

VIJAYAWADA

Conservationist nominated for prestigious award

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Murthy focusses on conservation of king cobra

Eastern Ghats Wildlife conservationist Murthy Kantimahanti has been nominated for the prestigious “Future for Nature” wildlife conservation award for his work to protect the Eastern Ghats king cobra.

Future for Nature which is associated with wildlife conservation giants like David Attenborough and primatologist Jane Goodall selects three wildlife conservations from all over the world and disburses grants to the tune of Euros 50,000 to support their work. Award-winning wildlife filmmaker, TV host and conservationist Saba Douglas-Hamilton is the chairperson of the award selection committee. Mr. Murthy is among the ten who have been shortlisted for the award.

Murthy Kantimahanti | Photo Credit: [HAND OUT](#)

Mr Murthy who is the founder of the Eastern Ghats Wildlife Society (EGWS) is currently focussing on community-based initiatives to conserve the snake fauna, particularly the king cobra (*Ophiophagus hannah*).

The Future of Nature Award will be used to intensively train the local village youth on issues pertaining to venomous/non-venomous snake identification, snake bites and first aid, with the intention to develop a network of citizen scientists through structured training programmes and workshops within local communities. Field assistants from the local communities will be involved on part-time basis to engage in conservation activities and snake bite management practices. The funds will also be used to establish the first ever Snake Education Centre in the Eastern Ghats.

Mr Murthy has been working to focus the growing perils to wide range of wildlife in the Eastern Ghats. While there were several programmes to study and conserve the King Cobra in the Western Ghats nothing was being done to protect the snake in the Eastern Ghats. The Houston Zoo has already pledged its support to Mr Murthy's snake conservation project.

“The Future for Nature Award is on par with Whitley Award which was conferred on Romulus Whitaker. The mere nomination for the Future for Nature Award paves the way for sponsorship, Mr Murthy said.

If Mr Murthy makes it to the list of award-winners he will be the second Indian to win the award since its inception in 2008. Charudutt Mishra was given the award for his work to protect the Snow Leopard.