



Western Ghat Regional Centre Zoological Survey of India, Calicut, Kerala



Government of India
Ministry of Environment and Forests

The Western Ghats, also known by the name 'Sahyadri', constitute a 1600km long, about 45-65 million years old mountain chain, along the west coast of India. Originating from south of the Tapti River (near the border of Gujarat and Maharashtra) and extending upto Kanyakumari, the southern most tip of the Indian peninsula (between 20°N lat. to 8°N lat), the Western Ghats cover an area of 1, 60, 000 sq. km. It is an important life supporting system of Peninsular India with an extremely diverse range of biotic provinces and biomes. Being one of the richest areas of Biological wealth exhibiting a high degree of endemism, the Western Ghats is acclaimed as one among the 34 globally identified Biodiversity Hotspots that form a major part of the Western Ghats - Sri Lanka Hotspot.

The Western Ghat Regional Centre at Calicut, Kerala, established in April, 1980, under the Sixth Five Year Plan of the Government of India, is one among the sixteen Regional Centres of the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), the internationally acclaimed taxonomic organization of the country.

The jurisdictional limit of the Centre encompasses the entire biogeographic zone of the Western Ghats. The Centre is engaged in the documentation of the rich and diverse faunal resources of the Western Ghats and Kerala state, by conducting field explorations and scientific studies.



Major Programmes undertaken

- Behavioral study of non-human primates of Western Ghats
- Extensive survey of the Ashtamudy Lake, a Ramsar site in Kerala
- Systematic studies on Pteromalinae (Hymenoptera: Insecta) of Indian Subcontinent
- Fish fauna of Kozhikode district
- Faunal Resources of Bhadra Tiger Reserve, Karnataka
- Survey and documentation of the fish fauna of the river systems of Kerala
- Systematic studies on Telenominae (Hymenoptera: Insecta) of South Western Ghats

- Systematic studies on Odonata of South Western Ghats
- Odonata fauna of Kerala state
- Herpetofauna (Amphibia & Reptilia) of South Western Ghats
- Faunal resources of Kudremukh National Park, Karnataka
- Systematic studies on Platygastriidae (Hymenoptera: Insecta) of Paddy agroecosystems in Kerala
- Systematic studies on Pteromalidae (Hymenoptera: Insecta) of South Western Ghats
- Systematic studies on Scelioninae (Hymenoptera: Insecta) of South Western Ghats
- Atlas of Odonata of the Western Ghats
- Atlas of Amphibians of the Western Ghats

Areas Surveyed

Areas surveyed include mainly the forested tracts including protected areas of South Western Ghats namely the Wildlife Sanctuaries of Periyar, Neyyar, Peechi-Vazhani, Parambikulam, Wayanad, Idukki, Peppara, Thattekad, Shendurney, Chinnar, Chimony, Aralam, Choolannur, Malabar in Kerala and the Brahmagiri and Bhadra in Karnataka.



The surveyed National Parks include Eravikulam, Silent Valley, Pampadum Shola, Mathikettan Shola, Anamudi Shola in Kerala and Kudremukh in Karnataka.

Major scientific contributions

New discoveries:

Over 200 species (fishes, amphibians and insects) were described as new to science by the scientists of the Centre.

Rediscovery:

Two important mammal species from Kerala, believed to have been extinct namely, the Malabar Civet and the small Tranvancore Flying squirrel were rediscovered. The Largest species of earthworm found in India, *Dravida nilamburensis* was rediscovered after a lapse of a century from Nilambur (Kerala).

Available Taxonomic Expertise

Taxonomic expertise on Mammals, Birds, Reptiles, Amphibia, Insects and related arthropods are available currently at the Centre.



National Zoological Collection (NZC)

The NZCs maintained at the Centre contain 20790 identified specimens, including both vertebrates and invertebrates. The collection also includes 126 holotypes and 185 paratypes.



Modern Infrastructure and Advanced Research facilities

The Centre is equipped with compact Insect Storage system for housing insect collections. The major recent additions to the centre include, Leica M205A automated stereomicroscope, with attached high definition CCD camera and montage software and also Jeoul Bench-top Scanning Electron microscope.



Publications

13 books and 550 research papers were published in various national/international journals by the scientists of the Centre.

- ▶ Threatened Mammals of Kerala
- ▶ Shorebirds of Kerala including Gulls and Terns
- ▶ Pictorial Handbook on Common Dragonflies and Damselflies of Kerala
- ▶ Handbook on Mammals of Kerala
- ▶ Fishes of Kozhikode District
- ▶ Mangroves and their faunal associates in Kerala
- ▶ Faunal diversity of a laterite hill system at Madayipara, Kannur District, Kerala, India
- ▶ Pteromalinae (Hymenoptera) of Indian subcontinent
- ▶ Studies on Proctotrupeoidea and Platygastridae (Hymenoptera) of Kerala
- ▶ Fauna of Eravikulam National Park (Kerala)
- ▶ Fauna of Kudremukh National Park (Karnataka)
- ▶ An annotated checklist of Amphibia of India
- ▶ Western Ghats : A hotspot of biological wealth



Library

The library of the Centre has acquired 2492 books and 22 journals/periodicals are subscribed.

Museum

Representative fauna of Western Ghats, pictorials and habitat cases/ models are in display at the Natural History Museum of the Centre, for generating public awareness towards biodiversity conservation.

Other Extension activities

Identification and advisory services are offered to students, researchers and scientists of other institutes. The facilities are also availed by the Kerala Forest & Wildlife Department and the Regional office of the Ministry of Environment & Forest, Cochin for identification of confiscated specimens of Insects, birds and mammals.

Talks/lectures on various subjects related to faunal diversity and biodiversity conservation are delivered on request to the students as well as school/college teachers.

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For more details visit <http://www.zsi.gov.in>