

ATREE is Asia's top environmental think tank

ATREE's philosophy of policy oriented, useful science has earned it international recognition. In January 2012, a University of Pennsylvania survey ranked ATREE 19th among the top environmental think tanks in the world and, implicitly, the first in Asia. Shortly after, in April 2012, ATREE's founder President, Dr Kamal Bawa was selected for the world's first major international award for work on sustainability—the Gannerus Sustainability Award—by the The Royal Norwegian Society of Sciences and Letters (DKNVS).

The University of Pennsylvania's Go-To Think Tank Rankings have been called the 'insider's guide to the global marketplace of ideas'. The Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program of the University's International Relations Program identifies think tanks by region and functionality. This year's ranking, based on peer and expert inputs, was the result of a 2011 survey of more than 1500 policy makers, scholars, journalists, current and former think tank executives, public and private donors, intergovernmental agencies and academic institutions from across the world. ATREE has been ranked 19th in the category of top think tanks by research area/ Environment.

The full report is available on <http://www.gotothinktank.com/2011-global-tank-index/>



2011 Khoshoo awards

Focus on theory, action and youth

ATREE and Institute of Rural Research and Development (an initiative of the S.M Sehgal Foundation) gave away the T. N. Khoshoo Award for Sustainability and Development to Sandeep Tambe and Hemlata Pradhan, on 3rd February 2012, on behalf of the Khoshoo family. Dr. Elinor Ostrom, 2009 Nobel Laureate in Economic Sciences, delivered the prestigious T. N. Khoshoo Memorial Lecture.

The first T. N. Khoshoo Ecology and Environment Award for Schools were also given away at the function. This was also the first time in seven years that the awards ceremony was held in Bangalore, instead of Delhi.

A practical take on complex systems The 8th T. N. Khoshoo Memorial Lecture

This year's T. N. Khoshoo Memorial Lecture was on how to manage complexity in the study of socio-ecological systems. The lecture focused on dealing with multiple and multi planar variables, and placing them in a common framework so that they are viewable, and therefore can be weighted, compared and analysed. This practical handle on ways of seeing across complex socio-ecological systems helped Dr. Elinor Ostrom

In this Issue

- ▶ ATREE is Asia's top environmental think tank

Outreach

- ▶ 2011 Khoshoo awards: Focus on theory, action and youth
- ▶ Examining conflicting claims on ecosystem services
- ▶ Fish systematics
- ▶ Health mela in Manas National Park
- ▶ Uncommon alliance: Wetlands Day celebrations at Vembanad

Conservation Education

- ▶ DNA Club year-end wrap up
- ▶ Jalapaadom: Lessons on water continue
- ▶ Kids in the canopy

Research

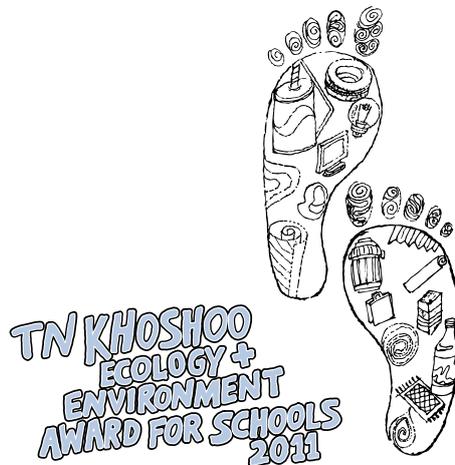
- ▶ Ecosystem research in Kaziranga National Park

disprove Hardin's theory of economic self interest overriding (non) management of shared common resources. Her studies on socio-ecological systems that successfully self-organize, versus others that cannot, in the governance of common property resources, have upset the very foundations of Hardin's theory.

Dr. Ostrom's theory accepts polycentric loci of governance, multiple variables, and complexity as being part and parcel of variable and dynamic socio-ecological systems. So her focus, as the lecture detailed, was on bringing gumption and objectivity to viewing such complex and variable systems clearly, instead of getting intimidated by their complexity.

The refutation of Hardin's cynical premise comes at an opportune time to conservationists, environmentalists and social scientists. Current governance mechanisms—mostly top-down—have failed in delivering equitable, sustainable management of resources. Tentative policies that seek to include local stakeholders are still faltering at implementation.

Dr. Elinor Ostrom has been working with Harini Nagendra (Ramanujam Fellow) of ATREE, using the socio-ecological systems framework to understand the differences in the quality of lakes in Bangalore. 'Socio-ecological systems are diverse, as should be the solutions for governing them', she said, talking about the many variables that can change the outcome of collective governance action in different social-ecological systems. She explained



how collective action would be more effective with polycentric, but nested governance, particularly with interconnected urban lake systems.

Inspiration from the Northeast

The T. N. Khoshoo Memorial Award is given annually to a person who has significantly promoted conservation or advanced environmentally sound development. This year, the award went to Dr. Sandeep Tambe, Special Secretary in the Department of Rural Management and Development, Government of Sikkim, and Hemlata Pradhan, artist and illustrator who specializes in painting orchids.

Sandeep Tambe got the award for his efforts in sustainability and community-based governance of common property resources in Sikkim. His work ranges from improving efficiency in the management of NREGA scheme – directly improving livelihood security, to biodiversity conservation, and addressing rural water scarcity through action on revival of local water bodies in drought prone areas of Sikkim.

For Hemlata Pradhan, what started as a hobby at age eleven became a drive for documenting wild flora in her part of the world, in the

northeast. Hemlata aims to highlight Indian jewel and wild orchids as important subjects for conservation, and document this flora for experts. Her works are exhibited at the Kew Royal Botanic Gardens of England, and also feature on a set of six Bhutanese postage stamps. She has begun an art school to promote nature conservation at the grassroots level.

Growing the Khoshoo school awards

The first T. N. Khoshoo Ecology and Environment Award for Schools, given for innovative and thoughtful action on local environmental issues, was presented by Dr. Ostrom to two schools from Bangalore: KK English High School (first prize) and Sri Vani Education Centre (second prize); and two schools from Delhi, Salwan Public School (first prize) and Father Agnel School (second prize) for their ideas and action on waste management and recycling. Our partners in creating these awards were The Teacher Foundation, Wipro, IAIM-FRLHT and Pravah.

In 2011, one of our school awards partners, Wipro, created the Earthian award for schools and colleges across the country. This award sought to encourage thinking on issues concerning sustainability across urban and rural India. Given the shared philosophy between the Earthian and Khoshoo school initiatives, and the wider reach that Wipro could provide to ATREE's efforts, ATREE and Wipro will now collaborate on the school awards. The T. N. Khoshoo Ecology and Environment Award for Schools will now be called the T. N. Khoshoo Earthian Trophy. ATREE will be a knowledge partner to Wipro for the Earthian awards. Of the final Earthian

awardees, one school and one college that distinguish themselves on the criteria of feasibility and implementability of the idea submitted will be given the T. N. Khoshoo Earthian Trophy.

The winners of the Khoshoo Earthian Trophy 2011-12 were Rishi Valley School for their examination of the historical water management practices in their immediate environment, and to IIM, Kozhikode, for their submission on integrating solid waste management and organic farming.

Submit your registrations and abstracts now!



Biodiversity Asia 2012 Science, Policy and Governance

The 2nd Asia Regional Conference of the Society for Conservation Biology - Asia Section
7-10 August 2012, Bangalore, India

Last date for abstracts: May 15, 2012
Registration closes on June 1, 2012

- ▶ Go to www.biodiversityasia2012.org for more information.
- ▶ Register at http://scbasia2012.org/registration_and_fees
- ▶ For further help, contact: Veena PG at scbasiasecretariat@atree.org



Society for Conservation Biology

Examining conflicting claims on ecosystem services

ATREE, together with University of Cambridge, University of Oxford and Winrock International India, New Delhi, held a one-day consultation to understand the tradeoffs and synergies in the use of ecosystem services. Participants—practitioners, economists and academics—aimed at understanding the political economy of decision-making around ecosystem services. They discussed how tradeoff choices are negotiated, which stakeholders are part of the negotiation process and, given the collective presence of experts, aimed at arriving at an understanding of how experts' views differ from those of stakeholders. They listed important ecosystem services, identified tradeoffs, and drew possible scenarios of future impact. This workshop was held in Bangalore, on 10 January 2012, as part of the Ecosystem Services and Poverty Alleviation Programme. Bhaskar Vira of Cambridge University, Rob Hope from Oxford, Chetan Agarwal from Winrock, Jagdish Krishnaswamy and Shrinivas Badiger of ATREE organised the workshop.

Fish systematics

Scientific discoveries of freshwater fishes in India date back to the year 1766, with the description of *Scatophagus argus* from River Ganges by Linnaeus. Since then, till the end of 2010, around 656 species of freshwater fish have been described from India. Even after 245 years of fish taxonomy research, our knowledge of freshwater fish fauna of India is limited, and new surveys have continued to lead to description of new genera and species from different parts of the country.

The Conservation Research Group (CRG) at St. Albert's College, Kochi and ATREE organised a consultation workshop on 'Challenges to Fish Taxonomy in India' on 26th January 2012 in Kochi. The aim of this meeting was to discuss the current status of fish taxonomy in India and future challenges; impediments faced by Indian fish taxonomists; and, to explore opportunities for individual and multi-institutional collaborations between taxonomists in India and abroad.

On board were Dr. Ralf Britz, Fish Research Leader at the Natural History Museum, London, and one of the world's leading freshwater fish taxonomists. He has described several new genera and species, including the world's smallest fish, *Paedocypris progenetica*, and the miniature novelty *Danionella dracula*. Dr Britz delivered the keynote address on 'Miniaturisation in Teleost Fishes'. Dr. Rajeev Raghavan, Associate Director, CRG spoke about challenges for fish taxonomy in the Western Ghats, and Dr. Priyadarsanan Dharma Rajan, Senior Fellow, ATREE, presented a talk on challenges for Indian taxonomists. The panel discussed the future of molecular taxonomy and barcoding, collecting fish specimens for research, biopiracy and benefit sharing, and conservation issues.

Krishnakumar K., Vembanad CERC and Rajeev Raghavan

Health mela in Manas National Park

ATREE facilitated a pre-monsoon health mela in Panbari Range of Manas National Park as part of its community outreach work under UNESCO's World Heritage Biodiversity Project. Over 1500 villagers benefited from the programme, as more than one



hundred doctors, paramedics, nurses, lab technicians, health educators and assistants provided consultations and care in ENT, ophthalmology, gynecology and medicine.

The organisers distributed pamphlets on health schemes, prevention of diseases and personal hygiene, all written in the local language. This mela was organised in partnership with the Manas Park Management, WWF-India and local community-based organisations. The medical resource personnel were affiliated to the State Health Department under National Rural Health Mission in Chirang District of Bodoland Territorial Area.

Arunava Gupta, Project Associate, ATREE Assam

Uncommon alliance: Wetlands Day celebrations at Vembanad

The Vembanad wetland system is fed by 38 rivers and streams and intrusion from the Arabian Sea. The mix of brackish and freshwater forms a unique ecosystem. In the 1960s, the government built a barrage to prevent saline water intrusion into paddy growing areas in the south. This intervention hit fishermen and clam collectors hard, as it led to deterioration in water quality and the habitat destruction of many species. Traditionally this has been a point of contention between farming and fisher communities. However, of late, the farming communities have also come to realize the importance of salinity in keeping this unique ecosystem healthy.

This World Wetlands Day, farmers and fishers united to demand scientific operation of the Thanneermukkom barrage. In a show of strength, around 200 fishermen, clam collectors and farmers met at the barrage to form a human chain. A public gathering was held afterwards, which started with a community pledge. The event was an enormous success owing to great community participation and wide media coverage.

This event was organised by ATREE's Vembanad Community Environmental Resource Centre (CERC), along with Vembanad Nature Club, Kuttanad Samyuktha Samithy, Black Clam Societies and Lake Protection Forums at Thanneermukkom Barrage, Alappuzha.

Conservation Education

DNA Club year-end wrap up

The Biodiversity Festival, which marks the closing of the Department of Biotechnology's Nature Awareness (DNA) Club activity for an academic year, was celebrated for the fourth consecutive year on 25-26th February 2012. The festival was conducted at Sree Someshwara High School, Dombarannahalli, Tumkur, where the DNA schools got together to present their work. The visiting schools, which are situated in the Western Ghats and coastal areas of Karnataka, got to experience the lifestyle and culture of the plains as they had the opportunity to visit the homes of local students and teachers.

The schools had organised lecture sessions, film screenings, and visits to institutions and wildlife sanctuaries. Students presented audits of energy, waste and water use in their schools, along with presentations of the various hands on activities, experiments and monitoring programmes they had conducted through the year.

Mr. Hulikal Natraj from the Miracle Research Centre, Doddaballapura gave a guest lecture on the science

behind miracles performed by shamans. A late evening astronomical treat was the star gazing session by Mr. KH Anand Raj, Principal, Saraswathi Junior College, Turuvekere.

Abhisheka K, Agasthyamalai CCC

Jalapaadom: Lessons on water continue

Seventy students participated in the ATREE-organised second Student Wetland Congress, held on 31 January at Alappuzha. Schools and colleges competed on projects related to the environment. The winners were St John's Upper Primary School, Kumarakom, who made a presentation on the depletion of fish resources and environmental degradation in Kumarakom. In the other category, St. Aloysius High School, Edathuva won the first prize for their presentation on environmental issues in Kuttanad.

Some of the other topics were: Am I a participant of global warming?, Amaranthus cultivation, and Zero budget natural farming in Kuttanadu paddy fields. The Judges of the programme were Mrs. Marykutty Abraham, Head of the Botany Department, St. Joseph's College for Women, Alappuzha and Mr. Deepak D, Environment Consultant.

T. D. Jojo, Vembanad CERC

Kids in the canopy

Agasthyamalai Community-based Conservation Centre (ACCC) organised a two-day NatureTracking workshop for students of Kendra Vidyalaya, Kattabomman Indian Navy Service, Vijayanarayanam, on 29-30 March. The two-day event was action packed: students learnt about the pest control services rendered by owls, followed by a visit to the

edges of the scrub forest to look out for the Indian eagle owl. The next day they were taken to the rain forests of Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve (KMTR), about 40kms from their campsite. A brief trek took the students to the place where ATREE's canopy research was in progress. After a strict demonstration of safety protocols of the climbing rope technique, the kids accessed the 80 feet Cullenia tree under the guidance of Thamizhazaghan, our climbing expert. Lt. Kishore Sangale, who headed the team, said: "This trip was really useful and great learning experience for our kids."

M. Mathivanan, Agasthyamalai CCC

Research

Ecosystem research in Kaziranga National Park

ATREE is studying the effect of grazing on plant species composition and biomass production in the Kaziranga National Park, in association with the park's management authority. Three enclosed sample plots with controlled grazing access have been established inside the Park. The plots are being monitored for plant species, soil moisture and biomass production. The objective is to test the hypothesis of a change in the grassland structure due to grazing by herbivore population and, based on this, develop a restoration model for overgrazed grasslands of the Park. This study will inform Park managers about the need, effectiveness and validity of habitat management practices for *in situ* conservation of biological diversity.

Dhritiman Das, PhD scholar, Assam



New

Recognitions

Dr Kamal Bawa has been awarded the Gunnerus Sustainability Award by the The Royal Norwegian Society of Sciences and Letters (DKNVS).

Dr. Sharachchandra Lele, Senior Fellow, ATREE has been appointed member of the Karnataka Elephant Task Force, constituted by the Karnataka High Court, to study the man-elephant conflict in the state. The members are expected to make recommendations for effective conservation and management regime for the pachyderm and its habitat, particularly in the Kodagu-Hassan belt. The Court expects that the report will include local communities' participation in the management of this issue.

Seena Karimbumkara, Senior Research Associate (SRA) with ATREE's Insect Lab, and **Dr. Chitra Ravi**, SRA with the Ecoinformatics Lab, have been selected as 2012 Encyclopedia of Life (EOL) Rubenstein Fellows. The EOL Rubenstein Fellows programme supports research committed to online collaboration and outreach.

People

Abi Tamin Vanak, Fellow with the Ecosystems and Global Change programme

H. K. Sahoo and **Bishwarupa Sahu**, Senior Research Associates with the Ecosystem Services and Poverty Alleviation (ESPA) project being conducted by ATREE, Vasundhara and University of East Anglia in Bhubaneswar

Karuna Gurung, Junior Research Fellow, Eastern Himalayas/NE Programme Office, Gangtok

Pranita Sambhus, Research Associate, GIS, Bangalore

Prasanna Kolte, Senior Research Associate, GIS, Ecoinformatics Lab, Bangalore

Sunil Dahal, Finance and Administration Officer, Eastern Himalayas/NE Programme Office, Gangtok

Publications

Book launch

Forest canopies of South Asia: A glimpse. 2012. Edited by M. Soubadra Devy, T. Ganesh and Amrita Tripathy.

Articles

Caughlin, T. T., T. Ganesh and M. D. Lowman. 2012. Sacred fig trees promote frugivore visitation and tree seedling abundance in South India. *Current Science* Vol. 102 (6): 918-922

Chetana, H. C. and T. Ganesh. 2011. Importance of shade trees (*Grevillea robusta*) in the dispersal of forest tree species in managed tea plantations of southern Western Ghats, India. *Journal of Tropical Ecology* 28: 187-197

Krishnakumar, K., Pereira, B and Radhakrishnan K.V. 2011. *Puntius madhusoodani* (Teleostei: Cyprinidae), a new species of barb from Manimala River, Kerala, South India. *Biosystematica* Vol 5(2): 31-37

Patil, S., P. Reidsma, P. Shah, S. Purushothaman, J. Wolf. 2011. Comparing conventional and organic agriculture in Karnataka, India: Where and when can organic farming be sustainable. *Land Use Policy*. doi:10.1016/j.landusepol.2012.01.006

Purushothaman, S., Patil, S. and I. Francis. 2012. Impact of policies favouring organic inputs on small farms in Karnataka, India: a multicriteria approach. *Environment, Development and Sustainability*, doi: 10.1007/s10668-012-9340-1.

Raghavan, R., N. Dahanukar, K. Krishnakumar, A. Ali, S. Solomon, M. R. Ramprasanth, F. Baby, B. Pereira, J. Tharian and S. Philip. 2012. Western Ghats' fish fauna in peril: Are pseudo conservationist attitudes to be blamed? *Current Science* Vol. 102 (6): 835-837

Seshadri, K. S., A. Vivek Chandran and K. V. Gururaja. 2011. Anurans from wetlands of Puducherry, along the East Coast of India. *Check List* 8(1): 023-026, 2012

Seshadri, K. S. 2012. Kodayar by night. *Sanctuary Asia*: 56-57

Subject editor

Setty S. R.: A report on some macrolichens new to Karnataka, India, K. S. Vinayaka, S Nayaka, Y.L.Krishnamurthy, *Journal of Threatened Taxa*. 4(1):2318-1321

Presentations/talks

Allwin Jesudasan. Poster presentation: The middle ground in conservation and development: Evaluating the ICDP in Kalakad Mundathurai Tiger Reserve. With Devy Soubadra, R Ganesan, T Ganesh. 25th International Congress for Conservation Biology, Auckland. 8 December 2011

K. S. Seshadri. Poster presentation: Long term monitoring in a biodiversity hotspot: Use of vocalizations to monitor anurans with an autonomous data collection protocol. With Ganesh T. At 25th International Congress for

Conservation Biology. Auckland, New Zealand . 8 December 2011.

Purushothaman, S.

Implications of trends in Access, Benefits and Status of Common Lands in Karnataka. With **Lele, S.** International Conference on Public Policy and Management, IIM Bangalore. Dec 2011.

Linking science and farmers' expertise with agricultural policies: towards a framework for emerging economies. With **Sheetal Patil and Ierene Francis.** Poster at 'Planet under Pressure' conference, DIVERSITAS, London. March 2012

Socio-economic-ecological analysis of Ficus based agroecosystems of Karnataka state, South India: Dhanya B, Seema Purushothaman and Syam Viswanath, Poster at 'Planet under Pressure' conference, DIVERSITAS, London. March 2012

Sheetal Patil. Poster presentation: Linking science and farmers' expertise with agricultural policies: towards a framework for emerging economies at 'Planet under Pressure' conference. Organised by the Global Change research programmes of the International Council for Science (ICSU). London, UK. 26-29th March 2012.

Siddappa Setty R.

Sustainable harvest of non-timber forest products in South India at national seminar on Sustainable Forests of Western Ghats: Prospects and Challenges. Solapur University, Solapur. 10-11 February 2012.

Sustainable harvest of non-timber forest products and livelihood. At international consultation on 20 Years of Rio: Biodiversity – Development – Livelihoods. MSSRF, Chennai. 15-17 February 2012.

Poster presentation on Restoration of arid tropical forest for sustainable development at Reserve Forest of Bandipur National Tiger Park, India. At Planet under Pressure conference. DIVERSITAS. London, UK. 26-29th March 2012.

Television Discussion. Forest Fire at Nagarhole National Park. On Udaya News, 1 March 2012.

Grants

Institutional grant to ATREE from Sir Dorabji Tata Trust and the Allied Trusts

Barkha Subba and Priti Gururaj have been awarded the Herpetological Conservation Research Fund by the Madras Crocodile Bank Trust. The grant will support their travel, contingencies and partial salaries.

Krishnakumar K., Programme Officer, Vembanad CERC, and Anirban Datta Roy, PhD scholar, received the Rufford Small Grant of 6000 GBP each for study on Impact of invasive alien species (IAS) in Periyar lake-stream system, an irreplaceable site for freshwater fish conservation in the Western Ghats Hotspot-India; and Patterns of local hunting in mixed use landscapes of the Dihang Dibang Biosphere Reserve, Arunachal Pradesh, respectively.

Senthil Kumar, SRF, and **Sandeep Sen,** Ph D scholar, Canada Commonwealth scholarships of CAD 10,000 each for 6 months to conduct part of their research in Canada on biogeography of rattans in India and phylogeography of Piper respectively.

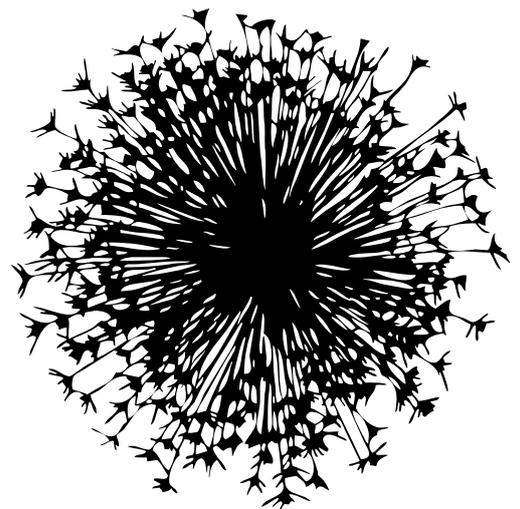
Seshadri K. S. and **Allwin Jesudasan** received a grant of INR 180,000 from Herpetological Conservation Research Fund (HCRF). For project

titled Ecological and economic benefits of anurans to paddy agriculture in south India.

Siddappa Setty R., GE grant for restoration of degraded forest near Bandipur National Park. USD 5000.

Workshop organised

ATREE CERC in association with Social Forestry Department, Alappuzha and Janasree Mission, Alappuzha conducted a one day seminar on environmental protection through Self Help Groups. The objective of the workshop was ~~to strengthen the capacities of the~~ self help groups in conservation programmes. Alappuzha. 21 March 2012.



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This newsletter has been put together from
reports by ATREE folk. Design and layout is by
Salil Sakhalkar. Editing by Samuel Thomas and
Meetu Desai.