FROM THE STATE DIRECTOR'S DESK

The period of May – June is usually when we settle our last financial year matters and prepare ourselves for the start of our major projects and programmes in the new financial cum academic year. And this is the period where we get maximum applications for internships. This is a win-win situation where the students from various colleges gets to do an internship with WWF, the world’s biggest and leading conservation organization, and for us, it is availability of more working hands to complete our work like drafting of the last year annual report, preparation of new powerpoint presentations, drafting of newsletters etc. We had three students of law from Mar Gregorios College of Law doing their one month internship with us and this provided us with the necessary manpower that was required to carry out some surveys and assessments that have been long pending. Mr. Vishnu mainly worked on preparing a position paper on the municipal solid waste management in Thiruvananthapuram – looking at what has been done over the past few years, critically evaluating why each strategy failed and also options available for the future. Ms. Chandini helped us in preparing a position paper on the human – stray dog conflict in Thiruvananthapuram – which has escalated very much over the past few years, looking at the timeline of the issue, severity, measures adopted to control it, critically evaluating what worked and what failed and on how to go forward in resolving this issue effectively and efficiently. Mr. Sudhi worked on assessing the effectives of the Thiruvananthapuram Zoo with regard to nature education and ex-situ conservation. He conducted a questionnaire survey among the various stakeholders of the Zoo including the visitors, animal keepers and the authorities and came out with the findings, observations and the suggestions which can help them to improve the facilities and make the Zoo more visitor friendly. These attempts will help us as a leading conservation organization to take a more proactive stand in such burning issues. In the same line, Mr. Sivakumar, Senior Education Officer, Ms.Rajalekshmi Sukumaran and Ms.Rahana Iqbal, Project Associates had the good opportunity to attend the “Two day Workshop on Environmental Laws and National Green Tribunal” held at Coimbatore on 3rd and 4th May 2014 organised by the Centre for Environmental Law, WWF-India. The two days learning and experience sharing with experts and other like-minded individuals and NGOs can help us in the long run on our policy and advocacy level interventions. As in previous years, the World Migratory Bird Day 2014 was observed at Kollam on 10th and 11th May with awareness programmes on the first day and field visit on the second. Two other intern students from SIMC – Pune, Mr. Alhul Prasad has been instrumental in preparing the art work for the hoardings on conservation issues that we propose to put up in the newly erected bus stops inside Thiruvananthapuram City and he has also prepared short video clippings on the work of WWF-India Kerala State Office. Ms. Norin Salim has helped us in preparing the content and layout for the 20 exhibition panels to be prepared on the themes related to the book ‘Silent Spring’. This is a project that we had committed to Antappan around two years back when he was organizing the 14 months environment awareness campaign, one month in each district. Now, even though we have lost that great green comrade because of his untimely death, we plan to keep our commitment and bring it out as an Antappan Memorial exhibition series. We could also be part of the First Antappan Memorial Meeting held at Edathwa, his native place, on 3rd June organised by Edathua Gramapanchayat and Green Community and we have also contributed a write-up to the memorial book brought out by Green Community on this occasion. As part of the ‘Going Beyond the Hour in Earth Hour 2014’, WWF and AMAS organized an awareness programme on energy conservation with free distribution of CPLs in Neyyattinkara and Poovar. The Kerala State Office was active in observing WED 2014 with multiple events - participation in the state-level exhibition as part of the government’s Local Environment Awareness Programme (LEAP) at Kotayam from 3rd to 5th June 2014; in association with AMAS, Neyyattinkara, we could carry out the mortality replanting of 1000 bamboo saplings along the banks of Neyyar and supplied 500 Curry leaf saplings to 500 homesteads to ensure its sustenance and to avoid pesticide infested curry leaves available in the market; delivered invited talks in various venues of observation of WED 2014 etc. The two months period was further energy packed with the three day Monsoon Camp conducted at Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary from 13th to 15th June and the first Teachers Training Workshop supported by CPREEC, Chennai held at Govt. Higher Secondary School, Thodupuzha on 27th June with the theme ‘Western Ghats’ and attended by 55 Teachers from different schools of the district. The monthly Sunday Bird Walk has also turned a big hit now.

Renjan Mathew Varghese,
State Director

IMPORTANT NEWS ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURE

GLOBAL

Antarctic ice loss has doubled: study

Antarctica is shedding 160 billion tonnes a year of ice into the ocean, twice the amount, of a few years ago, according to new satellite observations. The ice loss is adding to the rising sea levels driven by climate change and even east Antarctica is now losing ice. The new revelations follow the announcement last week that the collapse of the western Antarctic ice sheet has already begun and is unstoppable, although it may take many centuries to complete. (Source: The Hindu, May 21, 2014)

Tibetan Plateau glaciers ‘have shrunk by 15 per cent’

Glaciers on the Tibetan Plateau – the source of rivers such as the Brahmaputra – have shrunk by as much as
15 per cent, retreating by 8,000 square kilometres since 1980, according to a new Chinese government backed study. The decades long study conducted by the official Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) discovered that the perennial frozen earth on the Tibetan Plateau had also shrunk by 16 per cent over the past 30 years. The study attributes the retreat of glaciers and thawing of frozen earth to global warming, suggesting a significant impact on the water security of the subcontinent. Rivers such as the Brahmaputra have their source on the Tibetan Plateau, where it flows as the Yarlung Zangbo before turning at “the great bend” and entering India. (Source: The Hindu, June 20, 2014)

**NATIONAL**

**An eco disaster in the making in Nalgonda**

Receding forest cover and wildlife presence in Nalgonda district has become a major environmental threat, with the authorities sanctioning granite quarrying in Rachakonda forest area. According to the statistics available, the district has less forest area than the prescribed 33.33 per cent out of the total geographical area under National Forest Policy Act, 1952. The Department of Mines and Geology, Andhra Pradesh, has given permission to Sridevi Constructions, to quarry 16 acre hilly terrain in Marrigude and Samsthan Narayanpur Mandalas, that has largely disturbed the wildlife in the region. The Rachakonda area in Marriguda Mandal, which once had a huge presence of peacocks and spotted deers, seems to have lost its wildlife. “Though we tried to stall the quarrying by launching agitations, they were suppressed by the owner of the construction company, who enjoys political backing,” villagers said. The villagers appealed to the TRS, which would be forming the government in the Telangana State, to pay special attention to the issue and take measures to stop granite quarrying in Rachakonda. (Source: The Hindu, May 22, 2014)

**Scanty monsoon to shave off growth, push up prices**

The India Meteorological Department’s projection of 7 per cent below normal rainfall could push average inflation by half a percentage point, and the resultant full-blown drought, of the kind that struck India in 2002, could knock half a percentage point from the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate, experts have warned. Food prices jumped over 20 per cent after the 2009 drought as the UPA government had increased minimum support prices (MSP) for various farm produce. Retail inflation averaged 12.3 per cent during the year. Drought-related cost overruns in the fertilizer and fuel subsidies bills were roughly 0.2 per cent of the GDP in 2009 and food imports had surged by $5 billion or 65 per cent more than in 2008. (Source: The Hindu, June 12, 2014)

**Species of the Issue**

**Asian Elephant**

Sacred but exploited, the Asian Elephant has been worshipped for centuries and is still used today for ceremonial and religious purposes. Not only is it revered...
In Hindu mythology, there is a strong relationship between humans, animals, and plants. The concept of star trees, star animals, and star birds are classic examples for the same. Every one of you must plant your star trees and ensure they are growing and protected.

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SPECIAL FEATURE

亚洲象

在亚洲文化与宗教中，亚洲象因其角色而受到重视，它也是亚洲热带森林中的一种重要生物物种。科学名称为**Elephas maximus**，保护状况为濒危（IUCN）。在东南亚，估计有25,600至32,750头个体。亚洲象有四个亚种，分别是印度象、斯里兰卡象、婆罗洲侏象和苏门答腊象。虽然东南亚有成千上万的驯化亚洲象，但这种壮丽的动物正在面临灭绝的威胁。面对不断增长的人口，亚洲象的栖息地正在快速缩小。野生象群通常是小而孤立的，古代的迁徙路线被人类定居点切断。人象冲突常常导致双方死亡，象牙、肉和皮毛的偷猎仍然是一个普遍问题。

亚洲象是亚洲最大的陆地哺乳动物。它比非洲象小，耳朵相对较小。亚洲象的象鼻上有一个“手指”，而非洲象的象鼻有两个。亚洲象的象牙，尤其是雄象，是稀有的。亚洲象的象牙的分布可能反映了过去的象牙狩猎强度，从斯里兰卡的5%到南印度的90%。

亚洲象的耳朵在常动，以辐射热量来冷却自己。这种物种的听觉、视觉和嗅觉都很好，也是很好的游泳者。
Preparation of Position Paper on the Stray Dog Conflict in Thiruvananthapuram City

Ms. Chandini Venugopal, Student, BA LLB, Mar Gregorios College of Law, Thiruvananthapuram underwent internship at the Kerala State Office for a period of one month. During her internship, she mainly worked on preparing a position paper on the 'Human – Stray Dog Conflict' in Thiruvananthapuram – which has escalated very much over the past few years, looking at the timeline of the issue, severity, measures adopted to control it, critically evaluating what worked and what failed and charting the way forward.

Assessment of the Thiruvananthapuram Zoo with regard to its effectiveness on nature education and ex-situ conservation

Mr. Sudhi, Student, BA LLB, Mar Gregorios College of Law, Thiruvananthapuram underwent internship at the Kerala State Office for a period of one month. During his internship, he mainly worked on assessing the effectiveness of the Thiruvananthapuram Zoo with regard to nature education and ex-situ conservation. He did thorough library referencing to understand the concept, prepared, tested and refined the survey questionnaire, conducted the questionnaire survey and came out with the findings, observations and the suggestions.

Participation in the Two days Workshop on Environmental Laws and National Green Tribunal

Mr. A.K. Sivakumar, Senior Education Officer, Ms. Rajalekshmi Sukumaran and Ms.Rahana Iqbal, Project Associates attended the two day 'Workshop on Environmental Laws and National Green Tribunal' held at Coimbatore on 3rd and 4th May 2014 organised by Centre for Environmental Law, WWF-India. The workshop was attended by 42 Forest Department officials from different states, NGO representatives and individuals working in the field. Mr. Ritwick Dutta, Environmental Lawyer in Supreme Court & NGT and Mr. Neeraj Vagholikar, Environmentalist led the sessions and discussions.

Ongoing project on Laterite Mining and its Environmental Impacts

Discussions were conducted with Geovin Solutions to identify the GIS and RS related work that can be taken as a sub-consultancy of this work. Based on the discussions, deliverables and timeline, a technical and financial proposal has been submitted for our consideration and the same has been forwarded to Secretariat HR Division for necessary processing and approval.

Preparation of Position Paper on Municipal Solid Waste Management in Thiruvananthapuram

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ACTIVITIES OF WWF-INDIA KERALA STATE OFFICE

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World Migratory Bird Day

The World Migratory Bird Day 2014 held at YMCA Hall, Kollam on 10th and 11th May 2014 was inaugurated by Sri. Kesavan Nair, writer and social activist of Kollam in a function that was presided over by Sri. PC. Thomas, YMCA President. Adv. Niza Fasil, Sri. A.K. Sivakumar, Sri. Jesmis, Sri. Sureshkumar and Smt. Neha Waikar also spoke on the occasion. The poster series on Wetlands, Ashtamudi Lake and Migratory Birds were released in the function. The awareness panel boards prepared on the theme of the day to be installed in the campus of Govt. Boys High School and Kerala University Centre for Teacher Education was also unveiled. A photo exhibition of around 75 migratory birds was arranged in the YMCA Hall open for the public. The series of events were organised jointly by WWF-India and YMCA with the support of Kerala State Biodiversity Board and Molluscan Fisheries Division of CMFRI-Kochi in association with Grasshopper Nature Club and HELP Foundation, Kollam. The sessions on Bird Migration, Migratory Birds of Kerala and Bird Watching were led by Sri. A.K. Sivakumar, Sri. Jesson T Das and Sri. C. Harikumar.

On the second day a team of 25 bird enthusiasts had a morning bird watching session at Kandachira – Pavuvayal, part of Ashtamudi wetlands. They listed out 31 species of birds. The birding session was led by Sri. Harikumar, Smt. Neha Waikar and Smt. Saujya Anand, volunteers from WWF-India. Following the bird watching session the team gathered at YMCA Hall and discussed their observations. An interactive quiz exclusively on birds was carried out and the documentary ‘Birds of Kerala’ made by Sri. Suresh Elamon also was screened for the added benefit of the participants. In continuation to this, two day bird survey was conducted in and around Ashtamudi Lake and the data was shared with MFD, CMFRI Kochi as an input to one of their ongoing project on Evaluation of Ashtamudi Lake.

Invited Talk on Environment Education

The Senior Education Officer was invited to deliver a session on Environment Education at St. Jacob’s College of Teacher Education, Kazhakkootam, Thiruvananthapuram. Around 60 Teacher Trainees attended the session.

Sunday Bird Walk in May at Kollar

The monthly Sunday Bird Walk was held in and around Kollar – Ponmudi forests on 25th May and the team consisted 10 birders. They could see 38 species of birds though it was a rainy day.

Vembanad Fish Count

Senior Education Officer attended the 7th Vembanad Fish Count, the participatory documentation of fish fauna of India’s largest Ramsar Site Vembanad-Kol Wetland on 29th & 30th May 2014 organised by ATREE-CERC at Alappuzha. The team led by him noted 42 species of fishes. Reji Kunnumpuram, Volunteer of WWF-India also was part of the team.

Invited Talk at Rotary Club Meeting, Thiruvananthapuram

The State Director was the special invitee to the monthly meeting of Rotary Club Thiruvananthapuram on 19 May, 2014 and delivered a talk on ‘Protection of our Water Resources’. Around 40 Rotararians were present.

Writeup on Antappan Ambiyayam, the Late Green Comrade of Kerala

The State Director contributed a small write-up to the memorial book being brought out by Green Community on the occasion of the First Death Anniversary of Antappan.
Senior Education Officer represented WWF-India in the First Antappan Memorial Meeting held at Edathwa, his native place, on 3rd June 2014 organised by Edathua Grama Panchayat and Green Community. Around 100 people attended including friends, family and green comrades.

**Conservation hoardings for Bus Stops in Thiruvananthapuram City**

Mr. Athul Prasad, Student, SIMC – Pune is undergoing his internship at the Kerala State Office and he has been assigned the work of preparing hoardings on conservation issues to be put up in the newly erected bus stops inside Thiruvananthapuram City. He is also preparing a short video clipping on the work of WWF-India Kerala State Office.

**Panels on the themes related to Silent Spring**

Ms. Norin Salim, Student, SIMC – Pune is undergoing her internship at the Kerala State Office and she has been assigned the work of preparing the content and layout for the 20 exhibition panels to be prepared on the themes related to the book ‘Silent Spring’. She is also preparing other materials like powerpoint presentation on the theme of Climate Change for WED 2014 etc.

**Proposal for Ashtamudi Interpretation Centre**

The State Director, Mr. Vinod Malayilethu and Dr. Appukuttan met the Fisheries Joint Director Kollam and visited the Fisheries Office in Neendakara on 14 May 2014 and carried out a recon survey of finding a suitable space for an Ashtamudi Interpretation Centre as advised by the SG&CEO during his visit to Kollam few months back. The concept note is under preparation.

**Review of ‘Kerala Going 100% RE by 2050 – Summary’ in Malayalam**

The Climate Change and Energy Division, WWF-India in association with WISE Pune had earlier completed a study and published the report on ‘The Energy Report – Kerala Going 100% RE by 2050’. Based on the suggestion in the final workshop of the project, it was decided to bring out the summary of the project in local language i.e. Malayalam. In this regard, the draft of the document was prepared from Delhi and sent to us. The thorough review of the document was carried out and all corrections listed out. The document is in print.

**Free CFL Distribution at Neyyattinkara and Poovar**

As part of the ‘Going Beyond the Hour in Earth Hour 2014’, WWF and AMAS organized an awareness programme on energy conservation with free distribution of CFLs in Neyyattinkara and Poovar on 27 June, 2014.

**World Environment Day 2014**

Kerala State Office was active in observing WED 2014 with the following events:

Participating in the State-level Exhibition as part of the Government’s Local Environment Awareness Programme (LEAP), Kerala State Office put a stall with 48 exhibition panels on various themes like biodiversity of Kerala, endangered animals of India and endemic species of Western Ghats. Around 3000 people visited the exhibition held at Kottayam from 3rd to 5th June 2014.
Kerala State Office in association with AMAS, Noyyattinkara carried out the mortality replanting of 1000 bamboo saplings along the banks of Neyyar and supplied 500 Curryleaf saplings to 500 homesteads to ensure its sustenance and to avoid pesticide infested curry leaves available in the market.

The State Director was invited to give a talk in the WED observation on the theme of ‘Climate Change’ at the Department of Environmental Sciences, Kerala University on 5th June, 2014 and the talk was delivered on ‘Climate Change and Cities – the Kerala context’.

The State Director was invited to give a talk in the WED observation on the theme of Climate Change at St. John’s College, Anchal on 18th June, 2014 and the talk was delivered on ‘Climate Change and You’.

Made a multimedia presentation on the theme of WED 2014 and shared with all our network schools, colleges and associates for grassroots level awareness programmes.

**Monsoon Camp at Aralam WLS**

A three day Monsoon Camp was conducted at Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary from 13th to 15th June 2014 to familiarize the campers with monsoon and its importance. 17 nature enthusiasts attended the camp and they could see the unique fish migration an array of wildlife including limbless amphibians, Malabar Giant Squirrel, Bonnet Macaque and so on.

**Teachers Training Workshop**

The first Teachers Training Workshop for the 2014-15 academic year supported by CPREEC, Chennai was held at Govt. Higher Secondary School, Thodupuzha on 27th June 2014 with the theme ‘Western Ghats’ and was attended by 55 Teachers from different schools of the district. Sri. A.M. Haird, the Municipality Chairperson, Smt. Sheela Jayan, Vice Chairperson, Sri. K. Saji, Wildlife Warden, Sri. N. Ravindran, District Coordinator for Kerala State Biodiversity Board and Sri. Johncy Mathew, NGC Coordinators interacted with the participants.

**Sunday Bird Walk in June at Ashtamudi Lake**

As the follow-up of the World Migratory Bird Day held last month, the Sunday Bird Walk was held in and around Ashtamudi Lake on 29th June 2014 in which 10 birders attended. Remarkable observations were noted.

**Meeting on ‘Conservation of Paddy Fields and Wetlands’**

The Kerala Parishithithi Aikyavedi organized a half-day workshop on ‘Protection of our Paddy Fields and Wetlands’ on 12th June, 2014 at YMCA, Thiruvananthapuram especially in the background of the move by the State Government to dilute the Kerala Paddy Field and Wetland Conservation Act. The meeting was attended by the State Director, Senior Education Officer, Rajalekshmi Sukumaran (Project Associate) and Ms. Anita Ann George (Intern). In this background, an internal brainstorming session was held in the office led by the law intern and a note was prepared to be tabled in the meeting.

**WWF Wildlife Android/ Ios App Development**

Discussions are on with the IT Company Artsivis to develop a WWF Wildlife Android/ Ios app which can be used by visitors to PAs to know more about the area, its ecosystems, inhabiting wildlife, facilities available etc. The company has agreed to develop this free of cost and any possible revenue generation models can be looked into later on. The basic details of the layout of the app has been prepared and provided to the company and they are in the process of preparing the wireframes for approval before going in for developing the main application.