



### IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA AND SOCIAL CAMPAIGN TO INVOLVE THE PUBLIC IN WILDLIFE CONSERVATION: CERTAIN SUCCESS STORIES

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Conservation of wildlife is proving to be a race against time. With increasing human population, developmental projects, competition for land and resources and climate change is having a regressive effect on species diversity. According to the Living Planet Index (<http://www.livingplanetindex.org/home/index>), by 2020 number of wild animals living on Earth is set to fall by two-thirds. In such a scenario where the co-occurrence of humans with wildlife is unavoidable and the high stakes of humans at expense of wild species and natural resources advocate a holistic conservation approach. This holistic approach involves various agencies like policymakers, government agencies, activists, researchers, and social support to come together and contribute to saving the species. Public support has benefitted by 1) direct species or habitat conservation locally or globally and 2) indirectly building pressure on the government to change policies. Since long, conservationists have adapted to various methods for their outreach program. A famous practice since age has been to name national and state animal, tree or bird to raise awareness about the declining population of species. According to the State of India's birds 2020, (<https://www.stateofindiabirds.in/>), which is a citizen science compilation data, sparrow awareness programs have resulted in more sightings reported by citizens and a stable population due to nest adoption programs. Whether it has been game mascot, famous personalities as ambassador, a famous animal in the zoo, songs, book or by the involvement of famous companies and industries, conservation of wildlife regularly update with innovative campaigns.

Some of the famous innovative wildlife conservation campaign and their success stories have been listed below.

**Smokey Bear** was probably one of the earliest campaigns to raise awareness about forest fire amongst the public. When the Japanese attacked an oil field site in California (US.), the forest official became worried about the neighboring Los Padres National Forest. In 1944, a public service announcement came up with a smokey bear who was depicted as a sweet looking bear with a pair of jeans and a bucket full of water. The image was popularized across the state and its impact was assessed by a survey. The survey revealed that 70% of the respondent could identify Smokey bear and relate it with forest fire dangers.

**Save the hornbill campaign** was thought by the forest department official of Arunachal Pradesh (India). Nyishi tribe in Arunachal Pradesh is culturally and traditionally bound to affect hornbill. The beak of hornbill symbolizes manhood and valor in the tribe. The campaign sorted to replace the original beak by an alternative to reduce the dependency of the tribal on the species. Arunachal Wildlife and Nature Foundation (AWNPF) and Wildlife Trust of India prepared fiberglass replicas and distributed them in the tribal. The campaign became a success as in 2000 when it started, there were only 500 hornbills in Arunachal Pradesh which increased to 2000 hornbill in the year 2007.

**Save our tiger campaign.** Since 2008 Aircel took up the concern of the declining population of tiger in India. When 2006 census-estimated tiger number in India as 1411, Aircel along with NDTV and Wildlife Conservation Trust, invested in tiger awareness across India. The telecom industry, as well as media platforms, shook hands to make more and more public awareness about the tiger number. The campaign was called a success when in 2010 All India tiger census came up with a tiger number as 1706 and also the tiger death reduced to 51 in 2014 as compared to 72 death in 2012.



**Rhino campaign in Vietnam.** The Human Society International (HSI) and Vietnam CITES decided to spread awareness about rhinoceros and the myth that its horn is medicinal. Rhinoceros were dying due to illegal trade and demand for medicinal purposes which the common public was not aware of. The knowledge was spread by a children's book "I am a little rhino" and by various pamphlets and hoardings. Post the campaign, a survey revealed that demand for rhinoceros' horn has plunged 38% from 2013 to 2014.

advocated the need to end illegal wildlife trafficking between Nepal, Tibet, India, and China. He addressed the Buddhist followers for charities Care for the Wild International (CWI) and Wildlife Trust of India (WTI). According to the Wildlife Protection Society of India, the success of this advocacy was observed in Lithang and Sichuan province where Tibetans did not wear animal skins at several local festivals. Also, the prices for wildlife skins dropped too. Many Tibetans burnt tons of wild animal skin as a result of the Dalai lama sermon.

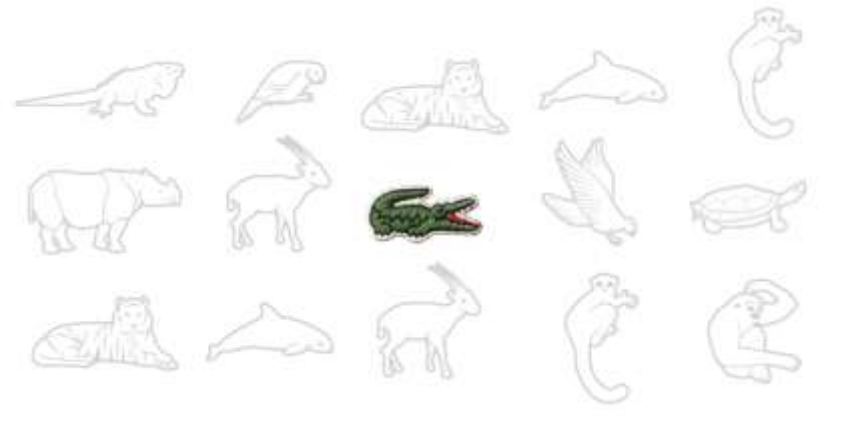


**Voices of Momos campaign.** The Myanmar Elephant Conservation Plan was prepared with a focused strategy for elephant conservation from 2018-2027. A part of the strategy involved public awareness campaign in 2017 with the combined effort of WCS, WWF, Friends of Wildlife and SCBI. The name of the campaign was chosen to fetch support of public amongst whom the 64-year-old Elephant from Yangoon Zoo was quite popular and synonymous. The campaign also involved fundraising by music concert etc. Some of the success of this campaign was the key markets of Yangoon agreeing to end the Illegal wildlife trade and Yangoon City Development Committee agreeing to work towards Illegal Wildlife Trade free Yangoon.

**Kung Fu Pangolin Campaign.** In 2017, American environmental organization WildAid involved Super Star Jackie Chan in creating a public service announcement about protecting pangolins. The Kung Fu Pangolin campaign mainly aimed to increase awareness in China and Vietnam regarding the pangolin poaching crisis. A survey posts the campaign concluded the positive of the campaign. 50% of the respondent in the survey believed scales had medicinal value compared to 70% of the 2015 survey (in China). Similarly, 61% of respondents had the same belief compared to 72% of respondents in the 2015 survey (in Vietnam).



**Save our Species campaign.** In 2018, IUCN partnered with French fashion design company Lacoste. The campaign involved an innovative method where Lacoste characteristic crocodile logo was replaced by 10 threatened species for limited edition Polo T-shirts. Some polo T-shirts corresponded to the number of remaining individuals of the 10 species in the wild. The featured species were Vaquita (*Phocoena sinus*), Burmese Roofed Turtle (*Batagur trivittata*), Northern Sportive Lemur (*Lepilemur septentrionalis*), Javan Rhino (*Rhinoceros sondaicus*), Cao-vit Gibbon (*Nomascus nasutus*), Kakapo (*Strigops habroptila*), California Condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*), Saola (*Pseudoryx nghetinhensis*), Sumatran Tiger (*Panthera tigris sumatrae*) and the Anegada Ground Iguana (*Cyclura pinguis*). Not only the polo-shirts were sold out in 24 hours, but campaign videos and other content were also shared 600,000 times.



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