



KERALA STATE BIODIVERSITY BOARD

EKAA

Environment. Kerala. Awareness. Action
Monthly - Newsletter of the Kerala State Biodiversity Board



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Biodiversity Award

Species Discoveries

RKI Projects

Biodiversity Awards Distributed

Kerala State Biodiversity Conservation awards have been distributed to individuals, educational institutions, organisations and media persons who make significant contributions in the field of biodiversity conservation measures since 2007. Award winners of 2019-20, belonging to 13 categories, were felicitated by Chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan on November 25th, 2021 at Mahatma Ayyankali Hall.

A certificate of recognition was awarded to the selected BMCs and a video of the activities undertaken at local level were released during the function held in association with the Biodiversity Award distribution on 25.11.2021. The book “Jaivavaividhya Samrakshana Paripalanam Janangalilude Sadhyathayum Niyamavum” authored by K.V. Govindan, Board member, KSBB was released by Pinarayi Vijayan, Hon’ble Chief Minister of Kerala.

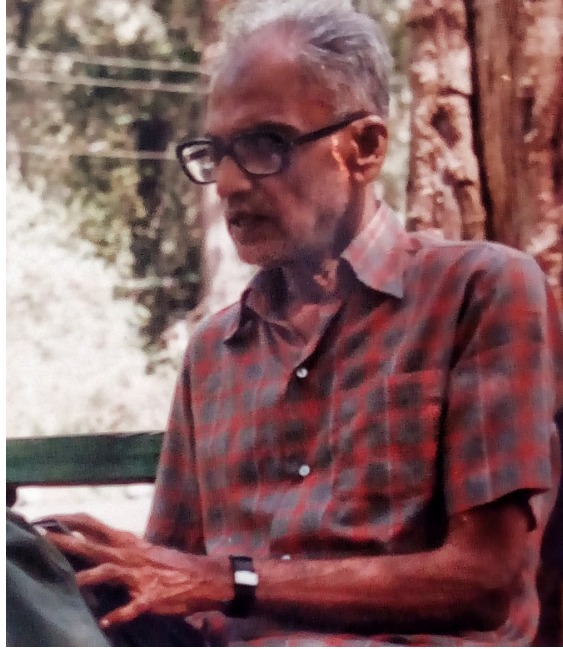
Bioresource Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) with BMC

Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) envisages sharing of the benefits accrued from commercial utilization of bioresource with the local community, who has been conserving these resources. As mandated by the Biological Diversity Act 2002 any foreign entities accessing bioresources from India has to obtain approval from National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) and the benefits accrued shall be shared with the concerned Biodiversity Management Committees (BMC). NBA had transferred the benefits accrued by accessing bioresources from Kerala so received, to Kerala State Biodiversity Board (KSBB) in turn had invited project proposals from BMCs. The funds so received were shared with 17 selected BMCs within the state and various conservation projects were initiated.



Eminent Personality

K. K. Neelakantan (1923-1992) better known by his pen name **Induchoodan**, was a leading Indian ornithologist. Widely regarded as the pioneer of environmental movement in Kerala, he popularized bird study through his Malayalam books. He started a career early in 1944, as tutor in The American College, Madurai. Later worked at Loyola, Brennen, Rajamundry and Victoria, Chittoor Government College, Thiruvananthapuram Women's College and University College and the Maharaja's College at Ernakulam. He retired from Thiruvananthapuram University College, as the Head of the Department of English, in 1978. His magnum opus *Keralathile Pakshikal* (Birds of Kerala) first published in 1958 is considered to be a classic in Malayalam. Described with illustrations of 261 birds found in Kerala, it is considered a unique work among Indian languages. A collection of his essays on environment, bird watching and birds titled "**Pullu Thottu Poonara Vare**" won the award of the State Department



of Science, Technology and Environment for popular Science writing and also the I. C. Chacko Endowment prize by the Kerala Sahitya Academy. "**Pakshikalum Manushyarum**", his other work on birds and bird watching for children, also has won two awards from the Kerala Government and Kairali Children's Book Trust instituted for Children's literature.

In 1949, Induchoodan got the rare fortune of stumbling upon the largest pelicanry in India. He found it at Aredu some 13 miles from Tadepalligudam in the East Godavari District. This finding was published in 1949. Induchoodan was the president of Prakriti Samrakshna Samithi and part of the Silent Valley Agitation during the year 1979. He was the founder and President of Kerala Natural History Society and an

Honorary member of WWF India. He pursued the study of birds until his death at the age of 69.

Species Discoveries

***Lepidagathis ananthapuramensis* (Acanthaceae): a new species from the lateritic plateaus of Kerala, India**

A new species of *Lepidagathis* from the lateritic plateau of Kasaragod district of Kerala, India, has been reported by a team of researchers V.S.A.Kumar, P.Biju, Sindu Arya, Josekutty & Augustine, and the same is described and illustrated as *Lepidagathis ananthapuramensis*. *Ananthapuramensis* is the species name given to the plant as this rare plant was spotted in the neighbourhoods of the Ananthapura lake temple, Kasaragod. *Lepidagathis ananthapuramensis* is an erect herb that grows to a height of 50-100 cm. The new species resembles *L.keralensis* but differs in having erect habit, hairy

stem, roots borne only on the basal root stock, hairy veins of leaves, early blooming period, one-sided purplish brown long inflorescence, 14-30 flowers per spike, four ovules in the ovary and 1-4 seeded capsule.



Activities - RKI- Conservation of Agrobiodiversity

As part of the RKI- Agrobiodiversity conservation project of Kerala State Biodiversity Board, inauguration of the trainer’s training programme (selected farm school farmers) was conducted in Thrissur district on 30th November 2021, at Chembukkavu PWD rest house mini conference hall. The training which marks the commencement of farm school trainings throughout the district in twenty Farmers fields, was inaugurated by the Chairman of Kerala State Biodiversity Board, Dr. C. George Thomas. The training started at 10 am with the inaugural session, presided over by K.V. Govindan, Member of KSBB. The training sessions were handled by Dr. C K Peethambaran and Dr. C.K. Shaju, the subject experts of the project. The Research Officer, Dr. T. A Suresh, District Coordinator of Thrissur, Febin Francis and the Assistant Programme Coordinator, Adishraj also took part in the training. Selected custodian farmers representing a cross section of farming community of the district attended the training and received the training handbook prepared by the subject experts. The training session began with the farmers introducing

Adish Raj,

Assistant Programme Co-ordinator, Thrissur



themselves and then the subject experts explained the importance of Agrobiodiversity Conservation, visions of the project and the guidelines to conduct the agrobiodiversity farm schools. The farmers then clarified their doubts regarding conduction of farm schools. The farmers made a whatsapp group for further communications and the training ended at 4 pm.



PALAKKADAN MATTA AND NAVARA RECEIVED GI TAG

Navara is an indigenous medicinal rice variety of Palakkad in Kerala. Navara rice is used as a health food especially in the rainy season. It is effectively used in certain Ayurvedic treatments in Kerala, namely Panchakarma treatment. Navara rice is valued for its curative properties in circulatory, digestive and rheumatic complaints. It has been granted Geographical Indication Registry Code. The Department of Posts, as a part of AtmaNirbharBharat Project has released a Special Cover on 13.10.2021, the Philately day, on GI Coded navara rice to honour its farmers. Sri. Narayanan Unni of Chittur/Navara Unni cultivates navara rice in a major chunk of his land at Chittur. He is one of our custodian farmers

Babu Bonaventure

District Coordinator, KSBB, Palakkad



in Palakkad district. As navara is extensively used for treatment purposes, its current market rate is as high as Rs.600 per kilogram. Along with Navara, Palakkadan Matta Rice, an indigenous rice of Kerala has also been granted Geographical Indication Registry Code on 13.10.2021. It has bold grains, red pericarp and high content of nutrients.



BIRDS HAVEN



Dr. Gigi C Rajan
Research Officer, KSBB

Bird sanctuaries are built to protect birds and their species. They are a natural facility that serves the conservation of various species and also their natural habitat. Some of the important bird sanctuaries in Kerala are mentioned below.

1. *Thattekad Bird Sanctuary*

Thattekad Bird Sanctuary is located about 12 km from Kothamangalam Taluk of Ernakulam District. Thattekad Bird Sanctuary is Kerala's very first bird sanctuary (Declared in 1983). It is also known as Salim Ali Bird sanctuary (Salim Ali was an Indian ornithologist and naturalist, who conducted systematic bird surveys across the country) which harbors rich and varied bird lives. Several species of birds found here are Indian pitta, Orange headed thrush, Indian cuckoo Cormorants, Yellow-browed bulbuls, Grey-fronted green pigeon, Whiskered terns etc. Ceylon Frogmouth, Rose billed Roller, Malabar trogons are just a few of the rare species seen here.



2. *Kumarakom Bird sanctuary*

Kumarakom Bird sanctuary also known as Vembanad Bird Sanctuary which is situated at Kumarakam in Kottayam District of Kerala. This bird sanctuary

is a favorite haunt of migratory birds. The main attractions are local birds like Waterfowl, Koel, Owl, Egret, Heron, Cormorant, Moorhen, Darter and Brahminy kite, as well as the migratory gull, teal, tern, flycatcher and other birds are seen here during their respective migratory seasons. Birds such as Kingfishers, Cuckoos, Fowls and Herons are commonly seen. Himalayan larks and Siberian storks arrive to settle here for a few months.

3. *Mangalavanam Bird Sanctuary*

Mangalavanam Bird Sanctuary is known as the 'green lung of Kochi'. Mangalavanam Bird Sanctuary is the resting ground for a large variety of resident and migratory birds. Some of the birds found are Common Redshank, Common greenshank, Brahminy kite, White-breasted waterhen and marsh sandpiper.

4. *Pathiramanal Bird Sanctuary*

Pathiramanal Bird Sanctuary is located in Alappuzha district. The name pathiramanal means 'midnight sand' which is home to many rare varieties of migratory birds from different parts of the world. Other birds seen include, the darter, Indian Shag, Purple Heron, Indian Pond Heron, Large Cormorant, Night Heron, Black Bittern, Chestnut Bittern and Yellow Bittern, Little Egret, Median Egret, Large Egret, Cattle Egret and Grey Heron.



5. Choolannur Peafowl Sanctuary, Palakkad

Choolannur Peafowl Sanctuary is located in Palakkad District of Kerala. It is also locally known as Mayiladumpara which is famous for peacocks and is declared as a peacock sanctuary in 14th March 1996. This is the only peacock sanctuary in India. Other birds found here are Brahminy kite, Rose-ringed parakeet, Asian koel, Little cormorant, Indian grey hornbill, Common hoopoe, White-browed bulbul, Oriental skylark, White-headed babbler etc.

6. Kadalundi Bird Sanctuary

Kadalundi Bird Sanctuary, also known as the Kadalundi Vallikkunnu community reserve and the first community reserve, lies in Kadalundi Grama Panchayat of Kozhicode district. Over a hundred species of native birds have been recorded in the sanctuary, about 60 species of migratory birds visit seasonally in these areas. The birds found there are Pintail ducks, Common teal, Night heron, Cormorant, darter, Indian shag, Purple heron, Gulls, terns, Large egrets, Intermediate egret, Cattle egret, Indian pond heron, Little egret, Pheasant tailed and Bronze-winged jacobins, Stork-billed kingfisher, Watercock



whistling duck, Cotton pygmygoose, Little cormorant and Whiskered tern.

7. Pakshipathalam Bird sanctuary

Pakshi Pathalam Bird sanctuary located in Wayanad District of Kerala. Pakshipathalam is rich in Bird Diversity. It is best known for the presence of 'Edible Nest swiftlet'. It is believed that the nest is made of solidified saliva and is the main ingredient of birds nest soup, a delicacy of Chinese cuisine. Some rare birds like the Emerald dove, the Gold fronted chloropsis, the Paradise flycatcher, the Asian fairy blue bird etc can be spotted in this area.

You too can become a bird watcher

Bird watching is entertaining as well as informative. To enjoy the delight of colorful feathers the following points to be noted

1. When going out for bird watching, you should wear clothes that are appropriate with your surroundings.
2. Avoid shiny and dark colored dress
3. Writing books, paper, pencils and eraser should be taken
4. It is advisable to consider the camera for taking photographs



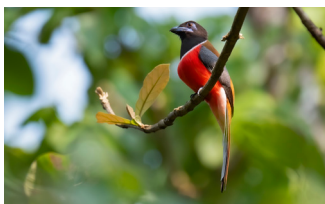
KSBB -National Bird Watching Day Celebration

The National Bird Watching Day is celebrated on November 12th, every year to mark the birth anniversary of Dr. Salim Ali, "The Bird Man of India". Kerala State Biodiversity Board celebrated the 125th birth anniversary of the ornithologist, by conducting an online Webinar and Bird Photography Contest named 'Thoovalsparsam'. On this occasion, Dr. Anoop Rajamony, a member of Travancore Nature History Society and famous Bird Watcher cum Bird Photographer in Kerala with many species reports

and photography awards to his name, delivered a speech. The topic was 'Bird Watching & Bird Photography: Window to eternal happiness'. The webinar was attended by hundreds of people from all walks of life around the state. Bird Photography Contest was open to all and received 175 entries from bird watchers all over Kerala. A panel of judges assessed the entries and selected First, Second and Third prize winners and awarded cash prize and certificates.



1st Prize



Jayan J, Kollam



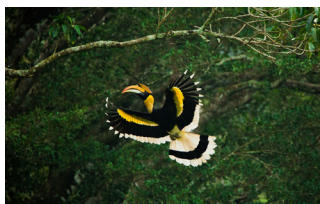
2nd Prize



Abhijith S, Palakkad



3rd Prize



Manikandan Kolazhy, Trichur

SHORE BIRDS

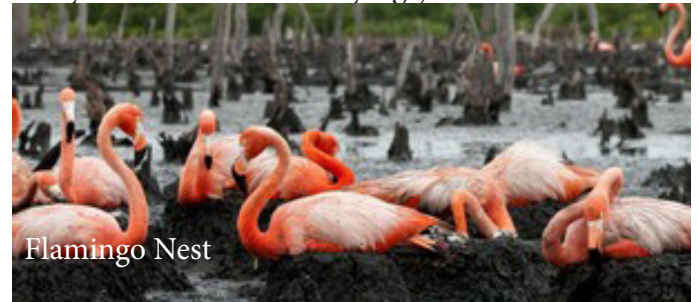


Aneesha Ani Benadict
Research Assistant, KSBB



The birds dwell in almost all the ecosystems irrespective of geographic differences. Likewise, they are also seen in association with the coast and nearby sea. The fishermen could also witness the presence of marine birds far away from the shore. The Marine birds are categorised mainly into four types; Penguins, Pelicans, Petrels, Gulls and Terns. They mainly live and wander in groups and make nests in the trees / coastal vegetation and rock crevices on the beach.

always interested either flying just above the ocean



Flamingo Nest

Pelican feeding



surface and searching for the prey or resting on the boats or other resting vessels and travelling all along. The shore birds, those who always roam on the beach, mainly feed upon small crabs in the small burrows and shells and worms, those which are visible only when waves retract. Such shore birds have their beaks designed in such a way that they can easily dig and tear the prey. Penguins are seen only in cold conditions and despite the inability to fly; they can dive in the ocean and find their prey. They can dive up to 450 meters and hunt fish even from the fast moving school of fishes. Terns love to fly long distances and Arctic Tern holds the record for longest migration of any animal in the world. The Guano is the excreta of sea birds which is a very good fertilizer that make the near shore sea bed fertile during monsoon.

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7. Sri. K.V Govindan
8. Dr. T.S Swapna
9. Dr. K.T Chandramohan



Sea gull



Petrel

Penguin



Flamingos also live near saline estuaries and wander on beaches, unlike other birds Flamingos build sand dune like nests using wet and clayish sand. Majority of the shore birds are seen on the beach and rest are