



The
Dawood
Foundation

NATURE SERIES

The Wild Indus

Inhabitants of the Indus

Education Inspiring Social Change

INDUS REGION

It is identified amongst the 40 biologically richest ecoregions in the world. It harbours riverine forests along the River, mangrove forests in the coastal areas while desert ecosystems occupy the periphery of the ecoregion.

It covers approximately 65% of the province of Sindh and occupies 18 districts of Sindh while a small northwestern part of the ecoregion extends slightly into Baluchistan.

NILGAI

The nilgai or blue bull is the largest Asian antelope and is endemic to the Indian subcontinent.

The short coat is yellow-brown in females and gradually turns blue-grey in males as they mature. There are white spots on the edges of the lips and throat. Males have 8-10 inches long horns which are straight and tilted slightly forwards.

As herbivores, the nilgai prefer grasses and herbs; woody plants are commonly eaten in the dry tropical forests of India.

Conservation status: **Least Concern**

FUN FACT

The nilgai is mainly diurnal (work in daytime) and more active in early morning and late afternoon.





ALEXANDRINE PARAKEET

The Alexandrine parakeet is a medium-sized parrot named after Alexander the Great, who transported numerous birds from Punjab to various European and Mediterranean countries. Large Indian parakeet is one of the species found in Eastern Afghanistan, Pakistan, North India, Central India, East India, Nepal, and Bhutan.

Conservation Status:
Near Threatened

Adult males have a broader black stripe across the lower cheek. It eats a variety of wild and cultivated seeds, buds, flowers, fruits, and nuts. Flocks can cause extensive damage to ripening fruits and crops like maize and jowar.

FUN FACT

The Alexandrine parakeet was the first parakeet species to reach Europe.

BARN OWL

The barn owl is the most widely distributed species of owl and one of the most widespread of all birds. The barn owl is found almost everywhere in the world. The barn owl is a medium-sized, pale-coloured owl with long wings and a short, squarish tail. Barn owls eat bats, birds, lizards, amphibians and insects.

Conservation Status: Least Concern

FUN FACT

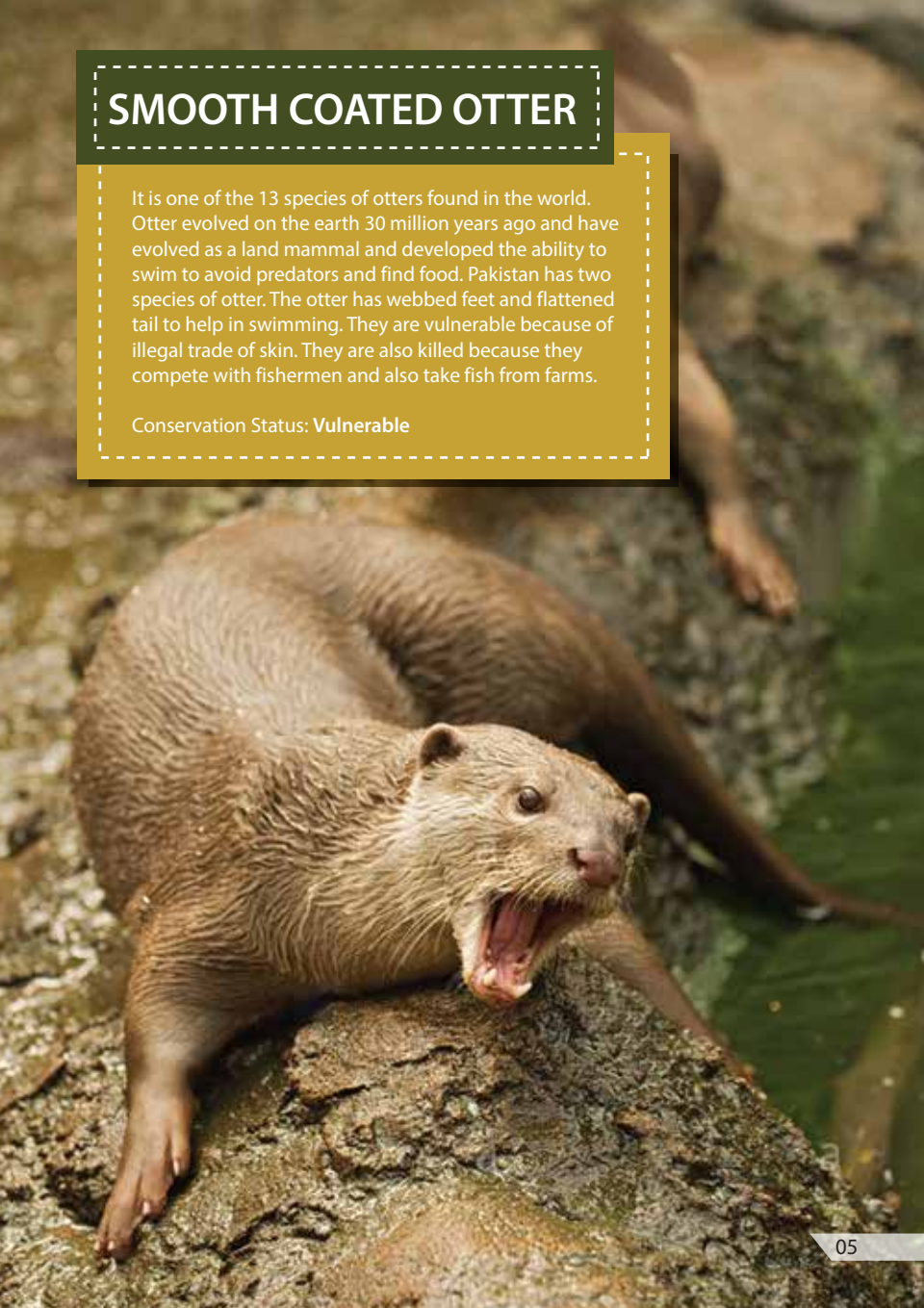
A group of owls is called a parliament.



SMOOTH COATED OTTER

It is one of the 13 species of otters found in the world. Otter evolved on the earth 30 million years ago and have evolved as a land mammal and developed the ability to swim to avoid predators and find food. Pakistan has two species of otter. The otter has webbed feet and flattened tail to help in swimming. They are vulnerable because of illegal trade of skin. They are also killed because they compete with fishermen and also take fish from farms.

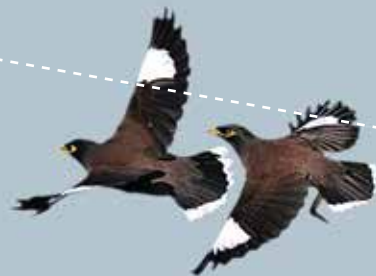
Conservation Status: **Vulnerable**



MYNA

The common myna/Indian mynah is a species of bird native to Asia. An omnivorous open woodland bird with a strong territorial instinct, the myna has adapted extremely well to urban environments.

Conservation Status: **Least Concern**



FUN FACT

Common myna produces various songs that consist of whistling, squeaking and gurgling sounds. Captive birds can mimic humans' speech.



HOOPOES

Hoopoes are colourful birds found across Afro-Eurasia, notable for their distinctive "crown" of feathers. Hoopoes are widespread in Europe, Asia, and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa and Madagascar. The diet of the hoopoe is mostly composed of insects, although small reptiles, frogs and plant matter such as seeds and berries are sometimes taken as well. The long beak is an adaptation to dig out worms from the soil.

Conservation Status: **Least Concern**

FUN FACT

Hoopoe enjoys bathing in the sun and in the dust. During sunbathing, hoopoe takes a specific position: it tilts its head back and spread its wings and tail above the ground.





THE INDIAN PEAFOWL

The Indian peafowl or blue peafowl, a large and brightly coloured bird, is a species of peafowl native to South Asia but introduced in many other parts of the world. Peafowl is omnivorous and eats seeds, insects, fruits, small mammals and reptiles. It feeds on small snakes but keeps their distance from larger ones.

Conservation Status: **Least Concern**

FUN FACT

Peafowl is best known for the male's extravagant display feathers which, despite growing from their back, are thought of as a tail. These feathers shed every year.

RED-VENTED BULBUL

The red-vented bulbul is a member of the bulbul family of passerines. It is resident breeder across the Indian subcontinent, including Sri Lanka extending east to Burma and parts of Tibet.

The red-vented bulbul is easily identified by its short crest giving the head a squarish appearance.

Conservation Status:
Least Concern



Red-vented bulbuls feed on fruits, petals of flowers, nectar, insects and occasionally geckos. They have also been seen feeding on the leaves of *Medicago sativa*.

SHELDUCK

Shelduck is a big, colourful duck, bigger than a mallard but smaller than a goose.

Both sexes have a dark green head and neck, a chestnut belly stripe and a red bill.

Shelducks are found mainly in coastal areas, though they can also be found around inland waters such as reservoirs and gravel workings.

Conservation Status: **Least Concern**



WHITE-BACKED VULTURE

FUN FACT

Vultures are very clean birds and bathe regularly. They have acute eyesight to locate carcass from a greater distance.

They soar high using thermals – warm rising air.

This species was once widely distributed in Asia and Pakistan. Its biggest colony of South Asia is in Changa Manga plantation. Now very small populations remain in Nagar Parker and Azad Jammu Kashmir. A vulture is a scavenging bird of prey. Vultures are found in Europe, Africa, and Asia. Vultures play an extremely important ecological service of consuming dead animals and control the spread of diseases. The anti-inflammatory drug diclofenac, found in carcass of domesticated livestock, is one of the major causes of the rapid decline of vultures in Pakistan. Environmentalists are taking actions to protect vultures by prohibiting diclofenac use in veterinary medicine.

Conservation status: **Critically endangered**

Vultures eat animals that have died in the wild. Without them, these animals would rot and smell. The white-backed vulture is a typical vulture, with only down feathers on the head and neck, very broad wings and short tail feathers. It has a white neck ruff.

A leopard cat is the central focus of the image, sitting upright and looking directly at the camera. It has a light brown or tan base color with dark brown or black stripes and spots. Its eyes are large and yellowish-brown. The background is a blurred natural setting with rocks and some green foliage.

LEOPARD CAT

The leopard cat is a small wild cat native to continental South, Southeast and East Asia. A leopard cat is about the size of a domestic cat, but leaner, with longer legs and well-defined webs between its toes. Leopard cats are carnivorous, feeding on a variety of small prey including mammals, lizards, amphibians, birds and insects. In Pakistan, they are found in forests and communities often mistake them as leopard cubs.

Conservation status:
Least concern

FUN FACT

Leopard cat was the first cat species domesticated in Neolithic China about 5,000 years ago in Shaanxi and Henan Provinces.

A Sindh ibex is shown in profile, facing left, standing on a dark, mossy rock. Its body is covered in thick, brownish-tan fur. The most striking feature is its large, spiraling horns, which are covered in a textured, ringed pattern. The background is a blurred, rocky landscape.

SINDH IBEX

The Sindh ibex or Turkman wild goat is a vulnerable species of wild goat commonly native to southern Pakistan. Sindh ibex are rather stocky animals with thick-set bodies and strong limbs terminating in broad hooves.

Conservation status: **Endangered**

During the hottest part of the year, the Ibex rest more extensively during the day and may graze a considerable part of the night.

BEE-EATER

The bee-eaters are characterised by richly coloured plumage, slender bodies and usually elongated central tail feathers. All are colourful and have long downturned bills and pointed wings, which give them a swallow-like appearance when seen from afar. As their name suggests, bee-eaters predominantly eat flying insects, especially bees and wasps, which are caught in the air by flights from an open perch.

Conservation status: **Least concern**

FUN FACT

All bee-eaters are earth-hole nesters, digging their tunnels with an oval chamber at the end for eggs.

INDIAN STAR TORTOISE

Indian star tortoises are native to India, Sri Lanka and southeastern Pakistan. It is a herbivore. It usually eats leaves, fruit, berries and flowers. Carrion is occasionally consumed in the wild. Indian shell tortoise has dark brown or black carapace with beige and yellow, star-shaped markings which provide camouflage (turtle easily blends with its surroundings). Star-shaped markings are also responsible for the name of this species. The bottom side of the shell, better known as plastron, is black-coloured with yellow stripes.

Conservation Status: **Vulnerable**





INDUS VALLEY TOAD

Indian marbled toad, Punjab toad, Indus Valley toad, or marbled toad is a species of toad found in Asia including Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan to Nepal extending into Peninsular India from the plains to about 1800m. It is particularly common in the Indus valley.

Conservation Status: **Least Concern**

BLACK POND TURTLE

The black pond turtle is known as the spotted pond turtle or the Indian spotted turtle is a species of freshwater turtle endemic to South Asia. It is mainly black with small yellowish spots, and a much-elevated carapace, with three interrupted keels or series of nodose prominences corresponding to the vertebral and costal shields.

Conservation Status: **Vulnerable**





FUN FACT

Mugger crocodiles are a hole-nesting species. As with other hole nesters, egg-laying takes place during the annual dry season.

MUGGER CROCODILES

The mugger is a medium-sized crocodile (maximum length ca. 45m) and has the broadest snout of any living member of the genus *Crocodylus*. The colour generally is light tan in juveniles, with black cross-banding on body and tail. Adults are generally grey to brown, with little banding remaining. Muggers are principally restricted to the Indian subcontinent where they may be found in several freshwater habitat types including rivers, lakes, mangroves, and marshes.

Conservation Status: **Least Concern**

A detailed photograph of a Shikra bird perched on a weathered tree branch. The bird is shown in profile, facing right. It has a light-colored head with a prominent yellow-orange eye and a dark blue-grey beak. Its back and wings are a mix of light and dark grey feathers, while its underparts are a pale, mottled grey. The background is a soft-focus view of green foliage and tree branches.

FUN FACT

The word Shikra is borrowed from the Urdu word which is derived from the word 'shikari' meaning 'hunter'.

SHIKRA

Shikra is a small bird of prey found widely distributed in Asia and Africa where it is also called the little-banded goshawk. They have a sharp two-note call and have the typical flap and glide flight. The Shikra is found in a range of habitats including forests, farmland and urban areas. Their calls are imitated by drongos and the common hawk-cuckoo resembles it in plumage.

Conservation Status: **Least Concern**

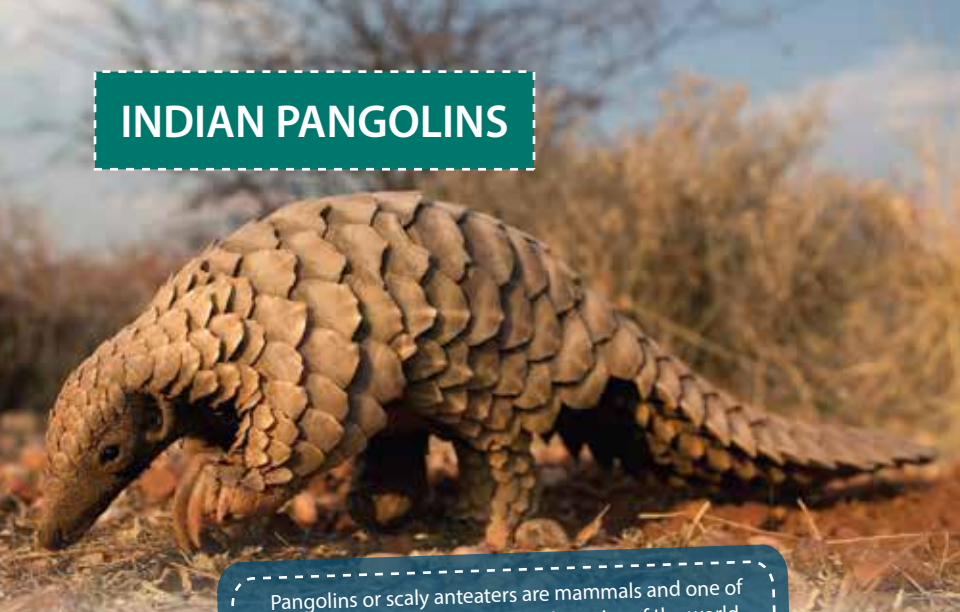
INDIAN COBRA

The Indian cobra also known as the spectacled cobra, Asian cobra, or binocellate cobra is found in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bhutan. These cobras are easily identified by their large and quite impressive hood, that they expand when feeling threatened, showing the famous hood mark.

Conservation Status: **Data Deficient**

The Indian cobra feeds on a variety of animals, but it preys mostly on rodents. They also eat small mammals, birds and bird eggs, frogs, toads, lizards and even venomous snakes.

INDIAN PANGOLINS



Pangolins or scaly anteaters are mammals and one of the most illegal traded mammal species of the world. There are eight species of pangolins in the world and Pakistan has one. Their scales are used in traditional Chinese medicine. These species range in size from 30 to 100 cm (12 to 39 in). Pangolins are insectivorous, and their diet consists of mainly ants and termites, which they capture using their long tongues. They live in hollow trees or burrows, depending on the species.

Conservation Status: **Endangered**

FUN FACT

The mammal can consume up to 20,000 ants a day. That's about 73 million ants a year!



COMMON PALM CIVET AND MASKED PALM CIVET



FUN FACT

Historically civet has been the main species from which musky scent was obtained used in perfumery. The word civet may also refer to the distinctive musky scent.

These cat-sized nocturnal mammals are found in Pakistan. Civets enjoy solitude and sleep in the treetops during the day. It is an omnivorous and mostly feeds on fruit as well as small birds, rodents and insects. When alarmed, it sprays the predator with a secretion, much like a skunk.

Conservation Status: **Least Concern**

GREATER FLAMINGOS

Flamingoes are colonial birds, and are usually found in large flocks. A flamingo extracts food from the water by a filtering mechanism, very much like that used by the Blue Whale.

It wades through the water with necks lowered and heads turned upside down, sweeping from side to side. The upper and lower portions of the bill are fringed with bristles which trap particles as the flamingo sucks in water. The outer layer of coarse bristles keeps out large particles.

It gets the pink colour from the carotenoids (pink and red) occur in many plants and animals, they eat such as algae and brine shrimps. It is the same colour pigment which is also found in carrots.

Conservation Status: **Least Concern**

FUN FACT

Flamingoes usually stand on one leg while the other leg is tucked beneath their bodies to keep the leg warm. Flamingoes live up to 60 years!



INDUS RIVER DOLPHINS

The Indus River dolphin is a subspecies of the South Asia dolphin which is one of the only four species of freshwater dolphins in the world. It is only found in the Indus river in Pakistan. This dolphin has the unique ability to swim on its side which helps it to swim in shallow water. The Indus river dolphin is almost blind and its eye can only tell between light and dark and blind dolphins rely on echolocation to navigate, communicate and hunt prey comprising of fish and prawns.

Conservation Status: **Endangered**



FUN FACT

Compared to other animals, dolphins are believed to be very intelligent. Dolphins communicate with each other by clicking, whistling and other sounds.

OSPREY



The osprey is also called sea hawk, river hawk, and fish hawk. It is a diurnal, fish-eating bird of prey. It is brown on the upperparts and predominantly greyish on the head and underparts. As its common names suggest, the osprey's diet consists almost exclusively of fish.

Conservation Status: **Least Concern**

It is found on all continents except Antarctica.

A close-up photograph of a common kingfisher perched on a light-colored, textured branch. The bird is facing left, showing its long, sharp, dark blue beak. Its head is covered in iridescent blue feathers with fine white spots. A small patch of orange-brown feathers is visible around its eye. The throat and breast are a vibrant orange-brown, while the wings and back are a deep blue with white speckling. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green.

COMMON KINGFISHER

The common kingfisher is also known as the Eurasian kingfisher or river kingfisher is a small kingfisher with seven subspecies recognized within its wide distribution across Eurasia and North Africa. This sparrow-sized bird has the typical short-tailed, large-headed kingfisher profile; it has blue upperparts, orange underparts and a long bill. It feeds mainly on fish, caught by diving, and has special visual adaptations to enable it to see prey under water.

Conservation Status: **Least Concern**

FUN FACT

The largest kingfisher in the world is Australia's laughing kookaburra. It weighs up to 500 gm, or 15 times as much as common bird.

MUDSKIPPERS

The mudskipper is a unique fish that uses its pectoral fins and pelvic fins to walk on land. It is usually found in mangrove forests. It eats insects, sandworms, small crustaceans, and other small creatures.

Conservation Status: **Least Concern**

FUN FACT

Mudskippers are excellent skippers, jumpers, and climbers. It flips its tail and body from side to side to propel over the ground in a skipping motion.

