



NEWS LETTER

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2015

# Mruthika

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Newsletter of WWF - India, Kerala State Office

## FROM THE STATE DIRECTOR'S DESK

The fact that Periyar Tiger Reserve has bagged this year's PATA-WWF Bagh Mitra Award is a matter of great pride to us. In the last year it was bagged by Parambikulam Tiger Reserve. The major efforts to protect the Tiger is not just because it is the National Animal, it occupies the apex position in the forest ecosystem and hence if the Tiger is removed from its position, the whole food chain and food web will collapse leading to the collapse of the health and vitality of the forest ecosystem which will ultimately affect the adjacent agriculture, plantation and human settlements also along the forest fringes. Tiger is an Umbrella Species – that is why we say 'Protect the Tiger and you Protect them All'. It is a Charismatic Species since it easily catches the attention of people from across the world. Over the years, the number of Tigers shows an increasing trend. Whether it is a real increase in the population or we are getting a clearer estimate because of the more scientific estimation techniques that we have adopted in the recent past is something which we are yet to ascertain and it will only be possible with the estimation figures in the coming years also. Earlier, Tiger estimation exercises used to be carried out by people going into the forest areas and taking note of the Tiger kills, scats, urine markings etc. i.e. generally based on indirect evidence. Direct sighting was very rare in such exercises since the animal is very shy and will move away once it detects human presence. Over the recent past, we have started using the camera trapping techniques (capture – recapture method) whereby the area to be surveyed is divided into grids and recon survey is carried out to identify the locations where the cameras can be placed. Then laser triggered cameras are placed in these identified locations for 15 – 21 days. Finally the camera data cards are retrieved and when the images are analysed, it gives the images of the individual Tigers, which can then be identified as males, females, adults, sub-adults, mothers with cubs etc. The images will also include other animals like Leopards, Sloth Bears, Wild Dogs, Elephants, Deers etc. and even

humans. The stripe patterns of a Tiger are different for each individual like the finger prints of humans. Hence the stripe patterns can be converted into digital signatures of individual Tigers and this can be shared between Tiger bearing states and data compared to avoid duplication thereby resulting in a more scientific and accurate estimation of the Tiger population in the states and the country as a whole. The global Tiger population figure now stands at around 3200 and India has around 1700 plus. That means, India hosts more than 50% of the wild Tiger population globally and hence the whole world looks to India to ensure the sustenance of the wild Tiger population in the long run. In this background, we can be proud of our Periyar Tiger Reserve bagging this prestigious award instituted towards the best achievement in Tiger Conservation. In Kerala, Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary and surrounding areas holds the largest number of Tigers, followed by Periyar TR and Parambikulam TR. WWF's global initiative on protecting the Tigers and enhancing their numbers and improving their habitats is TX2 (called as T by 2 denoting the target of doubling the number of wild Tigers). Under this initiative, several landscapes have been identified in India and across the world which needs to be protected and improved so that the Tiger can have a better habitat and protection and their numbers will naturally increase. One of the sites falls in Kerala which covers the forest areas from Vazhachal extending up to Parambikulam. Along with protecting the habitats, there is also an increasing need to create awareness among the people on protecting the Tiger. This year also we observed the International Tiger Day 2015 with relevant programmes. We also have a proposal to launch the 'Teachers for Tigers' programmes aiming to sensitise the Teachers on protection of the Tiger and through them reach out to the students, parents and the general public. Let us all come together to lend a helping hand in protecting the Tiger.

**Renjan Mathew Varghese,**  
State Director

## IMPORTANT NEWS ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURE

### GLOBAL

#### Israel offers help to clean up Ganga

Israel, one of India's biggest defence partners, wants to offer its expertise in water management and help the Government

with its ambitious Ganga Cleaning Project. Israel's water management, desalination and recycling techniques, which helped it overcome a water crisis following years of drought, have been emulated by several countries. Armed with these water management techniques, Israeli officials have met their counterparts in the Union Ministry for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, headed by Uma Bharti, to offer help in water conservation and the Ganga Cleaning Programme. A delegation of experts from Israel will be in India in August to assess the areas of

Ganga cleaning that the country can contribute to. India and Israel have already signed agreements for agriculture partnership and 28 centres of excellence have been set up in Haryana, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Bihar, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. These centres offer training to agriculturists on how to increase their produce and on effective means of irrigation. (Source: *The Hindu*, July 19, 2015)

## NATIONAL

### Manta Ray spreads to A.P. coast, but fishermen not interested

The migration of Giant Reef Manta Ray (*Manta alfredi*) from the Indian Ocean is posing a threat to its survival along the East Coast. It was listed as 'Vulnerable' on the List of the Threatened Species of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Though fishermen operating from the Machilipatnam coast are not making any attempt to catch it, a huge number of Manta Rays were getting entangled in their nets. Sighting Manta Rays establishes its seasonal migration to Machilipatnam coast. At least six Giant Reef Manta Rays got entangled in the nets of the local fishermen near the Hamsaladevi area in Krishna district in 2013 and another weighing above a half tonne was netted near the same location. Many a time, the fishermen had to release the Manta Rays in the sea, in the absence of channels to export it to the right market destinations. (Source: *The Hindu*, July 17, 2015)

### Butterfly species found



Scientists have discovered a tiny butterfly in Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh. It is 15 mm in size and has been named Banded Tit (*Hypolycaena narada*). Krushnamegh Kunte of the National Centre of Biological Sciences, Bengaluru, who discovered the species, said: "Butterflies are supposed to be well-known, and most of the species are discovered in India. Therefore, finding a new species is really surprising." A four-member team had visited the Namdapha Tiger Reserve in Arunachal Pradesh in 2009 and photographed this species for the first time. "We found this butterfly and thought it was different from

the other commonly found butterflies. We shared the photographs with Dr. Kunte," said Arjan Basu Roy, one of the team members. (Source: *The Hindu*, July 18, 2015)

### The quality of air you breathe in Chennai is worse than in Delhi

Official air quality data for the first half of this year shows that while Delhi does indeed face high levels of air pollution, Kanpur, Varanasi and Chennai are worse off. Averaging across the ten pollution monitoring stations in the city, a little over a quarter of the days from January to June this year in Delhi had an Air Quality Index (AQI) value of severe (3.2 per cent), very poor (8.7 per cent) or poor (14.4 per cent). In comparison, nearly half of all days in Kanpur were of severe, very poor or poor air quality. Varanasi had no 'severe' days, but nearly half of all days were either of very poor or poor air quality. Averaging across its three monitoring stations, Chennai had the highest proportion of 'severe' days (17.7 per cent), and a third of all days were either of severe, very poor or poor air quality. (Source: *The Hindu*, July 18, 2015)

## STATE

### Where Tigers, Tribes coexist

Though a school dropout from Sunkam tribal settlement deep inside the Parambikulam Tiger Reserve, S. Babu holds the answer to the raging debate on Tiger versus Tribal, where Tiger conservation and livelihood of forest-dwelling Tribespeople fail to find a common ground. He was busy on the eve of International Tiger Day, selecting a set of Tiger images he captured from the Sanctuary for a photo exhibition slated at the Palakkad District Collectorate. The exhibition to be organised by the Parambikulam Tiger Foundation, comprising images captured by Tribal Forest Watchers and Tourist Guides, will introduce to the outside world the rich biodiversity of the Reserve and highlight its Tiger conservation efforts. (Source: *The Hindu*, July 29, 2015)

### Monsoon deficient by 25 per cent

A tracking of the different phases of the monsoon from June 1 reveals that the State may have to wait worriedly for a normal spell this year. Overall, the rain registered is 25 per cent deficient so far. Only Thiruvananthapuram and Idukki districts recorded normal rainfall. But the rainfall deficiency level has reduced in northern districts. Usually July, said to be the wettest month, is the period when the monsoon is in full flow. The rainfall expected in June is 65 cm, July 73 cm, August 42 cm, and September 24 cm. "Currently we have a situation in which the rainfall had been weak in July. It is almost 37 per cent deficient till July 23. But we received 56 cm of rainfall in June," K. Santhosh, Director, Meteorological Centre, Thiruvananthapuram (Indian Meteorological Department), told. (Source: *The Hindu*, July 25, 2015)

## SPECIES OF THE ISSUE

### ചേരാകൊക്കൻ Asian Openbill (*Anastomus Oscitans*)



നമ്മുടെ നാട്ടിലെ തണ്ണീർത്തടങ്ങളിലും പുഴയോരങ്ങളിലും മറ്റും ഇപ്പോൾ സാധാരണയായിത്തന്നെ കണ്ടുവരുന്ന ഒരു വലിയ കൊറ്റിയാണ് ചേരാകൊക്കൻ. കഴിഞ്ഞ പത്തുവർഷമായിട്ടാണ് ഇവ കേരളത്തിൽ സാധാരണമായത്. അതിനുമുമ്പുവരെ പക്ഷിനിരീക്ഷകർക്ക് ഒരു അസാധാരണ പക്ഷിയായിരുന്ന ചേരാകൊക്കൻ സാധാരണയായി തമിഴ്നാട്ടിലെയും മറ്റും ഉഷ്ണമേഘി തണ്ണീർത്തടങ്ങളിലായിരുന്നു കണ്ടിരുന്നത്. അതേ ഉയർന്ന താപനില കേരളത്തിലും ഉണ്ടാകുന്നു എന്നതിന്റെ തെളിവാണ് ചേരാകൊക്കന്റെ എണ്ണത്തിലുള്ള വർദ്ധനവ്. വെള്ളരിക്കൊക്കു കളിക്കാൾ വലിപ്പത്തിൽ വെള്ളനിറത്തോടെയും ചിറകിന്റെ പിന്നറ്റത്ത് കറുത്തുവലുകളും ഇവയ്ക്കുണ്ട്. മുതിർന്ന ആൺപക്ഷികൾക്ക് കൊക്ക് നല്ല ഓറഞ്ചുകലർന്ന ചുവപ്പുനിറമാണ്. പൂർണ്ണവളർച്ചയെത്താത്തവയ്ക്ക് കൊക്കുകൾ ചാരനിറമായിരിക്കും. കൊക്കിന്റെ നടുവിലായിട്ടുള്ള വിടവാണ് ഇവയുടെ പ്രധാന പ്രത്യേകത. ഞവണിക്ക, നത്തക്ക എന്നൊക്കെ അറിയപ്പെടുന്ന പുറംതോടുള്ള 'മൊളസ്കുകളെ' പൊളിച്ചുകഴിക്കാനുള്ള അനുകൂലനമാണ് ഇത്. ഈ ചേരാകൊക്ക് മറ്റു ജലജീവികളെയും ആഹരിക്കാറുണ്ട്. ഒറ്റയ്ക്കും കൂട്ടമായും കാണുന്നുണ്ട്. കേരളത്തിൽ കൂടുവയ്ക്കുന്നതായി ഇതുവരെ കണ്ടെത്തിയിട്ടില്ല. മറ്റു ജലപക്ഷികളെപ്പോലെ തന്നെ ആവാസശോഷണം തന്നെയാണ് ഇവയുടെ നേരിടുന്ന പ്രധാനപ്രശ്നം.

## CHILDREN'S CORNER

ഇക്കഴിഞ്ഞ ജൂലൈ 29 നാം അന്തർദേശീയ കടുവാദിനമായി ആചരിച്ചിരുന്നു. കടുവകളെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള കൗതുകകരമായ കുറച്ചു വസ്തുതകളാണ് ഇവിടെ കൊടുത്തിട്ടുള്ള പട്ടികയിലുള്ളത്. അത് ചേരുംപടി ചേർക്കുക.

ഏറ്റവും കൂടുതൽ കടുവകളുള്ള രാജ്യം	എൻഡെയ്ഞ്ചേർഡ്
കേരളത്തിലെ കടുവാസങ്കേതങ്ങളുടെ എണ്ണം	6

ഒരു കടുവാസങ്കേതത്തിനകത്ത് സ്ഥിതി ചെയ്യുന്ന പ്രസിദ്ധമായ ക്ഷേത്രം	ക്യാമറാ ട്രാപ്പ്
2010 ൽ കടുവാ ഉച്ചകോടി നടന്ന രാജ്യം	2
IUCN പട്ടികപ്രകാരം കടുവകൾ ഏത് വിഭാഗത്തിൽപ്പെടുന്നു?	നെല്ലിക്കാംപെട്ടി
കടുവകളുടെ ഗർഭകാലം	ഇന്ത്യ
കടുവകളുടെ എണ്ണമെടുക്കാനായി ഇപ്പോൾ ഉപയോഗിച്ചുവരുന്ന ആധുനിക സംവിധാനം	ശബരിമല
പെരിയാർ കടുവാസങ്കേതത്തിന്റെ ആദ്യ പേര്	16 ആഴ്ച
പറമ്പിക്കുളം കടുവാസങ്കേതമായി പ്രഖ്യാപിച്ച കേന്ദ്രമന്ത്രി	റഷ്യ
ഇപ്പോൾ ലോകത്ത് എത്രതരം കടുവകളുണ്ട്?	ജയറാം രമേഷ്

## EXPERT TALK

### Rise in number of Tigers is a matter of great pride for Kerala

July 29 - We come to the International Tiger Day. ITD was declared in the background of the St Petersburg Tiger Summit held in Russia in 2010. Protection of the Tiger gains much significance worldwide due to some significant aspects like (i) It is the apex predator in the forest ecosystem (and hence vital to ensure the health and well-being of the ecosystem and its inhabiting life forms) (ii) As for India, it is our National Animal (iii) It is a charismatic species i.e. easily catches the attention of people, and (iv) It is an umbrella species i.e. you protect the tiger and its habitat and you protect all other species in the same habitat

As per the latest report of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), Government of India titled 'Status of Tigers in India 2014', the present estimate of Tigers in India stands at 2226, a whopping 30% increase in the population from 1706 as per the estimation carried out in 2010. The actual range stands between 1945 to 2491, but the confirmed figure is 2226 since we have photographed that many Tigers individually. This contributes to 70% of the world's tiger population with the balance spread out in China, Russia, Thailand, Vietnam and other such countries.

As per the 2014 report, the largest increase has happened in the Western Ghats Landscape covering Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Goa, from 402 in 2010 to 776 in 2014 and the world's single largest Tiger population is in Mudumalai - Bandipur - Nagarhole - Wayanad complex i.e. 570 Tigers in an area of 11,000 sq.kms. Goa has an established presence of around 3-5 Tigers. The other major habitat of Tigers in the West Bengal, Sundarbans, has not showed any change. In Odisha, the Tiger numbers have fallen.

As for Kerala, the numbers have steadily gone up from 46 in 2006 to 73 in 2010 and now to 136 in 2014. Periyar and Parambikulam are the two declared Tiger Reserves in the State. But surprisingly, as per the last estimation, the Tiger population is much better outside TRs i.e., in Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary and its surrounding areas.

Project Tiger is one of the major conservation programmes run by Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change under the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA). All the estimation exercises are co-ordinated by NTCA with the technical support and guidance from Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Dehradun and with the involvement of NGOs like World Wide Fund for Nature – India (WWF-India), Centre for Wildlife Studies (CWS), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), Wildlife Trust of India (WTI), Wildlife Conservation Trust (WCT), Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), Aaranyak, and Wildlife Research and Conservation Society (WRCS) to ensure competency in estimation exercises and transparency in the final figures.

The Tiger Estimation exercise has evolved over the years, from the traditional census techniques using direct and indirect sighting methods, to the state of the art capture-recapture technology by using laser operated camera traps. Various measures to enhance the prey base like improving the health of the forest ecosystem, preventing deterioration of the forest floor by cattle grazing and ensuring ample food for the herbivores are all being applied. The level of protection to the Tiger, be it within the Tiger Reserves, potential habitats being declared as new Tiger Reserves and huge funds, manpower and infrastructure is provided to step up the level of protection, and better protection of the big cat in forests even outside Tiger Reserves and Protected Areas. In instances, where Tigers and other cats stray out of forest areas into nearby settlements and lift cattle, compensations are given to the farmers on the same day itself to avoid retaliatory killing. There is a lot of emphasis on improving field level infrastructure including communication and transportation facilities, providing necessary support to field level staff like providing torches, windcheaters, raincoats, tents etc.

Along with the Central and State Governments, many international and national agencies are also working effectively and efficiently to ensure that the remaining Tigers are protected for future. Many education, awareness and outreach campaigns are taken up like 'Save Our Tigers' by various agencies like WWF, WCS in association with mainline media with the objectives to make the people more aware about why the Tiger should be protected, the present status of the big cat, threats to Tigers etc. and also to raise funds through donations. Media sensitization workshops are conducted at national, state and regional levels to provide a platform for media persons to interact with experts and protection staff from the field, for a better and clearer understanding of Tiger protection activities,

its hurdles and how we can all work together to ensure a sustainable future for the big cat.

One of the major reason for the decline in the Tiger population can be attributed to its poaching for sale of its skin and other body parts being used in medicines and for making various aphrodisiacs like Tiger blood wine in the international wildlife trade. This is one area where we can all contribute. Supply is there only when there is a demand. So if we can kill the demand by not buying such illegal wildlife parts and products, then the supply chain will also be lost and the Tiger can be protected.

If we look at the timeline in history, there was a time when we used to have around 1,00,000 Tigers in the wild. From that figures, we have lost 97% of the wild Tiger population and the numbers have come down because of poaching, forest fragmentation and degradation, habitat loss, prey – predator imbalance etc. Let us hope that, in future, we will be able to turn this around and the numbers will start picking up.

Renjan Mathew Varghese

## ACTIVITIES OF WWF-INDIA KERALA STATE OFFICE

### 1.1 CFL Distribution at Poovar



As part of 'Going Beyond the Hour' of Earth Hour 2015, WWF-India, Kerala State Office is distributing free CFLs (two each for a family) in association with KSEB, EMC and DoECC to economically underprivileged people. As part of this, on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2015, 800 CFLs were distributed at Pozhiyur, Kanchampazhinji and Poovar lying along the coastal belt of Thiruvananthapuram district. Senior Education Officer and Office Assistant led this activity along with Mr. Michael, a social activist of the area and regular associate of WWF-India.

### Heronry Survey

Kerala State Office is doing the Heronry Count in three southern districts of Kerala under the Green Partnership Programme with Kerala Forests & Wildlife Department.

This year in Thiruvananthapuram district (25 heronries), Kollam district (1) and Pathanamthitta (7) were surveyed. The survey was led by Senior Education Officer, Sri. Jaichand Johnson and Sri. Hari Mavelikara.



**Sunday Bird Walk**



The monthly birding programme, Sunday Bird Walk was held on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2015 at Neendakara - Shakthikulangara fishing harbors and Pallikkodi part of Ashtamudi Lake. 16 birdwatchers were part of the Sunday Bird Walk that listed 35 species of birds. The Heronry Count at Kollam also was conducted along with it.

**International Tiger Day 2015**



Kerala State Office observed the International Tiger Day at Devaswam Board College, Sasthamkotta at Kollam in association with Social Forestry Extension Unit, Kollam. Sri.I Siddique, Dy. Conservator of Forests inaugurated the observance. The Tiger Day Rally was flagged off jointly by

Sri.Siddique and Dr.Letheesh, Principal of the college. The Tiger Day Talk and Quiz was led by Sri. A.K.Sivakumar, Senior Education Officer. The State Director was interviewed by Akashavani for the ITD 2015. An article titled '*Rise in number of Tigers is a matter of pride for Kerala*' has been prepared and sent to Kerala Calling, the official magazine of Kerala Government.



**Workshop on Ecotourism Plan at Neyyar WLS**

Senior Education Officer attended the 'Workshop on Preparation of Ecotourism Plan at Thiruvananthapuram Wildlife Division' held on 13<sup>th</sup> July at Neyyar WLS and actively participated in the discussion.

**Meeting on Disaster Management & Climate Change**

The State Director attended the 'Consultation on Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation' organized on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2015 at Mascot Hotel Thiruvananthapuram by State Disaster Management Authority, Dept. of Revenue and Disaster Management and Govt. of India and UNDP Project.

**Onam Bird Count**



Orientation sessions for conducting the participatory Common Bird Monitoring Programme (Onam Bird Count) during Onam vacation was led by Senior Education Officer and Mr. Jaichand Johnson on 18<sup>th</sup> August at Govt. College for Women and Loyola School, Thiruvananthapuram respectively. On the next day it was again conducted at SN College, Kollam for the participants from Kollam District. The field level activities as part of the Onam Bird Count was coordinated from the Kerala State Office by the Senior Education Officer in Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam districts and Sri.C.Harikumar in Pathanamthitta District.

More than 500 bird lists were submitted from these three districts.



**Vetiver planting drive for the waterbodies in and around Thiruvananthapuram City**



WWE, AMAS Neyyattinkara, Social Forestry Department of Kerala Forests and Wildlife Department and the NSS Cadets have come together to plant vetivers along the fringes of urban waterbodies in the City to promote water and soil conservation. The launch of the programme was carried out by Smt. Sugathakumari Teacher, noted environmentalist and poetess on August 13 at a function in Pangode presided over by Sri. Unniyal IFS, PCCF (Social Forestry). Many school students participated in the programme by taking the pledge and planting vetiver saplings around the water body



### **Workshop on 'Strengthening Wildlife Law Enforcement in India' by TRAFFIC at Parambikulam TR**



TRAFFIC-India along with the Kerala Forests and Wildlife Department organized the workshop on Aug 20 & 21 at Parambikulam TR mainly targeting officers of the various enforcement agencies including the Forest Department, Police, Customs and Excise, WCCB, STF and others. The State Office provided all possible logistics support and the State Director and the Senior Education Officer attended the workshop.

### **Wildlife Orientation Camp at Wayanad WLS**



Kerala State Office conducted a three day Wildlife Orientation Camp at Wayanad WLS from 31<sup>st</sup> July to 2<sup>nd</sup> Aug 2015. The camp was attended by 9 nature enthusiasts accompanied by Senior Education Officer and a Volunteer. The team conducted nature watch, trekking, wildlife safari and discussions during the camp hours.

### **Friday Forum**



The first Friday Forum of this year was held on 7<sup>th</sup> August on the theme 'Monsoon of Kerala' at the regular venue, Museum Auditorium, Thiruvananthapuram. Around 70

students from 3 schools attended the Friday Forum, that was led by Dr. Subhash Chandra Bose, Director of CCDU, Water Resource Department.

### World Elephant Day 2015

Kerala State Office prepared an 'Elephants Quiz' and shared it with all our affiliated and associated schools and colleges asking them to organize quiz and awareness programmes on their own. The same was shared with Director, Environment Education also for wider reach.

### Coastal Cleanup at Varkala Beach

On 15th August 2015, the Nature Club Members of MGM School, Varkala did a great job showing their commitment towards Mother Earth and society by cleaning up the entire stretch of Papanasam Beach at Varkala littered with banana leaves, flowers, plastic and other pooja materials left over by thousands of people who had visited the area on the previous day being Karkkidaka Vavu. The participants were advised by WWF-India to collect the waste in a segregated manner to analyze the major pollutants and make a strategy if needed for coming years to ensure a green ritual.



Orientation for the students of KUFOS



The authorities and students of Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS) based in Panangad, Kochi requested us for an orientation session on concerns with regard to the marine and coastal ecosystem and



also WWF-India's work in nature conservation and environment protection including the marine and coastal sector. The programme was titled 'Defending the Blue'. Dr. V. Madhusoodhana Kurup, Vice-Chancellor, KUFOS inaugurated the programme. The State Director delivered the first talk on WWF's projects, programmes and initiatives internationally, nationally and locally. Mr. Vinod M., Senior Co-ordinator, Marine Programme gave the talk on WWF-India's initiatives on addressing the marine and coastal sector including our work on MSC Certification of Fisheries, Trade of Gastropod Shells, Marine Turtles etc. A small exhibition was also arranged at the venue in this connection.

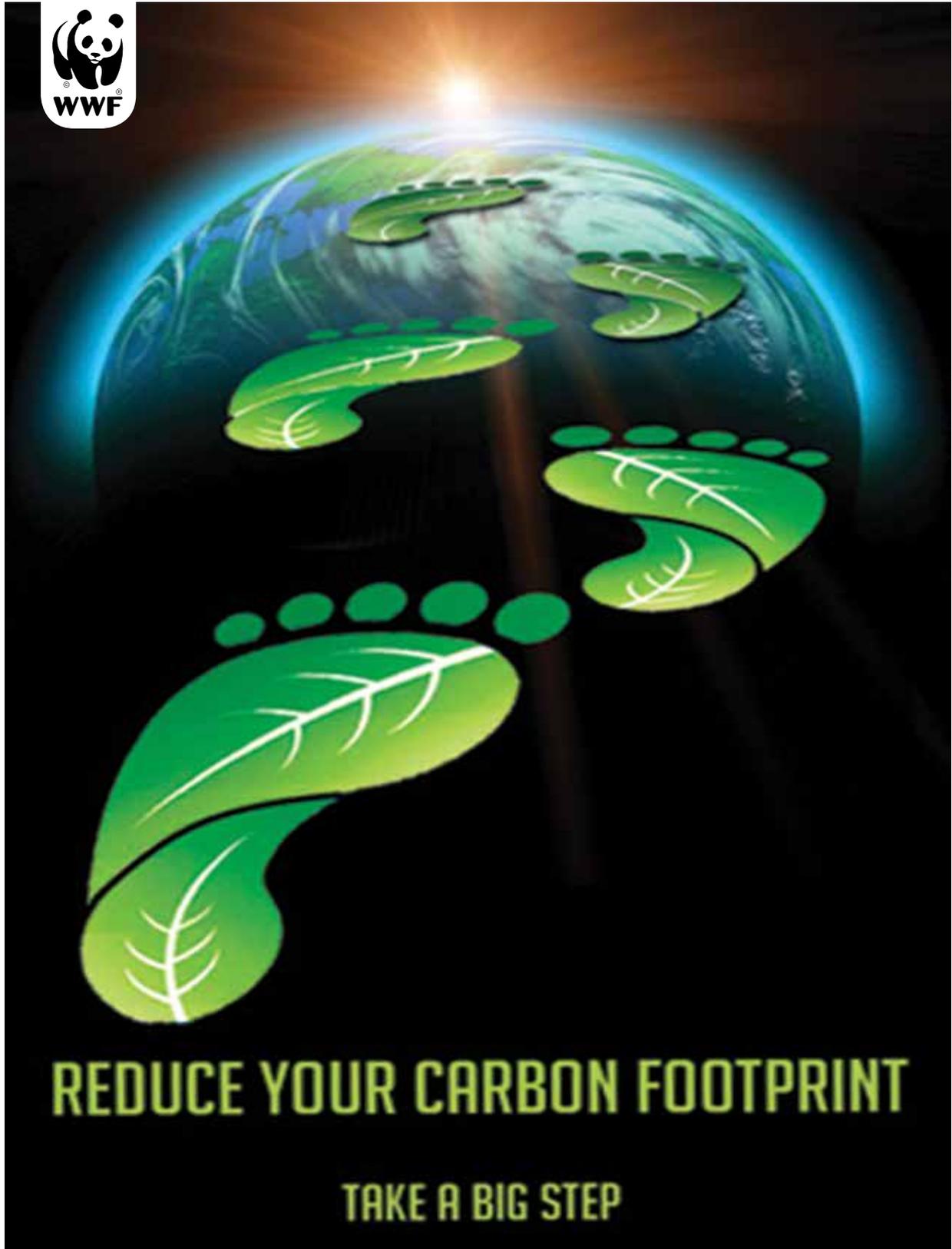
### Orientation Class for NSS Camp participants at Ooroottukala



The State Director was invited to address the student participants of the NSS Camp organized at Ooroottukala near Neyyattinkara. Around 80 students attended the session and there was very good discussions and deliberations. On the same occasion, the State Director launched a plantation drive of Curry leaf saplings targeting the local households so that the poison laden curry leaves coming from outside the State can be avoided in our platter in future.

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