



Offices

Bangalore

Royal Enclave, Srirampura
Jakkur Post, Bangalore 560 064
Tel: +91-80-23635555,
Fax: +91-80-23530070

Eastern Himalayas

E2, Second Floor, Golden Heights
Gandhi Road, Darjeeling 734 101
West Bengal
Tel: +91-354-2259297

New Delhi

2nd Floor, 1, K Commercial Complex
Biral Road, Jangpura Extension
New Delhi 110014
Tel: +91-11-2432 3133

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We are proud to announce that ATREE governing board member, Professor Nandini Sundar, Chairperson of the Department of Sociology at the Delhi School of Economics, is recipient of the 2010 Infosys Prize for Social Anthropology.

The citation by the Infosys Social Sciences jury reads, 'Professor Nandini Sundar is an outstanding social anthropologist of South Asia, who has made major and original contributions to our understanding of environmental struggles, of the impact of central and state policies on tribal politics, and of the moral ambiguities associated with subaltern political movements in contemporary India. These contributions are anchored in her deep grasp of the legacies of colonial rule for cultural politics in contemporary India, and in theoretically innovative understanding of the relationship of major historical events to persistent structural tensions in Indian society.'



ATREE felicitates Rohini Nilekani

Rohini Nilekani, philanthropist and Chairperson of Arghyam Foundation and Pratham Books, announced a gift of ₹ 5 crores to advance ATREE's outreach and advocacy strategy for environmental governance. Rohini Nilekani has been one of ATREE's long time donors. She also serves on the ATREE governing board, and in this position has played the role of critique and mentor to this organisation. ATREE celebrated this gift with a felicitation and panel discussion on 'Civil Society Institutions and Environmental Governance'.

Speaking at the felicitation, Nilekani said, "Our country is facing huge environmental challenges. We need both policy reform and better governance to address these challenges. ATREE is one of the few organisations in the country that generates new knowledge about the environment and uses this knowledge to make policy recommendations and improve governance."

Senior journalist and ex-Bureau Chief of The Hindu, Mumbai, Kalpana Sharma, B.M.S. Rathore, Joint Secretary, MoEF and Ganesan Balachander, member, Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) Consortium Board emphasised the increasing importance of the role of individuals and organisations in environmental governance. This, they said, would not only influence the government to take right decisions, but give citizens an opportunity to question policies too. Anurag Behar, CEO, Azim Premji Foundation and Chief Sustainability Officer, Wipro Ltd, moderated the discussion.

This event took place on 3rd November, at the Bangalore International Centre.

Announcing Certificate Courses

ATREE's Academy for Conservation Science and Sustainability Studies invites applications for two certificate courses:

- 1. Introduction to Geospatial Tools for Conservation**, 14-26 February 2011, Bangalore. Comprehensive course in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Remote Sensing (RS), designed by ATREE's Ecoinformatics Lab and Academy for Conservation Science and Sustainability Studies. http://atree.org/certificate_geospatial_2011
- 2. Perspectives on Environment and Development: Concepts and Debates**, 9-16 March 2011, Bangalore. This course will revisit fundamental concepts, theories and debates in natural resource management based rural development. Details on http://atree.org/ed_course_2010.

Or contact Madhavi Latha at madhavi@atree.org.

Inviting participation for 2-day waterfowl count in Tamiraparani wetlands organised by Agasthyamalai CCC

Contact Dr. Patrick David at patdavid28@gmail.com

Research

Is Manas National Park showing signs of recovery?

The decline in violence following the 2003 agreement between the Indian government and Bodo leaders has

benefited Manas. UNESCO has shown interest in removing Manas National Park from the World Natural Heritage Site in Danger list. But lack of reliable scientific data on the major wildlife populations has proved to be a hurdle. In the absence of such data, it was difficult to prepare a heritage site management plan.

ATREE's study conducted between 2006 and 2008 tried comparing tiger and prey densities of Manas with those of tiger reserves in Pench, Nagarhole, Kaziranga and Kanha. We found that while Manas still has the lowest abundance of both tiger and prey compared to the other four tiger reserves, it has a fairly good prey population that can potentially sustain more tigers.

Continuing in the same direction, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF-India program), Aaranyak and ATREE/ UNESCO are currently collaborating to provide technical support to government efforts at estimating wildlife/tiger population in Manas, for which camera trap monitoring has started yielding results. The research protocol follows NTCA-WII guidelines and the results will contribute to the all-India tiger estimation efforts.

The recent trans-boundary protection and management agreement reached between India and Bhutan is a significant development in aiding recovery. The forests of Bhutan, which are contiguous with Manas NP, provide critical corridors of movement for many large-ranging animals, and a safe refuge during periods of disturbance. ATREE is a partner in India's transboundary initiative with Bhutan, which is simultaneously surveying the contiguous Bhutan area (Royal Manas National Park) to the

north of Indian Manas for monitoring wildlife population.

Rajkamal Goswami, T Ganesh

Will the Western Ghats be declared a UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site?

India currently has five sites on the UNESCO World Natural Heritage sites list, and wants to add a sixth. In 2006, ATREE, along with Nature Conservation Foundation, Mysore, and Wildlife Institute of India, Dehra Dun evaluated sites in the Western Ghats for submission into UNESCO's Natural Heritage Properties. Based on these inputs, the GoI's MoEF sent in a proposal to UNESCO for inclusion of thirty nine sites in seven sub-clusters of the Western Ghats as World Natural Heritage Cluster Sites.

As part of the process of declaring a proposed area as a Heritage site, UNESCO sent the technical team of Wendy A. Strahm and Brian James Furze to assess the scientific, technical and administrative aspects of the Western Ghats proposal.

ATREE hosted an interaction meeting with the team, local scientists, conservationists and other civil society representatives who are committed to the conservation of the Western Ghats, at ATREE, Bangalore on 17 October 2010. The interaction consisted of a presentation on the Western Ghats by Jagdish Krishnaswamy (who is also now on the MoEF's Western Ghats Natural Heritage Committee), screening of a documentary on the Western Ghats by Sandesh Kadur, followed by interaction and discussions. The team's report will decide whether the Western Ghats cluster will be added to the UNESCO list.

S. Joseph, presentation on 'Response of Himalayan ecosystems to global change based on 1982-2006 satellite data' at International Symposium on 'Benefiting from Earth Observation: Bridging the Data Gap for Adaptation to Climate Change in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan Region' held in Kathmandu, Nepal. 4-6 October 2010.

Ravikanth G., talk on, 'DNA bar coding of plants: Promises and pitfalls' at the short term training course on 'Application of AFLP and SSR markers in Crop Improvement' at the Department of Genetics and Plant Breeding, University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore. 29 September 2010.

Arundati Das, talk on 'Climate change and its impact' to HSBC volunteers as part of the ATREE-Earthwatch Climate Change Programme.

Workshops organised

Jalapaadom student's workshop on 'Preparation of School Biodiversity Register,' at CERC. 3 December 2010.

Events

The India Biodiversity Portal was relaunched on 15 December 2010. Vembanad Community Environmental Resource Centre in association with Press Club Alappuzha organised a photo competition/exhibition on life in Vembanad, titled *Athijeevanam*.

Forty students from **Parikrma Humanity Foundation**, schools for underprivileged children visited ATREE on 18 November 2010, to learn about insects. Priyadarsanan Dharma Rajan, Seena Narayanan and Anirudh Marathe took classes about the biology, diversity and importance of insects and took the children for an insect identification walk around Srirampura.

ATREE participated in the **Indian Biodiversity Expo (IBE 2010)** at Thiruvananthapuram. 27-31 December 2010.

Talks@ATREE and movie screenings

Prof Sujaya Rao, Oregon University, on 'Diversity of bee pollinators in native and agricultural landscapes in Oregon in Western USA: Research and education.' 13 October 2010.

Interaction on Western Ghats being declared as a World Heritage Site. 17 October 2010.

'Rain Forest: Heroes of the High Frontier', documentary screened during the workshop for Canopy Science Research in the South Asian region. 20- 21 November 2010. 'Wild Meat Trail', documentary by Rita Banerji and Shilpi Sharma. 15 December 2010.

Press

Soliga tribes and tigers know each other, *Udayavani*, October 2010.

UNESCO mission to Western Ghats runs into obstacles, *DNA*. October 2010.

No entry for researchers in forests, *The Bangalore Mirror*. October 2010.

IUCN team begins 13-day India visit today, *The Times of India*. October 2010.

Divya Gandhi, Losing homes, *Frontline*. December 2010.

Visual treat on Vembanad Lake, *The Hindu*. December 2010.

Poornima Nataraj, 1,223 trees face the axe, *Deccan Herald*. December 2010

Evaluation of Western Ghats, *The Hindu*. October 2010.

Vagaikulam lake yet to be declared a bird sanctuary, *The Hindu*. December 2010.

10,000 trees to replace 911, *The Times of India*. January 2011

Grants Received

Ravikanth G. Biotechnological interventions for conservation and utilization of forest resources. Department of Biotechnology (DBT), New Delhi grant of Rs 56.64 lakhs for the period 2010-2013.

Siddappa Setty R. Local alternatives for temple offerings in South India - MM Hills, Biligiri Ranga Swamy Temple Wildlife Sanctuary, Nagamalai and Allagarkoil at Madurai. Department of Biotechnology, New Delhi grant of ₹ 2.55 lakhs





Academy

Academy collaboration

The Oregon State University (OSU) and ATREE's Academy for Conservation Science and Sustainability Studies have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to develop a mutual cooperation in teaching and research, which will include exchange of faculty, joint research activities, submission of joint proposals to national and international funding agencies based on faculty interests, participation in seminars and academic meetings, exchange of academic material and other information, special short-term academic programmes, and student exchange for research and study.

Conservation education ATREE style: First hand experiences in ecology and environment awareness

The Valley School at BRT

ATREE organised a field intensive conservation education trip for The Valley School students at ATREE's BRT field station. The three-day programme introduced the boys and girls to perspectives of ecology and environment: culture and ethics related to environment, wildlife, forest



dependence and livelihoods, food security and agricultural biodiversity.

The groups made an evening trek to the Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple and were later introduced to the ways of life of the tribal dwellers – Soligas – through visits to their local school and cultural programme. They visited Vivekananda Girijana Kalyana Kendra and learnt about the organisation's work with Soliga tribes. Lessons in ecology were learnt through the web of life game that lets players discover how elements in nature are related to each other.

The workshop was attended by 84 children and eight teachers.
Skanda S.

DNA Club field trips to Kudremukh

ATREE is the resource organisation for the Govt's Department of Biotechnology's Nature Awareness Club (DNA Club). Within this programme, DNA Club members of SDM High School, Ujire and Jaycees School, Sringeri made a field trip to Kudremukh National Park on 28th and 29th of December 2010. Dr Aravind Madhyasta and the Range

Forest Officer held an introductory session at Bhagawati Nature Camp on 28th for students of SDM High School. Students trekked to Gangamoola, where the Tunga and Bhadra rivers originate. During the walk they learnt about different forest types, importance of grassland and shola forests, river ecosystems and ferns. The highlight of the day was the spotting of a rare and endangered toad, *Ansonia ornata*. On the 29th, students of Jaycees School, Sringeri trekked through the grassland forests, learning about river ecosystem, epiphytes, flowering of *Strobilanthus* and observing spiders, damselflies and other tiny creatures. The top of the hill gave them a view of the areas devastated by mining, which led to discussion on forest degradation.
Abhisheka K



Awards + Recognitions

BR Hills environmental handbook in Kannada, *Vana Sanjeevana*, brought out by Kalpavriksh, ATREE and VGKK has got an award for the best Kannada book of the year by Akalanka Prathishtana, Udupi.

Shivanna K.R., appointed as the Chairman of the Scientific Advisory Committee for the DBT Institute of Bioresources and Sustainable Development, Imphal, Manipur for three years.

Ravikanth G. recognised as the postgraduate teacher at the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore.

New

Staff

Anamika, Consultant
Ashokankur Datta, Fellow
Dheeksha Rabindra, Communications Officer
Divin Murukesh, Consultant
Jyoti Shelavant, Consultant
Purnima Kumar, Senior Research Associate on ATREE-WIPRO Project
R. Sharada, Consultant
Roshan Ozmond, Consultant
Satyadeep Rajan, Director, Development
Shivaprakash, Consultant
Sreerupa Sen, Research Associate
Sridhar lyengar, Asst. Director, Finance

Interns

Sandeep Sen. Documenting detailed species account for land and freshwater molluscs of the Western Ghats for IBP project.



Publications

Devi, O.S., P. Komor and D. Das. 2010. 'A checklist of traditional edible bio-resources from Ima markets of Imphal Valley, Manipur, India', *Journal of Threatened Taxa*, 2(11): 1291-1296.

Lyngdoh, N., Geeta Joshi, Ravikanth G., R. Uma Shaanker and Vasudeva R. 2010. 'Influence of levels of genetic diversity on fruit quality in teak (*Tectona grandis* L.f.)', *Current Science*, 99(5): 639-644.

Manju, V. S., R. Uma Shaanker, Vasudeva, R., K.R. Shivanna. 2010. 'Functional dioecy in *Nothapodytes nimmoniana*, a distylous species in the Western Ghats', *Current Science*, 99(10): 1444-1449.

Manju, V. S., R. Uma Shaanker, S.R. Leather, Vasudeva, R., K.R. Shivanna. 2010. 'Floral resources, pollinators and fruiting in a threatened tropical deciduous tree', *Journal of Plant Ecology*, doi: 10.1093/jpe/rtq029.

Mukherjee, S., Krishnan, A., Tamma, K., Home, C., Navya, R., Joseph, S., Das, A., Ramakrishnan, U. 2010. 'Ecology driving genetic variation: A comparative phylogeography of jungle cat (*Felis chaus*) and leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*) in India', *PLoS ONE* 5(10): e13724. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0013724.

Nageswara, R. M., Ravikanth, G., K.N. Ganeshaiah and R. Uma Shaanker. 2010. 'Role of protected area in conserving the population and genetic structure of economically important bamboo species', *Bioremediation, Biodiversity and Bioavailability*, 4 (1): 69-76.

Shijo, J., Reddy, A. P. Thomas, S. K. Srivastava, and V. K. Srivastava. 2010. 'Spatial interpolation of carbon stock: a case study from the Western Ghats biodiversity hotspot, India', *International Journal of Sustainable Development & World Ecology*, 17(6): 1745-2627.

Priyadarsanan Dharma Rajan and K.D. Prathapan, Water in a sieve, *Down To Earth*. October 2010.

Harini Nagendra, We need city-level green plans, *DNA*. January 2011.

Harini Nagendra, How green was my Mehkri circle, *Bangalore Mirror*. January 2011.

Talks/ presentations by staff

Anirudh Marathe, presentation on 'Exploration of ant diversity across an elevation gradient in Eagle Nest Wildlife Sanctuary (NE Himalayas, Arunachal Pradesh).' Indian Biodiversity Congress (IBC 2010) in Thiruvananthapuram. 27-31 December 2010.

Seena Narayanan Karimbumkara, talk on 'Diversity of Dung Beetles (Coleoptera: Scarabaeidae: Scarabaeinae) of Shendurney Wildlife Sanctuary (Western Ghats: Kerala).' Indian Biodiversity Congress (IBC 2010) in Thiruvananthapuram. 27-31 December 2010.

Priyadarsanan D.R., talk on, 'Biological resources and traditional knowledge: An open access model for access and benefit sharing' at Indian Biodiversity Congress (IBC 2010), organised by CISSA in Thiruvananthapuram. 27-31 December 2010.

Siddappa Setty R., talk on 'Sustainable harvest of gooseberry' at 4th World Ayurveda Congress and Arogya Expo, Seminar on Conservation, Cultivation, Sustainable Collection, Processing and Marketing of Medicinal Plants with focus on RET Species. 12 December 2010.

Shivanna K. R., presided over the Botanical Conference of the Indian Botanical Society at Shivaji University, Kolhapur and delivered the

presidential address: 'Relevance of low-tech research in Botany in India'. 10-12 November 2010.

Priyadarsanan D. R., talk on 'Convention on Biological Diversity, Research and benefit sharing: the continuing imbroglio.' at the Post CBD- COP 10 Assessment of Access and Benefit Sharing, New Delhi. 9 November 2010.

Sharachchandra Lele, talk on, 'Re-thinking forest governance in India: Integrating collective action theory and economics with political ecology?' at Energy & Resources Group Colloquium, University of California, Berkeley. 8 December 2010.

Siddappa Setty R., talk on 'Biodiversity conservation in BRT' at ATREE for DePaul University students. 3 December 2010.

Sharachchandra Lele, talk on, 'Climate change and development: The challenge for Indian environmentalists', at Centre for South Asia, Stanford University, Stanford. 2 December 2010.

Siddappa Setty R., talks on 'Conservation and sustainable harvest of natural resources' for Gram Panchayat representatives from Tumkur and Shimoga district at Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Rural Energy and Development, Bangalore. October to November 2010.

Sharachchandra Lele, talk on, 'Beyond exclusion: Iterative approaches to biodiversity conservation in the tropics', course on Conservation Biology & Sustainable Development, University of Wisconsin, Madison. 28 October 2010.

Sharachchandra Lele, talk on, 'Ecosystem service, dis-service, or a governance problem: Forest-

hydrological impacts in the Western Ghats of India', at Nelson Institute of Environmental Studies and Department of Geography, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, USA. 28 October 2010

Sharachchandra Lele, talk on, 'Institutional analysis for better forest governance in India', Course on Society and Nature, University of Wisconsin, Madison. 27 October 2010.

Paramesha M., presented a paper on 'Assessing the functional status of wildlife corridors for better management in the Mysore-Nilgiri landscape of Western Ghats, India,' at 'International Symposium on degradation, restoration and sustainable management of forest ecosystems' held in Kunming, China. 24 - 30 October 2010.

Siddappa Setty R., speech on 'Importance of traditional knowledge and environmental education.' *Vana Sanjeevana* book award ceremony, Udupi. 24 October 2010.

Sharachchandra Lele, talk on 'Tradeoffs, unidirectionalities and power: Moving from collective action to governance in India's forests', during the Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, USA. 24 October 2010.

Ravikanth G., talk on, 'Species recovery of economic and endangered species' at the Zonal Conference on 'Recent Trends in Plant Physiology and Crop Improvement' at School of Bio Sciences and Technology (SBST), VIT University, Vellore. 22 October 2010.

Siddappa Setty R., talk on 'Biodiversity and conservation work in BRT' at Nature Camp conducted by Usha Charitable Trust, Bangalore. 22 October 2010.

Policy + Outreach



SAARC scientists seek better canopy science infrastructure

As a follow up to the 5th International Canopy Conference held in 2009 at Bangalore, ATREE organised a two-day capacity building workshop that brought together scientists from South Asia to discuss the setting up of a pan-regional canopy research programme. It aimed to further canopy science through greater cooperation and possible collaborations with government agencies to install canopy research facilities such as cranes, walkways and towers.

The panel at the workshop decided that a core group would develop a workable model for canopy research, based on existing information, and bring out guidelines for the same within a month's time. The lack of access to canopies would be highlighted in presentations to funding agencies, and the importance of forest canopies from a climate change and biodiversity conservation perspective would also be put forth. The need for capacity building among students in the South Asian region

was identified as a key concern that needs to be addressed. The participants opined that building links with Indian researchers and other SAARC countries through universities could help to address this issue.

The workshop was attended by delegates from Bhutan and Sri Lanka, representatives from Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Sikkim Forest Departments, and forest canopy scientists from India.

Vivek Ramachandran

Battling weeds in forests

ATREE's Community-based Conservation Centre at Male Mahadeshwara Hills (MM Hills) and Karnataka Forest Department, Kollegal division organised a workshop on 'Alien Invasive Plants' on December 8 and 9 in order to identify and map the spread of these species in MM Hills and adjacent areas; and also to discuss effective methods in monitoring and control.

Dr Siddappa Setty, Fellow at ATREE,

briefed the participants on the major invasive plants in India – *Lantana camara*, *Eupatorium*, and *Parthenium hysterophorous* and their impact on biodiversity. Participants identified the spread of lantana as a major issue in their forest areas. They noted that bird dispersal of seeds, tree cover loss and soil condition were some of the major reasons for lantana spread. ATREE scientists and foresters agreed on basic guidelines to control lantana spread: to remove the weed before it starts to flower, continuing to physically remove the invasive from a spot for at least three consecutive years, and getting fast growing species such as bamboo to occupy areas cleared of lantana.

Participants listed and mapped the spread of major invasive species found in MM Hills and adjacent areas. ATREE will use this data to generate maps that indicate the invasion of major alien invasive plants in MM Hills, Yediyarahalli, and Cowdalli.

The workshop was attended by three foresters and 12 forest guards from the above areas.

Ramesh Kannan

