



Wildlife Service Award 2022

Panchami Manoo Ukil

Birder, author and conservationist extraordinaire

You began 'The Bhubaneswar Bird Walks' in 2012, and later co-founded the NGO 'Song of the Wild'. With the first ever birdwalks in Odisha, you helped create a culture of birdwatching in the state and the initiative's success enhanced avian studies and field work. Your work with young and old promotes knowledge, compassion and coexistence with nature and as an educator, you introduce children to nature and explain how the intricate web of life links us all.

A part of your heart belongs to the Mangalajodi wetland on the northeastern fringe of Chilika Lake, where working with local bird guides and boatmen down the years, you successfully managed to get corporate CSR and community leaders to support and inspire former poachers so that they continue to be protectors of local biodiversity. Your writing and lobbying opened up Mangalajodi to the outside world and helped turn local boatmen into expert bird guides, who now find their economic and social circumstances greatly improved! You are undoubtedly one of Odisha's finest bird ambassadors with a deep commitment and belief that the youth in the fishing community are destined to be the most effective conservationists of tomorrow.

For this, we honour you.

Bittu Sahgal
Editor, Sanctuary Asia