

Panellists for discussion on India's Wildlife Economy

6th January 2025 Zoom Video Conference



Eugène Lapointe was home-schooled in the Canadian wilderness by his mother and game warden father. After military service, he spent 14 years in government service, where he helped draft the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), of which he became Secretary-General (1982–1990).

After leaving CITES, he founded the International Wildlife Management Consortium, which campaigns to Integrate Wildlife, Markets and Conservation (IWMC). IWMC believes that when wildlife species have value, stakeholders will make the effort to sustain it.

Eugène Lapointe is a jurist, diplomat, hunter, humanist, ice hockey coach, and lecturer. He is also one of the most credible and optimistic thinkers in the field of conservation.

He is President of the IWMC World Conservation Trust.



Deborah Vorhies is the first CEO of FairWild Foundation. It aligns commerce with development which enables sustainable trade. She has long and extensive experience in international biodiversity, trade and investment policy, including with the United

Nations, the World Bank, and in the non-profit sector. Most recently, she has served as Interim COO of AWEI, the African Wildlife Economy Institute, based at Stellenbosch University.



Francis Vorhies is a conservation economist whose career has centered on the intersection of conservation and commerce. Inspired by Kenneth Boulding's ecological economics seminar in the early 1980s and a visit to a South African game farm in the mid-1980s, he pursued work in conservation economics.

At the University of the Witwatersrand, he introduced an MBA elective on environmental management and co-founded Eco Plus, contributing to iSimangaliso's designation as a World Heritage site. In the 1990s, as the African Wildlife Foundation's first economist, he built capacity in conservation economics and later worked with IUCN on economic incentives and private sector engagement.

In the early 2000s, he directed Earthwatch Institute's European office and founded Earthmind in Geneva to promote market-driven conservation strategies. Currently, he is the first Director of the African Wildlife Economy Institute at Stellenbosch University and Academic Director at the African Leadership School of Wildlife Conservation in Kigali. His research focuses on wildlife policy and advancing Africa's wildlife economy for sustainable development.



Harbhajan Singh Pabla joined Indian Forest Service in 1977 and retired, in 2012, as the Chief Wildlife Warden of Madhya Pradesh. He has also worked as an international consultant on forestry and wildlife management in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal, besides. He believes in active wildlife management and has led the reintroduction of tigers, gaur,

blackbuck and barasingha into their former habitats after their local extinctions.

He believes that wildlife conservation has limited scope purely as an ecological and moral pursuit, and must fit into the economic agenda of the country for sustainable success. He considers India's current wildlife conservation approach a bit aimless and has authored a rather unusual series of books on Wildlife Conservation in India.



Karnasinh Ghorpade is invested in agriculture, property development, hospitality; he has a strong conservation/ hunting background and a love for the outdoors.

He was the Honorary Secretary of WWF Kolhapur division for about 10 years. He was involved in the framing of the Sahyadri Eco Sensitive Zone concept which has now been activated in the Maharashtra section of Western Ghats from Karnataka/ Goa border to Mahabaleshwar.

He was also President of the Shahaji Chhatrapati Association for Shooting and Conservation, Kolhapur when hunting licenses were being issued up to 1991. He had developed a good rapport with local non hunting wildlife NGO s and Forest Department in highlighting the role of hunting in Conservation.

He has hunted in Zimbabwe where the WWF office was helpful in explaining the operation of the CAMPFIRE and other community based programmes that helped local communities in managing wildlife.



Michael 't Sas-Rolfes is a sustainability economist and a Research Fellow at the Property and Environment Research Center (PERC), specializing in market-driven biodiversity conservation. He is also a research associate at Oxford's Martin School and a 2023 PERC Lone

Mountain Fellow. With over 25 years of experience, his career includes private conservation work, starting as a financial manager for a South African game reserve and conducting pioneering research on private wildlife markets in Southern Africa. He co-founded Eco Plus, consulting on energy policy, wildlife trade, and conservation areas.

Michael holds a Commerce degree from the University of the Witwatersrand, along with postgraduate qualifications in Environmental Resource Economics (UCL) and Biodiversity Conservation (Oxford). His PhD focuses on predictive methods for wildlife trade dynamics, and his work involves scenario analysis and participatory modeling for endangered species trade policy. An accomplished writer and educator, he has collaborated with think tanks like the Free Market

Foundation, the UK's Institute of Economic Affairs, and the International Policy Network, contributing significantly to conservation and trade discourse.



Sanjay P. Thakre is a retired forest officer from Maharashtra. He has worked in interesting areas like Sironcha, Gadchiroli and Chandrapur. He was Principal of the Rangers' College, Chandrapur and later also the Field Director of The Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR).

He was also General Manager Forest Development Corporation of Maharashtra (FDCM) and member Secretary Maharashtra State Zoo Authority from September 2016 to June 2017 till he superannuated.