

## Assam Shines at Sanctuary Wildlife Awards



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At the Sanctuary Wildlife Awards ceremony in Mumbai last night, environmentalist Rituraj Phukan was honoured with a Sanctuary Wildlife Service Award. The Nagaon based Climate Reality Leader is a renowned environmental writer, adventurer and conservationist who has represented the region and country in numerous global climate change events.

The loudest applause of the night was for 23 year old Munmuni Payeng, who won the Young Naturalist Award for her work with grassroots communities. It must be mentioned that she is the daughter of Padma Shree Jadav Payeng, famous as the Forest Man of India.

Eminent conservation scientist Dr. Vibhu Prakash, whose is known for his pioneering work on vultures and was instrumental in setting up the Vulture Breeding Centre in Rani, Assam, won the Lifetime Service Award.

"The Sanctuary Wildlife Awards were launched in 2000, and our strategy then was to hone in on virtually unknown wildlife defenders, shine a spotlight on their work, and a European some of the most prominent and credible individuals present them with recognition and admiration in the form of awards and public recognition. The Earth Defenders included forest guards and middle level forest officers, quiet but brilliant scientists, teachers, young adults and photographers. They all had one thing in common...a burning desire to protect the biosphere and leave a better, safer planet for future generations," said Bittu Sahgal, Founder of Sanctuary Nature Foundation and Editor, Sanctuary Asia.

Bangalore based Ramana Athreya, known for the discovery of the Bugun Liocichla bird in Arunachal Pradesh, educationist Panchami Manoo Ukil from Odisha, conservationist Arun Venkataraman from Tamil Nadu, naturalist Shabbir Husain from Kashmir were the other Wildlife Service winners.

The Sanctuary Wildlife Awards were presented by former Punjab Police chief Padma Bhushan Julio Rebeiro, UN Goodwill Ambassador and actress Dia Mirza, Bombay Natural History Society Director Dr. Bivash Pandav, and other dignitaries at the National Centre for Performing Arts in Mumbai on 2nd December.

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