

An initiative to create awareness on Fishing Cat behaviour and conservation among the fishing community children of Godavari mangroves.

Fishing cats are one of the most elusive small cat species in the world and are also highly threatened due to habitat destruction. To improve conservation of these small cat species, I believe the easiest way to achieve is by targeting the children of the local fishing community who are not just highly receptive but also can become good ambassadors for their community in future. Owing to factors such as poverty and poor school infrastructure these children do not even get proper education and so have very less opportunities to learn about wildlife conservation or animal behaviour. Therefore, our target will be to disseminate information on behaviour and conservation of Fishing cats by raising awareness and educating about its global importance, behaviour, and its mangrove habitats to the small children of the local fishing community living around mangrove forests of Godavari Delta.

With the help of the ABS Outreach Grant I would like to design a comic book about the relationship between a local kid and a fishing cat. Ecology of Fishing Cats in a mangrove forest and different aspects of its behaviour such as its hunting technique of fishes, effects of tides on their activity in the mangroves, communication between each other (vocal calls) etc. will be highlighted in the comic book, making it interesting and easier for the local kids to understand. Comic books are an excellent and easy way to disseminate information about behaviour and conservation actions of such elusive species to the kids. Through this method, we hope to raise awareness and develop a sense of ownership among the local kids of a globally important species that lives just behind their backyards.

