

FROM THE STATE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Earth Hour 2009 was a grand and successful event which was organized around the world on 28th of March, 2009 in the background of global warming and climate change. In Kerala also, events marking the occasion was arranged in Thiruvananthapuram and Kochi. Even though the events were successful, but the total objective of the event failed miserably in Kerala. The real success of the programme would have been in the 'Switching Off' of lights for one hour from 8.30 – 9.30pm in homes, offices, commercial establishments, public places etc. Except for very few genuinely concerned individuals and institutions who joined in the campaign by switching off their lights and casting their 'Vote for Earth' other highly educated and civilized Keralites mocked at the programme asking 'What is the benefit in switching off lights just for one hour?'. For all those people, we would like to remind you or make you aware that the major cause of climate change is global warming and the major cause of global warming is due to our higher energy use. We have now become a very energy intensive society. Many a times people like us, in the developing countries, blames it on the citizens of the developed nations. But the fact is that we are also not any better. If we very closely examine our lifestyle, we will clearly understand that in each and every activity

in our day to day life, we have become so dependent on energy – be it home or office including activities like cooling, transportation, recreation, cooking or washing. As of now, our major energy sources are fossil fuel based. The increased burning of fossil fuels creates environmental pollution and contributes to the increase in Green House Gases (GHGs) thereby leading to global warming. The process of mining, extraction and transportation of these fossil fuels from source to the end consumer is also a very energy and technology intensive process. Our buildings are all air-conditioned these days. We have totally shifted from bicycles to motorized transport. In all these, big and small activities, we need to understand our higher levels of energy consumption and how it directly or indirectly contributes towards global warming and climate change. So to bring about a reversal in these disastrous global phenomenon, the only solution is to be less energy intensive and be more energy efficient. A shift from consumeristic to sustainable lifestyle is imminent. We need to understand that 'Small Actions Make Big Differences' and we all need to start doing small acts of kindness to conserve our nature and protect Mother Earth.

Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director

IMPORTANT NEWS ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURE

GLOBAL

Elusive Javan rhinos in new footage

New infra-red footage released Thursday captures hitherto unseen images of elusive Javan rhinos, the most endangered mammal in the world with less than 60 individuals believed to remain alive. The grainy video was released by environmental group WWF, which has been monitoring the rhinos for about 20 years in the rugged Ujung Kulon National Park on the southern tip of Indonesia's Java island. The clips show a mother and calf and a large male wallowing in

various mud holes, revealing behavior researchers had never seen before and helping with the identification of individual animals. In one clip shot at night, a female rhino chases a wild pig away from her mud hole.

"These rhinos are very shy. In the last 20 years our team has only seen rhinos two or three times with their own eyes," WWF Asian rhino coordinator Christy Williams said. "The videos are showing a lot of young animals but not many calves so even though there is evidence of breeding it is not enough," Williams said. (*The Hindu*, 06.03.2009).

Building robot fish to detect pollution

Robot fish developed by British scientists are to be released into the sea off north Spain to detect pollution. If

next year's trial of the first five robotic fish in the northern Spanish port of Gijon is successful, the team hopes they will be used in rivers, lakes and seas across the world. The carp-shaped robots, costing 20,000 pounds (\$29,000) apiece, mimic the movement of real fish and are equipped with chemical sensors to sniff out potentially hazardous pollutants, such as leaks from vessels or underwater pipelines. They will transmit the information back to shore using Wi-Fi technology. Rory Doyle, senior research scientist at engineering company BMT Group, developed the robot fish with researchers at Essex University. The robot fish will be 1.5 meters (nearly 5 feet) long - roughly the size of a seal. (*The Hindu*, 21.03.2009).

Antarctic iceberg 'set to collapse'

The massive Antarctic iceberg is "set to collapse" as the ice bridge which links the two islands on the peninsula has started melting dramatically. "The Wilkins Ice Shelf is at risk of partly breaking away from the Antarctic Peninsula as the ice bridge that connects it to Charcot and Latady islands looks set to collapse," the European Space Agency (ESA) has said. "The melting began this week when new rifts forming along its centre axis resulted in a large block of ice breaking away," it said referring to ESA's satellite images acquired on April 2. Scientists are currently investigating the reasons and processes of the recent ice shelf break-ups. For many, the situation is linked to the global warming during the past 50 years, during which the Antarctic temperature has increased by 2.5 degree Celsius - far more than the global average. (*The Hindu*, 06.04.2009).

NATIONAL

Towards a national solar power mission

The Union Government has finalized the draft for the National Solar Mission. It aims to make India a global leader in solar energy and envisages an installed solar generation capacity of 20,000 MW by 2020, of 1,00,000 MW by 2030 and of 2,00,000 MW by 2050. Implementation will be in three phases. The first phase of solar deployment (2009-2012) will aim to achieve rapid scaling-up to drive down costs.

It will spur domestic manufacturing through the consolidation and expansion of on-going projects for urban, rural and off-grid applications. This will involve the promotion of commercial-scale solar utility plants, mandated installation of solar rooftop or on-site photovoltaic applications in buildings and establishments of government and public sector undertakings. The target is 100 MW installed capacity here. The Mission will encourage the use of solar applications to meet day-time peaking power requirement that is now met through diesel generation. (*The Hindu*, 26.04.2009)

STATE

Palakkad reeling under drought

Palakkad is once again reeling under severe drought. With dams and waterbodies, including rivers such as the Bharathapuzha and Bhavani, drying up people are facing severe shortage of drinking water. The average temperature has crossed 40 degrees Celsius. The failure of the monsoons - there has been no rain in the district in the last four months - has compounded the problem. The Principal Agriculture Officer said that crops in 859 hectares were destroyed and another 4,822 hectares were facing drought-like situation. The council urged the departments concerned to provide drinking water in tankers in drought-affected areas. V. Chenthamarakashan, MLA said that large areas of crops in the ayacut areas of the Meenkara and Chulliyar dams were affected. The high ranges of the Mangalam dam were facing a heat wave due to the drying up of the dam. The Attappady tribal area is badly hit. The Bhavani, which flows through the area to Tamil Nadu, has almost dried up. The panel suggested various measures to counter drought situations in the district. These included creation of more surface storages, construction of diversion structures, water quality management, creation of databank on hydro-climatic parameters, linking of reservoirs with water supply schemes, inter-basin transfer, protection of wetlands and paddy fields, etc. The necessity of a river basin authority for the Bharathapuzha basin was also highlighted. But the master plan is yet to get a look-in while the district is under the grip of a severe drought yet again. (*The Hindu*, 09.03.09).

5,457 hectares lost in forest fire

Kerala has lost 5,457 hectares of pristine forest land to forest fire during the summer. As many as 920 accidents of fire outbreak were reported this season. The worst affected was the Eastern Forest Division covering Palakkad and Nilambur areas where 1,530 hectares of forest land was lost in 182 accidents of fire outbreak, according to latest estimates. However, the summer rain has come as a relief to forest managers. "The fire risk has come down considerably, and most forest areas are now out of danger due to the summer showers," said T.M. Manoharan, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests. The Southern Circle region comprising Kollam, Thiruvananthapuram and Pathanamthitta districts also suffered heavy loss. Here 408 hectares were destroyed in 270 accidents. Wildlife sanctuaries, including Thekkady, Munnar, Chinnar, Eravikulam, Silent Valley and Parambikulam, also

faced fire distress. The loss was estimated at 948 hectares in 73 accidents, according to Forest authorities. The loss of biodiversity has not been estimated, as no mechanism is in place for such an evaluation. No loss of wildlife was reported, Mr. Manoharan said. With most parts of the forest area receiving good rain, the evergreen forests are out of danger. The grasslands of Thekkady and Eravikulam National Park are now relatively safe. During the second week of April, Eravikulam regularly received rain in the evening. The fire protection works in Eravikulam were better than that undertaken in the Tamil Nadu side of the Park, he said. Considering the gravity of the situation in the State, camps were set up in the fire-prone areas. Chief Conservators of Forests were assigned the charge of each district and fire prevention activities were coordinated. (*The Hindu*, 25.04.09).

Ten rare trees facing extinction

Ten rare trees, "narrowly endemic" to Kerala, are facing the threat of extinction. *Syzygium palghatense*, which was first described in 1918 from the Palakkad Hills, is one such tree that is fighting for survival. The scientists of the Kerala Forest Research Institute, Peechi, have spotted it in the Pandaravarai forests of the Parambikulam Wildlife Sanctuary. Fewer than 10 of these trees survive in the locality. *Dialium travancoricum*, locally known as "Malampuli," capable of growing over 100 feet, is another species at risk. *Atuna indica*, another threatened variety, was first described in 1868 from Malabar and subsequently rediscovered from the Nilambur and Kakkayam forests. *Agalia malabarica*, locally known as 'Chuvannakil,' is another critically endangered tree whose distribution is restricted to three isolated localities in Kerala - in Peechi, Vythiri and the Shenduruny Wildlife Sanctuary. *Anacolosia densiflora*, which was first described in 1864 from erstwhile Travancore, exists only in the Vallakkadavu forest of the Periyar Tiger Reserve. *Madhuca bourdillonii*, a giant tree locally known as Thandidiyan, was first spotted in 1921 from the Kulathupuzha-Aryankavu valleys and was later found in Vazhani, the Charpa forest and the Shenduruny sanctuary. *Inga cynometroides*, found in Rosemala, is restricted to less than 1sq km. The only surviving population of *Humboldtia bourdillonii*, another critically endangered tree, is found at Arjunankotta-Chenthamarakokka in the Periyar Tiger Reserve. *Palaquium ravii*, which was first located from the Peechi forests and later located in Periyar Tiger Reserve and the Nelliampathy forests in Palakkad, and *Syzygium periyarensis*, found in Sundermala of the

Periyar Tiger Reserve, are the other critically endangered trees of the State. These trees, considered possibly extinct, were relocated by the scientists of the institute. The institute plans to propagate them through various propagation methods, says K.V. Sankaran, Director of KFRI. (*The Hindu*, 27.04.09)

SPECIES OF THIS ISSUE

Asian Palm Civet

(*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*)

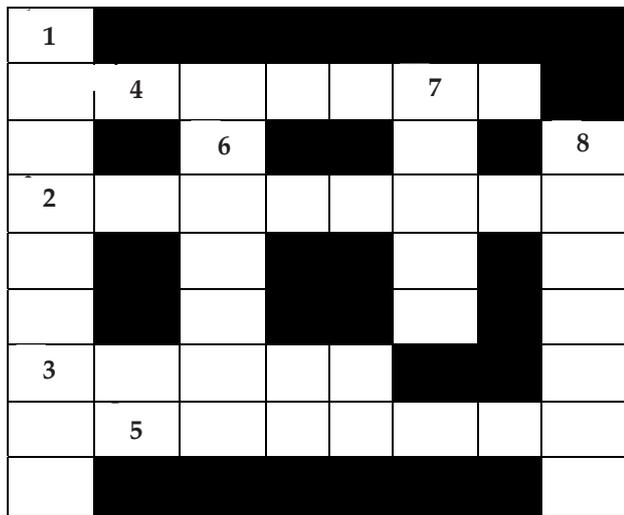
The **Asian Palm Civet** commonly known as the **Common Palm Civet** or the **Toddy Cat**, is a cat-sized mammal in the family Viverridae native to South-east Asia and southern China. In Malayalam the Asian Palm Civet is known as "**Marapatti**" (which translates as 'Tree-dog' or 'wood-dog'.) The Asian Palm Civet averages 3.2, has a body length of 53cm and a tail length of 48cm. Its long, stocky body is covered with coarse, shaggy hair that is usually greyish in color, with black on its feet, ears and muzzle. It has three rows of black markings on its body. The markings on its face resemble a raccoon's. Its tail does not have rings, unlike similar civet species.

The Asian Palm Civet is a nocturnal omnivore. Its primary food source is fruit such as chiku, mango, rambutan and coffee. It will also eat small mammals and insects. It also has a fondness for palm flower sap which, when fermented, becomes toddy, a sweet liquor (habit which earns one of its alternate names the 'toddy cat'). It inhabits forests, parks and suburban gardens with mature fruit trees, fig trees and undisturbed vegetation. Its sharp claws allow it to climb trees and house gutters.

Kopi Luwak or Motit Coffee (Civet coffee) is the most expensive coffee in the world prepared using coffee cherries that have been eaten by the animal, partially digested, and harvested from its feces. The inner bean of the berry is not digested, but a unique combination of enzymes in the stomach of the civet adds to the coffee's flavor by breaking down the proteins that give coffee its bitter taste.



CHILDREN'S CORNER



Downward

1. Mutual living together (2 different organisms) (9)
6. The world conservation strategy was a landmark publication by (6)
7. Form of oxygen (5)
8. Book contains lists of species whose continued existence is threatened. (7)

Rightward

2. Animals living at the bottom of a water body are called (7)
- 3 National centre for studies in Ornithology and Natural History, named after Dr. Sálim Ali (5)
4. Unit of ozone (6)
5. Which was the first national park to be established in India. (7)

Answers

1. symbiosis, 6. UNESCO, 7. ozone, 8. red data,
2. benthos, 3. SACON, 4. Dobson, 5. Corbett

ARTICLE

Pollution due to dumping of fish waste along the Airport Road

The stretch of road from Chackai bridge to the Trivandrum International Airport was the first segment of the road work to be completed right in the initial stages of the project. The road has been widened well enough, drains constructed along the sides, walkways created, avenue trees planted with tree guards and ornamental plants like bougainvillea planted for improving the aesthetic value.

But sadly, this has now become the most stinging stretch of road in the City because of the everyday dumping of fish waste. The source of fish waste is likely to be the fish waste generated from fish sellers who sit along the road side along late evenings and to attract buyers, they even cut and clean the fish and give it. This waste is then tied in plastic carrybags and thrown along the roadside. Stray dogs and cats tear open this covers and the rotting waste is strewn all along the area.

Crows aggregate in large numbers around this area to scavenge on this waste. This can pose serious threats to aircrafts landing and taking off on the runways just metres away.

The rotten foul smell is so strong that, it is almost absolutely impossible for anyone to walk along without closing their nostrils and running away for fresh air. Many people use this stretch of road for early morning jogging and brisk walking. And also this is the first stretch of road through which we welcome our NRKs back home and foreign and domestic tourists to the capital of God's Own Country. For travelers on cars, they do not feel this menace much because the wide roads along this stretch allow cars to travel at very high speeds and many people have the glasses rolled up for air-conditioning. But for the local people, slow moving traffic and pedestrians, this is a real serious concern.



ACTIVITIES OF WWF-INDIA KERALA STATE OFFICE

Session on Adventure & Wildlife Tourism for UST Global, Technopark

A session on Adventure & Wildlife Tourism was also organized by Color Purple on Thursday, March 5, 2009 as part of Rangoli 2009. The session organized at the Zenith Hall by the Team Escapade of Color Purple was handled by Sri. Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director, WWF-India. Harikrishnan Nair, Lead, Color Purple welcomed Sri. Renjan Mathew and

introduced him to the gathering. Sri. Renjan went on to give an overview about the multitude of activities engaged in by WWF-India for protection and conservation of the environment. He mentioned that climate change and energy conservation are among the chief areas of concern for the organization. The underlying message in his address was that all living matter has the right to live and should coexist in harmony with nature. He assured that WWF-India will assist Team Escapade pack our rucksacks and accompany us to view the lofty mountains in the southern states of India and also some unadulterated wonders of nature like lakes, forests and many more. Noel Samuel, Deputy Lead, Color Purple presented a memento to Sri. Renjan on behalf of UST Global and Team Escapade.

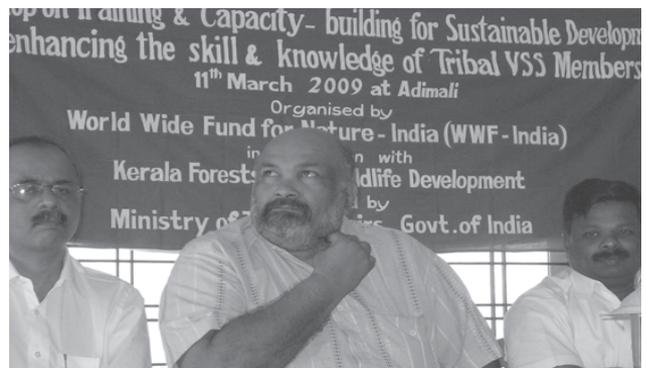


Training of Tribal VSS at Adimali

In the background of the Mid term Evaluation of NAP implemented by VSS under Munnar FDA, WWF-India, Kerala State Office had submitted a proposal to Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India to conduct a 'Training and Capacity Building for Sustainable Development by enhancing the Skill and Knowledge of Tribal VSS Members'. The workshop was organized in association with Kerala Forests and Wildlife Department. The programme was held on 11th March, 2009 at VeeTee Auditorium, Adimali, Idukki. About 94 VSS members (10 – 20 members from each VSS) and their Secretaries (Forest Guards) participated.

The workshop was inaugurated by Sri S. Rajendran, MLA of Devikulam. Sri Shaji, Chairman, Standing Committee, Adimali Panchayat was also present on the occasion. The Chief Guest Sri S. Rajendran was awarded with a memento by Sri Renjan Mathew Varghese as a token of appreciation.

The various technical sessions on 'Forest dependent communities, indigenous knowledge and various Acts



and Rules' was led by Sri Manibhooshanan A., Deputy Director, Kerala Institute of Research, Training and Development Studies of Scheduled Communities (KIRTADS), Kozhikode, 'Soil and Moisture Conservation (SMC) Activities' and 'Non Wood Forest Products (NWFP) – Sustainable harvesting and Value addition' by Dr. S. Sankar, Senior Scientist, Agroforestry Division, Kerala Forest Research Institute (KFRI), Thrissur, 'Nursery raising and planting activities' by Dr. R.C Pandalai, Senior Scientist of Kerala Forest Research Institute (KFRI), Thrissur. The last session on 'Group Dynamics, Conflict Resolution and Gender Issues' was presented by Sri Renjan very briefly only due to lack of time. The following interaction session was active, but had to be cut short due to lack of time because many of the participants had come from very far and interior areas and had long hours of travel back to their settlements.

Lecture at TKMIM – One Planet Leaders

Leaves, the nature club of TKM Institute of Management, Kollam, was inaugurated on Friday 13th March, 2009 by Jimmy Brannigan, Course Coordinator, One Planet Leaders Programme, by planting a tree on the institute premises. Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director, WWF and Jacob Thomas, Director of the institute were present. The club has been formed to create awareness and to promote civil society engagement with environment. The institute will be incorporating green business strategies and sustainable development as add-on programmes for management students.



Exhibition on 'Biodiversity of Kerala' in association with KCYM

Kerala Catholic Youth Movement started a 33 days Environment Awareness Campaign mainly focusing on Water Conservation mainly covering the districts of Central Kerala in the months of March – April 2009. The campaign included traveling exhibition to all the churches in these districts. As part of this programme WWF associated with KCYM in putting up the exhibition panels on 'Biodiversity of Kerala'. The

traveling exhibition was received at most of the venues with great enthusiasm and was well appreciated. It received good media coverage. The campaign also included various other programmes like workshops, seminars, debates, competitions for children etc arranged by the local churches.

Earth Hour 2009 – 28th March

Earth Hour 2009 was organized in Thiruvananthapuram by WWF-India in association with KSCSTE, CESS, EMC, KSSP, Doordarshan, BSNL and other committed groups and citizens in the capital city of Thiruvananthapuram. The event was organized on 28th March, 2009 from 8.00 – 10.00pm at Gandhi Park, East Fort, Thiruvananthapuram. Sri. Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director, WWF-India, Kerala State Office welcomed the guests and introduced the programme. Dr E.P.Yesodharan, Executive Vice-President, Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment (KSCSTE), Govt. of Kerala addressed the gathering.

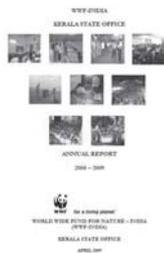
The Chief Guest of the day was Sri Suresh Gopi, Film Actor and Earth Hour Kerala Ambassador. By 8.30pm the lights at the venue were dimmed and all the dignitaries and other participants joined together in lighting of the candle. A Memento of Appreciation was presented to Sri Suresh Gopi by Sri Dhareshan Unnithan, Director, Energy Management Centre (EMC), Govt. of Kerala.

The participants were treated to a unique musical performance titled 'Mula padum ravu' using instruments made from bamboo by 'The Creator' led by Sri Unnikrishnan Pakkanar and his 12 member team.



Annual Report of KLSO for 2008 – 2009

The Annual Report of WWF-India Kerala State Office was compiled and published. The same was sent to various associating agencies and departments.



Mortality reporting to TRAFFIC

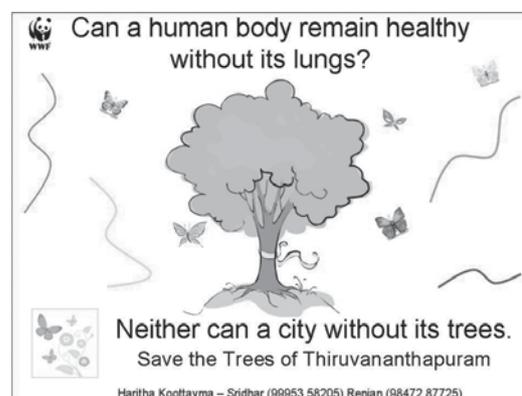
Several instances of mortality/ poaching/ seizure of threatened and rare wildlife species comes to our knowledge from time to time through various sources. It is important to consolidate and analyse such information speedily, so as to provide meaningful feedback to all concerned. Such information is also important from a communication perspective, as we are expected to act and react to such information. The TRAFFIC division of WWF-India is developing a wildlife crime and trade database with the National Tiger Conservation Authority. In this regard, information on mortality, hunting or seizure of the following species i.e. tiger, rhinoceros, elephant, leopard and bears are being collected and collated. Anyone who comes to know about such incidents can provide details like – Species, Time when first report came, Area of occurrence, Brief information about the incident, Postmortem report if any, Seizure data if any, Arrests if any with details, Contact person, Source of information, Any other information. The details may be sent to ssinha@wwfindia.net or contacted at 011 – 4150 4786 or 098681 44462. WWF-India, Kerala State Office has been regularly sending in details as and when such local incidents are noticed or are seen reported through print or visual media.

Internship – NUJS, Kolkata

Mr. Peter Adam and Nikhil P. Joseph, students of B.A., B.Sc., L.L.B (Hons) of The West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences, Kolkata has joined for a period of 45 days placement training with WWF-India, Kerala State Office. They are expected to work attached to an organization and by involving themselves understand the work and working environment of the same. The two students are assisting in developing quality resource materials in the form of multimedia presentations, flipcharts, handbook, thematic articles etc to aid in our various outreach programmes to different sections of the society.

Haritha Koottayma against uncontrolled tree cutting for road widening and development in Thiruvananthapuram

On 28th April, 2009 WWF joined hands with other concerned citizens, environmental groups and NGOs to protest against the massive cutting of avenue trees along the roads of Thiruvananthapuram City. The campaign was organised in front of the Govt. Secretariat, Statue and the Thiruvananthapuram Corporation Office, LMS Junction. Different actions are being undertaken like protest march, putting up awareness boards, submission of petition to Chief Minister, Ministers and administrators etc.



EDITORIAL BOARD

Mr. A.V. George
Mr. Renjan Mathew Varghese
Mr. A.K. Sivakumar

Do You Know?

Manufacture, stocking, distribution, sale, use, transportation, collection, segregation, recycling and disposal of

- plastic carry bags of less than 20 x 30 cm
- plastic cups
- bottles
- packaging material
- plastic carry bag / container made of halogenated material is **BANNED** in the State.

} of less than
30 micron
thickness

Violation of

- manufacture, reuse, recycle may please be reported State Pollution Control Board / Police
- stocking, distribution, sale, use, transportation may please be reported to Local Authority / Police
- prohibition on transportation of banned articles into the State may please be reported to Commercial Taxes Department

Penalties

- handling of banned plastics upto 10,000 no. punishable under section 188 of I.P.C. attracting upto 1 month imprisonment or Rs. 200 fine or both
- handling of banned plastics greater than 10,000 no. punishable under the Environment (Protection) Act attracting upto 5 years imprisonment or Rs. 1 lakh fine or both and Rs. 5000 per day for continuing the violation



KERALA STATE POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD

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