

Wildlife NGOs help PHCs in Karnataka forest areas

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BENGALURU: Wildlife organisations and activists are doing their bit to tackle Covid by adopting primary health centres (PHCs), donating medical equipment, accessories and providing food and medical kits to people living on forest fringes. The local field staff of Centre for Wildlife Studies (CWS) are directly helping 150 PHCs in four districts of Chamarajanagar, Mysuru, Udupi and Uttara Kannada. These health centres have a severe shortage of essentials, like face shields, oximeters, PPE kits, thermal scanners, gloves, masks and medicines.

With their field base at H D Kote, one of their teams delivers essentials to 12 PHCs around Nagarhole and Bandipur. They supply testing and protective equipment to the staff at PHCs. "Thanks to 115 donors, this week, we are supporting 12 PHCs. We have a long way to go as the number of PHCs in need of help has grown to 230. Another three teams are getting ready to work in central Karnataka and Goa," says Krithi Karanth, Chief Conservation Scientist, CWS.

Mahadevswamy, a CWS staffer, said, "In my village, symptomatic patients are going to PHCs in tempos, two-wheelers and even by walk. These health centres have their hands full." Covid has not spared communities around Bannerghatta too. An NGO, Rocha India, through its campaign, has set up a rural Covid isolation centre, which is fully equipped to handle 80 patients at a time. Avinash Krishnan, Senior Research Officer, Rocha India, said, "Medical relief materials have been provided to affected communities. Earlier, we distributed food to 1,500 community members around Bannerghatta."

A few conservation groups, like the Wilderness Club and Srishti Foundation, are helping tribals in H D Kote, as the pandemic and lockdown has hit them badly. One of the volunteers, J Manjunath, said, "Many of our activist friends and Lions Club have responded but we need more funds to support tribals facing hunger. We have mobilised resources to provide food to hungry children and 300 provision kits and 50 medical kits will be given initially in areas around Nagarhole Tiger Reserve."

Source: <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/karnataka/2021/jun/02/wildlife-ngos-help-phcs-in-karnataka-forest-areas-2310659.html>