



WWF

KERALA

2025

May-June 2025

Mruthika

Conservation Highlights of WWF-India, Kerala State Office

FROM THE STATE DIRECTOR'S DESK

The Hindu newspaper center page news titled “Energy & Efficiency” details how we should reduce our energy consumption through improving/ increasing our energy efficiency. This is very much right. As we are very much aware, our increasing energy consumption and the subsequent increasing energy production are the root cause of many of the environmental problems that we face now - submergence of pristine forests/ other valuable land area and displacement of tribal communities from forests by way of construction of more hydro-electric projects, mining for fuel like coal, lignite, etc., global warming and climate change accelerated by coal-based thermal power plants, air pollution from thermal power plants, environmental, ecological and safety concerns about nuclear power plants, nuclear fuels and nuclear spent fuel disposal, etc. Non-conventional energy sources came in as a big blessing, like solar, wind, etc. But down the line, we have realised there are issues with them too, like an increase in mining for materials needed for making solar panels, safe disposal of used and discarded solar panels, and

storage batteries, loss of valuable land when putting up large-scale solar farms, wind turbines, and bird hits, etc. So the path ahead for us is to adopt a three pronged approach: (1) reducing energy consumption through all means possible, especially during the peak load hours, and otherwise too (for e.g., lighting of signboards, advertisements, billboards, etc. maybe switched off after 11 pm in the night, the trend of increasing night life be reversed to reduce night life by closing malls, pubs, bars, and other such after 11 pm because humans and other life forms need sleep and rest, especially during the night. (2) increasing energy efficiency by using energy-efficient electrical and electronic equipment at home, in the office. (3) shifting to non-conventional energy sources (because it is a better option, causing less damage when compared to others). The thought that we are developing and hence our energy needs are increasing is normal, and subsequently we need to increase our energy production is a call for disaster - for people, planet, and other lifeforms too.

Renjan Mathew Varghese
State Director

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN NATURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Global

Attenborough at 99 delivers ‘greatest message he’s ever told’

At 99, Sir David Attenborough premieres his urgent cinematic documentary *Ocean*, calling it his most vital work yet. The film reveals how oceans—Earth’s climate regulator—face catastrophic decline from destructive practices like bottom trawling, which devastates seabeds and releases CO₂. Featuring never-before-seen footage, Attenborough warns humanity is “almost out of time” to protect marine ecosystems, recalling his 1957 Great Barrier Reef dive as a stark contrast to today’s degraded seas. Attended by King Charles III, Prince William, and celebrities, the London premiere underscored his message: saving oceans is key to

planetary survival. (Source: BBC, 8 May 2025)

World Food Prize for a Scientist for growing food with fewer chemicals

Brazilian Microbiologist Mariangela Hungria won the 2025 World Food Prize (announced May 13) for pioneering biological nitrogen fixation techniques that reduce reliance on chemical fertilizers while boosting crop yields, particularly in soybean production—key to Brazil becoming the world’s top soybean producer. Over 40 years, her research on soil bacteria-plant synergy helped farmers adopt sustainable practices without sacrificing productivity, offering an eco-friendly alternative to nitrogen fertilizers that cause pollution and emissions. While acknowledging criticisms of Brazil’s deforestation for farmland, Hungria emphasized that her methods improve soil health, potentially reducing further forest encroachment. The \$500,000 award will be presented in October at the World Food Prize ceremony in Iowa, honouring her transformative impact on global agriculture. (Source: The Hindu, 15 May 2025)

National

Valmiki Thapar, India's Tiger Man, died on May 31st, aged 73

He was suffering from cancer. Thapar was well-known for his evocative photographs and scholarly oeuvre of nearly 50 books on the tiger, particularly those in Ranthambore, Rajasthan, for nearly four decades. Valmiki Thapar was part of more than 150 government panels and task forces, including the National Board for Wildlife, which is led by the prime minister. (Source: *The Hindu*, 31 May 2025)

Single-use food, beverage packaging forms 84% of Himalayan plastic waste

The Zero Waste Himalaya Alliance was formed to combat the crisis in the eco-sensitive region. Single-use food and beverage packaging forms more than 84% of the plastic waste in the eco-sensitive Himalayan region, an anti-waste collective of NGOs has found. According to the Zero Waste Himalaya Alliance, about 70% of the plastics collected from across the Himalayan belt from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh are non-recyclable and have no market value. The gravity of the environmental reality came to light at the Zero Waste Himalaya Network Meet held in Himachal Pradesh's Bir in April, where the constituents of the alliance lamented the failure of the current policies in addressing the unique challenges of mountain ecosystems. (Source: *The Hindu*, 10 May 2025)

Puttur civic body converts wet waste into BioCNG, which is used to operate six vehicles

In a rare initiative in Karnataka, Puttur city municipality in Dakshina Kannada is converting wet waste into Bio Compressed Natural Gas (BioCNG) through private partnership, for the past nine months. The BioCNG is being used to operate six vehicles of the municipality. The BioCNG is generated by Krishna Muliya Green Energy LLP in a plant at Bannur. Now, the municipality and Krishna Muliya Green Energy LLP are planning to sell surplus BioCNG to potential consumers. Municipality Commissioner Madhu S. Manohar said that the plant was set up by Krishna Muliya Green Energy LLP under Build, Own, Operate and Transfer (BOOT) model on civic land. "The plant produced over 24,000 kg of BioCNG since August, 2024," the commissioner said, adding that it produced between 200 kg and 250 kg of gas daily and that their target is to produce 350 kg of gas every day. (Source: *The Hindu*, 1 May 2025)

Trade tariffs close borders but may open doors to invasive alien species

Global trade, while boosting economies, has inadvertently accelerated the spread of invasive alien species—like the giant African snail that entered India in 1847, devastating crops and ecosystems. From contaminated grain imports

introducing *Parthenium* to ballast water transporting invasive crabs, these bio-invasions cost India over \$127 billion in six decades. Despite stricter trade tariffs, shifting alliances and lax biosecurity increase risks, with aquatic species like the yellow fever mosquito posing severe public health and economic threats. To counter this, India must adopt a 'One Biosecurity' approach, enforcing rigorous port checks, real-time species tracking, and post-trade impact assessments. With global freight traffic set to triple by 2050, proactive measures are critical to prevent irreversible ecological and financial damage. (Source: *The Hindu*, 19 June 2025)

State

ISRO Commits to Sustainable Space Exploration with Eco-Friendly Propellants

Unnikrishnan Nair, Director of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), highlighted ISRO's progress in developing sustainable launch systems using semi-cryogenic, cryogenic, and Liquid Oxygen-Methane propellants during his inaugural address at the EVINCE 2025 conference in Thiruvananthapuram. Organized by the Indian Institute of Chemical Engineers, the event emphasized the role of chemical engineering in advancing eco-friendly space technologies, with speakers like former VSSC director M.C. Dathan stressing the need for circular economy principles to reduce carbon footprints. The conference, themed on AI and additive manufacturing for material innovation, also featured insights from leading scientists, including CSIR-NIIST Director C. Anandha Ramakrishnan. (Source: *The Hindu*, 17 May 2025)

Jaiva Vismayam: Kozhikode Declares Its Ecological Symbols

On May 24, 2025, coinciding with the International Day for Biological Diversity, Kozhikode District officially declared its representative species—including the district flower, tree, heritage tree, animal, butterfly, bird, aquatic animal, and fish. The initiative, led by Kozhikode District Panchayat BMC in collaboration with the Kerala State Biodiversity Board (KSBB), aims to promote conservation, ecological awareness, and regional pride. The selection process involved public nominations, BMC inputs, and expert evaluations from institutions like Malabar Botanical Garden, Zoological Survey of India, and ICAR. Criteria included endemism, cultural significance, and ecological value. The final list was approved after scientific review. The declaration event, "Jaiva Vismayam", was inaugurated online by Forest Minister Shri A.K. Saseendran at Samudra Community Hall, Kozhikode. A video showcase of the declared species and honoring of experts and competition winners marked the ceremony. The declaration of district species marks a transformative step in conservation-led governance, fostering a deeper connection between communities and their natural heritage. (Source: *KSBB Newsletter*, April-June 2025).

SPECIES OF THE ISSUE

Pygmy Dartlet
(*Agriocnemis pygmaea*)



It is a small damselfly with black capped green eyes, black thorax with apple green stripes on lateral sides. Segments 1 to 7 of its abdomen is black on dorsum and pale green on ventral half. The remaining segments are orange-red. Female is more robust and exhibits several color morphs. The green color of the male is replaced by red in the females in the red forms.

CHILDREN'S CORNER

Discover the animal superpowers: Nature has given every animal one or the other superpower. Solve this word search to find out what they are!!

W	F	C	Q	J	D	U	N	S	T	J	E	N	F	S	S
F	T	Y	D	F	S	B	H	T	C	E	D	B	T	Y	R
R	G	R	D	S	T	R	E	N	G	T	H	V	T	I	E
J	F	B	T	Y	N	D	B	U	I	S	L	R	C	K	L
Y	U	D	C	Y	J	L	G	U	S	O	B	A	V	L	T
J	X	Y	G	L	V	D	R	E	V	S	M	E	B	G	N
U	K	A	E	B	A	S	B	S	F	O	N	P	L	W	A
M	G	P	O	E	H	W	G	V	U	O	H	M	U	Y	V
D	U	D	N	E	P	N	S	F	M	L	B	T	J	H	H
B	I	L	H	Y	I	J	L	S	S	U	E	J	L	O	E
M	O	P	K	W	P	A	B	T	P	L	I	B	S	T	G
T	U	S	K	S	G	H	D	B	E	O	V	B	O	J	T
T	B	U	L	E	U	P	N	E	E	D	E	T	M	L	M
J	F	T	P	B	L	J	U	H	D	W	P	H	K	Y	S
G	T	U	G	C	E	W	D	T	O	V	S	F	B	U	N
E	H	E	J	R	V	U	L	E	N	O	S	J	R	B	R
V	D	T	A	F	N	T	L	I	A	T	W	G	H	D	O
X	R	F	C	A	S	D	Y	K	B	C	E	X	R	S	H

Superpowers To Find:

1. Camouflage
2. Venom
3. Speed
4. Strength
5. Claws
6. Wings
7. Webs
8. Antlers
9. Beak
10. Tusks
11. Tail

ACTIVITIES OF WWF-INDIA KERALA STATE OFFICE

Environment Education

Wild Wisdom Global Challenge



The first Gear-Up session, focusing on Dragonflies, was held on 30 June and drew an enthusiastic response, with 827 registrations and 353 active participants. In the month of June, A.K. Sivakumar met with school and school chain heads to promote WWGC and registrations.



People 4 Planet

International Day for Biological Diversity

On the occasion of International Day for Biological Diversity, KLSO actively engaged in a series of events in Thiruvananthapuram. On 19 May, an inter-school biodiversity quiz was jointly organized with the Department of Museums & Zoos at the Museum Auditorium, where A.K. Sivakumar served as quizmaster. Loyola School's Ishan Sajay and Vaishnav A. Nair emerged as winners among 30 participants.



A "Workshop on Urban Biodiversity," organized by University College and the Kerala State Biodiversity Board (KSBB) on 22 May, saw participation from Sivakumar and four WWF interns, who contributed to shaping the action plan.



The same day, Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director attended a Red Data Book Consultation hosted by KSBB as part of the Biological Diversity Day observance.



On 1 June 2025, to mark the International Day for Biological Diversity (May 22) and World Bicycle Day, a joint event was held by WWF-India, the Directorate of Museums and Zoos, Indus Cycling Embassy, and NCC (1 Kerala Girls Battalion). The program included a mega cycling rally and invasive species eradication drive, with 41 participants. Cyclists gathered at Manaveeyam at 6:30 AM, rode to Statue Junction, and returned to the Thiruvananthapuram Zoo, where they cleared around 4 cents of invasive plants.





National Workshop on “Bird Monitoring through Citizen Science: A Decade of Transformation.”



The Kerala Bird Monitoring Collective (KBM) organized a two-day national seminar titled “*Birdwatching through Citizen Science: A Decade of Transformation*” at Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) on 14–15 June. Co-hosted with KAU’s College of Climate Change and Environmental Science and College of Forestry, the event marked ten years of KBM’s citizen science efforts in bird conservation. Attended by scientists, researchers, birders, and officials including the Chief Wildlife Warden, the seminar featured group discussions on key themes. WWF staff and volunteers participated. Sivakumar contributed to the “Training & Resources” theme, while Anushreedha contributed to the “Bird Walks” theme.



Follow-up of the Asian Waterbird Census 2025



As a follow-up for the Asian Waterbird Census held in January, Anamika and Krishnanjana, Academic Interns from Mar Gregorios College of Law, Thiruvananthapuram, were assigned to visit and collect the supporting data of all the AWC sites under the guidance of A.K. Sivakumar. A report was prepared and finalized after an in-house discussion. It was a very good exercise to enrich the Report of AWC.



World Environment Day (WED) 2025

To mark World Environment Day (WED) 2025, KLSO organized and participated in a series of impactful events in collaboration with various institutions and organizations across the state. Activities included planting drives, clean-up campaigns, awareness sessions, and expert talks, all aligned with the WED 2025 theme ‘*Ending Global Plastic Pollution*’.

On 5 June, KLSO collaborated with the Kerala Academy of Sciences for a seminar at Sree Narayana College, Punalur. Dr. G.M. Nair, Dr. A.G. Pandurangan, Mr Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director, WWF-India addressed the gathering on the global theme of Ending Global Plastic Pollution. Ms. Anushreedha, Project Officer, WWF-India introduced citizen science tools like iNaturalist and eBird



Simultaneously, sessions were held at Le'Cole Chempaka, Kallayam, led by A.K. Sivakumar, Senior Education Officer and at Image Creative Education, Kollam, led by Renjan Mathew and Anushreedha Sivanandan engaging students through cultural programs, plastic awareness activities, and the UNEP Tide Turners Plastic Challenge.



At Thiruvananthapuram M&Z, WWF and Indus Cycling Embassy volunteers initiated a Butterfly Garden as a follow-up to earlier invasive species removal. WWF also contributed to Christ University's WED event "*Break the Habit, Beat the Plastic*", addressing marine pollution and sustainable alternatives.

WWF interns attended a Miyawaki forest seminar organized by Nature Club Worldwide at YMCA Hall, where experts presented practical urban forestry models.



On 8 June, in observance of both WED and World Ocean Day, a cycle rally and beach clean-up at Veli Beach resulted in the collection of 10 bags of waste.



Further outreach included an awareness session at *Pixel Quest* in Kochi on 14 June, encouraging youth involvement in conservation through the *People 4 Planet* program.



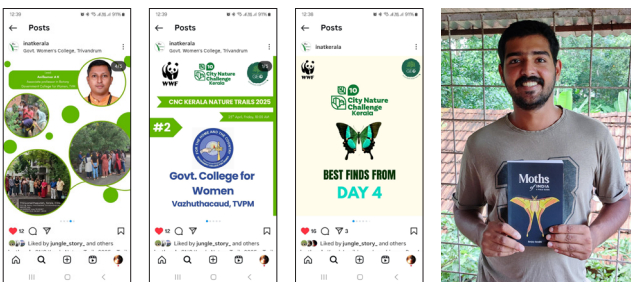
On 20 June, a hands-on training session at KUCTE, Anchal, educated 62 teacher trainees on plastic waste management, including a demonstration on making lifejackets from waste materials.



Christ University's "Break the Habit, Beat the Plastic" program was organized by the Nodal Office of Christ University which focused on collaboration and innovation to combat plastic pollution for a sustainable future. C. Balagopal gave the welcome address and stressed the need for institutional initiatives and youth involvement. Dr. K.V. Thomas discussed plastic marine impact on Kerala's coasts, while Induja Raj highlighted community success in solving waste at Kochuveli Railway Station. Sudheer Kumar of BALCO, a company producing PVC pipes, advocated for sustainable plastic use and reusable alternatives. Akhilesh Ramesh of WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Institute) NGO promoted a shift to a circular economy via Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, linking it to sanitation and health. A.K. Sivakumar, Rachel Anna Kurien, Devika Saju and Joel Joby Jacob, representing WWF-India, attended the program.



Nature Connect - City Nature Challenge (CNC)



Participants added their observations for CNC 2025 Kerala until 4 May, recording 91,556 observations across 2,707 species, with contributions from 454 observers and 594 identifiers. The organizing team has identified the Top

Observers, Identifiers, Young Naturalists, and Best Debut winners. Highlights have been shared on CNC and WWF-India's social media.

Others



The KLSO team attended "Ormmappaythu," a memorial event for Sri. S. Rajendran, former Director of AMAS Kerala, at Sugantha Smrithi, Neyyattinkara.



The office team visited the Miyawaki Forest at Kanakakkunnu with interns Mikha Khosh and Devika Saju, and collected plastic waste.



The 20-cent NERC plot in Vellayambalam was cleared of weeds and the area was planted with tapioca.



Loyola Externship get-together



The Loyola School invited all the organizations that provided sessions for the students on their Externship Program for the year 2025 and commemorated their support. Renjan and Anushreedha attended the program and gave feedback on the program and received a memento of appreciation from the school team.

EDITORIAL BOARD

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Published by WWF-India, Kerala State Office, Vanchiyoor P.O., Thiruvananthapuram - 695035
For private circulation only • Phone: 0471-2302265 • email: klso@wwfindia.net • web: wwfindia.org
Pre-Press: Soft and Soft, Sasthamangalam, Phone: 8547043499, Printed at: New Multi Offset, Tvpm