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The Monthly Electronic Newsletter of Zoological Survey of India

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IN THIS ISSUE

- ▶ [Headquarters, Kolkata](#)
- ▶ [ANRC, Port Blair](#)
- ▶ [MARC, Digha](#)
- ▶ [CZRC, Jabalpur](#)
- ▶ [NRC, Dehradun](#)
- ▶ [GPRC, Patna](#)
- ▶ [SRC, Canning](#)
- ▶ [HARC, Solan](#)
- ▶ [DRC, Jodhpur](#)
- ▶ [NERC, Shillong](#)
- ▶ [APRC, Itanagar](#)
- ▶ [WRC, Pune](#)
- ▶ [EBRC, Gopalpur-on-Sea](#)
- ▶ [SRC, Chennai](#)
- ▶ [MBRC, Chennai](#)
- ▶ [FBRC, Hyderabad](#)
- ▶ [WGRC, Kozhikode](#)

From the Director's Desk

I have great pleasure to state that the survey/research activities of the Department have been progressing as per schedule, bringing out quite valuable information on the fauna of the country. As part of the notable research/publication activities of the Department, two important faunal documents on Simbalbara Wildlife Sanctuary (Himachal Pradesh) and the wetland of Nalsarovar (Gujarat) have been brought out, apart from other research publications.

Last year, the Department conducted a chain survey/expedition to the Cold deserts of Ladakh. In a similar manner, this year also the Department could conduct two major surveys in the Tawang and the Namdapha Tiger Reserve areas of Arunachal Pradesh during October November months with the participation of scientists from both the Headquarters and the various Regional Centres. The surveys have yielded several interesting information on the fauna of the region.

Dr. Ramakrishna

ANIMAL OF THE MONTH



**Indian
Eyed
Turtle**

Check-list of fauna of India:

1. Echinodermata
2. Scoliidae (Homoptera: Insecta)

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Headquarters, Kolkata

Three Extensive field surveys were undertaken in the States of Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal for faunal explorations, apart from the periodical surveys carried out in and around Kolkata. During the month, the scientists of ZSI, Kolkata (HQ) identified 7 species of Protozoa, 2 species of Platyhelminthes, 8 species of Nematohelminthes, 11 species of Brachyuran crabs, 4 species of Collembola, 25 species of Hemiptera, 11 species of Hymenoptera, 9 species

of Acari, 5 species of Lepidoptera, 4 species of Odonata, 3 species of Orthoptera, 10 species of spiders, 18 species of molluscs, 7 species of Amphibia, 53 species of fishes and 2 species of reptiles from the States of Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. 13 Holotypes (slides) belonging to 4 species of the genus *Habrobathynella* (Crustacea: Malacostraca: Syncarida: Bathynellacea) received from Y.

Ranga Reddy, Professor Emeritus & Principal Investigator, DST Project. Nagarjuna University, Andhra Pradesh, India were deposited in the National Zoological Collection. Identification services were rendered on 7 lots of specimens, received from different organizations for identification. Seized wildlife materials received from the various Forest Department authorities and other agencies were identified as - operculum of Gastropods, skin of leopard cat, *Prionailurus bengalensis*, skin of a mutant leopard, *Panthera pardus*, hide, hooves and tail tips of Indian Bison, *Bos frontalis*, and the skin and limb bones of the barking deer, *Muntiacus muntjak*.

Studies on the animal remains unearthed from Rangpur (Gujarat) Archaeological site revealed 6 species of herbivorous mammals. The macro-invertebrates recovered from the Tertiary deposits in Nagaland revealed 31 species of bivalves and majority of them turned out to be first records from the Disang Formations in Nagaland. Two checklists prepared on Indian Echinodermata and Scoliidae (Hymenoptera: Insecta) are hyperlinked with the departmental website www.zsi.gov.in.

Postgraduate students from the Zoology Department, Coochbehar College, West Bengal, visited different sections of the HQ.

The Director, ZSI, along with 2 scientists from HQ and 2 scientists from WGRC, Kozhikode, attended the RAMC meeting at MoEF, New Delhi on 9th November. Two scientists from HQ

participated in the National Workshop on Electron Microscope: Instrumentation and their application in material science and biological science, from 23rd to 25th of the month at Jadavpur University, Kolkata. Two scientists of HQ participated in the Arunachal Pradesh (Namdapha Tiger Reserve) Expedition. One scientist attended the IIIrd School of Herpetology at Guwahati on 14th of the month.

Quami Ekta week was celebrated during 19th to 25th of November.

During the month, 12 employees of ZSI, Kolkata participated in the Training on IT Awareness and E-Governance, under the Information Technology Programme of the Administrative Ministry.

Publication Production Section brought out 4 books and earned revenue of Rs. 75,000/- through sale of books.

5 research papers were published, 4 accepted for publication and 5 communicated.

Publications:

1. Chaudhuri, P.S., Nath Sabyasachi, Bhattacharjee Subhalaxmi and Paliwal, R. 2009. Biomass, density and diversity of earthworms under rubber (*Hevea brasiliensis*) plantations in Tripura, India. *The Bioscan*, 4(3): 475-479.
2. Paliwal, R. and Julka, J.M. 2009. Earthworm (Oligochaeta): 7-12. In: *Faunal Diversity of Pong Dam and its Catchment Area. Wetland Ecosystem Series*, 12: 1-138 pp, Zoological Survey of India, Kolkata.




The Stargazer Snake eel, *Brachysomphis cirrocheilus* -
New record for India



A view of the Noa Dehing River in Namdapha Tiger Reserve,
Arunachal Pradesh

3. Paliwal, R. and Mehta, H.S. 2009. Aves. In: *Faunal Diversity of Pong Dam and its Catchment Area. Wetland Ecosystem Series*, 12: 1-138 pp, Zoological Survey of India, Kolkata.
4. Sanyal, A. K and De, J.K. 2009. Pygmy Hog Its status and conservation. *Banabithi*, October, 12-15, Forest department, Govt. of West Bengal.
5. Mondal, G.P and Hazra, A.K. 2009. The diversity of Collembola (Hexapoda) from East and North East India with some notes on their ecology. *Occasional Paper No. 298*; 1-206., Zoological Survey of India, Kolkata.

 In this Issue

Andaman and Nicobar Regional Centre, Port Blair

Marine and terrestrial surveys were undertaken to Ritchie's Archipelago, Neil Island, Car Nicobar Island, Grub Island and Tarmugli Island during 1st to 9th and 12th to 20th November. Undersea surveys in these areas revealed 113 species of corals, 27 species of fishes, 4 species of nudibranchs, 8 species of gastropods and 6 species of crustaceans. 9 species of corals identified during the survey turned out to be new to Indian waters. The live coral cover in the reef area of these islands has been estimated as 17.5 to 62.5%. On the terrestrial part, 68 species

of birds, 22 species of butterflies, 12 species of spiders and 6 species of lizards were identified. Manuscripts on new records of Nudibranchs of Andaman, Intertidal Fauna of East Coast of India and pictorial handbook on Opisthobranchs of A&N Islands were submitted for publication. Database on corals, fishes and nudibranchs were updated with the inclusion of new records. A Project proposal on Ecology and Conservation of the endemic bird, Narcondam Hornbill, *Aceros Narcondami* Hume, in Andaman & Nicobar Islands has been submitted seeking financial



Coral - *Acropora polystoma*



Coral - *Montipora danae*



White-headed Starling - *Sturnus erythropygius*




Eurasian Golden Oriole - *Oriolus oriolus*

support from the Ministry. In order to monitor the corals of the Islands, permanent monitoring plots were demarcated in Tarmugli Island, Henry Lawrence Island, John Lawrence Island and Outram Island and the study is underway.

Scientists of the Centre provided one-day training on 'Census of Crocodiles' to the Forest Department officials of Andaman and Nicobar Administration. The Centre participated in the

National Book Exhibition organized by State Library of A&N Islands from 14th to 20th November and displayed over 400 classic publications of ZSI for public viewing. 48 manuscripts were edited and finalised for the special publication of ZSI entitled, '*Recent Trends in Biodiversity of Andaman and Nicobar Islands*'.

 In this Issue

Marine Aquarium cum Regional Centre, Digha

Efforts were continue to restore the diversity in the display tanks as well as to prepare thematic micro-habitats in the tanks. Two additional tanks were prepared during the month with natural rocks and sand media for displaying sea anemones & clown fishes as well as star fishes. 151 live examples of marine fishes and invertebrates were collected for exhibiting in the aquarium. Different types of puffer fishes, red crabs, sea anemones and star fishes were the highlight of the month. Apart from live marine


fauna, 131 examples of marine invertebrates viz. bivalves, gastropods, star fishes, sea anemones and crabs were also collected under the Annual Plan of Research Work, from local surveys. The local collection during the month also comprised of live examples of two soft corals species for the first time from Digha environs. 3 staff members attended the computer training on IT at Kolkata during the month. Advisory services were rendered to students from schools, colleges and members from other institutions.



Gangetic Puffer, *Chelonodon patoea*



The Snapper, *Lutjanus johnii*

 In this Issue

Central Zone Regional Centre, Jabalpur

A field survey was conducted in the Veerangana Durgavati Wildlife Sanctuary from 18th to 24th of the month and representative faunal samples were collected for taxonomic studies. 31 species of freshwater fishes were identified during the month. Identification and advisory services were provided to two outside parties on 24 species of Coleoptera and on the gall midges

affecting cotton crops in Karnataka. A research paper was reviewed and comments offered. A senior scientist of the Centre was invited as Chief Guest on the occasion of 'Eco Water Literary Campaign-2009' programme organized at the Govt. Autonomous Science College, Jabalpur on 14th of the month and he also participated in the workshop on "Disposal of Appeal under Right to

Information" conducted on 23rd November, at the Institute of Secretariat Training & Management, old JNU campus, New Delhi. Another senior scientist of the Centre delivered a lecture on 'Faunal diversity of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh' at the Department of Zoology, Home Science College, Jabalpur on 4th November. He also attended the interview committee as an expert at the Tropical Forest Research Institute, Jabalpur.

During the month, eight students of B.Sc. from Govt. Model Science College, Jabalpur; Howabagh College, Jabalpur and Govt. Autonomous Science College, Jabalpur carried out their project works in CZRC.

A M.Sc. Ist Semester student of the Govt. Autonomous Science College, Jabalpur,

completed the two months' Internship/ training at the Centre from August to October, 2009, on the project 'Diversity of Moths in the Veerangana Durgavati Wildlife Sanctuary'.

Publications:

1. Sidhu, Avtar Kaur, Mehta, H. S. and Chandra, K. 2009. Appressed basking posture a prevalent method of behavioural thermoregulation adopted by butterflies of cold desert of Ladakh (India). *Association of Tropical Lepidoptera notes, USA*, June issue: 3-4.
2. Thirumalai, G., Chandra, K and Sidhu Avtar Kaur. 2009. Ecological diversity and Insect Biodiversity in Cold Desert in India. Pp: 199-210. (Editor, Prof. T.N. Ananthakrishnan: in Insect Biodiversity- Functional Dynamics and Ecological Perspectives).

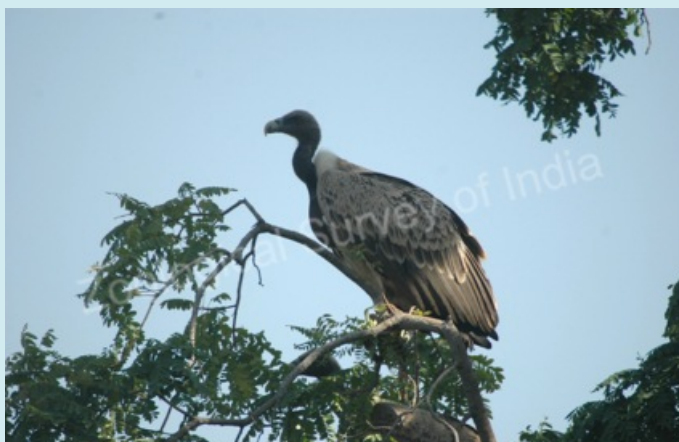
Vultures of Veerangana Durgavati Wildlife Sanctuary, Madhya Pradesh



Egyptian vulture *Neophron percnopterus* (Linnaeus)



Red-headed vulture *Sarcogyps calvus* (Scopoli)



Indian White-backed Vulture- *Gyps bengalensis* (Gmelin)

Northern Regional Center, Dehra Dun

An extensive survey of two weeks was undertaken in the Bhiwani, Mahendergarh, Rewari and Mewat districts of Haryana State and a collection of representative fauna, belonging to 17 animal groups was made, besides observing 91 species of birds and 14 species of mammals. An intensive survey was undertaken in Kalesar Wildlife Sanctuary and 16 species of birds were observed; 5 species of nematodes and 13 species of butterflies were identified. Another field survey was undertaken in and around Dehra Dun for the study of Parasites of vertebrate hosts. 2 research papers, referred by an international foreign journal for review, were offered suitable comments. A scientist of the Centre delivered an invited lecture on Molecular taxonomy to the BBT Final students of Dolphin Institute of Paramedical Sciences, Dehra Dun. Two research papers were submitted.



Giant Tiger Centipede, *Scolopendra hardwickei*

 In this Issue

Gangetic Plains Regional Centre, Patna

A field survey in Chapra district of Bihar was undertaken and representative faunal samples obtained. 3 species of chalcids (Insecta: Hymenoptera) from Bihar were identified, of which 2 species turned out to be collected for the first time from Bihar. A scientist of the Centre participated in the Expedition to Namdapha Tiger Reserve, Arunachal Pradesh. 15 species of butterflies and 3 species of mantids were identified from the collections procured from the Tawang district and Namdapha Tiger Reserve, during the scientific expedition conducted in

Arunachal Pradesh. 2 of the mantids studied, turned out to be new records for Arunachal Pradesh. A lecture on the current status of Gangetic dolphin, *Platanista gangetica gangetica*, in Indian subcontinent was delivered by a scientist of the Centre at Bhagalpur on 23rd of the month. Identification service on fishes was rendered to the students of Patna University. 3 administrative staff members of the Centre attended the training on IT and office suite at CMC, Kolkata.


New records of Insecta (Mantodea), from Arunachal Pradesh



Tenodera aridifolia (Stoll) (Male)




Crebroter urbanus Saussure (Male)

 In this Issue

Sunderban Regional Centre, Canning

A local survey was undertaken along the coast of the Matla River, in connection with the preliminary studies on the faunal diversity in the fish landing centres of Sunderban and representative faunal samples of fishes and

prawns were collected for taxonomic studies. 3 employees of the Centre participated in the computer training programme under I.T. & e-Governance from 2nd to 6th of the month, at Kolkata.

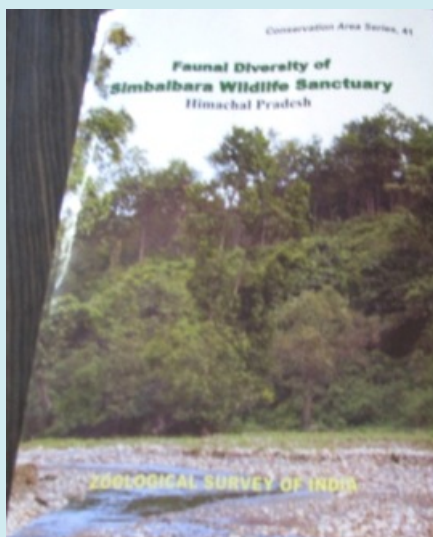
 In this Issue

High Altitude Regional Centre, Solan

The Document on the *Faunal Diversity of Simbalbara Wildlife Sanctaury* has been published dealing with 9 faunal groups and a total of 405 species, among which 2 species of lizards and 1 species of turtle turned out to be new records form the state of Himachal Pradesh. Under the ongoing programme on the fauna of Pangi Valley, and Churdhar Wildlife Sanctuary, 7 species of butterflies and 3 species of Orthoptera were identified. Besides, from river Beas, 5 species of Pisces and from Sukhana wetland (Chandigarh), 1 species of Pisces were identified. A scientist of the Centre reviewed a research paper for a national journal. 3 research Papers were published in national journals.

Publications:

1. Avtar Kaur Sidhu (2009). Revision of Genus *Spindasis* Wallengren (Lepidoptera: Papilionoidea: Lycaenidae) from North West India. *Journal of Entomological Research*, 33(3): 277-283.



Faunal document on Simbalbara WLS




The snake, *Boiga multifasciata*



The butterfly, *Celastrina argiolus*

2. Kamal Saini and H. S. Mehta (2009). Orthoptera as Agriculture and Forest pest in Himachal Pradesh (India). In: *Forest Insect Pest and Disease Management in Northwest Himalaya*, Published by Himalayan Forest Research Institute, Shimla: 81-86.
3. Avtar Kaur Sidhu and H. S. Mehta (2009). Observations on the biology of some pest species of butterflies from Himachal Pradesh (Lepidoptera: Papilionoidea). In: *Forest Insect Pest Management in Northwest Himalayas*. Published by Himalayan Forest Research Institute, Shimla: 103-108.

 In this Issue

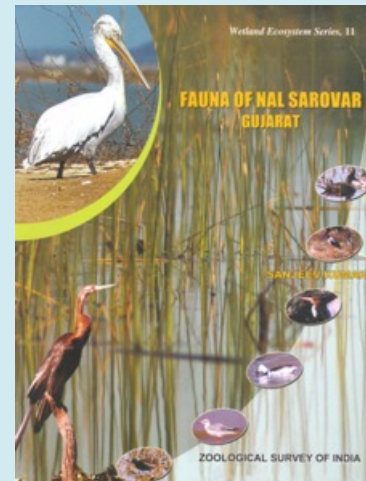
Desert Regional Centre, Jodhpur

Survey of Sardar-Samand Reservoir (SSR), Rajasthan was conducted from 11th to 17th November and representative faunal groups were collected. GPS coordinates of wetlands and wildlife sites within SSR were also recorded. One survey party of the Centre proceeded on a faunal exploration survey of the Sitamata Wildlife Sanctuary and for the study of aquatic nematodes of the Lakes in Udaipur, Rajasthan on 30th November. Scientists of the Centre identified 21 species pertaining to Nematoda, Lepidoptera, Odonata and Coleoptera from various environs of Rajasthan, besides 3 species of Nematoda from the forest areas of Gujarat. 4 scientists of the Centre participated in an International Conference held at CAZRI from 24th to 28th November. 110 entries pertaining to the books in the Centre's Library were made employing the software *e-granthalaya*. 2202 examples of Coleoptera were identified and registered. Prof. Dr. Rüdiger Wehner, Department of Zoology and Brain Research Institute, University of Zürich, Switzerland, visited DRC from 6th to 9th November, to study the specimens of *Cataglyphis setipes* (Formicidae: Hymenoptera: Insecta), congener of *Cataglyphis*

bicolor in North Africa. Scientists of the Centre participated in the Brain Storming Session on Khejri (*Prosopis cineraria*) mortality, held at AFRI on 26th of the month. The Nagar Raajbhasha Karyanvayan Samithi, Jodhpur has awarded the Runner-up Shield and a *Prashasthi Patra* to the Centre for its appreciable contribution towards Raajbhasha, Hindi.

Publication:

Kumar Sanjeev, 2009. Fauna of Nalsarovar, Gujarat. *Wetland Ecosystem Series: 11: 1-137+12 plates, Zool. Surv. India, Kolkata.*



Faunal document on Nal Sarovar



Nagar Raajbhasha Karyanvayan Samithi, Jodhpur, presenting the Runner-up Shield and *Prashasthi Patra* to DRC/ZSI, Jodhpur

North Eastern Regional Centre, Shillong

During the month, 7 species of Rotifera and 10 species of Cladocera collected from Deepor beel, Kamrup district, Assam were identified and registered. 5 species of aquatic Hemiptera, 6 species of Amphibia and 4 species of reptiles were identified and registered from Nokrek Biosphere Reserve, Garo Hills, Meghalaya. 4 species of reptiles from Manipur and 1 species of reptile from Meghalaya were also identified and registered. Identification service was provided to St. Peter College, Shillong on 6 species of reptiles.

A field survey was conducted at Deepor beel and water samples and qualitative and quantitative plankton samples were collected from six sampling sites. 2 staff members participated in

the Arunachal Pradesh expedition (Namdapha Tiger Reserve). 2 staff members of the Centre attended the Computer training programme at BDPS, Shillong. Foresters from the Meghalaya Forest Training Centre, Darugiri, Garo Hills visited the Centre on a study tour. A one day Hindi workshop was conducted at the Centre on 27th November. 1 research paper was published and 2 research papers were submitted.

Publication:


Sharma, B.K. and Sharma, S. 2009. Diversity of Microcrustacea (Crustacea: Branchiopoda) of Loktak Lake, a Ramsar site, Manipur, India. *Journal of Threatened Taxa*, 1 (11): 541-548.



A view of Deepor beel, a Ramsar Site, in Assam



Foresters from the Meghalaya Forest Training School, during their study tour to NERC

 In this Issue

Arunachal Pradesh Regional Centre, Itanagar

A scientific expedition to Namdapha Tiger Reserve was conducted from 30th October to 17th November. Scientists from various Centres of ZSI participated in the expedition. Representative samples of invertebrates and vertebrates were collected for taxonomic studies. Over 200 species of birds were recorded during the field survey. The significant bird records include, sighting of 3 species of hornbills such as the Great Hornbill, *Buceros bicornis*, Wreathed Hornbill, *Aceros undulates* and the Rufous-necked Hornbill, *Aceros nipalensis* as



The ZSI team at Namdapha Tiger Reserve

well as the endangered waterbird of Namdapha Tiger Reserve-the White-bellied Heron, *Ardea insignis*. The expedition team also recorded the



Entomofauna being collected at night using a light trap



White-bellied Heron, *Ardea insignis*

White-tailed Eagle, *Haliaeetus albicilla*, a rare winter visitor to India.



Long-billed Thrush, *Zoothera monticola*



Woolly horseshoe Bat, *Rhinilophus luctus*

[▶ In this Issue](#)

Western Regional Centre, Pune

The Central Zoo Authority (New Delhi) with Rajiv Gandhi Zoological Park and Wildlife Research Center (Pune Municipal Corporation) organized a training programme on “Reptile Management in Captivity” at the WRC, Pune. 25 zoo keepers from Maharashtra, Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh were given training on collection and preservation of amphibians and reptiles. 8 identification & advisory services were rendered on freshwater fishes and Cladocera to 2 outside parties. 20 post graduate students of Yashwantrao Chavan Institute of Science visited the museum and scientists of the Centre delivered lectures on “Collection and preservation of zoological specimens” to the students.



Students observing the faunal displays in WRC museum

[▶ In this Issue](#)


Estuarine Biology Regional Centre, Gopalpur-on-Sea

Unidentified faunal collections of Brahmani-Baitarani Estuary, Orissa were studied and identified into 8 species of fishes and 2 species of prawns. 3 species of crabs collected from the Cauvery Estuary and 4 species of crabs collected from Nuanai Estuary were also identified and added to the identified collection of the Centre.

A scientist of the Centre participated in the scientific expedition to Namdapha Tiger Reserve, Arunachal Pradesh and studied the freshwater fish samples from the Reserve area.

One senior scientist attended the Expert Committee meeting for Revalidation of Potential Fishery Resources in the Indian EEZ, conducted on 26th November at CMFRI, Cochin.

30 Students of B.Sc. Honors from Bhairab Ganguly College Belgharia, Kolkata paid their visits to museum and a scientist of the Centre delivered a lecture on 'Ecology and Biodiversity of Estuaries'.

 In this Issue



Pearlspot, *Etroplus suratensis*

Southern Regional Centre, Chennai


A team of scientists of the Centre completed the extensive faunistic survey tour to Kalrayan, Mudumalai, Pachamalai and Kolli Hills areas in Tamil Nadu. A scientist of the Centre received the membership of the Entomological Society of America. A senior scientist of the centre delivered a special address at the valedictory function of the CSIR programme 'Youth for Leadership in Science' on 26th of the month at Chennai. A monograph on the Piscian Diversity in the coastal waters of Kalpakkam is being prepared by a senior scientist with the scientists of IGCAR, Kalpakkam. A videograph on the Mountain Weasel, documented by a senior scientist of the Centre, during the Ladakh expedition conducted in 2008, is hyperlinked with the departmental website www.zsi.gov.in.



Oriental White-eye, *Zosterops palpebrosus*

Publication:

Thirumalai. G. 2009. Insecta: Heteroptera: (Aquatic and Semiaquatic) In: *Fauna of Nal Sarovar, Gujarat, Wetland Ecosystem Series: 103-112.* (Published by the Director, ZSI, Kolkata).

 In this Issue

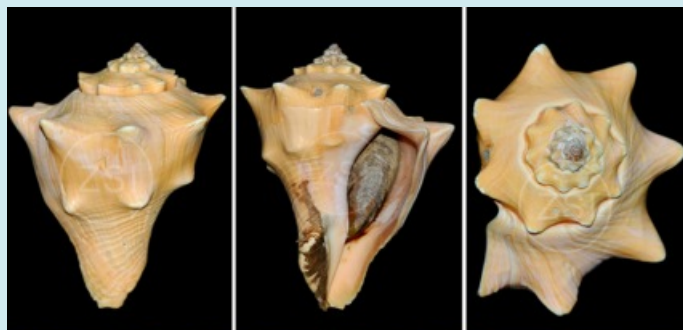
Marine Biology Regional Centre, Chennai

Four species of sponges, 6 species of fishes and 5 species of echinoderms were identified out of the material collected from the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve. Further, 4 species of fresh water fishes were identified for SRC/ZSI, Chennai. One advisory service was rendered involving the identification of 4 fresh water fishes for SRC/ZSI, Jodhpur. A senior scientist of the Centre refereed a manuscript for one Indian journal and submitted comments on a project proposal received from National Geographic Society. Around 80 new examples of live animals were introduced for display in the aquarium tanks. 626 students and tourists visited the marine aquarium during the month.

Publications:

1. Venkatraman, C., and V. Gokula. 2009. Coastal birds of Tamil Nadu, *Rec. zool. Surv. India, Occ. Paper 303*: 1-64, (Published by the Director, *Zool. Surv India*, Kolkata).
2. Venkatraman, C., J. T. Jothinayagam, C. Raghunathan, P. Krishnamoorthy, G. Sivaleela and A. Manimekalan. 2009. Occurrence of White Sucker Fish *Remorina albescens* to South East -Coast, India. *J. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc.*, 105 (3): 348-349.


New records to East Coast of India



Pugilina carnariam Roeding Crown Conch



Remorina albescens Temminck & Schlegel White Suckerfish

 [In this Issue](#)

Freshwater Biology Regional Center, Hyderabad

Field studies on a few *temporary* water ponds in and around Attapur, Hyderabad, were continued for evaluation of the temporary water faunal profile. Net zooplankton and water samples were collected for analysis. A field survey was undertaken from 29th October to 5th November, 2009 at Kolleru Lake, West Godavari and Krishna districts, for post south-west monsoon limnological studies following the late onset of rains (late August-Sept.) and the subsequent extensive floods (early October, 2009) in the region. Net zooplankton and water samples (*littoral* and open water *limnetic* zones) were collected from over 27 significant sampling sites. Though the wetlands ecology reflected

gradual ecological recovery, *species monotony* rather than rich *diversity* seemed to be predominant in littoral malacofauna (*ca* 5-7 spp) and other macrophyte based faunae-periphytic invertebrates and larval entomofaunae. Digital photographs of major wetland and associated faunae were taken for overall faunal inventorying. Under the ongoing programmes, studies were continued on the Reservoir limnology and the *entomofaunal* diversity in a man-made raw water reservoir-Palair (Khammam district) and a few natural lakes in and around Greater Hyderabad.

Two taxonomic advisory services were rendered on earthworms (2 spp.) and freshwater crabs

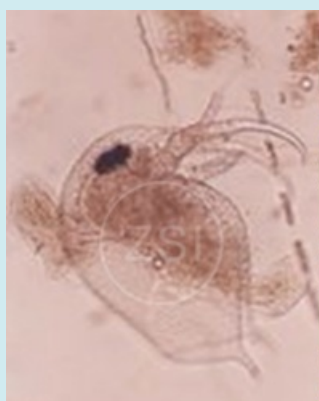
(*Paratelphus* sp.). A batch of 24 life science graduate students and teachers from the Kerala Varma College, Thrissur, Kerala visited the Centre and they were briefed about the role of ZSI in faunal inventorying of the country as well as the role of the Centre in the exploration of fresh water wetlands, ecology and faunal diversity.

Publication:

Deepa, J. *et.al.* 2009. Ichthyofauna, In: *Fauna of Nalsarovar, Gujarat, Wetland Ecosystem Series*, 11:113-128. Ed. Director, Zool.Surv.India, Kolkata.



Student visitors from Kerala Varma College, Thrissur, Kerala, at FBRC




A zooplankter, *Bosminia (Bosminia) longirostris*



Periphytic aquatic insect diversity- *Cybister (Melanectes) convexus*, a predacious diving beetle and *Haliphus angustifrons*, a Haliplid crawling water beetle found in lacustrine environs.



 In this Issue

Western Ghat Regional Centre, Kozhikode (Calicut)

Three new species under the genera, *Odontacolus* Kieffer, *Xenomerus* Walker and *Protelenomus* Kieffer (Platygastridae: Hymenoptera: Insecta) were identified. This forms the first record of the Genus *Protelenomus* from India. A research paper dealing with 57 species of Platygastridae belonging to 19 genera and 4 subfamilies was contributed towards the publication 'Fauna of Karnataka', under finalization. A research paper comparing the morphological details of *Telenomus* spp. (Hymenoptera), parasitizing hosts under 3 different insect orders (Lepidoptera, Neuroptera and Heteroptera) is under preparation. Besides, 11 species of Odonata (Insecta) were identified and a research paper published.

Two articles were contributed to the

Commemorative volume being brought out by the Zoology Alumni of the Malabar Christian College, Calicut, in connection with the Centenary Celebrations of the college, by two scientists of the Centre.

A senior scientist of the Centre delivered an invited talk on 'Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace' during the bicentenary celebrations of the birth of Charles Darwin and the 150th year of the publication of the 'Origin of Species' by Charles Darwin, organized by the Prof. T. C. Narendran Trust for Animal Taxonomy and the Zoology Dept., Malabar Christian College, Calicut on 25th of the month, at the Malabar Christian College, Calicut. Identification and advisory services were provided to graduate students on 13 species of Odonata and also on

flower-insect relationships. A research paper on fish taxonomy was reviewed for a reputed journal and comments offered.

Two senior scientists of the Centre attended the Research Advisory and Monitoring Committee (RAMC) meeting of BSI and ZSI, at the Ministry of Environment & Forests, New Delhi, on 9th of the month, as members of RAMC. A senior scientific assistant of the Centre participated in the workshop on “Along the trails of Dr. Salim Ali”, at the Salim Ali Nature Study Centre, Parambikulam WLS from 11th to 13th November, organized by the Kerala Forest & Wildlife Department. A scientific assistant of the Centre participated in the Arunachal Pradesh expedition conducted in the Namdapha Tiger Reserve, from 1st to 17th November. The vocalization of Hoolock Gibbons recorded at Namdapha is hyperlinked with the departmental website www.zsi.gov.in.

A staff member of the Centre received the Second prize for Hindi typing (Computer) from Col. R. K. Nair, NCC, Calicut on 30th November, in a competition held by the Town Official Language Implementation Committee.

Dr. Ramakrishna, Director, ZSI, handed over the 'Best Taxonomist Award' to Prof. Mohammad Hayat, former Chairman, Dept. of Zoology, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, during a programme organized by the Prof. T. C. Narendran Trust for Animal Taxonomy, held at WGRC, on 21st November.

During the month, 1040 visitors paid their visits to the museum.

Publication:

K.G. Emiliyamma. 2008 (released in November 2009). Taxonomic Studies: Odonata (Insecta) of Kerala, India. *Fraseria* (N.S.), vol. 7, 2008: 11 17.

Special Events of WGRC during the month



A staff member of WGRC receiving the Second prize for Hindi Typing (Computer) in a competition held by the Town Official Language Implementation Committee



Dr. Ramakrishna, Director, ZSI, handing over the Best Taxonomist Award to Prof. Mohammad Hayat, former Chairman, Aligarh Muslim University, during a programme organized by the Prof. T. C. Narendran Trust for Animal Taxonomy, held at WGRC/ZSI, Calicut, on 21st November, 2009

ANIMAL OF THE MONTH

Indian Eyed Turtle

Morenia petersi (Anderson)

(Class: Reptilia, Order: Testudines, Family: Bataguridae)



[Text and photo: Archana Bahuguna, NRC/ZSI, Dehradun]

The Indian Eyed Turtle, *Morenia petersi* (Anderson), is known to occur in Assam, Bihar, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh in India, and also in Nepal and Bangladesh (Das, 1995). It has recently been recorded from Banganga, Haridwar Uttarakhand, (Bahuguna, 2009 - in press). This turtle seldom exceeds 20 cm in length. The species is semi-aquatic inhabiting slow moving rivers, ponds and swamps. It is omnivorous and feeds on aquatic plants, crustaceans and fishes. Mating takes place in winter months and nesting in April or May. Two eggs (34.6-35.0 x 22 mm) comprise its clutch (Das, 1991).

Distinguishing Features:

Head moderate in size; snout strongly projected beyond the lower jaw; upper jaw notched in the middle; lower jaw ventrally flat; sutures between the pectorals not shorter than those between abdominals; carapace olive black; each vertebral with a narrow yellowish mesial line; last four vertebral with a yellowish linear horseshoe mark with the ends directed forward; each costal with an ocellus placed rather low and formed by

a narrow yellowish line, above which are some irregular looped lines of similar colour; the nuchal and each marginal with a vertical narrow yellowish mesial streak; plastron yellow. Head with three yellow streaks on each side, the lower extending from below the nostril to the angle of the mouth. Limbs bordered with yellow; digits fully webbed. Tail, short.

Conservation Status: The species is placed under the category: Lower risk, near threatened (LRnt) (IUCN 1996). In India, its status is indeterminate. In Bangladesh the species is over exploited for food.

References:

- Bahuguna, A. 2009. New distribution record of *Morenia petersi* (Anderson). *Herpetological review* (In press) 2009.
- Das, 1991 Colour guide to the turtles & tortoises of the Indian subcontinent. R&A, Publ. Avon. England .133 pp.
- Das, 1995. Turtles and tortoises of India. Oxford University Press, Bombay. x + 176.




OUT OF THE BOX

Protected areas in Country for Wildlife (MoEF press release, November 12, 2009)

There are 661 Protected Areas in the country which cover around 4.8% geographical area. There are 99 National Parks, 515 Wildlife sanctuaries, 43 Conservation Reserves and 4 Community Reserves in the country.

<http://www.pib.nic.in/release/release.asp?relid=54028>


 In this Issue



PICTURE GALLERY

Echinoderms of Andaman & Nicobar Islands



 In this Issue