

Reviving Open Natural Ecosystems (ONE) for protecting wildlife habitats & livelihoods of agro-pastoralist communities

What's the crisis?

Between 1880 and 2010, **20 million hectares of grassland & shrub land, and 26 million hectares of forests were lost**, particularly following the Green Revolution. The difference in perspective towards these losses is significant. Whereas forest loss received considerable attention, both in the popular imagination as well as in legislature, the loss of savanna grasslands has largely gone unnoticed.



ONEs and common lands consist of naturally open habitats of savannas, scrublands, grasslands, ravines and dunes, dotted with occasional trees.

They sustain grazing-based livelihoods of millions of pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities in India who have also had a long history of coexistence with these ecosystems, and their unique wildlife such as the Indian Blackbuck, Indian wolf, the critically endangered great Indian bustard, and the chinkara gazelle.





ONEs are natural assets of high ecological, social, economic, and cultural significance.

We have identified ONEs to cover approximately **30 MHa (10%)** of India's land surface, with the largest extent in the states of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat. However, in recent times, ONEs are being diverted for renewable energy projects (both wind and solar), as well as tree-planting.

Such diversions could alter hydrological cycles (reduce stream flows), endanger habitats and lives of unique biodiversity, and threaten the livelihood of pastoralist communities.

ONEs are a source of economic resilience and livelihood for millions of agro-pastoralists & agrarian communities.

India has the world's highest livestock population at **535 million. About 30% of India's agricultural GDP is derived from livestock.** ONEs are valuable assets that help communities manage economic and environmental shocks.



Restoration & conservation of ONEs provide valuable ecological services.

Community-based conservation efforts of ONEs including adaptive management practices of alien invasive species (e.g. *Lantana* and *Prosopis*) can help improve soil organic carbon stocks, local livelihoods, fodder availability and reduced wildlife-human conflicts, thus enhancing ecological and human well-being.

