

Nature is our Password, Conservation the Creed

Summer 2012

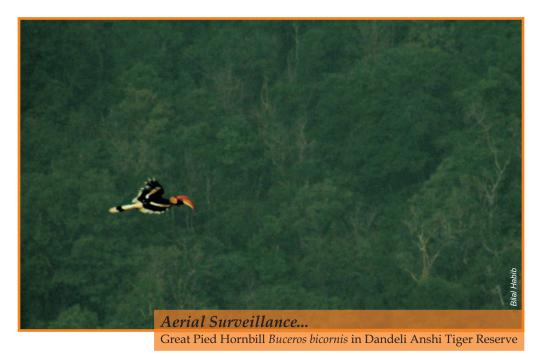
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Current Protected Area Network of India

Position as on April 26, 2012

National Parks: 102; Area 39918.54 sq km, (1.21%) Wildlife Sanctuaries: 515; Area 120228.84 sq km, (3.65%) Conservation Reserves*: 49; Area 1515.60 sq km, (0.04%) Community Reserves: 4; Area 20.69 sq km, (0.0%) Total Protected Areas: 670; Area 161683.67 sq km, (4.90%)

*New Conservation Reserve for Rajasthan:

Shakambhari

(Total Area 131 sq km; Districts - Sikar & Jhunjhunu; Notification Date: February 9, 2012)

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Around the Campus



Post Graduate Diploma Course in Advanced Wildlife Management concluded

One of the important course at the Institute, the 10-month P.G. Diploma Course in Advanced Wildlife Management was concluded on June 30, 2012. During the month of April, the Management Term Paper Exercise was held at Kanha National Park in Madhya Pradesh to carry out the study on the selected site. The trainees were assigned specific topics on various aspects of protected area management. These papers were presented in a seminar by officer trainees on April 20, 2012. The Management Plan Exercise with the objective to collect first-hand information on Tiger Reserve resources, its problems and existing management practices was held at Dandeli - Anshi Tiger Reserve in Karnataka. Through working in groups, the reserve values were identified and understood by them and they prepared their Tiger Conservation Plans.

The officer trainees were awarded diploma and prizes on successful completion of their course. Seven officer trainees were awarded the Honours Diploma for securing 75% or above marks. They were also given the following awards:

Institute's Gold Medal for the 'Top Trainee' was awarded to Shri Arun R.S. Wildlife Preservation Society Silver Medal for the 'Second in Merit', Silver Medal for the 'Best All Round Wildlifer', N.R. Nair Memorial Silver Medal for 'Best Management Plan' and Best Management Term Paper A.K. Chatterjee Silver Medal were bagged by Dr. Manish Kumar. Top Trainee in Wildlife Biology (Book Prize) was given to Dr. Raja Ram Singh.

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World Environment Day Celebrated

A joint program of the World Environment Day on the year's theme "Green Economy: Does it include you?" with the Indian Society of Remote Sensing, Dehra Dun Chapter (ISRS-DC) and Indian Meteorological Society, Dehra Dun Chapter (IMS-DC) was organized at the Institute on Wednesday 5 June, 2012. The event was attended by faculty & students of Indian Institute of Remote Sensing and Wildlife Institute of India and members of ISRS-DC.

In his welcome address Dr. George Philip, Chairman, ISRS-DC emphasized on the importance of World Environment Day. World Environment Day is celebrated every year on 5th June to raise global awareness of the need to take positive environmental action.

Shri P.R. Sinha while addressing the gathering discussed about the issue of equity. He stressed that the major problem of wildlife sector is the approach towards conservation. Speaking about the ecotourism practices, he said that ecotourism requires lot of skills and investment. Ecotourism should contribute for the atmosphere.

A popular talk was delivered by Dr. Anand Sharma, Director, Meteorological Centre, IMD, Dehra Dun on 'Weather & Climate'. Dr. Sharma explained about weather and discussed about temperature, wind, humidity, pressure, precipitation, microclimate, macro-climate, urban heart islands, climate variability and climate change.

A documentary on "Monsoon - India's God of Life" was also screened and a poster exhibition was organized displaying significant case studies and applications of remote sensing technology in various fields of natural sciences.

Welcome...

Shri Suresh Kumar Dalal, IFS has joined Indian Forest Service in 1990. He was allotted the Haryana Cadre. He served in various capacities in the cadre as DFO Territorial; DFO Publicity & Extension; DFO, Community Forestry; and Director, Land Use Board, Haryana. Before joining the Wildlife Institute of India, he was serving as Assistant Director General, Economic Intelligence Bureau, New Delhi. Shri Dalal joined the Institute on June 25, 2012. He assumed the duty of Registrar, WII. His areas of specialization are forest protection and artificial regenration, people's participation and management of natural resources.



Farewell...

Dr. V.K. Melkani

hails from Nainital, Uttarakhand State. After completing his Ph.D. from Kumaon University, Nainital in Organic Chemistry in 1981, he joined Indian Forest Service in 1982. He is an IFS Officer of Tamil Nadu Cadre. His special interest includes achieving biodiversity conservation through involvement of local people and other stakeholders. He joined the Institute on deputation on December 15, 2008. Dr. Melkani assumed the charge of the Head of the Department, Landscape Level Planning & Management Department at this Institute. He repatriated to his parent cadre on June 30, 2012 after completion of his tenure at WII.

Prof. B.C. Choudhury,

Scientist 'G' headed the Endangered Species Management Department of the Wildlife Institute of India. He joined the Institute in June, 1987. He has worked on several inland, coastal and marine wetland projects in the country and is known for his works on aquatic species such as crocodiles, dolphins, river turtles, marine turtles and migratory waterfowls. He has also worked for establishing a network

of Wetland Protected Area in the country as well as to develop a National Wetland Conservation Strategy. He coordinated the WII's freshwater and marine wetland research and management programmes. He is a member of IUCN SSC Species Specialist Group and the Sustainable Use Specialist Group. He was awarded the prestigious Society for Conservation Biology (SCB) Global Achievement Award during the year 2005 for his works on aquatic endangered fauna and ecosystems and science based aquatic area conservation advocacy works. Shri Choudhury retired after reaching the age of superannuation on June 30, 2012.

Smt. Qumar Unneesa

joined the Institute in September, 1984. She has worked in different sections and at the time of her retirement, she was posted in the Library & Documentation Centre of the Institute as a Peon. Smt. Qumar Unneesa retired on June 30, 2012 after reaching the age of superannuation.



Adieu to the Crocodile Man

Gitika Verma Journalism Intern

For some it means the bliss of doing nothing... To others it is having the freedom to do the things they love and have been putting off... To still others, retirement is a blank slate. Let us find out what retirement is for Mr. Binod Chandra Choudhury, popularly known as BC amongst his friends and colleagues.

In the heaps of file, research papers and various books on nature conservation of endangered species lies a vacant chair, I wondered this will be the scene from tomorrow, when the Crocodile-Man, Mr. B.C. Choudhury will retire from Wildlife Institute of India, DehraDun.

His almost thirty year long tenure in WII will come to an end on June 30, 2012. The person with cool temperament and large grin is taking his retirement as a new venture.

June 28, 2012. I was sitting in his chamber, waiting for Mr. Choudhury, to have a word on his retirement. I was thinking how upset he will be on the last day of his professional carrier. While waiting in his chamber, I struck a conversation with a gentleman, Mr. Satya Ranjan Behera, who is doing PhD under the guidance of Mr. Choudhury. The first word he uttered was "The Crocodile Man". Yes, he is the Crocodile Man, devoting more than half of his life to Crocodiles.

Finally my wait was over and entered Mr. B.C Choudhury, full of enthusiasm. He sat on his chair, answering his continuously beeping Cell phone. It was now my turn to listen to his take on retirement and life ahead. It felt good to see him talking about his retirement as a new venture, a new start.



He was earlier a journalist, started his career in Statesman, Kolkata. Mr.Choudhury, was assigned to do a story on Billy Arjan Singh- the Tiger Man. That's from where his interest grew and he went on to do something rather than just writing on them. He started his career as a conservationist with Late Shri S.R Choudhury from Simplipal National Park. The credit of making him what he is today also goes to Late Shri Pushpa Kumar. Mr. Choudhury joined Andhra Pradesh Forest Department in 1981 and later joined WII in June, 1987.

Your experience in WII, if you are in conservation, you should never think of "Those Golden Days", there is no good in going back to old days. But Yes, there were lots of thing that were very good and some that could have been better. Elucidating the point that the responsibility of field practitioner is more than a policy maker, he said, there is no second chance in conservation, once extinct is gone forever.

On being asked, where we are lagging behind, He stated, we are not able to communicate to the common people. Wildlife Institute of India, since inception have done and completed more than 150 projects, but when people are asked, they hardly know about it. We will have to communicate to two target groups, the Policy maker and the Public, both at the same time. Then only we will be able to communicate nature and wildlife effectively to everyone.

Why Tiger, why not Crocodile and Turtle in Indian media, Television wants TRP and Newspaper wants long shelf life. And tiger being a special creature adds to their glory than other species. But it is not the media that is wrong; it is our duty to tell them what to publish and what to broadcast and to what extent. Adding to this, he explained about his recent Andaman trip, where Mr. Choudhury spoke about Man-Animal

conflict, he said, we need to understand, who the target group is. Then only we will be able to communicate them effectively.

Is there anything that you wished, you would have done, My mind is young but many times my age does not support it, I want to go on a rainforest canopy walk, but cannot do it now. If I was young, I would have done it.

On being called a 'Crocodile Man', Crocodile made me what I am today and I made them what they are today. When I started they were in 2 digits, now they are in 4 digits. We made that obscure species known. It is a great feeling that I am one among those, who did this great work.

Your innings with Turtle, since I hail from east coast, major breeding ground of turtles, it was quite natural to get attached and attracted towards them. I was given an international recognition in the form of a painting dating year 1738 as memento.

Something that you never figured out and still wonder, why workable recommendation never gets implemented? There is neither dearth of talent nor lack of finance in India, so where is the hurdle then?

Plans after retirement, Create curiosity among people, who want to do something for wildlife and environment. New technologies are coming up, so are the challenges. People's perceptions have changed, so lots of thing can now be done, which were not possible earlier.

Message for everyone, Believe in yourself, remove the word 'Impossible' from your dictionary, be out and out optimist.

"No Conversation on Conservation, Only Conservation."

My conversation lasted for just thirty minutes and in those thirty minutes, energy and wisdom spoke a lot about the man's carrier and persona.

Retirement has never been more deserved. He has inspired everyone and has allowed WII to achieve the reputation for excellence.



Modernization at the cost of biodiversity and traditional livelihood in Kachchh

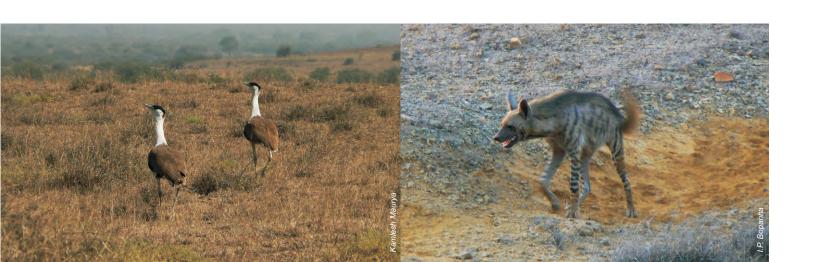
Sutirtha Dutta, I.P.Bopanna, Kamlesh Maurya, Yadvendradev Jhala

Achchh is virtually an island, separated by the Arabian Sea in west, Gulf of Kachchh in south and Rann (seasonally inundated with sea water) in north and east. Such island condition, persisting for thousand years, has imparted uniqueness to its livelihoods and wilderness. Its broken arid plains are rich in flora and fauna, and a paradise for nature lovers. It experiences environmental fluctuations and consequently landuse changes within short time periods. Researchers of Wildlife Institute of India guided by Dr. Y.V. Jhala have been investigating how these changes affect wildlife by studying their population, habitat and behaviour in Abdasa tehsil during 2005–11. Annual rainfall and agro-infrastructure have increased simultaneously during these years, reducing grassland habitats and adding environmental toxicity.

ustard populations of Indian subcontinent are rapidly Ddeclining due to habitat loss and hunting. The Critically Endangered great Indian bustard (Ardeotis nigriceps) density has declined from 9 to 5 birds per 100 km² between 2007-11. Given that only ~300 birds are left globally, such continued decline is alarming. These birds prefer undisturbed, flat, grassland patches during breeding season but range widely in accessible and productive agro-grass-scrub patches during non-breeding season. Various life-history activities require characteristically different habitats, indicating that large heterogeneous patches need to be conserved. Birds show strong fidelity to breeding sites, which occur in grasslands with a mix of sparse cover for displaying males and moderately tall cover for nesting females. Here males' mating territories are strategically placed, where long-term female usage is also high, implying that their destruction can cause serious conservation problems. Population of the Endangered lesser florican (Sypheotides indica) is

concentrated within ~130 km² prime habitat. Their density varies from 7 to 17 birds per 10 km² between years, corresponding with local rainfall patterns. They prefer remote grasslands with ample herbaceous cover. As agriculture is spreading into interiors, preservation of dispersed grassland patches within agricultural matrix is crucial for their persistence. Vulture populations of Indian subcontinent have also faced rapid decline due to diclofenac prevalence in livestock husbandry. Researchers conducted advocacy program among local users, replacing diclofenac by friendly drug meloxicam, and subsequently husbandry use of diclofenac was officially banned (2007-09). Parallel monitoring of white-backed vulture (Gyps bengalensis) breeding shows that nest counts have declined from 4-7 nests per village in 2004-06 to 2-3 nests per village in 2008-11. Interestingly, nesting success has reduced from 71% in 2004-05 to 13% in 2008-09 but later increased to 53% in 2010-11. Whether vulture populations recover after diclofenac ban or not need to be monitored in the coming years to assess the efficacy of conservation efforts.

Radio-telemetry of the large and elusive striped hyaena (Hyaena hyaena) has provided first-hand insights into their life history. These animals range over 54 km² area for daily needs. Their foraging movements are definitive between den/refuge sites and known village food sources. Village livestock contribute to about 30% of their diet and reduce search efforts, promoting stronger sociability among clan members. All members participate in cub rearing (providing food, guarding and playing with cubs) but male sub-adults disperse earlier (6-7 months since cub birth) than female sub-adults (12-13 months). While communities' livestock husbandry benefit hyaena, accessing these resources through agro-infrastructurally developed areas



increase mortality risks. Four out of seven collared animals have been killed in snares for agricultural pests and one in roadaccident within last three years. The smaller carnivore, Indian fox (Vulpes bengalensis), is known to be adaptable and generalist. Their population has ranged between 25 to 40 individuals per 100 km² between years, with no clear trend across years, rainfall and cropping intensity. Radio-telemetry of 12 individuals shows that they range over 1.8 km² area for daily needs. They prefer grassland over fallow fields, savanna, scrub and ravine habitats. While savanna is preferred over fallow fields during daytime, a reverse trend is observed at night, probably for foraging benefits under less disturbance. Pups are born in January and raised in dens excavated in grassland during the next 4-5 months after which they disperse. Diet is chiefly composed of arthropods, rodents, reptiles, fruit and crops. From 2006 to 2010, a threefold decrease in reptile biomass and fivefold increase in fruit-crop biomass has been observed in their diet that coincides with decreasing lizard density and increasing agricultural food in the environment. Thus, results show that fox can adapt to some rainfall-landuse perturbations, but they are also specialized to grasslands for crucial life history needs.

Spiny-tailed lizard (*Saara hardwickii*) is an important prey and Schedule II species poached for alleged aphrodisiac properties. Their population density has declined from 91 to 31 lizards per hectare between 2007 and 2010. They prefer grasslands and moderate livestock grazing but avoid >1m tall vegetation and cropped areas. Rainfall-landuse perturbations have antagonistic influence on lizards; while lag-year rainfall increases their food resources, cropping intensity reduces their burrowing substrate.

ow intensity agro-pastoralism is the traditional livelihood of Kachchh that is threatened by agricultural intensification facilitated by recent modernization. Questionnaire survey reveals that pastoralists constitute only 6% of village households, while remaining 94% population have negligible economic stakes (but significant cultural stakes) on grassland resources. Institutional arrangements are weak among pastoralist communities, which compounded with small unevenly distributed stakes and external economic forces may have led to open access of grassland resources. Evidences suggest that villages with relatively strong institutions face less threat from landuse conversions. Although traditional livelihoods are compatible with wildlife, under current scenario it is unlikely that communities' internal social mechanisms can achieve those conservation objectives. Hence managers must consolidate traditional livelihoods by enforcing legal land tenure rules and providing external aides such as agro-environmental incentive schemes.

These results provide a holistic view of species-environmental responses in this understudied ecosystem. Rainfall-landuse cycles have been an integral part of this landscape, but the prevailing one is more permanent and leading to loss of biodiversity and traditional livelihoods. Arresting these habitat disruptions through policy changes and community sensitization is the most critical conservation need for Kachchh.

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A Catalyst in Your Conservation Stint

Gitika Verma Journalism Intern

Life is all good, being a government official in the environment and forest department. But there is still something on the platter that will add more glory to your carrier and your profile that is the Post Graduate Diploma Course in Advanced Wildlife Management from Wildlife Institute of India, DehraDun.

The 10-month long course based on 16 modules and field exercises enhances once knowledge of conservation, wildlife crime, poaching, and wildlife management. The classes that take place in the lush green environment of the Institute allows one to soak the serenity of nature in most pristine way.

One of the officers who joined XXXIII P.G. Diploma Course in Advanced Wildlife Management, spared some time to have a chat with me before there valedictory function.

C.P Khanduja, IFS, Bihar Cadre

When asked about his experience about the course, the 10-month long duration at WII was both enriching and enterprising. We came to know about various techniques of wildlife protection, wildlife conservation in India and abroad. We learnt various policies and legislature relating to conservation and planning. The course enhanced our computer knowledge, communication skill and presentation style, that will be very helpful in effective communication with the policy makers.

Starting a student life all over again after decades... yes, it feels different, but we remain in learning phase throughout our life. It's good to learn again as a student.

Trip to Africa... We came to know, how management in foreign countries use funds of ecotourism for wildlife conservation. They have good intelligence network to track wildlife crime and poaching.

Where are we lagging behind...We just have one Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, established in New Delhi, which is expanding slowly to regional areas. In our country, we don't have reward system for informers in all the States; except in Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka.

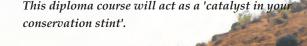
Best Part of this diploma course...Interaction with officers from different States. Field works were great. Technical tour to Rajaji National Park gave us a good learning opportunity.

Living in the lap of lush green environment feels good. We can breathe clean and healthy air. Given a chance, I would surely like to revisit this pristine environment.

Major conservation issue at present...Tiger, because they are on the verge of extinction. And since tiger is in lime-light, we can bring other issues also under the same umbrella.

How do you feel when this course is about to end.../I feel nostalgic; I don't know how these ten months have passed. I will remember this phase throughout my life.

Message for aspirants... Don't miss the chance to get P.G Diploma at WII. Come as early as possible but not before 2 to 3 years of field experience.



Floral and Faunal Biodiversity of WII Campus

B.S. Adhikari and G.V. Gopi

The Campus

Wildlife Institute of India (WII) campus is located in the southern fringe of Dehra Dun. It lies between 77°57′50″ to 77°58′45″ E longitude and 30°16′40″ to 30°17'15" N latitude with an altitudinal range from 640-665 m asl and covers an area of ca.88 hectare. The topography of the campus is dendritic type, small channels drain in to Asan river, a tributary to river Yamuna, flows on the northern periphery of the campus. In general, the vegetation of WII campus is natural and semi-natural, represented by various succession stages e.g., grassland (Saccharum community, Cynodon community, Phragmites community, Imperata community, Typha community and mixed grass community with Lantana), scrubland (Lantana community and mixed shrub community), riverine forest (Sapium community close to water and Broussonetia papyrifera community in moist places and woodland of coppice Sal community and old Sal community.

Albeit the Sal forest of WII campus is not very rich in diversity, yet it is very important from conservation point of view, since Sal covers 5% of total forested land of the country. It faces anthropogenic pressure in terms of extraction of fuel wood, grazing and fire. Being summer deciduous, the forest floor is full of dry leaves (ca. 95%) and twigs, which enable fire to spread rapidly in the forest.

Flora

The campus has the floral diversity of 616 plants, which is almost one third of Doon valley flora. Of the total plant species, 94% (577) species are naturally grown and 6% species are planted. The distribution of plants in different taxa is as follows: 58 trees, 65 shrubs, 357 herbs and climbers including 9 species of pteridophytes, 71 grasses and 27 sedges in WII campus belonging to 107 families (99 Angiosperm and 8 Pteridophyte) with 384 genus (375 Angiosperm and 9 Pteridophyte). Dioscorea belophylla is the only species, which is under vulnerable category. Among families, Poaceae is represented by maximum number of species (71) followed by Fabaceae (60), Asteraceae (38) and Cyperaceae (27).

In last few years changes have taken place in various habitats, due to which species like Alternanthera pugens, Aechmanthera gossypina, Hygrophila auriculata, Justicia adhatoda, Sauromatum venosum, Trianthema portulaccastrum, Wrightia tomentosa, Erigeron

karvinskianus, Ageratum houstonianum, Eruca sativa and Iberis amara are becoming less visible, whereas Hygrophila salicifolia has made its presence in the campus.

Fauna

The WII campus harbours immense faunal wealth. 310 avifaunal species belonging to 49 families, 16 mammalian species belonging to 15 families, 11 amphibian species belonging to 4 families, 90 butterfly species belonging to 5 families, 16 moth species belonging to 7 families, 22 reptile species belonging to 7 families and 17 spider species belonging to 6 families have so far been recorded.

Species rich avifaunal families include Sylviidae (37 species), Muscicapidae (35 species), Corvidae (28 species), Accipitridae (24 species) and Passeridae (21 species). Thirteen avifaunal families (Rostratulidae, Irenidae, Burhinidae, Caprimulgidae, Centropidae, Cerylidae, Coraciidae, Hemiprocnidae, Pittidae, Podicipedidae, Tytonidae, Upupidae and Zosteropidae) have just one species represented. The mammalian family of Viveridae has two species, while other families are represented by one species each.

The IUCN threat status of birds in the campus reveals that, of the 310 bird species, 3 species (White-rumped Vulture, Slender-billed Vulture, Red-headed Vulture) are categorized as Critically Endangered, one species (Egyptian Vulture) as Endangered, three species as Near Threatened (Cinereous Vulture, Ferruginous Pochard, Painted Stork), one species (Imperial Eagle) as Vulnerable and the rest 302 species have been categorized as Least Concern. Of the 310 bird species, 10 are accorded schedule I status and the rest 301 have been accorded the Schedule IV status in the Indian Wildlife Protection Act (IWPA). The IUCN threat status of mammals in the campus reveals that, of the 16 mammalian species, 2 species (Indian pangolin and common leopard) are categorized as Near Threatened and rest 15 species as Least Concern. Of the 17 mammalian species, 2 are accorded Schedule I, 6 are accorded Schedule II, 2 are accorded Schedule III, 3 are accorded Schedule IV and 3 are accorded Schedule V status in the IWPA.

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Orange-tip Butterfly (painting)



On the Move...

Workshop on "Sharing Biodiversity Information and the Integrated Publishing Toolkit (IPT2)",

Taiwan, June 25-27, 2012. The workshop was organised at Taiwan Endemic Species Research Institute, Chi-Chi Township, Nantou County, Taiwan. It was jointly organised by Taiwan Biodiversity Informatics Facility (TaiBIF) and Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF). Dr. Gautam Talukdar, Scientist and Dr. Panna Lal, Programmer from the Institute participated in this workshop. The purpose of this workshop was to promote publishing and sharing biodiversity data within Asia for regional biodiversity conservation. This training workshop helped to develop a pool of trainers in the area of biodiversity data

publishing, especially metadata authoring, use of GBIF Integrated Publishing Toolkit (IPT), so that they can become more involved in the development and deployment of the tool, acting as a distributed helpdesk network for the benefit of their stakeholders.

A total of 50 participants from various countries and international organisations, such as Japan, South Korea, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Philippines, Taiwan, Asian Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) and International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development ICIMOD participated in the workshop.

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3rd Regional Nodes Meeting of the GBIF Participant Nodes in Asia, Leader Hotel, Taiwan, June 28-30, 2012.

The meeting held at the Leader Hotel in Taipei, Taiwan was jointly organised by Taiwan Biodiversity Informatics Facility (TaiBIF) and Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF). Dr. Gautam Talukdar from WII attended the meeting in the capacity of GBIF - India Node Manager. The main purpose of the regional meeting was to formulate Asian Regional Strategies and plans to enhance cooperation between GBIF Nodes within the Asian region. The other objectives were to discuss the implementation of the GBIF Work Programme by Nodes in 2012-2013, and formulating suggestions on prioritizations of the different work areas for the 19th meeting of the GBIF Governing Board. The meetings also provided a platform for GBIF Asian Nodes to share their experiences, set priorities, and state their requirements and needs in a streamlined manner.

In all 19 participants from various countries and International Organisations, such as Japan, South Korea, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Philippines, Taiwan, Asian Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) and International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) participated in the workshop.

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If you lack talent, cultivate power. This will attract fawners around you and you will never again know you don't have talent.

Kaushik Basu,

Chief Economic Advisor, on power (Times Of India, July 13, 2012)