

Building Community Capacity and Support for Conserving the Lesser Florican (*Sypheotides indica*) in India

Introduction

A site-based approach may not be appropriate for conservation of widely dispersed threatened species like the Lesser Florican that share part or whole of their habitat with humans. Involvement of local communities is essential to its survival. Our programme provides a combination of economic incentive, community outreach and conservation education programme. This has resulted in increasing community stewardship for the species leading to **371%** increase in Florican sighting reported during the period 2007-2009 compared to previous years.

About the Lesser Florican

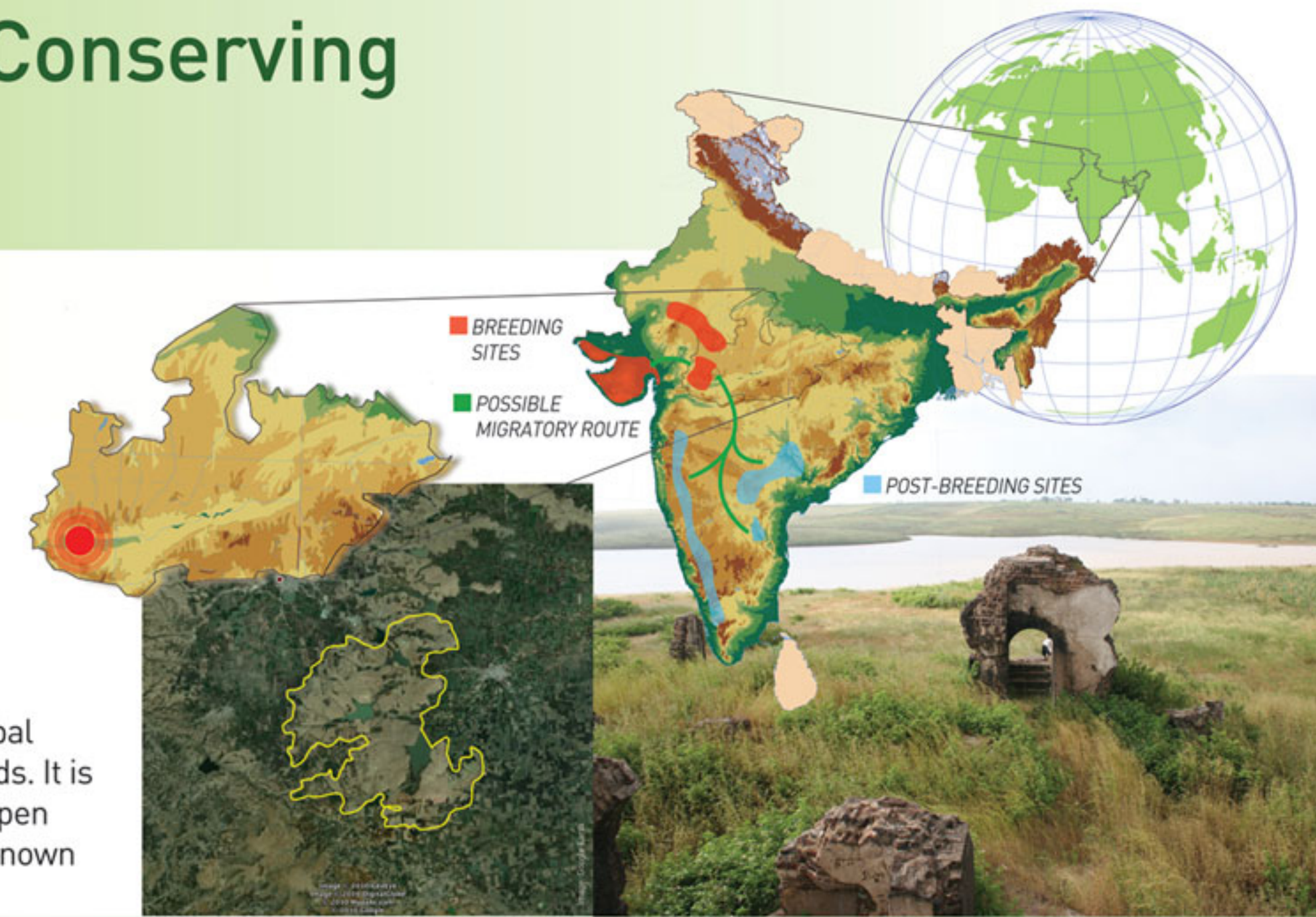
The Lesser Florican (*Sypheotides indica*) is endangered and endemic to India. Estimated global population is less than **2,500**. It belongs to the *Family Otididae*, commonly known as bustards. It is about the size of a large chicken and is omnivorous. Its primary habitat is grasslands and open fields adjoining them. The male Lesser Florican has a unique mating display. Very little is known about its post-breeding habitat and behaviour.



Lesser Florican (*Sypheotides indica*) Adult Male



Male Lesser Florican mating display.



Sailana grasslands, Ratlam District, Madhya Pradesh

The study site

Sailana Kharmor Sanctuary (23° 24' N, 74° 58' E), Ratlam district, Madhya Pradesh is a protected area to safeguard the Lesser Florican. It comprises of grassland, crop fields and grazing lands, and is bound by three villages. The whole area is owned by agriculturists. The sanctuary is 13 sq.km large.



Female Florican

Conservation Strategy

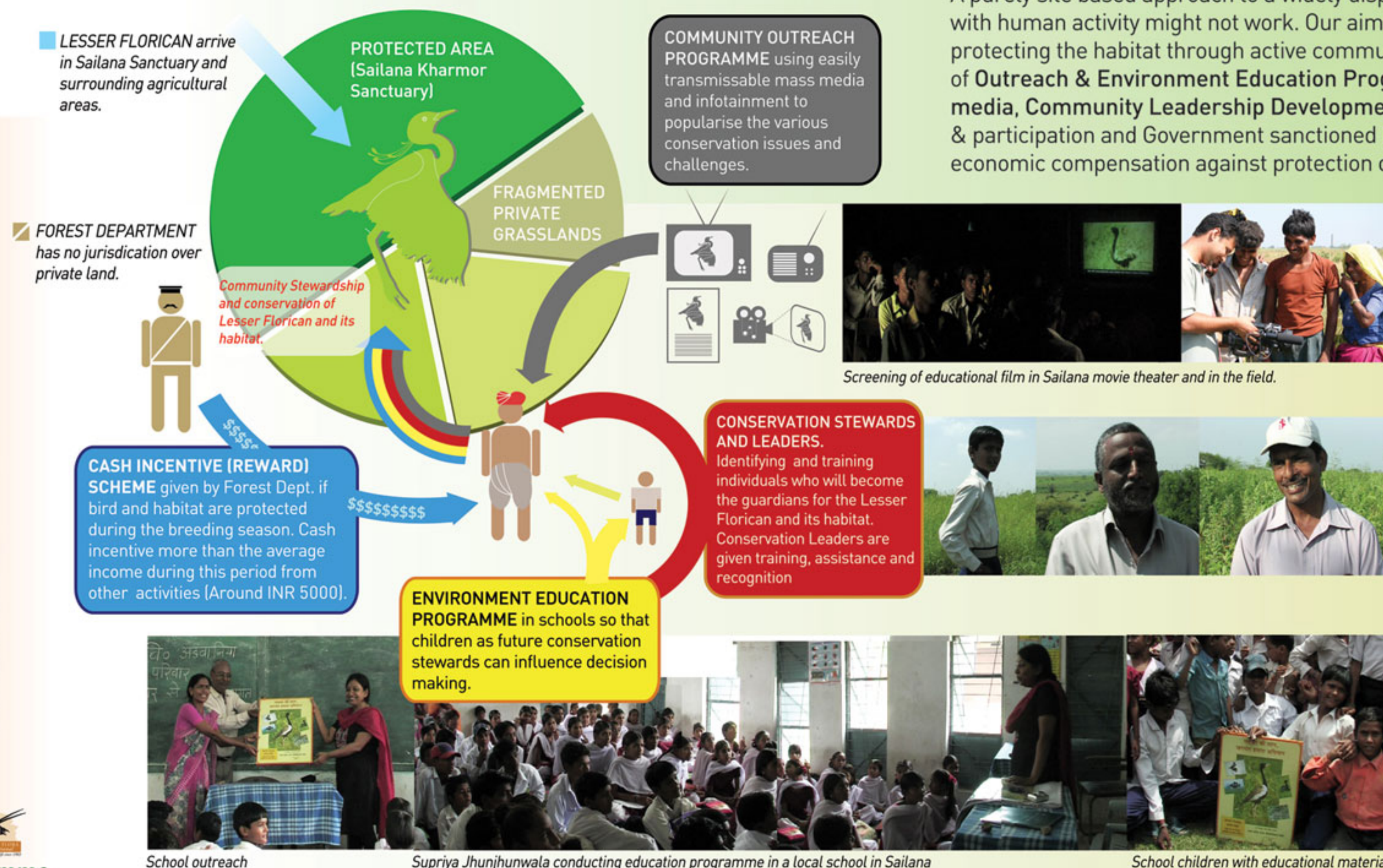
A purely site based approach to a widely dispersed species whose habitat overlaps with human activity might not work. Our aim is to conserve it's population by protecting the habitat through active community participation. We use a combination of Outreach & Environment Education Programmes using infotainment & mass media, Community Leadership Development Programme through active discussion & participation and Government sanctioned Economic Incentive Scheme to provide economic compensation against protection of habitat.

Threats

Principle threats are **habitat loss** through grazing, agricultural activities, cutting of grass and use of pesticide leading to depletion of prey base. Direct factors are **hunting and predation**. Climatic factors like failure of monsoon might also affect them.



Threats: Grazing, pesticide use & intensive land use



Results & Conclusion

Our conservation education and incentive programme has increased community stewardship, leading to **371% increase** in Florican sighting in and around Sailana.

Control site at Sardarpur Sanctuary where no outreach programme are being conducted, sightings have **decreased** by over 50%.



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