



Student Conference on Conservation Science – Bangalore

Report on the second conference
14–16 September 2011

The second Student Conference on Conservation Science – Bangalore was held at the J N Tata Auditorium, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore and was attended by 211 student participants. Participants were from India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines, and Cambodia, the Netherlands and the UK.



Administration

The conference was sponsored by ADM Capital Foundation, Hong Kong, with additional financial support (for 10 bursaries) from the Ravi Sankaran Fellowships Program (Inlaks Shivdasani Foundation, India).

The organising institutions were: University of Cambridge (UK), Wildlife Conservation Society – India Program, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment, National Centre for Biological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, Nature Conservation Foundation, and the National Institute of Advanced Studies.

Supporting organizations included the Wildlife Institute of India, Bombay Natural History Society, Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History, Foundation for Ecological Research, Advocacy and Learning, Wildlife Conservation Society, Wildlife Research and Conservation Society, Kalpavriksh, Equations, Ambedkar University Delhi, Centre for Indian Knowledge Systems, and Dakshin Foundation.

Programme

The conference was opened by Professor MK Mathew (National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bangalore) and Professor DN Rao, (Chair, Division of Biological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore). The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz, visited the conference briefly and gave a 10-minute address to the participants.



Student presentations

Talks and poster presentations by student participants formed the core of the conference. Research students presented 26 talks and 45 posters in all.

Conference bursaries: A total of 70 student delegates received financial support to attend the conference (up from 27 last year). The travel, food, accommodation and conference costs of these student delegates from India (52), Sri Lanka (5), Bangladesh (4), Nepal (4), Cambodia (2), Indonesia (1), Thailand (1), and the Philippines (1), were wholly covered by conference bursaries. All other student presenters were provided free accommodation for the duration of the conference.

Prizes: Three prizes each were awarded for student talks and posters.



Talks

1. Cynthia Adeline Layusa
2. Girish Arjun Punjabi
3. Tarun Nair

Posters

1. Soumya Sarkar
2. Raghav Saraswat
3. Sayantan Das

To increase the interest and participation at the poster sessions, we had two new prizes: participants could vote for their favourite posters, and the most popular posters were given a “popular choice poster award”. Also, at the end of the last day, there was a quiz for participants, with questions coming from the posters. The questions were answerable only if one had read the posters and talked to the poster presenters.

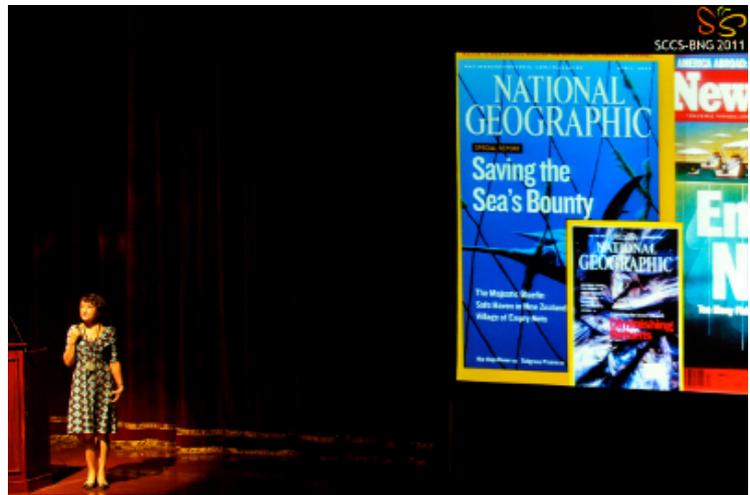
The popular choice poster awards went to Tiasa Adhya and Shaina Sehgal; and the poster quiz was won by Chandrima Home and Vidyardhar Atkore.

Winners received books donated by ATREE, Dakshin Foundation and the publishers Orient BlackSwan; and also received a cash award from the Nature Conservation Foundation.



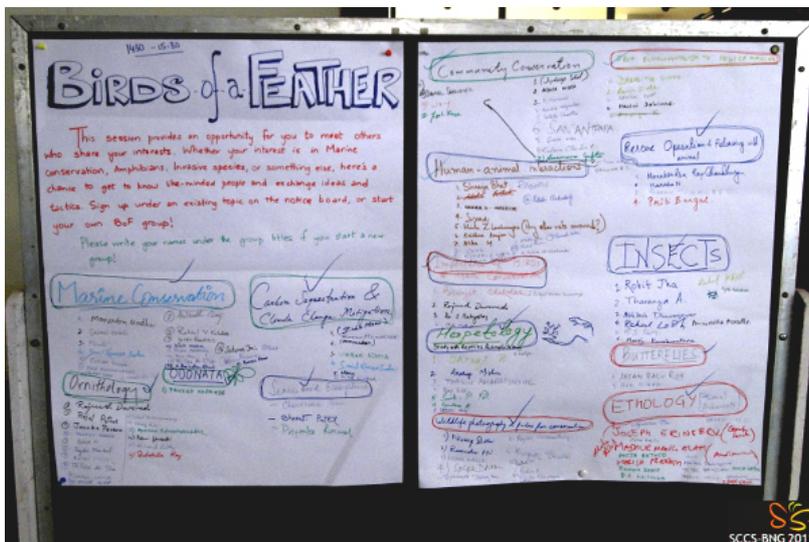
Plenary talks

There were four plenary talks by eminent conservation scientists and practitioners: Rohan D'Souza (Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, India), Harry Biggs (South African National Parks, Kruger), Yvonne Sadovy (University of Hong Kong) and Andrew Balmford (University of Cambridge, UK).



Birds-of-a-feather session

To allow participants to self-organise into special interest groups, we allocated one hour for a session called “Birds-of-a-feather”. In advance of this session, participants used a poster board to suggest topics and to sign up for a topic of interest. Groups of participants met under the following topics:



Marine Conservation; Carbon Sequestration and Climate Change Mitigation; Ornithology; Semi-Arid Ecosystems; Community-based Conservation; Human-animal Interactions; From Environmentalism to Policy Making; Rescue and Release of Wild Animals; Insects; Herpetology; Wildlife Photography and Films for Conservation; Animal Behaviour.

Who's Who in Conservation

In this poster session, 21 conservation agencies, institutes and NGOs displayed posters and provided staff to describe their work and answer queries. These included: Aaranyak; Agumbe Rainforest Research Station; Action for Research and Conservation in the Himalayas; Andaman and Nicobar Environment Team; Asian Nature Conservation Foundation; Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE); CEPF-ATREE Western Ghats Small Grants Program; Foundation for Ecological Security; Centre for Ecological Science, Indian Institute of Science; Centre for Wildlife Studies; Dakshin Foundation; Foundation for Ecological Research, Action and Learning; Madras Crocodile Bank Trust; National Institute of Advanced Studies; National Centre for Biological Sciences; Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History; Samrakshan Trust; University of Lucknow; Wildlife Conservation Society-India; Young Ecologists Talk and Interact; Zoo Outreach Organisation; Wildlife Matters Trust.



Workshops and Discussions

There were 13 workshops (up from 7 last year). Instead of panel discussions, there were three 'Beyond Science' sessions that ran in parallel with the workshops. In these sessions, participants discussed real-world conservation issues and approaches.

Title	Conducted by
Workshops	
Elements of good study design in ecology and conservation	Advait Edgaonkar & Kavita Isvaran
Socio-Economic Dimensions of Conservation-induced Displacement	Asmita Kabra
Bare Essentials of Conservation Genetics	Uma Ramakrishnan, Shomita Mukherjee, Subhankar Chakraborty & Vaibhav Chaturvedi
Connecting People: Effective Messaging for Conservation	Pavithra Sankaran
Asking questions in conservation science	Charudutt Mishra & Aninda Sinha
An introduction to GIS with Quantum GIS	Srinivas V & Ravi Bhalla
Contributing to Wikipedia: a primer for conservation scientists	L. Shyamal & NS Prashanth
Spawning Aggregations in Marine Fish	Yvonne Sadovy
Recognising and Dealing with Complexity and Uncertainty – the Basis for Adaptive Management	Harry Biggs
Rapid Socio-ecological Assessments for Conservation and Development	RJ Ranjit Daniels & Jayshree Vencatesan
Visualizing data and a graphical approach to ecological and environmental science	Jagdish Krishnaswamy
Introduction to Generalised Linear Models	Soumya Prasad & Raman Kumar
Making Sense of Conservation Education	Pranav Trivedi & Nimesh Ved
The craft of compelling communication	Geoff Hyde
'Beyond Science' Sessions	
Why there is no 'Conservation for Dummies': making conservation work in the real world	Sanjay Gubbi (with Dinesh Gundurao, Asha Krishnaswamy, Girish Babu & Anu Chengappa)
Films and conservation	Shekar Dattatri
Conservation and activism - exploring conflicts and synergies	Harini Nagendra (with Ravi Chellam, Sharachandra Lele, Praveen Bhargav, Roshni Nuggehalli & Areeba Hamid)

Feedback from conference attendees

Conference overview

- The proportion of participants who rated the conference to be “Good” or “Excellent” increased from 81% last year to 94% this year (of 147 participant who gave feedback). As last year, none found the conference to be “Poor”.
- The registration fee (INR 1,000, late registration INR 1,500) was found to be “About right” by most participants (89% of 38 who gave feedback online – this question was not asked on the printed feedback form). This proportion was similar to that last year (82%).
- Most participants (79%) “Strongly agreed” to seeing a similar conference next year. This proportion was a little higher than that last year (70%).
- Meeting new colleagues and encountering new ideas in conservation were the top things participants found useful at the conference, followed by learning new skills from workshops.

Student talks and posters:

84% of participants thought that the number of student talks were “About right” (similar to last year: 80%), but only 74% said that sufficient time was allocated to discussion on student talks (contra 94% last year). Compared with last year, when only 43% of attendees thought that the time allocated to student posters was “About right”, this year, the increased time allocated for posters raised this figure to 73%.

Plenaries and workshops:

Plenaries were rated “Excellent” or “Good” by 94% of respondents (similar to the 87% last year). The three new Beyond Science sessions also received high ratings: aggregated across sessions, 85% of participants rated them as “Excellent” or “Good”. Similarly aggregated, the 15 workshops received a rating of “Excellent” or “Good” by 94% of participants. Additional comments point to the need for better time management in workshops, and setting realistic goals when dealing with technical subjects.

Birds-of-a-feather session:

The new birds-of-a-feather session was rated “Excellent” or “Good” by 79% of respondents, with many saying that they wished more time could be set aside for this.

Organisation and Support

Conference Administrator: Bharath Sundaram

Administrative assistance: Adhith Swaminathan

Organising Committee: Ankila Hiremath, Jagdish Krishnaswamy, Jayashree Ratnam, Karthik Shanker, Kavita Isvaran, M.D. Madhusudhan, Krithi Karanth, Suhel Quader and R. Sukumar.

Advisory Committee: Anindya Sinha, Asad Rahmani, Ghazala Shahabuddin, Rohan D'Souza, P.C. Bhattacharjee, Prithiviraj Fernando, Ravi Chellam, Sophie Le Clue and V.B. Mathur.

Resource persons (including talks and poster judges): Advait Edgaonkar (Indian Institute of Forest Management, Bhopal), Andrew Balmford (University of Cambridge, UK), Anindya Sinha (National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore), Ankila Hiremath (Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment, Bangalore), Anu Chengappa, Areeba Hamid (Greenpeace India), Asha Krishnaswamy (Deccan Herald, Bangalore), Asmita Kabra (Ambedkar University, Delhi), Charudutt Mishra (Nature Conservation Foundation, Mysore), Dinesh Gundurao (Honourable Member of the Legislative Assembly, Karnataka), Geoff Hyde (National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bangalore), Girish Babu (Udayavani, Bangalore), Harini Nagendra (Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the

Environment, Bangalore), Harry Biggs (South African National Parks Service), Jagdish Krishnaswamy (Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment, Bangalore), Jayashree Ratnam (National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bangalore), Jayshree Vencatesan (Care Earth, Chennai), Kavita Isvaran (Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore), Krithi Karanth (Centre for Wildlife Studies, Bangalore), KS Krishnan (National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bangalore), L. Shyamal , MD Madhusudan (Nature Conservation Foundation, Mysore), Nimesh Ved, Nitin Rai (Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment, Bangalore), NS Prashanth (Institute of Public Health, Bangalore), Pavithra Sankaran (Nature Conservation Foundation, Mysore), Pranav Trivedi (Nature Conservation Foundation, Bangalore), Praveen Bhargav (Wildlife First, Bangalore), Praveen Karanth (Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore), Rajah Jayapal (Wildlife Conservation Society-India, Bangalore), Raman Kumar, Ravi Bhalla (Foundation for Ecological Research, Advocacy and Learning, Pondicherry), Ravi Chellam (Madras Crocodile Bank Trust), Renee Borges (Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore), RJ Ranjit Daniels (Care Earth, Chennai), Rohan D'Souza (Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi), Roshni Nuggehalli (Hasiru Usiru, Bangalore), Sanjay Gubbi (Centre for Wildlife Studies, Bangalore), Sanjay Molur (Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore), Sharachchandra Lele (Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment, Bangalore), Shekar Dattatri, Shomita Mukherjee (Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History, Coimbatore), Soumya Prasad (Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore), Srinivas V (Foundation for Ecological Research, Advocacy and Learning, Pondicherry), Subhankar Chakraborty (National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore), Uma Ramakrishnan (National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bangalore), VB Mathur (Wildlife Institute of India), Vaibhav Chaturvedi (National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bangalore), Yvonne Sadovy (University of Hong Kong).

Logo Design: Raman Kumar

Web design and implementation: Pavithra Sankaran and Anush Shetty.

Student advisors: Hari Sridhar, Marianne Manuel, Chandrima Home, Sartaj Ghuman, Vaibhav Chaturvedi, Rohit Naniwadekar.

Conference volunteers: Ashok Kumar Mallick, Ema Fatima, Bharti, Joyshree, Ranjana, Vikram Aditya, Manish, Yangchenla, Hita, Venkat Ramanujam, Rohit Naniwadekar, Shashank, Krishnapriya, Prasenjeet, Amruta, Prachi, Navya, Murali, Tashina, Priya, Dipti, Chetan, Atul Joshi, Geetha Ramaswamy, Sumithra Sankaran, Karthikeyan, Sumit Sinha.

Photography: Prasenjeet Yadav.

Many thanks are due to various members of staff from the organising institutions for their help. These include:

- Indian Institute of Science: Nirmala, Geetha, Palani, Guest house caretakers, Security Personnel.
- National Centre for Biological Sciences: Nidhi, Nishath, Uma, Purushottam, Pradip, Ashok Rao, Dispatch Office, Ranjith, Reception, Security, Avinash, Shaju.
- Nature Conservation Foundation: Rakhee Karumbaya

PROGRAMME

Wednesday, 14 September 2011

- 09:00 – 10:00 Registration and workshop sign-up
- 10:00 – 10:30 Inauguration
- 10:30 – 11:30 **Plenary 1:** Rohan D'Souza (Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi).
Nature of Money versus the Value of Conservation: Should Natural Endowments replace Ecological Services?
- 11:30 – 11:50 Refreshments
- 11:50 – 12:50 **Session I: Species in Danger.** (Chair: Charudutt Mishra)
- *Naven Hon.* Food and habitat of Asian Small-clawed Otters in northeastern Cambodia.
 - *Sayam Chowdhury.* Research and conservation initiatives for the Critically Endangered Spoon-billed Sandpiper in Bangladesh
 - *Bashir Ahmed.* Population status, distribution, threats and conservation of South Asian River Dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*) in the rivers of Pabna District, Bangladesh.
 - *Sonika Khushwaha.* Current survey, monitoring and conservation initiatives for vultures in Orchha, Madhya Pradesh, India
- 12:50 – 13:20 Lunch and poster set-up
- 13:20 – 15:20 **Workshops and Beyond Science session**
- A. *The Craft of Compelling Communication.* Geoff Hyde.
- B. *Asking Questions in Conservation Science.* Charudutt Mishra & Aninda Sinha.
- C. *Bare Essentials of Conservation Genetics.* Uma Ramakrishnan, Shomita Mukherjee, Subhankar Chakraborty & Vaibhav Chaturvedi
- D. *Socio-Economic Dimensions of Conservation-induced Displacement.* Asmita Kabra.
- E. *Connecting People: Effective Messaging for Conservation.* Pavithra Sankaran.
- Beyond Science: *Why there is no 'Conservation for Dummies': making conservation work in the real world.* Sanjay Gubbi.
- 15:20 – 16:00 **Poster Session**
- 16:00 – 16:10 **Refreshments**
- 16:10 – 16:15 Address by the Vice Chancellor of the University of Cambridge,
Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz.
- 16:15 – 17:15 **Session II: Habitats, disturbance and diversity.** (Chair: MD Madhusudan)
- *Amol Kulavmode.* *Lantana camara* as seed trap for forest nucleation in Silent Valley.
 - *Seshadri K.S.* Impacts of selective logging on anuran assemblages in a mid elevation evergreen forest, southern Western Ghats, India
 - *Mayurdan Gadhvi.* Recruitment stress induced changes in distribution patterns of estuarine benthic fauna.
 - *Anushree Bhattacharjee.* Human-leopard conflict in western Duars, northern West Bengal
- 17:15 – 18:00 **Who's Who in Conservation?**
- 18:00 – 19:00 **Plenary 2:** Harry C. Biggs (South African National Parks Service). *The Adaptive Management Initiative in Kruger National Park – response to variability, uncertainty and complexity.* Chaired by VB Mathur.
- 19:00 – 19:30 Walk across to IISc Gymkhana
- 19:30 – 21:30 Dinner at IISc Gymkhana.

Thursday, 15 September 2011

- 08:30 – 09:00 Registration and workshop sign-up

- 09:00 – 10:00 **Plenary 3:** Yvonne Sadovy (University of Hong Kong). *From Reefs to Restaurants: the Hidden Cost of Luxury Seafood*
- 10:00 – 10:20 Refreshments
- 10:20 – 11:40 **Session III: Conservation and Human Communities.** (Chair: Asmita Kabra)
- *Farhana Akhtar.* Sharing the challenge of conserving Bangladesh's cetacean diversity with local communities
 - *Delip Das.* Sharing efforts and challenges of conservation of Spoon-billed Sandpiper in Bangladesh.
 - *Anindita Majumdar.* How much from forests: quantification of forest biodiversity and biomass dependence by tribal in South West Bengal.
 - *Mohammad Abdul Motaleb.* Reading nature's mind: Disaster management by indigenous peoples of Bangladesh
 - *Ranjini Murali.* PES in an African protected area: exploring issues of legitimacy, fairness, equity and effectiveness.
- 11:40 – 12:40 **Poster session**
- 12:40 – 13:30 Lunch
- 13:30 – 14:30 **Session IV: The Landscape of Conservation.** (Chair: Krithi Karanth)
- *Cynthia Adeline Layusa.* Distributional modelling and the implication of habitat loss to the conservation of a small island species
 - *Suyadi.* A spatial model of tiger (*Panthera tigris sumatrae*) potential habitat suitability in Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park, Sumatra, Indonesia
 - *Anusha Shankar.* Landscape correlates of Malabar Pied Hornbill nests in the Sangameshwar block, northern Western Ghats, Maharashtra, India.
 - *Girish Punjabi.* Ecological and anthropogenic correlates influencing large carnivore occupancy in the Sahyadri-Konkan corridor, India.
- 14:30 – 15:30 **Break-out session**
- 15:30 – 16:40 **Who's Who in Conservation?**
- 16:40 – 17:00 Refreshments
- 17:00 – 19:00 **Workshops and Beyond Science session**
- F. *Contributing to Wikipedia: a primer for conservation scientists.* L. Shyamal & NS Prashanth.
- G. *Elements of Good Study Design in Ecology and Conservation.* Advait Edgaonkar & Kavita Isvaran.
- H. *Spawning Aggregations in Marine Fish.* Yvonne Sadovy.
- I. *Recognising and Dealing with Complexity and Uncertainty – the Basis for Adaptive Management.* Harry Biggs.
- J. *Introduction to Generalised Linear Models.* Soumya Prasad & Raman Kumar.
- Beyond Science: *Films and conservation.* Shekar Dattatri.
- 19:00 – 19:30 Walk across to IISc Gymkhana
- 19:00 – 21:00 Dinner at the Gymkhana

Friday 16 September, 2011

08:30 – 09:00 Registration

09:00 – 10:00 **Plenary 4:** Andrew Balmford (University of Cambridge).
Nature's glass: half-full or half-empty?

10:00 – 11:00 **Session V: Habitats, disturbance and diversity.** (Chair: Nitin Rai)

- *Radha Wagle.* Effects of management and disturbance gradients on a bird fauna.
- *Lahiru Ishan Samaranayake.* Biodiversity and biotic interactions in Kandyan Home Gardens, Sri Lanka
- *Karthik Teegalapalli.* Lessons from a pinch of salt: *Mikania micrantha* control methods and implications.
- *Thasun Amarasinghe.* Impact of vehicular traffic on herpetofaunal mortality in a savannah dominated forest in Sri Lanka.

11:00 – 11:20 Refreshments

11:20 – 12:40 **Session VI: Species in Danger.** (Chair: Advait Edgaonkar)

- *Chetana Purushotham.* Effect of geographical gaps on population structure using songs of the endangered White-bellied Shortwing in 'sky islands' of the Western Ghats mountains of southern India.
- *Chaminda Pradeep Ratnayake.* Do nesting habitat selection affect the reproductive success of cooperatively breeding Sri Lanka magpie *Urocissa ornata*?
- *Tarun Nair.* The feasibility of estimating gharial populations through photographic capture-recapture; and factors determining their distribution and abundance in the Chambal.
- *Tharanga Aluthwattha.* Will commonness answer the rarity? Conservation approach for endemic butterfly *Elymnias singhala* (Lepidoptera: Satyridae).
- *Sutirtha Dutta.* Understanding habitat relationships of the critically endangered Great Indian Bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*) from a biological perspective at multiple scales of an agro-pastoral landscape.

12:40 – 13:20 Lunch

13:20 – 14:00 **Poster session**

14:00 – 16:00 **Workshops and Beyond Science session**

K. *Making Sense of Conservation: Education.* Pranav Trivedi & Nimesh Ved.

L. *Introduction to GIS with Quantum GIS.* V. Srinivas and Ravi Bhalla.

M. *Rapid Socio-ecological Assessments for Conservation and Development.* RJ Ranjit Daniels & Jayshree Vencatesan.

N. *The Craft of Compelling Communication.* Geoff Hyde.

O. *Visualizing data and a graphical approach to ecological and environmental science.* Jagdish Krishnaswamy.

Beyond Science: *Conservation and activism - exploring conflicts and synergies.* Harini Nagendra.

16:00 – 16:30 Conclusion

16:30 – 17:00 Refreshments

LIST OF STUDENT POSTERS
with abbreviated titles

1. Janaka Perera. Niche occupancy of Orange-billed Babbler.
 2. Supriya. Colonial breeding in *Merops leschenaulti*.
 3. Arunava Gupta. Conservation, development & human needs.
 4. Chaya Sarathchandra. Conservation of Chilaw Mangroves.
 5. Debadityo Sinha. Of Fuelwood, Food and Forests.
 6. Pallavi Ganju. Folk tales and songs of Warli tribals.
 7. Phindarilin Kharjana. Indigenous use of medicinal plants.
 8. Rashmi K. Ethnoveterinary study of medicinal plants.
 9. Sangeeta Haflongbar. Ethnobotanical study on Dimasa Community.
 10. Sanjan Thapa. Bats Conservation in Kathmandu Valley.
 11. Shaina Sehgal. Impact of economics on conservation.
 12. Suchita Shrestha. Conservation Approaches of Community.
 13. Bharati Patel. Ecotourism in Achanakmar Sanctuary.
 14. Pator Singnar. Conservation need for 'dolu bamboo'.
 15. Debahutee Roy. Survey & management of Temple Primates.
 16. Jaydev Mandal. Nest sites of Adjutant Storks.
 17. Raghav Saraswat. Man-Monkey Conflict: cultural conundrum?
 18. Shivani Agarwal. Human- Elephant Conflict.
 19. Soumya Sarkar. A study of birds and butterflies.
 20. Tiasa Adhya. Conservation threats to the Fishing cat.
 21. Rajeev Basumatary. Chelonian diversity.
 22. Rishi Kumar. Conservation of a least concern species.
 23. Dikpal Krishna Karmacharya. Conservation of vultures in Nepal.
 24. Dola Bhattacharjee. Meiofauna in the rookery sediments.
 25. Nishadh K.A.. Enviro-cloud.
 26. Rahul Lodh. DNA barcoding of butterfly.
 27. Sagar Dahal. Survey of small mammals.
 28. Sarbani Nag. Herps of in and around of Fambonlho WLS.
 29. Manoj Kanakarathna. Role of forest in water purification.
 30. Sunil Kumar Sahu. Conservation of mangroves.
 31. Ambika Pd. Khatiwada. Dhole Conservation in Kangchenjunga.
 32. Ashish Kambale. Breeding Behavior of *Gyps bengalensis*.
 33. Kuladip Sarma. Anthropogenic Impact Assessment.
 34. P Hareesh Chandra. Reproductive biology of *S. roxburghii*.
 35. Pin Chanratana. Status and ecology (Large-spotted Civet).
 36. Rajan Paudel. Swamp Francolin.
 37. Amar Singh. House sparrow conservation.
 38. Anusree A.S. Effect of restoration on tree-diversity.
 39. Nopphadol Prayong. Habitat management for gaur conservation.
 40. Pankaj Koparde. Understanding Fly Ash Ponds.
 41. Sreehari Raman. Small carnivores of Parambikulam T.R.
 42. Thilina De Silva. Recovery of avifaunal community along-side tropical forest regeneration.
 43. Pallabi Chakraborty. Occupancy Survey of the *Panthera tigris*.
 44. Rajal Pathak. Avian diversity in fragmented habitat.
 45. Sayantan Das. Sloth Bears in Hospet, Karnataka.
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