



WWF
NEWS
LETTER

KERALA

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Mruthika

Newsletter of WWF - India, Kerala State Office

FROM THE STATE DIRECTOR'S DESK

The birding programmes of WWF-India are enriched every year with more and more diverse programmes with the involvement of people from different sections of the society and this has a multidimensional impact – it is an important documentation process, it gives us a more clear picture of the richness and diversity of biodiversity and wildlife around us, it helps us to monitor the status and health of the avian population, it helps us to identify changes in species, habitats, behavior, migration etc, it helps us to generate interest and involvement among the society in protecting natural habitats and their inhabiting wildlife. Moreover bird watching helps us to generally observe the nature and environment and identify desirable and undesirable changes and encourages us to take action in this regard. The Asian Waterfowl Census 2015 covering the three southern most districts was conducted by WWF-India jointly with Social Forestry Division in January. The AWC at Thiruvananthapuram covered six sites with the participation of 72 birders and volunteers and the exercise resulted in the count of 1880 birds belonging to 50 species, the census exercise at Pathanamthitta counted 3053 birds belonging to 52 species and Kollam district AWC counted 8000 birds belonging to 55 species. This high numbers should open our eyes to ensure that these water birds and their habitats, i.e. the varied wetlands around us are protected. In this connection, WWF took the initiative to observe World Wetlands Day 2015 with an awareness programme at Fatima Mata National College, Kollam on 2nd February organized jointly with the Social Forestry Division and the College with the participation of 120 students. WWF threw open a 'Wetlands Challenge' to the students to visit the local wetlands around their homes, identify the status and threats and come up with an action plan to protect the same. The extensive field work as part of the ongoing project on laterite mining and its environmental impacts is bringing out some alarming facts and figures on the extent

of laterite mining, both legal and illegal, happening across the State in different magnitudes. In some areas, the field team had a difficult time consoling the local people, especially women with tears, unfolding their stories of how they fell prey to the mining lobby under the lure of money wherein, around ten years back, they gave their land for extracting the laterite bricks and soil and henceforth their local wells have totally run dry and now their existence is at stake because of the severe shortage of water in the area. The field work in the other four districts where laterite mining happens at a rampant rate is yet to be completed and then only the final picture will emerge. On the environment education front, Teachers Training Workshops were organized in Kannur and Thiruvananthapuram. Two other major EE programmes conducted during this period included the State Environment Awareness Programme, Paaristhithikam 2015 supported by Dept. of Environment & Climate Change, GoK, in which the awareness programmes on the theme of 'Sustainability through Energy Conservation and Co-operation' were organized targeting the students of L'ecole Chempaka and Loyola School in Thiruvananthapuram and the action component, the distribution of 10 Solar Lanterns to selected five deserving institutions in the City mainly homes for the disabled, old age homes and orphanages. The National Science Day 2015 was observed by WWF-India at Dept. of Chemistry, Amrita School of Arts & Science, Kollam with fifty students of the integrated course in Chemistry attending the workshop titled 'Geoinformation Technology for Better Natural Resource Management'. The Wildlife Orientation Camp during this period was organized covering Muthumala and Bandipur Tiger Reserves. As in previous years, we actively participated in the National Biodiversity Congress organized in Thiruvananthapuram this year by the Kerala State Biodiversity Board.

Renjan Mathew Varghese,
State Director

IMPORTANT NEWS ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURE

GLOBAL

Fossil finds push back snake origins

Snakes have been slithering on Earth far longer than anyone ever realised. Scientists on January 27 described the four oldest-known snake fossils, the most ancient of which was a

roughly 25-cm reptile called *Eophis underwoodi* unearthed in a quarry near Oxford, England, that lived about 167 million years ago. The remarkable fossils from Britain, Portugal and the United States rewrites the history of snake evolution, pushing back snake origins by tens of millions of years. Until now, the oldest snake fossil dated back to about 102 million years ago, said University of Alberta Paleontologist Michael Caldwell, who led the study published in the journal *Nature Communications*. (Source: The Hindu 29 January 2015)

NATIONAL

Giant leap for the big cat

India now has 70 per cent of the Tiger population in the world with the latest assessment estimating 2,226 big cats, up 30 per cent from 1,706 in 2010, show preliminary estimates in “Status of Tigers in India, 2014.” The largest increase is recorded in the Western Ghats Landscape complex — Kerala, Karnataka, Goa and Tamil Nadu — with 776 tigers (up from 402 in 2006). The Mudumalai - Bandipur - Nagarhole - Wayanad complex holds the world’s single largest Tiger population currently estimated at over 570 Tigers (in 11,000 sq.kms. of habitat), the report says. Goa now has a persistent tiger presence with three to five animals. Sunderbans did not report an increase in number because of a low prey base and other factors. Odisha reported a fall in number. The latest round of assessment used state-of-the-art technology of double sampling, using camera traps to estimate the assessment and distribution of tigers over 3,78,118 sq.kms. of forests in 47 reserves in 18 States. The only portion which was not scanned were some parts of the north-east and Jharkhand. (Source: *The Hindu* 21 January 2015)

India home to 18% of world’s raptors

India is home to 106 species of raptors, popularly known as ‘birds of prey,’ says a recent publication by the Zoological Survey of India. The publication reveals that more than 18 per cent of the 572 species of raptors spread all over the world can be found in India alone. There are primarily two kinds of raptors — diurnal (day flying) and nocturnal (night flying). Out of the 333 species of diurnal birds of prey found in the world, 101 species can be found in the Indo-Malayan region. India’s bio-geographical regions support 69 species of kites, vultures, eagles, harriers, hawks, buzzards and falcons in different habitats. Among these raptors, the Indian white-backed Vulture, the Long billed Vulture, the Slender billed Vulture, the Red headed Vulture and the Forest Owllet are in the ‘Critically Endangered’ category, and the Egyptian Vulture and the Saker are in the ‘Endangered’ list of the International Union for Conservation of Nature’s (IUCN) ‘Red List.’ Some of the interesting and lesser-known species of raptors include Andaman Serpent Eagle and Great Nicobar Serpent Eagle which can only be found in the Andaman and the Great Nicobar islands respectively. (Source: *The Hindu* 26 February 2015)

Smart cities must be eco-friendly

As the smart cities initiative gets under way in India, U.N. Special Envoy for Cities and Climate Change Michael Bloomberg has cautioned that global financial institutions are increasingly coming under pressure not to assist any development activity that does not adequately address environment and climate change concerns. During a meeting with Union Urban Development Minister M.

Venkaiah Naidu, Mr. Bloomberg, who has agreed to assist the Ministry in organising a ‘City Challenge’ competition for assessing cities and towns for inclusion in the smart cities development programme, emphasised that smart cities should be environment friendly. (Source: *The Hindu* 17 February 2015)

Indian firms need to do more to avoid climate change risks

Lack of preparation leaves supply chains in Brazil, China, India and the U.S. more vulnerable to climate change risks than those in Europe and Japan, according to a new report by CDP, an international NGO, formerly called Carbon Disclosure Project. Suppliers in India and Canada are not doing enough to manage climate change risks. Indian companies, in particular, demonstrate a low propensity to reporting on emissions, according to the report ‘Supply chain sustainability revealed: a country comparison 2014-15.’ The report, which says, it is the most comprehensive overview of the climate risks and opportunities for supply chains globally with focus on 11 countries, finds that Chinese and Indian suppliers deliver the greatest financial returns on investment to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and demonstrate the strongest appetite for collaboration across the value chain. (Source: *The Hindu* 05 February 2015)

STATE

Monkey fever, a new challenge for Kerala

The emergence of Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD or monkey fever), a viral infection which had been confined for long to certain provinces in the interior forests of Karnataka, in Wayanad and Malappuram districts in Kerala this year, is a warning to the State’s health system about yet another vector-borne disease which could become a public health challenge. The focal point of KFD, since the 1950s, has been Shimoga and a few nearby provinces in Karnataka, where a few hundred cases were reported every year. This is the third consecutive year that KFD is rising its head in Wayanad. Though in 2013 and 2014 only one confirmed case each were reported, this year KFD has manifested as an outbreak in two districts in Kerala, affecting nearly 50 persons. (Source: *The Hindu* 17 February 2015)

Migratory birds comes under surveillance

Fears of recurrence of avian influenza epidemic has pushed the Forest Department to keep a tab on migratory birds that winter in Kerala. Veterinarians will collect droppings of migratory birds from the two nearby wetlands, Sasthamkotta and Ashtamudi, for scientific analysis. The wetlands and wilderness areas of the State are among the preferred destinations of migratory birds. The possibility of outbreak of the epidemic among wild birds, especially waterfowls, cannot be ruled out, a communication from the Department said. (Source: *The Hindu* 30 January 2015)

SPECIES OF THE ISSUE

തീക്കാക്ക (Malabar Trogon - *Harpactics fasciatus*)



പശ്ചിമഘട്ട മലനിരകൾ അതിന്റെ 'endemism'ത്തിന് പേരു കേട്ടതാണ്. ഇവിടെ മാത്രം കണ്ടുവരുന്ന ഒരു സുന്ദരൻ പക്ഷിയാണ് തീക്കാക്ക. പേരു സൂചിപ്പിക്കുന്നതുപോലെ തന്നെ തീ പോലെ കടുംചുവപ്പും ചെമ്പൻ നിറവും ചേർന്ന നിറമാണിവയ്ക്ക്. ഇരുട്ടടഞ്ഞ നിത്യഹരിതവനങ്ങളിലും അർദ്ധ നിത്യഹരിതവനങ്ങളിലുമാണ് ഇവയെ സാധാരണയായി കണ്ടുവരുന്നത്. ചിലപ്പോൾ ഇവയോടുചേർന്ന പുത്രപാതി വനങ്ങളിലും കാണാറുണ്ട്. ആൺ-പെൺ പക്ഷികൾ തമ്മിൽ കാഴ്ചയിൽ പ്രകടമായ വ്യത്യാസമാണ് ഉള്ളത്. കറുത്ത തലയും ചുവന്ന മാറിടവും വെള്ളമാലയുമിട്ട് ആൺപക്ഷി സുന്ദരനാകുമ്പോൾ പൊതുവേ പുകുപിടിച്ച ചെമ്പൻനിറമാണ് പെൺപക്ഷികൾക്ക്. താരതമ്യേന നിശബ്ദരായ ഇവയുടെ സാന്നിധ്യം പറക്കുമ്പോഴും വല്ലപ്പോഴും ശബ്ദമുണ്ടാകുന്ന ശബ്ദം കേൾക്കുമ്പോഴും മാത്രമാണ് നാം തിരിച്ചറിയുക. നീണ്ടവാലിനിറുവശത്തും അടിവശത്തായി വെള്ളത്തുവലുകളുമുണ്ട്. നിത്യ-അർദ്ധനിത്യഹരിതവനങ്ങളിലെ മധ്യഭാഗത്തുള്ള ഇലച്ചുർത്തുകളിലാണ് ഇവ ഇരതേടുന്നത്. പാറ്റകൾ, ഇറച്ചുകൾ, ചെറിയ പല്ലികൾ, ചീവീടുകൾ തുടങ്ങിയവയാണ് ഇഷ്ട ആഹാരം. കാട്ടിലെ കീടനാശിനിയെന്നെന്നു സാരം! ചെറിയ മരപ്പൊത്തുകളിലാണ് കൂടുകൂട്ടുന്നത്. ഒറ്റയ്ക്കും കൂട്ടായിട്ടും കണ്ടുവരുന്നുണ്ട്. മറ്റേതു ജീവിവർഗത്തെയുംപോലെ തന്നെ ആവാസശോഷണമാണിവയുടെയും പ്രധാനഭീഷണി. നിത്യഹരിതവനങ്ങളും അർദ്ധനിത്യഹരിതവനങ്ങളും നശിക്കുന്നത് നിലനിൽപ്പിനെ ബാധിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. കേരളത്തിൽ കണ്ടുവരുന്ന പശ്ചിമഘട്ട ദേശ്യപാതികളായ (endemic) പക്ഷികളിൽ പ്രധാനിയാണ് തീക്കാക്ക.

എ.കെ. ശിവകുമാർ

CHILDREN'S CORNER

What you can do at your home to save energy.....below are some hints..... but you have to figure out what words go in each blank.

1. is beneficial for the environment and for your health.
2. of your desktop computer can be switched off when idle.
3. Switch off the between 6.00 to 10.00 pm.
4. Dry clothes in sunlight than using of a washing machine.
5. Incandescent bulbs can be replaced by
6. Use..... rated home appliances.
7. Replace electric geysers with
8. ObserveHour every day.

(Send your answers as an SMS to 94473 86978. First 3 winners will get a prize)

SPECIAL FEATURE

Asian Waterfowl Census 2015 Report

Asian Waterfowl Census 2015 was conducted by WWF-India, Kerala State Office in three southern districts namely Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam and Pathanamthitta in association with the Social Forestry Divisions of Kerala Forests & Wildlife Department. This was under the Green Partnership Programme of Kerala Forests & Wildlife Department and a network of NGOs across the State.

Thiruvananthapuram



AWC held on Saturday 10th January reveals heavy decline in the Water bird population of Thiruvananthapuram. The census recorded 1874 individual birds belonging to 49 species. The highest count was from Punchakkari paddy fields and from Vellayani Lake. Shore birds like Greater sand Plover, Lesser sand Plover, Sanderling, Heuglin's Gull and waders like Wood Sandpiper, Marsh Sandpiper, Green Sandpiper, Pacific golden Plover, Green Shank were the major migratory birds reported. The census was held at Punchakkari paddy fields, Vellayani Lake, Akkulam Lake, Veli Lake and beach, Poovar Estuary and Aruvikkara Dam. Of these, the lowest count was from Akkulam Lake numbering about only 144 from 22 species. The heavy change in land use pattern and pollution were identified as major culprits for this. The lesser counts at Punchakkari paddy fields and Vellayani Lake compared to previous years indicate loss of feeding grounds due to lack of agriculture. The unprecedented heavy rain fall in the later months of 2014 which resulted in water level rise in the habitats of waders is one of the reasons for low count.

Pathanamthitta

The AWC held on 17th January 2015 at Pathanamthitta district records the sightings of a Blue Throat, a flock of Glossy Ibis and a dozen Asian Openbills which lives in dry wetlands with high atmospheric temperature. The AWC was conducted at five locations namely Thonnallur near Pandalam, Karingalipuncha, Aranmula - Nalkalikkal wetlands, River Pamba at Aranmula and Othara-Thiruvamanapuram wetlands. The maximum count was

from Karingalipuncha with around 1200 birds belonging to 33 species. The birders from Thonnallur Ela counted around 800 birds from 39 species. The Aranmula wetland which falls under the proposed airport under dispute reported a very good water bird habitat with more than 1000 birds belonging to 22 species. Around 600 birds were recorded from Othara - Thiruvamanapuram. The migratory birds like Common Sandpiper, Little ringed Plover, Pacific golden Plover, Green Sandpiper, Whiskered Tern, Glossy Ibis and Black winged Stilts etc were reported from these area.



The general conclusion of the census reveals a steady total count in the district compared to previous year. But the sighting of dry habituated species is a matter of real concern on the increasing temperature in the district. The increase in number of Black Kites, a known scavenger in the River Pamba of Aranmula, indicates the increased pollution from dumping of poultry waste. The sighting of Whiskered Terns, generally found in stagnant waters like paddy fields were reported from the river, indicating the degradation of the river ecosystem. The wetlands of the districts needs to be protected for the healthy existence of these birds and there by increase the agricultural sector and ensure a sustainable socio-economic status.

Kollam



The AWC 2015 held in Kollam on 24th Saturday has estimated a good population of around 8000 water birds from 6 selected wetlands in the district. The census covered Kantachira - Sakthikulangara harbour, Pallikkodi - Neendakara harbour, Thodiyur - Vattakkayal - Vellanathuruthu, Chittumala - Karali marshes, Polachira and Kappil beaches. The highest count was from Polachira

near Chathannur from where around 3500 birds were counted mainly comprising five types of wild ducks namely Lesser whistling Ducks, Pigmy cotton Goose, Garganey Ducks, Spot billed Ducks and Northern Pintails, of which the latter three are migratory. A Common Moorhen and three Indian Coots were sighted at Polachira. Neendakara Harbour and Pallikkodi wetlands stands in second position with a count of around 1500 birds, of which the lion's share was contributed by Little Egrets from the harbour area and the mud banks of Pallikkodi. The team which visited Thodiyur - Vattakkayal and Vellanathuruthu beach near Karunagappally sighted several migratory birds like Painted Storks, Greater sand Plover, Lesser sand Plover, Grey Plover, Green Shank, Green Sandpiper, Brown headed Gulls and Whiskered Terns. The team covering Chittumalachira could sight migratory birds like Wooly necked Stork, Asian Openbill, Common Sandpiper, Whiskered Terns, Little Terns and around 320 Purple swamp Hens - a resident medium sized bird with blue plumage like that of a peacock. Kantachira, part of Ashtamudi Lake, a usual habitat for large number of Black tailed Godwits was a great disappointment this year because only a single bird was seen. But other migratory birds like Red Shank, Green Shank, Green Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper, Whiskered Terns were observed here.

Generally, in all the wetlands, the count of waders usually seen feeding in shallow waters was less due to the comparatively high water level. The count of swimming birds preferring deeper waters like Ducks and Cormorants were high. The two harbours really proved to be good feeding grounds for around 1000 Little Egrets and a fairly large population of Brahmini Kites and Black Kites. The Karali Marshes, once a haven for birds, showed a sharp decline in number as well as species of water birds. The wetland which used to shelter more than 5000 Purple Swamphens in previous years is now home to only few. The shallow wetland has been converted into a deep lake due to uncontrolled sand mining. The Polachira wetlands seem comparatively less disturbed with rather no issues such as waste dumping.

The Asian Waterfowl Census in all the three districts were led by expert birdwatchers attached to WWF namely A.K. Sivakumar, C. Harikumar, Biju P.B., CG.Arun, Neha Waikar, Jaichand Johnson, Kiran R.C. and Anoop S.S.

MEMBER'S DESK

കാടിന്റെ മക്കൾക്കൊപ്പം

മുതുമലൈ - ബന്ദിപ്പുര, ഇവിടെ പ്രവേശനഫീസില്ല!! നമുക്കല്ല കാടിന്റെ മക്കൾക്ക്. കേരളം, തമിഴ്നാട്, കർണാടകം ഇവയുടെ സംഗമസ്ഥാനം. കാടിന്റെ മക്കൾക്ക് അങ്ങോട്ടുമിങ്ങോട്ടും എങ്ങോട്ടും പോകാം, വരാം.



ഇവിടെ ഫെബ്രു. 15, 16, 17 ഒരു ത്രിദിനക്യാമ്പ് WWF ചാർജ് ചെയ്യുന്നവർ മടിക്കേണ്ട കാര്യമെന്ത്? ശ്രീ ശിവകുമാറിനോട് ഒക്കെ പറഞ്ഞു. 14 ന് രാജ്യാണിയിൽ കൂകിപ്പായലാണ് നിലമ്പൂർവരെയെന്നും ബർത്ത് ഉറപ്പാക്കണമെന്നും അദ്ദേഹം പറഞ്ഞു. അടുത്ത സുഹൃത്തും WWF സഹയാത്രികനുമായ മാത്യുസാർ മസ്കറിലാണ്, മകളുടെയടുത്ത്. അദ്ദേഹമില്ലാതെ എന്ത് ക്യാമ്പ്? വരുമെന്ന ഉറപ്പിൽ ടിക്കറ്റ് റിസർവ് ചെയ്തു. ഫെബ്രു. 14 രാത്രി 10.30 ന് ഒമ്പതംഗസംഘം രാജ്യാണിയിൽ യാത്രയായി. പതിവുള്ള തമാശവട്ടം, അസമയമായതിനാൽ മാറ്റി വെച്ചു. ഫെബ്രു. 15 - പ്രഭാതം 7.30 നിലമ്പൂർ സ്റ്റേഷൻ WWF സുഹൃത്തു കോവിലകത്തു മുറി ഡിവിൻ കാത്തുനിൽക്കുന്നു. വിംഗറിൽ അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ വീട്ടിലേക്ക്. ഒന്നു ഫ്രെഷായി, കനോലിപ്പോട്ടിലേക്ക് തിരിച്ചു. വൈകിട്ട് മുതലമൈ എത്തിയാൽ മതിയെന്നുള്ളതുകൊണ്ട് ഒരു ബോണസ് ട്രിപ്പാണിത്.

ചാലിയാർ - കുറിഞ്ഞിപ്പുഴകളുടെ സംഭാവനയാണീ സ്ഥലം. 1846 ൽ കനോലി സായ്വിന്റെ നിർദ്ദേശാനുസരണം സർ ചാത്തുമേനോൻ നട്ടുപരിപാലിച്ച 1500 ഏക്കർ തേക്കുതോട്ടം ജനകീയ സർക്കാർ 5.675 ഏക്കറായി ചുരുക്കിയെടുത്ത് കേരള ഫോറസ്റ്റ് ഡിപ്പാർട്ട്മെന്റിന് ചാർത്തിക്കൊടുത്തു. നന്നായി സൂക്ഷിക്കപ്പെടുന്നുവെന്നത് ആശ്വാസകരം. സാദാ സന്ദർശകർക്കും, പഠനസംഘത്തിനും ഒരുപോലെ പ്രയോജനപ്രദം. 23-ാം നമ്പർ തേക്കുമരമാണ് ഏറ്റവും വലുത്. 49.2 മീറ്റർ ഉയരം 4.29 മീറ്റർ ചുറ്റുവണ്ണം. നദികളുടെ സാമീപ്യമുള്ളതിനാൽ പക്ഷികൾ ശലഭങ്ങൾ ഇവയ്ക്ക് ധാരാളമുണ്ടാവിട. ചാലിയാറിന് കുറുകെയുള്ള തൂക്കുപാലം മറ്റൊരു ആകർഷണമാണ്. ഉച്ചയോടെ വഴിക്കടവ്, ഗുഡല്ലൂർ വഴി മുതുമലയേക്ക് വിട്ടു. മുതുമലയെ പീക്കോക്ക് ഫോറസ്റ്റ് ഹൗസിൽ 'സിവിൾ വെജിറ്റേഷൻ മീൽസ്' ഞങ്ങളെ കാത്തിരിക്കുന്നു. ഒന്നാം തരം ഭക്ഷണം. വൈകിട്ട് നാലുമണിക്ക് തെപ്പക്കാട് നിന്ന് മുതുമലയെ സഫാരി.

321 ചതുരശ്രമീറ്റർ വിസ്തൃതി. ഫെബ്രുവരിയിലൊക്കെ ഡ്രൈസി സൺ ആണ്. അതിനാൽ ദൂരെക്കാഴ്ചയുണ്ട്. ആന, കാട്ടുപോത്ത്, കടുവ, നാലുതരം മാന്യകൾ, മലയണ്ണാൻ, കാട്ടുനായ, മയിൽ, ഹിൽ മൈന തുടങ്ങി എണ്ണമറ്റ വന്യമൃഗങ്ങളും പക്ഷികളും ശലഭങ്ങളും എത്രയോ ഇനങ്ങളിൽപ്പെട്ട മരങ്ങളും കൊണ്ട് സമ്പന്നമുമാണിവിടെ. എന്നാലും കാടിനുള്ളിലെ വന്യമൃഗകാഴ്ച തികച്ചും ഭാഗ്യമാണ്. കടുവ ഒഴിച്ച് മറ്റെല്ലാ മൃഗങ്ങളേയും കാണാനും ചിലവയുടെ പടമെടുക്കാനും കഴിഞ്ഞു. തൊട്ടുതലേന്ന് സഫാരി ചെയ്തവർ കടുവയെ കണ്ടതായി അറിഞ്ഞു. രാത്രി മുതലമൈ പീക്കോക്കിലെ കഞ്ഞിയും ചമ്മന്തിയും നല്ല തണുപ്പും. സുഖനിദ്ര ഇടയ്ക്ക് മുറിഞ്ഞു. ജനലിലൂടെ പുറത്തേയ്ക്കു നോക്കുമ്പോൾ പുറത്ത് മുറ്റത്ത് കരി കുടുംബം! അമ്മയും കുട്ടിക്കൊമ്പനും, കാട് അവരുടെ വീട്..

ഫെബ്രു. 16 രാവിലെ മുതുമലയെക്കാട്ടിൽ ഒരു കറക്കംകുടി കഴിഞ്ഞ ശേഷം മസിനഗുഡിയിലേക്ക്.. മറവൻകണ്ടി അണൈ, മൊയാർ അണൈ, ചിക്കമ്മൻ കോവിൽ തുടങ്ങി കാണാൻ എന്തൊക്കെ! കാട്ടാനകൾ പാതയോരത്ത്. സന്ദർശകരുടെ സാന്നിധ്യം അറിയിച്ച് മാന്യകളും കുറങ്ങുകളും. യാത്ര സമയബന്ധിതം.. നേരം ബന്ദിപ്പരിലേക്ക്. തെപ്പക്കാട് - ബന്ദിപ്പൂർ റൂട്ടിൽ വന്യജീവികളെ ധാരാളമായി കാണാം. കാണുക മാത്രം.. നിർത്തിയിറങ്ങി കാണാനോ പടമെടുക്കാനോ ശ്രമിച്ചാൽ പണികിട്ടും. ഫൈനറുണ്ട്. ബന്ദിപ്പൂരിൽ ഒരു സായാഹ്നസഫാരിക്കുശേഷം ഫോറസ്റ്റ് മെമ്പിൽ നിന്നുഭക്ഷണം കഴിഞ്ഞ് സുഖമായൊരു ഉറക്കം. ഫെബ്രു 17. പുലർച്ചെ ഒരു ബന്ദിപ്പൂർ സഫാരികുടി ഈ യാത്രയിൽ ധാരാളം പക്ഷികളുടെയും പോത്തുകളുടെയും മാന്യകളുടെയും സൈറ്റിങ്ങ് ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നു. ഉച്ചയോടെ മടക്കം. മുതുമലയെവിൽ നിന്ന്

ഉച്ചഭക്ഷണം. നാലുമണിക്ക് നിലമ്പൂർ, നിലമ്പൂർ കോവിലകം, ക്ഷേത്രം, ചാലിയാർ പുഴയോരം ഒക്കെ ഒന്നു ദർശിച്ചു.

നിലമ്പൂർ സ്റ്റേഷൻ. രാത്രി 8.20 ന് നിലമ്പൂർ നിന്ന് തിരുവനന്തപുരം വരെ പോകുന്ന 16350 രാജ്യാണി റെഡി. ഓരോ യാത്രയും ഓരോ അനുഭവങ്ങളാണ് അനുഭവങ്ങളാണ് നല്ല ഗുരുനാഥൻ. കുറ്റങ്ങളും കുറ്റവൃക്കളും നോക്കാതെ യാത്ര ആസ്വദിക്കുക. ഏതുയാത്രയിലും നമുക്കുള്ള പാഠങ്ങൾ, വിഭവങ്ങൾ പ്രകൃതി നമുക്കായി ഒരുക്കിവെച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. തമാശനിറഞ്ഞ ഗൗരവയാത്രയാണ് ആസ്വാദകരം. മസിൽ പിടിച്ചയാത്രകൾ ഒന്നും തരുന്നില്ല. ഇതൊക്കെ അറിയുന്നവരാണ് WWF യാത്രികർ. ആറും അറുപതും ഇതിലുണ്ട്. ഈ യാത്രയിലെ മുതിർന്ന അംഗം മാത്യുസാറിനേയും ഏക വനിത രഹന റഫീക്കിനേയും അഭിനന്ദിക്കാതെ വയ്യ !

കെ. ശിവപ്രസാദ്
സായിഗംഗ, വട്ടിയൂർക്കാവ്, തിരുവനന്തപുരം

ACTIVITIES OF WWF-INDIA KERALA STATE OFFICE

Common Bird Monitoring Programme (CBMP)



The Orientation Programme for the upcoming CBMP to be held from 13th to 16th February 2015 was conducted in three southern districts, Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam and Pathanamthitta on 9th, 23rd and 28th January with sessions on 'Common Birds' and 'Introduction to www.ebird.org'. Sessions were led by Ms. Neha Waikar, A.K. Sivakumar and Sri.C.Harikumar respectively.



Ongoing project on 'Laterite Mining and its Environmental Impacts'

The data regarding the laterite mining and quarrying sites in Ernakulam District were collected from the Dept. of Mining and Geology District Office. The major sites and representative quarries as per size were covered within two days on 30 & 31 January and primary data collected by direct observation, interaction with the quarry operators,



laborers etc. The team consisted of the State Director, the team from GeoVin Solutions Pvt. Ltd, and a staff from Ground Water Dept, Ernakulam. The field work in the other 5 districts are also planned to be covered within the months of February and March 2015. On 9th and 10th February, a joint team from WWF and Geovin Solutions visited Kollam District and covered all the laterite mining sites covering the various aspects of timeline of mining, extent and depth, environmental and socio-economic impacts etc.

Teachers Training Workshop at Kannur



A Teachers Training Workshop on 'Education for Sustainable Development', supported by CPREEC, Chennai was held at the IB owned by Kerala Forests & Wildlife Department, Kannavam on 29th January 2015 and was attended by 45 teachers from different schools of the district. Sessions of the workshop were led by A.K.Sivakumar, Senior Education Officer, Sri.C.Sunilkumar, State Advisory Board Member and Sri.Rajan Vengad.

Bird Documentation Programme for students of Bhavans Vidya Bhavan, Kodunganoor

An orientation session on common and water birds were given to the Nature Club Members of the school on 20th January and they were taken for a birding trip to Punchakkari wetlands on 26th January in the early morning hours. They observed around 40 species of birds there and noted down their field observations with details. The field session were led by Sri. A.K.Sivakumar and Smt. Neha Waikar.

Refresher Course in Environmental Science at University Staff College

The State Director was invited to deliver two lectures on 13 January, 2015 on the topics 'Human Animal Conflicts'

and 'Our Wetland Ecosystems in Peril' in the Refresher Course in Environmental Science at University Staff College. Around 60 college teachers from different colleges in Kerala attended.

Solar City Project in Kochi Corporation

A.K.Sivakumar and Sri.Vinod Malayilethu attended the half day discussion meeting on the implementation of the Solar City Project in Kochi organized by Kochi Corporation on 19th January 2015. They contributed actively in the discussions and deliberations on how to effectively implement the project.

World Wetlands Day 2015



World Wetlands Day was observed by WWF with an awareness programme at Fatima Mata National College, Kollam on 2nd February 2015, organized jointly with the Social Forestry Extension, Southern Region Kollam and the college. It was inaugurated by Sri. I. Siddique, Dy. Conservator of Forests, Social Forestry Extension, Kollam. Sri. Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director, WWF-India delivered the Wetlands Day message. The session was presided over by Dr. Charles Dicruz, Head of the Dept of Zoology and Dr. Mary Tresa P Miranda delivered the welcome speech. Dr. Johnson Pius felicitated the programme and Smt. Fazeena S., M.Sc Student delivered the vote of thanks. The technical sessions on 'Wetlands for our Future' and 'Wetlands of Kerala - Issues and Concerns' were led by Sri. A.K.Sivakumar and Sri. Renjan Mathew Varghese respectively. The post lunch session was an interactive quiz programme on wetlands followed by an open forum.



Class at TKMIM

The State Director was invited to address the batch of MBA Students on 8th January, 2015 on the topic of 'Ecological Footprint and Sustainable Development' and also on our recent work related to 'Kerala Going 100% RE by 2050'. Around 80 students attended the two sessions.

Sunday Bird Walk at Polachira



The monthly birding programme, the Sunday Bird Walk was held on 8th February at Polachira wetlands which witnessed the highest count of birds in the Asian Waterfowl Census conducted previously in and around Kollam. Eight birders participated and they could identify 38 species. Migratory birds like Northern Pintails, Garganey Ducks, Pheasant tailed Jacana, Golden Oriole, Rosy Starling, Wood Sandpiper etc were the highlights of the day.

Paaristhikam 2015



The State Environment Awareness Programme, Paaristhikam 2015 supported by Dept. of Environment & Climate Change, Government of Kerala was conducted in Thiruvananthapuram at two institutions with both awareness and action components. The awareness programmes were held at L'ecole Chempaka, Edavakode and Loyola School, Sreekaryam on 12th and 20th February 2015 respectively with classes on the theme of 'Sustainability through Energy Conservation and Co-operation' that included two technical sessions led by Mr. Renjan Mathew Varghese, WWF-India and Mr. Suresh, EMC and competitions like poster designing, elocution and an interactive learning quiz mastered by Mr. A.K. Sivakumar. The action component was the distribution of 10 Solar Lanterns to



selected five deserving institutions in the City mainly homes for the disabled, old age homes and orphanages.



Teachers Training Workshop in Thiruvananthapuram

A Teachers Training Workshop was conducted at Govt. College of Teacher Education on 19th February 2015 that was attended by 70 Teacher Trainees. The workshop was inaugurated by Dr G.R. Santhosh Kumar, Chairman, Board of Studies in Education, University of Kerala. The session was presided over by Dr.T.V. Kunhiraman, Principal-in-charge, GCTE, Thycaud. Sri. Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director gave the introduction to the workshop. Dr.T.K.Jayasree, Asst. Professor, M.Ed Department and Mr. Akhil S., Student Representative felicitated the workshop. Dr.V.K.Sobha welcomed the guests and participants to the programme and Ms. Gayathri, Student Co-ordinator delivered the vote of thanks. Activity sessions and technical sessions on 'ESD Concepts' was led by Sri. Renjan Mathew Varghese and on 'ESD - Approaches and Methodology' by Sri. A.K.Sivakumar.



Wildlife Orientation Camp at Muthumala - Bandipur Tiger Reserves

A Wildlife Camp was conducted from 15th to 17th February at Muthumala Tiger Reserve in Tamilnadu and Bandipur Tiger Reserve in Karnataka covering nearby places like Masinagudy, Moyaar and Nilambur also. Seven campers along with the Senior Education Officer and a volunteer



attended the camp. The wildlife safaris in both the Tiger Reserves were thrilling enough with the sighting of many animals and birds. The camp was highly interesting.

National Biodiversity Congress 2015



As in previous years, WWF was invited to be part of the National Biodiversity Congress 2015 organised by the Kerala State Biodiversity Board in association with the National Biodiversity Authority and other State Biodiversity Boards with various events spanning from 23 – 28 February at Kanakakunnu Palace Ground and other adjoining venues. WWF put up an exhibition stall and also arranged display and sale of our conservation products. The State Director was also specially invited to be Judge for the Children's Biodiversity Congress and also contributed in the discussions and deliberations as part of the three days National Biodiversity Conference from 25 – 28.

Class on Biodiversity at SIRD, Kottarakara



The State Director was invited to lead a class on 'Biodiversity Resources and its Conservation Challenges' as part of the Training Programme for Government Extension Officers organized by State Institute of Rural Development, Kottarakara on 25 Feb, 2015.

National Science Day 2015 at Amrita School of Arts & Science, Kollam

Fifty students of the Integrated Course in Chemistry of Amrita School of Arts & Sciences, Amritapuri Campus was introduced to the concept of Geoinformation Technology



in the workshop titled 'Geoinformation Technology for Better Natural Resource Management' organized by WWF-India in association with Department of Chemistry, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Kollam as part of National Science Day 2015 on the theme of 'Science for Nation Building' sponsored by Kerala State Council for Science, Technology & Environment and supported by Dept. of Science & Technology, Govt. of India. The workshop was inaugurated by Dr.C. Gopinathan Pillai, Principal, ASAS in a function presided over by Mr. Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director, WWF-India. Dr.M.Viswanathan, HOD and Chairman, Dept. of Chemistry, Dr. Smitha Chandran S. and Mr. Vinod P.G. spoke on the occasion. The technical sessions on various topics like Basics of Geoinformation Technology & its applications, Geospatial & Utility Network Analysis in GIS, Principles of Remote Sensing and its applications were led by Mr. Renjan Mathew Varghese, Mr. Vinod P.G. and Dr. A.R.R. Menon.



Workshop on the Challenged Coast of India

The State Director attended the 'Workshop on the Challenged Coast of India' organized on 16th February at YMCA Hall organized jointly by NFF and KSMTF and contributed in the discussions and deliberations as this is a common agenda shared by us also as outlined in the Coastal and Marine Conservation Strategy of WWF-India. The speakers were Ms. Jessu from Chennai and Mr. Probir from Pondicherry.

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