



NEWS  
LETTER

KERALA

2011

May - June 2011

# Mruthika

Newsletter of WWF - India, Kerala State Office

## FROM THE STATE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Kerala has gained much international, national and local attention recently with the widespread discussions and debates on Endosulfan and its innocent victims in Kasargod as a result of aerial spraying of the harmful pesticide on the Cashew Plantation in the district under the Plantation Corporation of Kerala. There is obviously difference of opinion between administrators, agricultural scientists and environmentalists on the cause and effect of Endosulfan. Even among the individual groups there is split opinion on whether Endosulfan is causing the widespread health problems among the local people or not. Anyway it is a simple fact that Endosulfan is a harmful pesticide and as someone said it correctly in one of the media interviews – Stop any use of Endosulfan as of now and if later on studies proves it as harmless, its use can be permitted. Actually this should be our general approach for anything and everything which is supposedly expected to harm the environment and thereby the health of various living forms. The benefit of doubt should always go for the environment. But sad to say, what generally happens now is exactly the other way round. Industrialisation, intensive agriculture and other such processes are pumping in various harmful chemicals in the form of fertilizers, pesticides, insecticides etc into the environment, its effects are little known to us as of now and finally when it starts its manifestation, it would be too late. At least from now on, let us take a preventive approach, rather than a curative one. WWF-India took a major step in associating with the Kerala Forests and Wildlife Department in their 2011 Wildlife Census by preparing, printing and distributing the 'Field Guide to the Wild Mammals of Kerala' to the 2000 plus participants of the census activities. The initiative was highly appreciated from all across the State. With regard to wildlife conservation and protection, in association with Kerala Forests and Wildlife

Department, we could also put in a very relevant nomination from Kerala for the Amrita Devi Bishnoi Wildlife Protection Award instituted by the Central Government under the Ministry of Environment and Forests. Like in previous years, we also commemorated the World Migratory Bird Day, this year in association with the Kerala State Biodiversity Board. The event gave a unique opportunity for the keen bird watchers of the city to travel to Koonthakulam, a real good nesting, breeding and feeding ground for many migrant and resident birds. In the past months of the last academic year, about 15 Teachers Training Workshop were conducted in association with CPREEC. The compiled activity reports were submitted to CPREEC and the new proposal for conducting TTWs in the academic year of 2011-12 mainly on the theme of 'Forest Ecosystem' has also been submitted to CPREEC. WWF-India Kerala State Office is also proud to present its Annual Report 2010-11 containing details of all projects, programmes, activities, events and network initiatives. The copies of the same have been sent to our entire network. World Environment Day was commemorated with programmes for the Teacher Trainees at Mar Theophilous Training College and with week long events for the employees of HSBC in co-ordination with CMS Delhi. The work on the ongoing project 'Development of Sustainable Livelihood Security Index for the Ramsar Site (Vembanad Lake) of Kerala' is progressing. As requested by the funding agency, the Second Interim Report has also been submitted. The State Director attended the WWF-India Senior Manager's Meeting on 23 and 24 June organized at the WWF-India Secretariat, the first of its approach to bring both State Directors and Program Managers around the same table, the discussions are deliberations being led by the Secretary General and Program Director.

**Renjan Mathew Varghese,**  
State Director

## IMPORTANT NEWS ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURE

### GLOBAL

#### Renewables can power the world, says IPCC

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the body of the world's leading climate scientists convened by the

United Nations, said that if the full range of renewable technologies were deployed, the world could keep greenhouse gas concentrations to less than 450 parts per million, the level scientists have predicted will be the limit of safety beyond which climate change becomes catastrophic and irreversible. Renewable energy is already growing fast – of the 300 gigawatts of new electricity generation capacity added globally between 2008 and 2009, about 140GW came from renewable sources, such as wind and solar power, according

to the report. Although the authors are optimistic about the future of renewable energy, they note that many forms of the technology are still more expensive than fossil fuels, and find that the production of renewable energy will have to increase by as much as 20 times in order to avoid dangerous levels of global warming. Renewables will play a greater role than either nuclear or carbon capture and storage by 2050, the scientists predict. Investing in renewables can also help poor countries to develop, particularly where large numbers of people lack access to an electricity grid (*Source: The Hindu, 11 May, 2011*).

### **Mediterranean Ocean invaded by more than 900 alien species**

A four-year study conducted at the University of Gothenburg shows that more than 900 new alien species have been encountered in the coastal environments of the eastern Mediterranean Sea in recent decades, including the poisonous Puffer Fish. The invasion of alien species has had the consequence that the whole food chain is changing, while there is a lack of knowledge on which to base relevant risk assessments. When the Suez Canal was completed in 1869, a corridor was created for the spread of alien species to the Mediterranean Sea, which is now undergoing great changes in animal and plant communities. In recent years, regular reports of alien species from several of the coastal environments of the eastern Mediterranean have caused concern over what will happen to indigenous species and ecosystems. The results show a clear ecological impact when alien species either become dominant, like Puffer Fish, or are Piscivores, like Barracuda and Cornet Fish. It is evident that the food chain is being restructured, but the lack of previous studies limited our conclusions. The poisonous Puffer Fish is one of the alien species that have recently been introduced. The Puffer Fish toxin, Tetrodotoxin, causes muscle paralysis, which can lead to respiratory arrest. In the worst case the outcome can be fatal. (*Source: The Hindu, 26 May, 2011*).

## **NATIONAL**

### **Environmental Appraisal Authority coming**

The Union Government is in the process of setting up a National Environmental Appraisal and Monitoring Authority (NEAMA) as part of its efforts to bring in institutional reforms and improve environmental governance, Union Minister of State for Environment and Forests Jairam Ramesh said. Mr. Ramesh said that as a professional, science-based and autonomous entity tasked with environmental appraisals and monitoring of compliance, NEAMA would mark a major improvement over the current system wherein the Ministry did appraisal and approval of projects. While NEAMA would be more effective in addressing conflict of interest issues through separation of the processes of appraisal and approval, the appraised projects would require his final approval to ensure the principle of executive accountability, he said. (*Source: The Hindu, 5 May 2011*)

### **B.R. Hills, Kudremukh forests set to become Tiger Reserves**

Minister for Environment and Forests Jairam Ramesh said that the Union Government had approved two more Tiger Reserves in Karnataka and the formalities would be completed in a few days. Mr. Ramesh told reporters that B.R. Hills in Chamaraajanagar district and Kudremukh in Chikmagalur district would become the 40th and 41st Tiger Reserves in the country. The total number of Tiger Reserves in Karnataka would go up to six, he noted. The Minister, who visited Karnataka to see the release of a captured tiger into the Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary, expressed satisfaction that Karnataka had the most number of tigers in the country. He commended all those who had contributed to this achievement. Observing that shifting of the 700 families living in the Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary was one of the most successful examples of relocation in the country, he said 1,300 families in Nagarhole and 300 families in Kudremukh, who were living in the core area, needed to be rehabilitated. He reiterated that there would be no forcible eviction (*Source: The Hindu, 9 May, 2011*).

### **A billion dollar credit from World Bank to clean up the Ganga**

The World Bank has approved \$1 billion as credit and loan to support India's efforts to clean up the Ganga River. The sprawling river basin accounts for a fourth of the country's water resources and is home to more than 400 million people. The project will support the National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA) in building the capacity of its nascent operational level institutions so that they can manage the long term Ganga clean-up and conservation programme. Apart from dedicated operational-level institutions at the Central and State levels, the Project will help the National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA) to set up a state-of-the-art Ganga Knowledge Centre to act as a repository of knowledge relevant for the conservation of the Ganga. The project will also help strengthen the Central and State Pollution Control Boards for monitoring the pollution in the Ganga better by modernising their information systems and providing staff training. The project will also finance the upgradation of the Ganga water quality monitoring system, as well as carry out an inventory of all the sources of pollution that affect water quality in the Ganga. The project will help the NGRBA devise and implement communications programmes to encourage people to participate in the clean-up programme. (*Source: The Hindu, 3 June, 2011*).

## **STATE**

### **Nine new reptile species found in Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary**

Snake skink lizard and Striated wolf snake that were among the new species spotted in the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary during the Reptile Reconnaissance Survey-2011 that drew to a close recently. The survey organised by the State Forest

and Wildlife Department in association with the Zoological Survey of India identified nine new species — four snakes and five lizard species — inside the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary. As many as 41 reptile species were identified during the survey. Snake species such as the Banded racer, Trinket snake, Striated wolf snake and Travancore wolf snake and lizard species such as the Day gecko, Elliot's forest lizard, Banded gecko, Termite-kill gecko and Snake skink lizard were identified as new to the Sanctuary during the survey. (Source: *The Hindu*, 28 May, 2011).

#### **About 63% of State's coastline faces erosion**

As much as 63 per cent of the coastline of Kerala is facing sea erosion, according to the shoreline change assessment of the State coast released by Union Minister of State for Environment and Forests Jairam Ramesh. The coastline includes artificial coasts built using seawalls, riprap revetments or groynes. As much as 53 per cent of the State's coast now has artificial coast and 10.3 per cent eroding coastline, experiencing high, medium, and low levels of erosion. The assessment says that the artificial coast is essentially eroding coastline and is managed by structures. It is therefore only appropriate to consider it as eroding coast. This indicates that only 37 per cent of the State's coast is 'natural' (no intervention). Of this, accretion is dominant along 24 per cent of the coast, particularly in Ernakulam district, which has an intricate network of backwaters (Vembanad Lake). Only eight per cent of the State's 590-km coastline is stable, without erosion or accretion. District-wise statistics indicate that erosion is dominant in all coastal districts with minimum erosion in Thrissur (1.5%) and maximum in Thiruvananthapuram (23%). Artificial coasts are dominant in Kollam and Ernakulam (80%). Stable coasts are more prevalent along the coast of Thiruvananthapuram (17%). (Source: *The Hindu*, 18 June, 2011).

#### **'Extinct' mangrove sighted after 150 years**

A mangrove species, long believed to have gone extinct in the State was sighted on an isolated private island of Ashtamudi Lake in Kollam. '*Ceriops tagal*' or the Yellow mangrove has been listed by the Forest Department as a "mangrove species that had disappeared from Kerala." But last week, Kerala Sasthra Sahithya Parishad activist V.K. Madhusudhanan chanced upon the "disappeared" Yellow mangroves, sporting a spectacular greenish yellow canopy of leaves on the 40-acre Puthenthuruthu Island not far from the Neendakara Estuary. He was at the island for an inspection on alleged mangrove destruction in the area. His finding has been confirmed by botanist N. Ravi who also visited the site along with S. Sun, Assistant Conservator of Forests (Social Forestry) on Monday. Yellow mangroves have great value as a fisheries habitat. Recognizing the importance of mangroves, the State Government has made substantial monetary allocations for acquiring and protecting private land with rich mangrove forests. Prof. Ravi told that it is after a gap of more than 150 years that Yellow mangroves have been sighted and identified in Kerala. The sighting is the first since 1850s when the

British botanical explorer R. Wight (1796-1872) noted in his accounts of sighting the Yellow mangrove at Quilon (Source: *The Hindu*, 26 June, 2011).

### **EXPERT TALK**

#### **Recent approval on Wild boar culling - Wildlife conservation to be in balance with Sustaining Livelihoods**

The recent order by the Government of Kerala approving culling of wildboars which pose continuous serious threat to agriculture has evoked mixed response from different sections of the society. Anyway all are in agreement that wildboars, atleast in some areas have become a vermin (various small animals or insects, such as rats or cockroaches that are destructive, annoying, or injurious to health). There are widespread reports of incidents from all across the State of herds of wildboars venturing out of forest areas into nearby settlements and plantations and destroying the various crops including tubers like tapioca, yam, plantation like plantain, rubber, arecanut etc. And also there are stray incidents where the wildboars have attacked human beings and caused injury.

Wild boar is a Schedule III species under the Wildlife Protection Act. Based on the higher level of protection offered to our forests and its wildlife by the Kerala Forests and Wildlife Department and through the recent various participatory conservation approaches, the population of wildboars have increased considerably in our forest areas. This can be attributed to their reproduction physiology also because wildboars have more babies each year than any other large mammal. They can have 3 litters a year with 14 babies in each litter. And they are fully grown by about 1 year. Also on the other hand, in the natural forest food web also, the pressure on wild boars as prey base is low as the number of predators including tigers and leopards are considerably less in our forests.

It is an accepted fact that wildlife conservation loses face when wildlife comes in direct conflict with the interests of the local people, mainly the sustenance of livelihoods, mainly in the form of agriculture and plantation. The local people earn their only livelihood through agriculture related activities. And when that comes under threat, they want immediate solutions.

Paying compensation was an approach adopted since long. But the State Government does not allocate the needed financial resources to adequately compensate for the crop loss of the farmers, neither does it reach the genuinely affected people, nor is it distributed on time. All this has time and again led to the failure of that system. Even though the Forest Department still has provision for this, in many areas, farmers have lost the confidence and they have stopped filing crop loss reports with the department. So even though both farmers and conservationists have conceptually welcomed the idea of wild boar culling in five districts on an experimental

basis for one year, there is still much apprehension on its implementation. The Government Order itself is not clear on the implementation aspects and in some areas it is contradictory also. At the field officers level also, much clarity is required.

Conservationists are mainly apprehensive that this order might be turned and twisted in whatever ways possible in the days ahead to poach wild boars as well as other wildlife also including mainly species like Sambar deer and Spotted deer. As the saying goes 'all laws are made to be broken'. Past experience has proved that many of our acts and rules made exclusively to protect and conserve wildlife itself has not helped in curbing wildlife crime effectively. But on the other hand, we are losing much of our agricultural land being reclaimed for other purposes or left fallow and farmers also moving out of agriculture and farming due to various reasons thereby posing severe threat to our food security. This also needs to be addressed. So the question that remains in everyone's mind is then, what will be the fate of our wildlife in the light of such an order approving culling of a wild species and how it is in turn going to support the farming community? We need to wait and see in the days ahead...

Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director

## SPECIES OF THE ISSUE



### **Common Sorrel (*Oxalis corniculata*)**

The creeping wood sorrel is an annual herb found in moist locations, low growing and herbaceous plant in the family Oxalidaceae, which is locally known as 'pulyarila'. It is a creeping plant growing up to 6-25 cm across. It has a narrow, creeping stem that readily roots at the nodes. It has trifoliate leaves subdivided into three rounded leaflets resembling a clover in shape. The flowers are small yellow coloured and fruit is a narrow, cylindrical capsule. This species is cosmopolitan in its distribution. The plants have good medicinal properties owing to its astringent, anti-inflammatory and antipyretic properties. The leaves of wood sorrel are quite edible. The leaves contain oxalic acid, which gives them their sharp flavour. The entire plant is rich in Vitamin C. The leaf juice is administered in the conditions

like bloody diarrhoea, prolapse of rectum etc and also used as an external application in the conditions like painful swelling or any inflammation. The leaves are also used in chutneys.

## CHILDREN'S CORNER

### **Making a Rain Gauge**

A rain gauge is a measuring instrument used by meteorologists to record the amount of precipitation or rainfall in an area. This is measured in millimeters or inches or centimeters. This exercise helps the students to make a rain gauge and measure rainfall in their area.

Materials required: Empty 1 litre plastic bottle, Ruler, Craft knife, Bricks or stones

Cut the bottle near the mouth with a knife. Remove the lid from the cone shaped funnel and place it inside the cut bottle. Place the bottle outdoors in an open clearing or on the roof of buildings. Use bricks or stones to help it stand upright in case of strong winds. Check the arrangement for any misplacements and if any make necessary rearrangements so as to collect the rain water. After the rain showers measure the water in the gauge with a ruler.



## MEMBERS CORNER

### **വനത്തിൽ കഴിഞ്ഞ ദിനങ്ങൾ**

ആതിര ഹരിദാസ്

ഒരു സാധാരണ പ്രവൃത്തിദിവസമായിരുന്നു അത്. വാർത്തകൾ തിരക്കിട്ട് ഫയൽ ചെയ്യുന്നതിനിടയിലാണ് എനിക്ക് വനംവകുപ്പിൽ നിന്നുള്ള കത്ത് കിട്ടിയത്. വന്യജീവികളുടെ സെൻസസ് പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾക്ക് സന്നദ്ധസേവകരിൽ ഒരാളായി ഞാനും തിരഞ്ഞെടുക്കപ്പെട്ടു എന്ന് സ്ഥിരീകരിക്കുന്ന വിവരമായിരുന്നു കത്തിൽ. വാക്കുകൾക്കതീതമായ ആഹ്ലാദത്തിൽ ഞാൻ കോരിത്തരിച്ചു. എന്റെ ആവേശത്തിന് അതിരില്ലായിരുന്നു. സെൻസസിൽ പങ്കെടുക്കുന്നതിലും വിജനമായ വനമധ്യത്തിൽ സമയം ചെലവഴിക്കുന്നതിലുമുള്ള താല്പര്യത്തിനും ഉത്സാഹത്തിനും പുറമെ ഞാൻ കുറേക്കാലമായി കാത്തിരിക്കുന്ന നിമിഷം കൂടി യായിരുന്നു അത്. സന്തോഷത്തിനപ്പുറമുള്ള ഒരു വികാരത്തിലേക്ക് ഞാൻ ഉയരുന്നതിന് മറ്റൊരു കാരണം കൂടിയുണ്ടായി

രുന്ന്. സെൻസസിനായി അപേക്ഷിച്ചതു മുതൽ ഒരു പെൺകുട്ടിയായതുകൊണ്ടു മാത്രം അപേക്ഷ നിരസിക്കപ്പെടും എന്ന ചിന്ത എന്നെ വേദനിപ്പിച്ചിരുന്നു. കാരണം, ഒരു പെൺകുട്ടിക്ക് കാട്ടിൽ കഴിയുക എത്രയോ ദുഷ്കരമാണെന്ന് തങ്ങളുടെ അനുഭവം വച്ച് വിവരിക്കുന്നതിൽ എന്റെ സുഹൃത്തുക്കൾക്ക് വലിയ സന്തോഷമായിരുന്നു. യാത്ര ചെയ്യാനുള്ള ആവേശം മാത്രമായിരുന്നു എന്റെ കൈമുതൽ. കന്നിയാത്രയായിരുന്നതിനാലും വനത്തിൽ കഴിഞ്ഞ് പരിചയമില്ലാതിരുന്നതിനാലും സുഹൃത്തുക്കൾ എന്നെ നിരസാഹപ്പെടുത്തി. താമസസൗകര്യമില്ലാതെ കഠിനവും ദുർഗ്ഗമവുമായ വനപാതകളിലൂടെ സഞ്ചരിക്കേണ്ടി വരുമെന്നും അട്ടകടിക്കുമെന്നും അവർ പറഞ്ഞിരുന്നു. അതുകൊണ്ടുതന്നെ ക്ഷണം വനപ്പോൾ എന്റെ ആഹ്ലാദത്തിന് അതിരില്ലായിരുന്നു. കാട്ടിലൂടെയുള്ള നീണ്ട കാൽനടയാത്ര ഉൾപ്പെട്ടതായിരുന്നു മൂന്ന് ദിവസത്തെ സെൻസസ്. മൃഗങ്ങളുടെയും അവയുടെ വിസർജ്യങ്ങളുടെയും സൂചനകൾ നോക്കി നേരത്തെ അടയാളപ്പെടുത്തിവെച്ച പാതയിലൂടെയാണ് നടക്കേണ്ടത്. മലയാറ്റൂർ വനമേഖലയാണ് എനിക്ക് അനുവദിച്ചു കിട്ടിയത്. ആ വനമേഖലയിലെ സന്നദ്ധസേവകരിൽ ഏക പെൺകുട്ടി ആയിരുന്നതിനാൽ ഒരു പുരുഷലോകത്ത് പ്രവേശിച്ചതുപോലെ ചിലപ്പോഴെല്ലാം എനിക്കു തോന്നുന്നുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. സത്യം പറയാമല്ലോ, താമസസൗകര്യത്തെ ഓർത്തുള്ള വേവലാതിമൂലം എനിക്ക് അരക്ഷിതാവസ്ഥ അനുഭവപ്പെട്ടിരുന്നു. ഞങ്ങളുടെ വനമേഖലയിലെ ഫോറസ്റ്റ് ഓഫീസിൽ എത്തിച്ചേരുന്നപ്പോൾ എന്റെ ആശങ്കകളെല്ലാം അസ്ഥാനത്താണെന്ന് എനിക്കു മനസ്സിലായി. ഒരു കാട്ടിൽ കിട്ടാവുന്ന ഏറ്റവും നല്ല താമസസ്ഥലമായിരുന്നു അത്. അവിടെ വൈദ്യുതിയും പൈപ്പുവെള്ളവും ഇല്ലെന്ന് ശരിതന്നെ. പരിമിതമായ ശുചാലയ സൗകര്യങ്ങളേ അവിടെയുള്ളൂ. പക്ഷേ, ഹെയ്, അത് വന്യമായ ഒരനുഭവം തന്നെ.

ഒന്നാംദിവസം ഞാൻ വനയാത്രയ്ക്ക് ഒരുങ്ങിനിന്നു. അതുസാഹസത്തോടെയും അളവിലാത്ത ഊർജ്ജത്തോടെയും ആവേശത്തോടെയും ഞങ്ങൾ ഏഴുമണിക്ക് യാത്ര തുടങ്ങി. ഒരു വനപാലൻ, ഒരു വാച്ചർ പിന്നെ ഞാനുമായിരുന്നു എന്റെ മൂന്നംഗസംഘത്തിൽ. യാത്രയ്ക്കിടെ ഭാഗ്യമെന്നോണം മേയുന്ന കാട്ടാനക്കൂട്ടത്തെ ഞങ്ങൾ കണ്ടെത്തി. കാട്ടാനകൾ കുളിക്കുന്നത് നിരീക്ഷിച്ചുകൊണ്ടു നിന്നപ്പോൾ സ്ത്രീകൾ കുളത്തിൽ കുളിക്കുന്നത് പുവാലന്മാർ ഒളിഞ്ഞുനോക്കുന്ന നിരവധി ചലച്ചിത്രദൃശ്യങ്ങളോർത്ത് എനിക്ക് ചിരിക്കാതിരിക്കാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞില്ല. കാട്ടാനകളുടെ സ്വകാര്യതയിലേക്ക് കടന്നു കയറുന്നത് മോശമായ കാര്യമാണെന്ന് എനിക്കുതോന്നി. കണ്ട കാഴ്ചകൾ രേഖപ്പെടുത്തി ഞങ്ങളുടെ സാന്നിധ്യമറിയിക്കാതെ ഞങ്ങൾ കാട്ടുവഴിയിലൂടെ യാത്ര തുടർന്നു.

നന്നായി വെട്ടിയൊരുക്കിയ വനപാതയാണ് അറിവില്ലായ്മകൊണ്ട് ഞാൻ പ്രതീക്ഷിച്ചിരുന്നത്. പക്ഷേ എന്നെ സംഭ്രമിപ്പിക്കുംവിധം ഓരോ കയറ്റവും കുത്തനെയുള്ളതായിരുന്നു. പാറക്കെട്ടുകൾ നിറഞ്ഞ ആ വനപാതയിലൂടെയുള്ള യാത്ര എളുപ്പമല്ലെന്ന് എനിക്ക് മനസ്സിലായി. ആദ്യത്തെ കുറച്ചു മണിക്കൂറുകളിൽ അട്ടകൾ എന്റെ രക്തത്തിന്റെ രുചിയറിയാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുകയായിരുന്നു. കയറ്റം കയറുമ്പോൾ നമുക്ക് അവയെ കൈകാര്യം ചെയ്യാൻ സമയം കിട്ടില്ല. പാറയുടെ പ്രതലത്തിൽ ദുഷ്കരമാംവിധം കാലുനിക്കൊണ്ട് കുത്തനെയുള്ള കയറ്റവും ഇറക്കവും എനിക്ക് വെല്ലുവിളി ഉയർത്തി. നിബിഡവനത്തിൽ കഴിയുക എന്നത് ജെഫ് കോർവിൻ ഷോകളിൽ കാണുന്നതുപോലെ അത്ര എളുപ്പമല്ലെന്ന് എനിക്കു മനസ്സിലായി. നല്ല ശ്രദ്ധയില്ലെങ്കിൽ ജീവിതത്തോടുതന്നെ വിടപറയേണ്ടി വരും.

സത്യം പറയുകയാണെങ്കിൽ ഭീകരമായ ആ ഭൂപ്രദേശത്തിലൂടെ കടംവാങ്ങിയ പാദരക്ഷകൾ ധരിച്ചുകൊണ്ടുള്ള എന്റെ

യാത്ര അങ്ങേയറ്റം ദുഷ്കരമായിരുന്നു. ആ പരുക്കൻ പാതകളിൽ കാലുറപ്പിച്ചു നടക്കാൻ എനിക്കു കഴിഞ്ഞില്ല. അതുകൊണ്ടുതന്നെ എനിക്ക് എന്റെ പാദരക്ഷകളെ വിശ്വസിക്കാനാകുമായിരുന്നില്ല. വനത്തിലൂടെ കാൽനടയാത്രയ്ക്ക് ഒരുങ്ങുമ്പോൾ ഉറപ്പുള്ള പാദരക്ഷകൾ ധരിക്കണമെന്നതാണ് ഒന്നാം നിയമമെന്ന് ഏതു യാത്രികനും സാക്ഷ്യപ്പെടുത്തും.

നനഞ്ഞ് പരന്നുകിടക്കുന്ന പാറകളുടെ ചെങ്കുത്തായ കയറ്റം കാണുമ്പോഴെല്ലാം ഞാൻ മരവിച്ചു നിന്ന നിമിഷങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ടായിട്ടുണ്ട്. അവയിൽ നിന്ന് കാൽവഴുതി അടികാണാത്ത ഗർത്തത്തിലേക്ക് പതിക്കുന്നത് ഓർത്ത് എന്റെ ചങ്കിടിപ്പ് കൂടിയിരുന്നു. എന്റെ ചെറുപ്പകളെ വിശ്വസിക്കാനാവില്ല എന്നതുകൊണ്ടുതന്നെ അത് അങ്ങേയറ്റം ഭീതിതമായിരുന്നു. പക്ഷേ ഓരോ വെല്ലുവിളികളേയും മറികടക്കുമ്പോൾ അത് അളവിലാത്ത ആനന്ദം നൽകി.

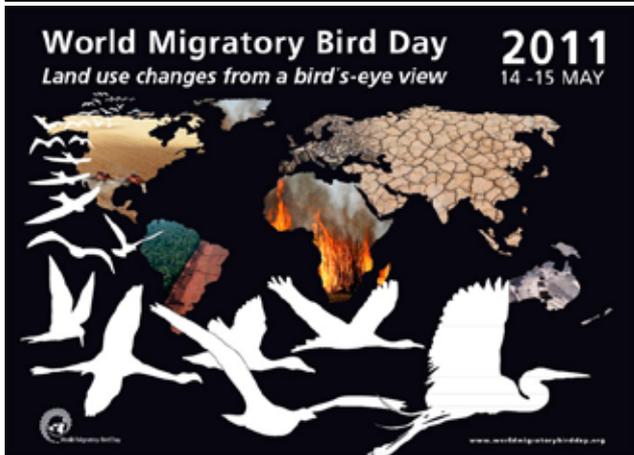
ഓരോ തവണ ഒരു കയറ്റം കീഴടക്കുമ്പോഴും തോന്നുന്ന അതിരില്ലാത്ത അഭിമാനബോധം മനംകവരുന്നതാണ്. ആ ചെങ്കുത്തായ കയറ്റത്തിനു മുകളിലെത്തിയപ്പോൾ ഞാൻ താഴെ അഗാധമായ ഗർത്തത്തിലേക്ക് നോക്കി. എന്റെ ഭീതികളിൽ ഒന്നിനെ, ഉയരങ്ങളോടുള്ള പേടിയിലെ കീഴടക്കിയതിൽ എനിക്ക് അഭിമാനം തോന്നി. ആ നിമിഷങ്ങൾ ആവേശകരമായിരുന്നു.

ഞങ്ങളുടെ യാത്രാവഴിയിൽ ഇടയ്ക്കിടെ മുറിച്ചുകടന്ന അരുവികൾ ആശ്വാസമരുളുന്ന അനുഭവങ്ങളിലൊന്നായിരുന്നു. അരുവികളായിരുന്നു കൂടിവെള്ളത്തിന്റെ ഏക സ്രോതസ്സ്. അകളകിതമായ ആ ജലത്തിന് ഉന്മേഷദായകമായ രുചിയായിരുന്നു.

വൈകുന്നേരങ്ങളിൽ ഫീൽഡ് വർക്കിനുശേഷം ഫോറസ്റ്റ് ഗാർഡുമാർ തങ്ങൾ വലിയ സസ്തനികളെ കണ്ടുമുട്ടിയ കഥകൾ വിവരിക്കുമായിരുന്നു. ജീവനും കൊണ്ടോടുകയല്ലാതെ ആത്മരക്ഷയ്ക്ക് ഉപാധികളൊന്നും ഇല്ലാതെയാണ് അവർ രാത്രികാല നിരീക്ഷണം നടത്തുന്നത്. അവർ നേരിടുന്ന ബുദ്ധിമുട്ടുകളെക്കുറിച്ച് ആ കഥകൾ എനിക്ക് ഉൾക്കാഴ്ച പകർന്നുതന്നു.

അടുത്തുനിന്ന് ധാരാളം ആനകളെ കണ്ടുവെന്നല്ലാതെ നല്ലതോതിൽ പല മൃഗങ്ങളെയും കാണാനുള്ള ഭാഗ്യം എനിക്ക് കിട്ടിയില്ലെങ്കിലും ഇതൊരു ആയുഷ്കാല അനുഭവമായി ഞാൻ എന്നും കരുതിവയ്ക്കും. ഇക്കാര്യത്തിൽ കന്നിക്കാരിയായിരുന്നതിനാൽ എനിക്ക് കൂടുതലൊന്നും ആവശ്യപ്പെടാനാവുമായിരുന്നില്ല. വിജനമായ കാട്ടിൽ കഴിഞ്ഞതും നിബിഡവനത്തിലെ വന്യജീവികളെ നിരീക്ഷിക്കാനായി യാത്ര നടത്തിയതും വാക്കുകൾക്കതീതമായ, വിവരിക്കാനാവാത്ത വിസ്മയാനുഭവം തന്നെയാണ്. കളങ്കപ്പെടാത്ത വായുവും വെള്ളവുമുള്ള കാട്ടിൽ പക്ഷികളുടെയും അണ്ണാറക്കണ്ണന്മാരുടെയും കളകുജനങ്ങൾക്കിടയിൽ മൂന്നു ദിവസം കഴിഞ്ഞത് എന്നിൽ പുതുജീവന്റെ നവോന്മേഷം നിറച്ചു. അത് പ്രകൃതിയുമായുള്ള എന്റെ അന്തരാത്മാവിന്റെ ബന്ധം വീണ്ടും കൂട്ടിയിണക്കുന്നതിന് സഹായിച്ചു. എന്റെ ശക്തിയും ദൃഢതയും തിരിച്ചറിയാനും ആ വനയാത്ര സഹായിച്ചു. ജീവൻ പോകുമെന്ന് പേടിച്ചുതെത്തിലുള്ള വീഴ്ചകളുണ്ടായിട്ടുണ്ട്. ആ ദിവസങ്ങളിൽ എണ്ണമറ്റ കടന്നലുകൾ കുത്തി വേദനിപ്പിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. പക്ഷേ തിരിഞ്ഞുനോക്കുമ്പോൾ എല്ലാം സമ്പന്നമായ അനുഭവങ്ങളായിരുന്നു. വനങ്ങളോടുള്ള എന്റെ അഭിനിവേശം വർദ്ധിപ്പിച്ചിട്ടേയുള്ളൂ ഈ അനുഭവങ്ങളെല്ലാം. കാണത്തോടു വിടപറഞ്ഞ് നഗരജീവിതത്തെ പുണരാൻ സമയമായപ്പോൾ എക്കാലത്തേയും മികച്ച അനുഭവം തന്നതിന് ഞാൻ പ്രകൃതിയോട് നന്ദിപറഞ്ഞു. വനം വകുപ്പിന്റെ വാഹനത്തിൽ കയറി തിരിഞ്ഞുനോക്കി ഞാൻ മനോഹരമായ ആ മഹാവനത്തോട് നിശ്ശബ്ദമായി മൊഴിഞ്ഞു. “ഇപ്പോൾ നമുക്കൊരു ബന്ധമുണ്ട്. കൂടുതൽ അനുഭവങ്ങൾക്കായി ഞാൻ അധികം വൈകാതെ മടങ്ങിവരും. നല്ല പാദരക്ഷ കളുമായി.”

## ACTIVITIES OF WWF-INDIA KERALA STATE OFFICE



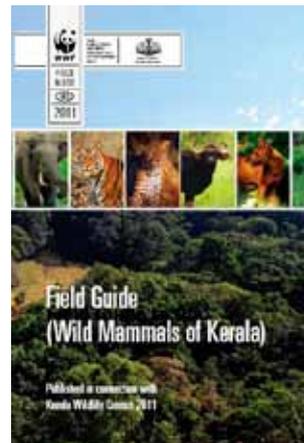
### World Migratory Bird Day 2011

World Migratory Bird Day, was observed by WWF-India, Kerala State Office in association with Kerala State Biodiversity Board and Warblers & Waders on 14th May 2011. The awareness programme at the Press Club Hall, Statue, Thiruvananthapuram on this year's theme 'Land use changes from a bird's eye view' was inaugurated by Dr.R.V.Varma, Chairman of Kerala State Biodiversity Board in the function presided over by Sri.Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director of WWF-India. Dr.K.Udayavarman, Director of Museums and Zoos and Sri.C.Susanth of Warblers & Waders felicitated the programme. Sri.A.K.Sivakumar, Programme Coordinator and Senior Education Officer of WWF-India welcomed the guests and participants of the programme and Dr.Abhiram delivered the vote of thanks. The first technical session on 'Migratory birds of our wetlands' was led by Sri. Prasanth Narayanan of School of Environmental Sciences, MG University. Mr.Abhiram Sankar, an active bird watcher and member of Warblers and Waders led the second session on 'Migratory birds of Forests and Homesteads'. The third session on 'Issues and concerns over the migratory birds of Kerala' was led by Sri. A.K. Sivakumar. A photo exhibition of around 100 migratory birds of Kerala was also arranged at the venue in connection with the programme. On 15th, a selected team of birdwatchers visited Koonthakkulam Bird Sanctuary near Tirunelveli as part of the field observation.



### State Wildlife Census 2011

This massive exercise was held from 18th to 20th May 2011 as a joint venture of Kerala Forests & Wildlife Department, Periyar Foundation, Kerala Forest Research Institute and WWF-India, Kerala State Office. WWF-India actively involved in the process by preparing and distributing a Field



Guide to Wild Mammals of Kerala (2000 copies), training programmes and providing more than 120 volunteers. Mr. A.K.Sivakumar, Senior Education Officer volunteered for the census in Parambikulam Tiger Reserve and Mr.Murukan, Field Officer volunteered in Periyar Tiger Reserve. The 'Field Guide to Wild Mammals of Kerala' was specially published for this purpose including 32 mammals and printed in multi colour. All volunteers of the census blocks across the State

were provided with this book for easy identification of species.

### Single day Nature Orientation Trip to Chathancode

Twenty one students from Bhavan's Vidyalaya and their parents were taken for a single day nature orientation trip to a tribal hamlet, Chathancode within the Peppara WLS. They had a unique experience with knowing the life of forest dwellers, a wild stream with wonderful waterfalls, different types of forests, bird, butterflies etc.



### Workshop on Sustainable Marine Shrimp Trawling

The State Director was fully involved in organizing and conducting the two day workshop on 'Developing a Blueprint for Sustainable Marine Shrimp Trawling' organized in Hotel Avenue Centre, Kochi on 1 and 2 June 2011 under the banner of the Marine Programme of WWF-India. The programme was attended by about 30 Marine Scientists from various departments and institutions in Kerala. The workshop had some initial presentations followed by very active discussions and deliberations in preparing the blueprint.

## Commemoration of World Environment Day 2011

WWF-India, Kerala State Office commemorated World Environment Day 2011 as a week long programme with vast array of events with the support and cooperation of three agencies:

Department of Museums & Zoos, Govt. of Kerala  
NIMS Heart Foundation, Thiruvananthapuram  
CMS Vatavaran, New Delhi

The activities included awareness sessions, documentary screening, zoo visit, forest study trip, presentations, quiz and participatory field oriented programmes.



## Letter of Appreciation and Memento to Ms. Sathi Devi

Ms. Sathi Devi, Teacher, Bhavan's Vidya Mandir, Kochi has won the Vriksha Mithra Award instituted by Kerala Forests and Wildlife Department. Ms. Sathi Devi has long years of association with WWF-India Kerala State Office. In this regard, a letter of appreciation and memento was sent to her.

## School notebook distribution for slum children

WWF-India Kerala State Office in association with NIMS Heart Foundation and COME Ministries distributed about 1300 notebooks to school and college going students of Karimadam Colony, Chalai, Thiruvananthapuram. This initiative was well appreciated by different sections of the society.



## KLSO Annual Report 2010-11

WWF-India Kerala State Office compiled and published its Annual Report for 2010-11. The copies of the same have been sent to our associates and partners and also to the other State Offices and higher officials of WWF-India.

## Senior Manager's Meeting at WWF-India Secretariat

The State Director attended the Senior Manager's Meeting organized in the WWF-India Secretariat on 23 and 24 June 2011 intended to streamline the work at the State Offices and also integrate the local level conservation initiatives with the broader Programme Areas of WWF-India.



## EDITORIAL BOARD

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

Kerala is blessed with enchanting natural beauty.  
It is nourished by 44 rivers and a chain of backwaters.

It is confronted with environmental problems due to pollution  
on account of urbanization and industrialization.

The health consequences of exposure to dirty  
environment are considerable.

The people of Kerala are highly conscious of  
the need to protect the environment.

Kerala State Pollution Control Board is committed  
to control environmental pollution.

It administers various environmental statutes for the  
prevention and control of pollution.

**Join us in maintaining and restoring the  
wholesomeness of the environment.**



**KERALA STATE POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD**

(under the Department of Environment of the Government of Kerala) PATTOM P.O.,  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM - 695 004

Head Office: Pattom P.O., Thiruvananthapuram-695 004. Tel: 0471-232910, 2318153, 2318154, 2318155  
e-mail: [kspcb@keralapcb.org](mailto:kspcb@keralapcb.org) Fax: 2318152 web: [www.keralapcb.org](http://www.keralapcb.org)

Published by WWF-India, Kerala State Office, Moolavilakom, Vanchiyoor P.O., Thiruvananthapuram-695035  
Phone: 0471-2302265, E-mail: [wwwfklso@gmail.com](mailto:wwwfklso@gmail.com). Web: [www.wwfindia.org](http://www.wwfindia.org)  
Computer Graphics: Soft & Soft, Sasthamangalam, Phone: 9447451314, Printed at: G.K. Printers, Kochi.