Email: sarika.khanwilkar@columbia.edu  LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/sarikakhanwilkar

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Sustainable development leader with peer-review publications on social and ecological research and strong competencies and organizational skills in educational programming and events. Passionate about environmental conservation and improving science through ethical research collaborations, developing accessible methodologies, engaging communities, and informing policy with scientific insight.

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**EDUCATION**

**Columbia University,** New York, NY Expected graduation: 2023

*PhD candidate, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology*

Advisor: Dr. Ruth DeFries

**Columbia University,** New York, NY 2019

*MA, MPhil, Ecology and Evolution*

**Gonzaga University**, Spokane, WA 2014

*B.S. in Biology, Concentration in Research*

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**PEER REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS**

**Khanwilkar, S.**, Sosnowski, M., Guynup, S. (2022). Patterns of illegal and legal tiger parts entering the United States over a decade (2003 – 2012). *Conservation Science and Practice*.

DeFries, R., Agarwala, M., Baquie, S., Choksi, P., **Khanwilkar, S**., Mondal, P., Nagendra, H., Uperlainen, J. (2021) Improved household living standards can restore dry tropical forests. *Biotropica*.

**Khanwilkar, S**., Galletti, C., Mondal, P., Urpelainen, J., Nagendra, H., Jhala, Y.V., Quresh, Q., DeFries, R. (2021). Tropical Deciduous Forests of South Asia: Land Cover Classification and Monitoring Forest Degradation Using the Bare Ground Index [Data set]. *NASA LCLUC Metadata*. Accessible at https://lcluc.umd.edu/metadatafiles/LCLUC-2017-PI-Defries/

**Khanwilkar, S.**,Gould, C.F., DeFries, R., Habib, B., Urpelainen, J. (2021). Firewood, forests, and fringe populations: Exploring the inequitable socioeconomic dimensions of Liquified Petroleum Gas (LPG) adoption in India.

Baquie, S., Urpelainen, J., **Khanwilkar, S**., Galletti, C., Velho, N., Mondal, P., Nagendra, H., DeFries, R. (2020). Migration, assets, and forest degradation in a tropical deciduous forest of South Asia.

DeFries, R., Agarwala, M., Baquie, S., Choksi, P., Dogra, N., G. S., Preetha, **Khanwilkar, S.**, Mondal, P., Nagendra, H., Urpelainen, J. (2020). Post-lockdown spread of COVID-19 from cities to vulnerable forest-fringe villages in central India.

Pawar, D., Nelson, H. P., Pawar, D. R. L., **Khanwilkar, S.** (2019). Estimating Leopard Panthera pardus fusca (Mammalia: Carnivora: Felidae) abundance in Kuno Wildlife Sanctuary, Madhya Pradesh, India.

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**HONORS AND AWARDS**

**Meridian Award** (Co-PI), National Geographic Society ($25,000) 2022 - 2023

**Dean’s Fellowship,** Columbia University 2017 – 2022

**U.S. Fulbright Student to India**, Fulbright Association 2019 – 2020

**Critical Language Enhancement Award (Hindi)**, Fulbright Association 2019 – 2020

**Research and Exploration Grant** (Co-PI),National Geographic Society ($9,656) 2019 - 2020

**Fellow** (Co-PI),Advanced Consortium on Cooperation, Conflict, and Complexity ($7,000) 2019 - 2020

**Earth Institute Travel Grant** (Co-PI),Columbia University Earth Institute ($2,000) 2019

**Jackson Wild Media Fellow**, Jackson Wild and Day’s Edge Productions 2019

**Seed Grant** (Co-PI), Columbia University Center for Science and Society ($1,035) 2018 – 2019

**Matching Travel Award,** Columbia University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences ($250) 2018

**Graduate Student Research Fellow,** Society for Conservation Biology ($1,000) 2018

**Student Travel Grant,** Arts and Sciences Graduate Council ($500) 2018

**AmeriCorp Service Award,** Corporation for National and Community Service 2015

**Grant,** Howard Hughes Medical Institute ($1,000) 2014

**Dean’s Merit Scholarship,** Gonzaga University ($74,826) 2010 - 2014

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**RESEARCH**

**Columbia University**, New York, NY September 2017, ongoing

*Graduate Student Researcher*

* Graduate student team member on the NASA-funded project, Tropical Deciduous Forests of South Asia: Monitoring Degradation and Assessing Impacts of Urbanization. Delivered remote sensing products openly available at lcluc.umd.edu/metadatafiles/LCLUC-2017-PI-Defries/.
* Ongoing research involves examining trends in forest livelihoods and forest health using socioeconomic data from household surveys and metrics of vegetation from very-high resolution satellite imagery.
* Lead social media education campaign on tiger trafficking in the United States reaching over 40,000 people.

**University of Chester**, Kuno National Park, Madhya Pradesh, India March – April, 2017

*Wildlife Research Assistant*

* Estimated leopard and herbivore abundance and distribution in Kuno National Park with camera traps, transects, and capture-recapture analysis.

**United States Fish and Wildlife Service**, Hobe Sound, FL January – December 2015

*Biology Intern, Student Conservation Association/Americorp*

* Started a marine debris educational program through establishment of long-term community partners and development of educational materials and scientific protocol, earning an AmeriCorps Service Award
* Monitored nesting of sea turtles and shorebirds along 3.5 miles of protected beach, created maps with ArcGIS software, and accessed remote aquatic sites in the Everglades to collect fresh water and prepare laboratory samples.

**Tiger Research and Conservation Trust**, Nagpur, Maharashtra, India October – December 2014

*Research Assistant*

* Mapped habitat of tigers and their prey surrounding Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve using camera traps.
* Conducted sociological surveys and evaluated human-wildlife conflict mitigation strategies in 75 villages.

**Gonzaga University**, Spokane, WA January – May 2014

*Independently Funded Research* – Amphibian Disease Ecology and Conservation

* Measured and analyzed fungal growth rates with microbiological and statistical techniques, used to explore the feasibility of bio-augmentation as an effective conservation strategy.

**Amazon Conservation Association**, Manu National Park, Peru June – August 2013

*Research Assistant* – Fieldwork in Amphibian Disease Ecology and Conservation

* Conducted visual encounter surveys for amphibians to collect fungal samples.
* Quantified prevalence of bacterial infection using molecular genetics and analyzed related environmental factors.

**School for Field Studies Center for Marine Resource Studies**, Turks and Caicos Islands January – May 2013

*Student*

* Developed questionnaire and conducted 15 semi-structured interviews with individuals to record community perspectives and knowledge of the state of the island, environmental protections, and livelihood opportunities.

**University of Pittsburgh**, Pittsburgh, PA June – August 2012

*Research Assistant* – Tissue Bioengineering

* Used histological and surgical techniques to insert protein and quantify bone development in chicken embryos.
* Evaluated efficacy of BMP-2 peptide in vivo for future bone growth bioengineering projects.

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**TEACHING AND MENTORING EXPERIENCE**

**Columbia College,** New York, NY Summer 2020, 2021

*Laidlaw Graduate Student Mentor*

* Mentored four Columbia College STEM undergraduate students in 2020 and an additional five students in 2021. Responsibilities included leading weekly skill development workshops and providing one-on-one weekly check-ins for professional feedback and relationship building over six weeks.

**Columbia University,** New York, NY January 2018 – May 2019

*Graduate Teaching Assistant*

* Environmental Biology I (UN2001): Prepared and presented a one-hour lecture on the musculoskeletal and reproductive systems. Held and prepared weekly recitation sections which 5 – 15 students attended regularly. Created exam questions and graded assignments, tests, and participation.
* Food and the Body (UN1020): Prepared and presented a 30-minute lecture on cooking fuel. Managed nine final project groups throughout the semester; strategically assigned groups, periodically assessed group and individual performance, and supervised the final paper and presentation. Created rubrics and graded final projects and participation.
* Science for Sustainable Development (W2330): Graded assignments and tests.

**Gonzaga University**, Spokane, WA

*‘Science in Action’ Student Coordinator* September 2012 – May 2014

* Modified 5 experiments weekly to improve inquiry-based science lesson curriculum for K-6 students.
* Streamlined instructions and materials for 30 ‘Science in Action’ undergraduate student teachers to enhance efficacy.

*Biology Mentor* September 2012 – May 2014

* Tutored 3 undergraduate students weekly in biological courses.

*Mentor/Program Advisor for Self-Esteem Mentors Increasing Life’s Excitement* September 2010 – December 2012

* Planned and implemented weekly games and interactive discussions designed to build positive identities in 60 K-6 students through management of 10 college students.

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**LEADERSHIP**

**Project Dhvani,** New York, NY May 2018, ongoing

*Co-founder*

* Founded a research collaborative along with two graduate researchers at Columbia University dedicated to using acoustic recordings to understand vocalizing biodiversity and forests in India (www.projectdhvani.org).
* Ongoing work involves securing funding from national and international sources, advising a team of Indian-based interns and research assistants, and managing research collaborations across central and southern India.

**Wild Tiger**, Nagpur, India/San Antonio, TX April 2015, ongoing

*Founder and Director*

* Founded US-based 501c3 nonprofit dedicated to the conservation of India’s Bengal tigers and their habitats (www.wild-tiger.org).
* Ongoing work involves research on tiger-related wildlife crime in the United States, maintaining partnerships with organizations in India and the United States, and fundraising for conservation and community-related work in India.

**Columbia University,** New York, NY

*Science Communication Committee Chair* October 2017 – May 2019

* Started the science communication initiative and lead a committee of 15 graduate students to organize science writing workshops, panel discussions, and film screenings.

*Arts and Science Graduate Council Department Representative* October 2018 – May 2019

* Represented the Ecology, Evolution, and Environmental Biology department at the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences graduate student council, voicing concerns over student life and ensuring funding opportunities.

**Gonzaga University,** Spokane, WA August 2013 – May 2014

*Student Advisor* – Advisory Council on Stewardship and Sustainability

* Student liaison between Gonzaga’s Student Body Association and the Advisory Council on Stewardship and Sustainability.
* Audited energy efficiency of campus buildings and identified areas of improvement. Collaborated with Resident Life to enact an energy efficiency dorm competition, implementing Gonzaga’s Climate Action Plan.

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**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE**

**Snehal Patel for Mayor,** Fair Oaks Ranch, TX March – May 2021

*Community organizer*

* Organized and managed grassroots campaign volunteers and strategized canvassing efforts in the 2021 mayoral race of Fair Oaks Ranch, TX (population of almost 10,000 people).

**Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival**, Jackson, WY

*Community Programs Coordinator* February - October 2016

* Developed 2-day programming and collaborated with 50+ organizations and public/private schools across the state of Wyoming for a science festival.

*Film Judge and Event Production* August – September 2015

* Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival “Best Children’s Program” judge.
* Managed and implemented National Geographic press tour of the 2015 Elephant Conservation Summit and Wildlife Film Festival for 11 press members.

*Education Intern* June – October 2014

* Implemented Wyoming’s first science festival with over 1,000 in attendance. Developed programming and collaborated with 30+ organizations.
* Taught nature photography workshops and lead field excursions for 40, 9-12 year olds.
* Science Media Awards “Best Children’s Program” judge.

**The Lands Council**, Spokane, WA August 2013 – May 2014

*Communications and Development Intern*

* Contacted potential donors and procured items valued at $10,000 for the annual auction.

**Gonzaga University**, Spokane, WA

*Program Leader –* April’s Angels2013

* Organized and lead a group of 35 student volunteers in a day of service in Spokane, WA.

*Alternative Spring Break Student Volunteer* 2011, 2012

* Boise, ID: constructed community space within an immigrant farm community.
* Neah Bay, WA: archived documents at the Makah Cultural and Research Museum and facilitated cultural classes at Neah Bay High School.

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**ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS**

**INVITED TALKS**

*Firewood, forests, and fringe populations: Exploring the inequitable socioeconomic dimensions of Liquified Petroleum Gas (LPG) adoption in India* November 17th, 2021

U.S. International Education Foundation International Education Week, Dehradun, India

*Tigers behind bars: tigers in captivity and the United States* May 9th, 2021

Symbiosis University biodiversity cell, Pune, India

*Forest health and forest livelihoods in central India* October 11th , 2019

Gonzaga University biology seminar series, Spokane, WA

**PODIUM TALKS**

*A decade of tiger parts entering the United States* October 8th, 2020

Student Conference on Conservation Science-NY, New York, NY

*Response of biodiversity to village removal in central India’s Protected Areas* February 25th, 2020

South and Central Asia Fulbright Conference, Kochi, India

*Does urban migration reduce forest degradation in central India?* April 5th, 2019

NASA Land Cover Land Use Change Science team meeting, Maryland, VA

*Mentoring for Millenials: Wild Tiger develops the next generation of conservation leaders* October 25th, 2018

International Conservation Marketing and Engagement Congress, George Mason University, Arlington VA

*Building local leadership for conflict mitigation outside core protected tiger habitat* February 3rd, 2017

International Society for Tropical Foresters, Yale University, New Haven, CT

*Frogs aren’t too “hoppy:” Conservation issues and mitigation strategies* April 25th, 2014

Spokane Intercollegiate Research Conference, Spokane, WA

*Planning for the future: Effects of future development on Small Island Developing States (SIDS)* April, 23rd, 2013

Center for Marine Resource Studies, South Caicos, Turks and Caicos Islands

**POSTER**

*Firewood, forests, and fringe populations: Exploring the inequitable socioeconomic dimensions of Liquified Petroleum Gas (LPG) adoption in India* September 20th, 2021

International Conference on Sustainable Development, New York, NY

*A decade of illegal and legal imports of tigers and tiger parts into the United States* August 3rd, 2020

Ecological Society of America, Salt Lake City, UT

*LPG adoption by marginalized, forest-fringe populations in central India* October 2nd, 2019

Student Conference on Conservation Science-NY, New York, NY

*LPG adoption by marginalized, forest-fringe populations in central India* January 4th, 2019

Central Indian Landscape Symposium, Melghat Tiger Reserve, India

*Prevalence of Bd among high elevation amphibians in Peru* October 10th, 2013

Gonzaga University’s Science Research Poster Session, Spokane, WA

*The osteogenic effects of BMP-2 peptide on developing chick mandibles* October 26th, 2012

Murdock College Science Research Conference, Walla Walla, WA

*Trophic level analysis of arboreal frugivores and diurnal raptors in the Ecuadorian Amazon to assess ecosystem health* October 9th, 2011

Gonzaga University’s Science Research Poster Session, Spokane, WA

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**EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATIONS**

**INVITED TALK OR PANELIST**

Virtual presentation on *Diving deep into the wildlife trade* March 4th, 2022

Orange City Literature Festival, Nagpur, India

Virtual presentation on *Using emerging acoustic technologies to conserve India’s forests* May 5th, 2022

Skowhegan Bird Club, New York, NY

Virtual panelist at the *alumni mentor lunch* September 26th, 2020

Student Conservation Assocation’s National Public Lands Day, Arlington, VA

Virtual presentation on *Let’s talk tigers: species conservation* July 31st, 2020

Student Conservation Association alumni talks, Arlington VA

Virtual panelist on *Tiger King: Let’s talk about the tigers* April 22nd, 2020

Wild Tomorrow Fund, New York, NY

Virtual presentation on *Wildlife conservation and research* September 26th, 2019

Student Conservation Assocation’s UnConference, Arlington, VA

**TALK**

*How to become a tiger biologist* December 18th, 2018

St. Mary’s Elementary School, Fredericksburg, TX

*Estimating populations of large carnivores in India* December 9th, 2017

Columbia University Open Labs Science Cafe, New York, NY

*Carnivores and conflict* October 4th, 2016

Cibolo Creek Nature Center, San Antonio, TX

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**ONLINE MEDIA (produced/written by Sarika Khanwilkar)**

**VIDEO**

**Vimeo**

The Sage Seed (https://tinyurl.com/y4gksbgp) 2019

**WRITING**

Sanctuary Asia online magazine

*Roadside tigers in the United States* (https://tinyurl.com/y3ujzh6r) 2020

Columbia University Center for Science and Society blog

*Students imagine life after COVID-19* (https://tinyurl.com/y6jc5743) 2020

Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival blog

*Ten Things You Need to Know About Tiger King* (tinyurl.com/y9gabnyq) 2020

*“Eye” Wonder: 10 Things You Didn’t Know About Frog Eyes* (goo.gl/2zEx7l) 2014

*A Picture is Worth 1,000 Hikes* (goo.gl/4FWFNn) 2014

Student Conservation Association field blog

*Our Summer of Sounds and Satellites*, co-authored (tinyurl.com/y7ljq9ug) 2019

*Touched by Tiny Turtles* (www.thesca.org/connect/blog/touched-tiny-turtles) 2015

*The Ultimate Science Adventure* (www.thesca.org/connect/blog/ultimate-science-adventure) 2015

*Think Globally, Act Locally* (www.thesca.org/connect/blog/think-globally-act-locally) 2015

*People Protect What They Love* (www.thesca.org/connect/blog/people-protect-what-they-love) 2015

*Banding Together to Battle Invasives* (www.thesca.org/connect/blog/banding-together-battle-invasives) 2015

*Gopher Your Dreams…* (www.thesca.org/connect/blog/gopher-your-dreams) 2015

*Intern Survival Guide: There Is No Guide* (www.thesca.org/connect/blog/intern-survival-guide-there-no-guide) 2015

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**ONLINE MEDIA (featuring Sarika Khanwilkar)**

**PODCAST**

Superpowers for Good: Leadership lessons from-and for-the world’s greatest changemakers

*She’s saving tigers and shaking things up in science* (https://tinyurl.com/atvxppa7) 2022

Rewildology

*Turning the Lens: Tiger Wildlife Crime in the U.S. with Sarika Khanwilkar* (https://tinyurl.com/k5wxmxw7) 2022

Conservation tribe weekly podcast

*Tiger conservationist responds to ‘Tiger King’* (https://tinyurl.com/y4393v24) 2020

**WRITING**

IIT Madras Shaastra Magazine

*Tech gone wild*

(https://shaastramag.iitm.ac.in/special-feature/tech-gone-wild) 2022

Czech Center for Investigative Journalism

*Year of the tiger: the number of beasts is decreasing, the number of tiger smugglers is increasing*  2022

(https://tinyurl.com/4ssx7dx7)

Mongabay news platform

*New study highlights hidden scale of U.S. illegal tiger trade* (tinyurl.com/2p9auxa2) 2022

Times of India news platform

*China is not alone, trafficked tiger parts also entering the US:* Study (tinyurl.com/4hvhnnc4) 2022

News from the Columbia Climate School

*U.S. may have been responsible for almost half of recent past illegal tiger trade* (tinyurl.com/2p9xrc6r) 2022

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**PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS/MEMBERSHIPS**

Society for Conservation Biology

Graduate Women in Science

The New York Academy of Sciences

Reviewer for: *Global Ecology and Biogeography*

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**CERTIFICATIONS**

Motorboat operations (U.S. Department of the Interior) 2015

Aircrew member and aviation dispatcher (U.S. Department of the Interior) 2015

Wildland firefighter (National Wildfire Coordination Group) 2015

Adult and child CPR (American Red Cross) 2015

Rescue Diver, Emergency Oxygen Provider, NITROX (PADI) Lifetime