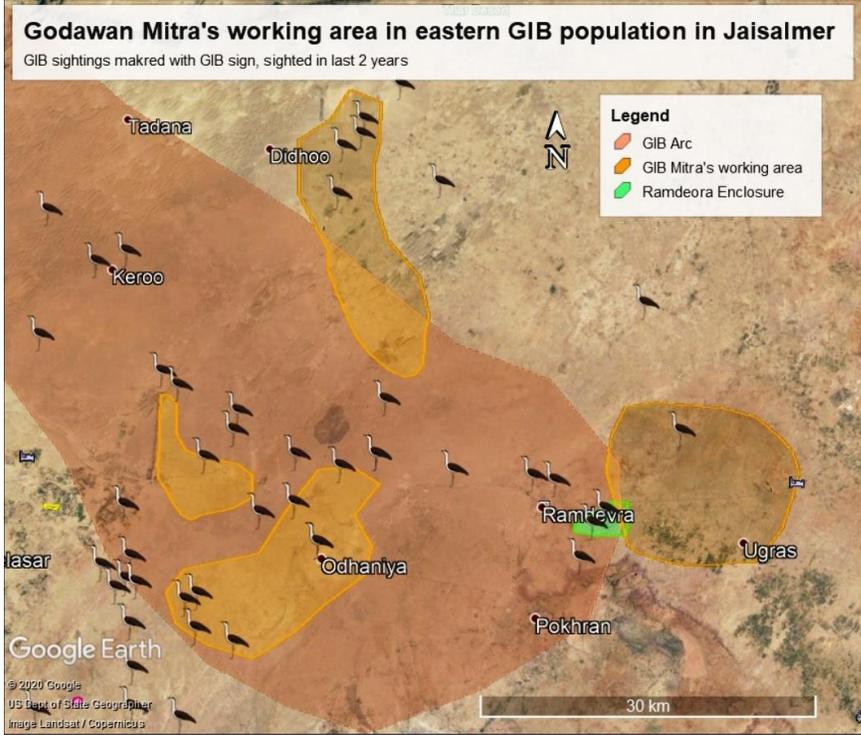
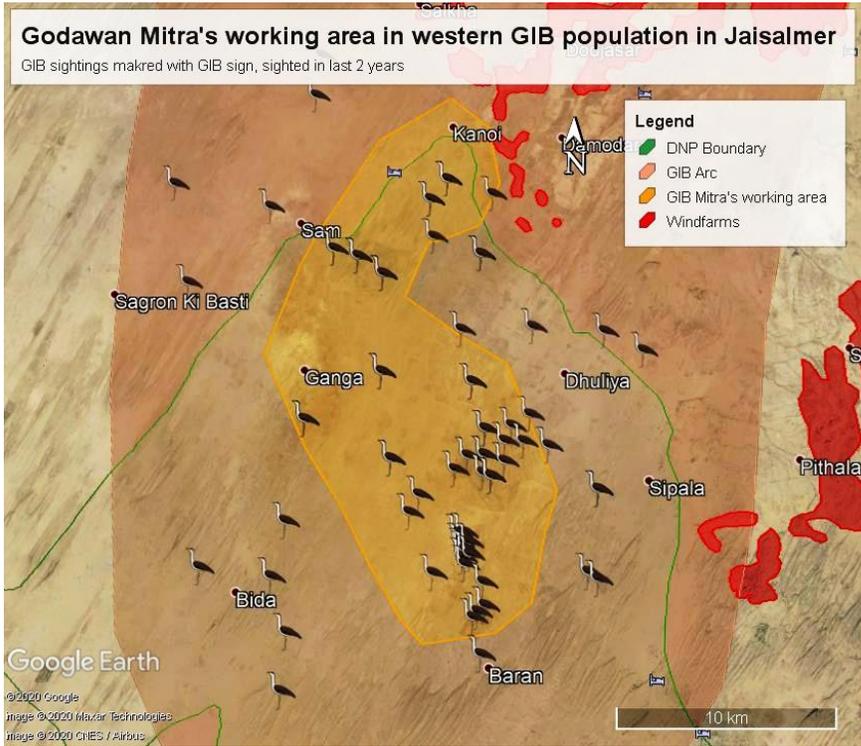
The ERDS Foundation is working on wildlife conservation and sustainable development of this landscape, keeping Great Indian Bustard (GIB) or Godawan as a flagship species of desert grasslands. Once vast tracts of desert lands were home of this majestic bird, now the population has been shrink a lot and only 150 birds were estimated through a landscape level population estimation by State Forest department and Wildlife Institute of India (an autonomous institute of MoEFCC, GoI). Looking at the dwindling population of GIB, a landscape level community centric program was conceptualized by the team in late 2018. Many long term plans were designed in consensus with local communities, as almost 80% population is roaming outside the only protected area, i.e., Desert National Park-Sanctuary (proposed as National Park in 1981, final notification is still awaited). The land use pattern of this area is mixed, where large part under rain-fed agriculture, followed by irrigated agriculture farms, revenue land, and human settlements.

Our Work

Currently two projects are ongoing, *Godawan Mitra* and Anti-poaching Networking in GIB landscape.

Godawan Mitra

It is a community volunteering project, where local communities are participating as eyes and ears of our team and helping us in monitoring of GIB movement in vast landscape of GIB Arc. GIB Arc is a current GIB distribution area, marked by State Forest Department and WII, with full focus to save this landscape for GIB movement. We have strategically selected 5 youths, who are working from their respective villages and in nearby areas. These youths were working since long time, now from 1st July, we have started giving them honorarium to bear their field expenses.



The current population of GIB in Jaisalmer is scattered in an arc shape, which starts from the northern end of DNP and ends near the Jaisalmer-Jodhpur border, close to Ramdeora-Khara village. Godawan Mitra is working in the northern part of DNP, outside the enclosures of the protected area (Fig. 1), and 4 are working in the Pokhran belt, which is its eastern population. Since there is only one protected enclosure and the rest is community-owned agriculture land and government revenue land, 4 youths are monitoring this side (Fig. 2).

Anti-Poaching Networking

This work is going since last 3 years and around 100 active community volunteers are supporting this work through their extended network too. IN April 2020, with the help of this network, one of the biggest organized poaching gang case cracked by the team. Currently we are monitoring this case very closely.



(Arrested culprits with forest personals in Pokhran Range Office)

For more information in this, please follow the link:

<https://india.mongabay.com/2020/04/rajasthan-uncovers-chinkara-poaching-racket/>

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/jaipur/four-arrested-for-poaching-chinkara-in-jaisalmer/articleshow/75438588.cms>



Another poaching case in Pokhran range

Four arrested for poaching chinkara in Jaisalmer

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Jaipur/Jaisalmer: Poaching of state animal chinkara (Indian gazelle) is continuing unabated as in past four days, five animals have been poached in various districts.

The forest department on Monday recovered remains of chinkara, two knives, weighing scale and arrested four poachers. All the accused were produced before the judicial magistrate which sent them to judicial custody till May 11.

"On Monday evening, one Mukesh Vishnoi informed the forest department that



The four accused of poaching chinkara in police custody

chinkara were poached near Luharon ki Basti on Ramgarh-Raghava route and poachers were about to cook its meat. A forest team reached the spot and raided the house of Babu Ram where four poachers were packing chinkara

meat in packets," regional forest officer Om Prakash Vishnoi said.

The team recovered head, skin, horns and other remains along with knives and weighing scale.

Babu Ram Lohar, Ajeeta-

ram Gawaria, Sanwara Ram Bheel and Hameera Ram Bheel, residents of Ramgarh, were arrested and produced before the chief judicial magistrate.

Post-mortem of the chinkara was conducted on Tuesday.

Expressing concern over the rise in cases of chinkara poaching in the area, wildlife expert Radheyshyam Peman, said, "Poachers are mindlessly killing the state animal. These poachers are active for quite a long time as the department is not taking any concrete action. Recently, in Ramdeora area some animals were poached".

Unhappy with veg food, migrant labourers poach birds for dinner

Ajay Singh and
Vimal Bhatia | TNN

Jaipur/Jaisalmer: Unhappy with vegetarian food, five migrant labourers staying in a quarantine centre in Nokha village of Jaisalmer district hunted grey francolin (bird), which is covered under Schedule III of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

The labourers allegedly manhandled the teachers posted at the centre who criticized their action and stopped them from cooking the meat. Police reached the spot after the clash and arrested five labourers who hailed from Madhya Pradesh. Police has registered a case under the Wildlife Protection Act (WPA) and assault to deter public servant from discharge of duty.

In the complaint, teacher Sushil Kumar said after he opposed killing of birds, the la-



Labourers manhandled teachers who criticised their action

bourers attacked and hit him with stones and sticks.

SP Kiran Kang said, "Many labourers of Madhya Pradesh are staying in Shakti Nagar School under Nokh police station area, of which five hunted partridges. In-charge of the centre Sushil Kumar

Bishnoi was also attacked by these labourers. We have started the investigation after lodging a complaint."

Sources claimed that the labourers were bored of eating food served by the administration and wanted to eat non-vegetarian food.

Green activist Radheeshyam Pemani said the migrant labourers of other states who have been kept at various schools and other shelter homes in Jaisalmer district are killing wildlife. Villagers from nearby areas are continuously informing about their activity. "Killing grey francolin is covered under Schedule III of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and is punishable with an imprisonment of six months or fine of Rs 25,000 or both. As these birds cannot take immediate flight, hunting them using net or sticks is easy," Pemani said.

A case of poaching of Gray francolins were also registered in the nearby, with the help this network and culprits were caught red handed with the killed birds.

The ultimate aim of this project is "Zero Poaching", for this, many online and telephonic discussions were held between team members and community volunteers to discuss the modus operandi and way planning to understand the gravity of cases.

Crowd Funding Campaign: In the end of June, a online crowd funding campaign was started to raise fund for smooth functioning of these projects and this campaign was ended on 5th Aug. 2020.

Promotion of Organic Farming in GIB landscape

We have a string network of around 100 farmers, who are in dialogue with our team and opted for organic way of sustainable farming practices in GIB landscape. Our advocacy team is helping them in certification process, 5 farms have been certified and many have been evaluated.

Conservation Education Program: The team is busy in drafting a story book on the current plight of GIB for school children and this will be finished soon.



	<p>Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.</p> <p>(Margaret Mead)</p>
<p>izquotes.com</p>	