

MARCH 2022

Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board

Newsletter

Volume 2 Issue 1

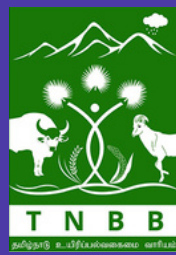


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INCUMBENT UPDATE

Dr. Shekhar Kumar Niraj, IFS, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, assumed charge as the Secretary of TNBB on 18.03.2022 as a successor to *Thiru. Debasis Jana, IFS*, Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests.

[More about Dr. Shekhar Kumar Niraj on Page 4](#)



NEWS AND ACTIVITIES

Online training of BMCs at District, Block and Village Panchayat levels

March 2022



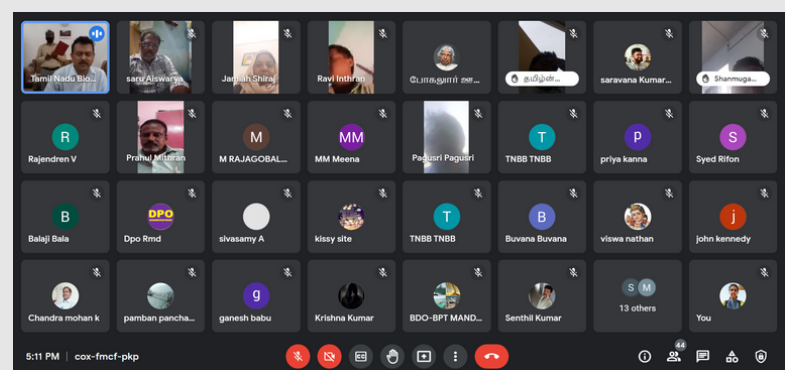
Online training workshop banner prepared by TNBB.

An online training workshop was conducted by the Board from 15-29 March 2022, for secretaries of Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs) at the district, block and village panchayat levels. The main aim of the online workshop was to create awareness among BMCs regarding biodiversity conservation activities and maintenance of People's Biodiversity Registers (PBRs). Secretaries of district and village panchayats, block development officers (BDOs) of block panchayats from 29 districts participated in the workshop. The medium of instruction for the entire training workshop was Tamil.

The workshop began with Ms. Varsha, NBA-UNDP BSIP intern, introducing the concept of biodiversity, its types namely genetic, species and ecosystems diversity, and the importance of conserving biodiversity. Relevant local examples were used for the audience to gain a better understanding of the concepts. Thereafter, the Biological Diversity Act 2002 (BDA 2002) and its objectives were presented and the three-tier institutional mechanism explained with a focus on the legal provisions pertaining to the establishment of Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs) in each local body. Then, details regarding BMC constitution, meetings, local biodiversity fund (LBF) were elucidated.



Presentation in Tamil with details on the constitution of BMCs.



A snapshot of the online training workshop

Subsequently, Mr. Ajeeth, Technical Executive, explained the roles and responsibilities of BMCs, the formation of technical support groups (TSGs), preparation of people's biodiversity registers (PBRs), conservation through biodiversity heritage sites (BHS) and the access and benefit sharing (ABS) mechanism, providing suitable examples from local contexts. After the presentation by the trainers, a short video (in Tamil) was played explaining the Biological Diversity Act 2002, the three-tier institutional mechanism, the constitution and role of BMCs, the importance of preparing PBRs, and ABS mechanism.

This was followed by an interaction with the participants by Mr. Debasis Jana, IFS, APCCF & Secretary, TNBB. He reviewed the progress of BMC meetings and activities and sought the mandatory and timely submission of minutes of the meetings held by each BMC. He further explained the importance of preparing PBRs in the local language, i.e., Tamil, for the benefit of the people as well as an aid in conserving biodiversity. In the end, the floor was open for questions and concerns, if any, from the BMC members regarding aspects such as BMC functioning, ABS mechanism, PBR preparation and other administrative tasks. Members clarified doubts regarding preparation of PBRs and other financial aspects, assured that meetings would be conducted as stipulated in the legal provisions and provided suggestions on taking forward the provisions of BDA 2002 to a larger audience.

Online Photography Contest organized by the Board

March 2022

The Board organized an online photography contest on the theme "EXPLORE-CAPTURE-SHARE: Tamil Nadu's Rich Biodiversity Heritage" in order to showcase the rich biodiversity of the state of Tamil Nadu and to create awareness among the general public regarding the same.

A total of 191 images have been received from 67 participants in the following broad categories:

- Landscapes and Natural Habitats (45 entries)
- Birds (37 entries)
- Insects and Spiders (58 entries)
- Plants and Agro-biodiversity (19 entries)
- Mammals, Amphibians, Reptiles, and Marine creatures (29 entries)

The judgement is currently in process and the entries are being judged for their creativity, originality, quality and relevance. The results of the contest shall be announced soon.

Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board announces online

Photography Contest

on the theme

EXPLORE - CAPTURE - SHARE
TAMIL NADU'S RICH BIODIVERSITY HERITAGE

Submission Guidelines:

- Accepted formats: JPEG/PNG with original resolution
- Only colour photos are accepted
- Minimum resolution - 1024 x 768 pixels
- Aspect ratio - preferably 3:4 (landscape images)
- Refer to the link given below for detailed guidelines

Best entries shall be rewarded suitably

Landscapes and Natural Habitats ;
Unique Species/Varieties ;
(Birds, Mammals, Reptiles,
Amphibians, Insects, Plants, etc.);
Underwater life ;
Biodiversity Types
(Genetic, Species or Ecosystem)

To participate:
Scan the QR Code or
Click the following link
<https://forms.gle/iX2GLU6MK8GyTLY2A>

Deadline
30 March 2022

Poster for photography contest released by TNBB

LEGAL EXPLAINER

Access to biological resources and equitable sharing of benefits

According to the Biological Diversity Act 2002 (BDA 2002), access to biological resources for foreign citizens and entities, and non-resident Indians (NRIs) is regulated by the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA), under section 3(2). Similarly, under section 7, access to Indian citizens and entities is regulated by the respective State Biodiversity Board (SBB).

In the case of *Divya Pharmacy vs. Union of India and Others* in 2018, the petitioner, i.e., Divya Pharmacy, argued that the State Biodiversity Board (SBB) does not have the authority to demand fair and equitable benefits sharing towards the use of biological resources since section 7 of BDA only provides for "prior intimation" by Indian entities to the SBB for accessing biological resources for commercial utilization.

This was however rebutted by the Union of India which argued that regulation in the form of a regulatory fee is generally accepted and when section 7 is read with section 23(b) of the Act which says that the SBB has the power to "regulate by granting of approvals or otherwise requests for commercial utilization or bio-survey and bio-utilization of any biological resource by Indians", the SBB has the authority to demand fair and equitable sharing of benefits. The Uttarakhand High Court in its judgement of the case also ruled that the SBB has the powers to collect ABS fee under section 7 and when read with section 23(b) of the Act, also has the duties to do so.

In the context of Tamil Nadu, the Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board has been receiving applications for access to biological resources for commercial utilization by companies and industries using these resources. After having identified and obtained a tentative list of companies and industries extracting and using biological resources from Tamil Nadu, **the Board had issued notices to 577 companies in February 2022** seeking compliance with the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 and the provisions relating to access and benefits sharing (ABS). As a result, the Board has also been receiving responses and Form-I applications for the same. Also, the Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board has so far disbursed to the beneficiaries an amount of ₹53,04,104 received as Access Benefit Sharing obligation from various companies.

DID YOU KNOW?

'Gloriosa superba' (flame lily): State flower of Tamil Nadu



Gloriosa superba (flame lily), state flower of Tamil Nadu.

Common Name: Flame lily or Climbing lily

Scientific Name: *Gloriosa superba*

Local Name (in Tamil): *Kannvalipoo, karthigaipoo, kandal, senganthal malar, agnisalam* (since it looks like a flame), *kalappaikkizhangu* and *ilaangilee* (since its tuber resembles a ploughshare), *thalai-suruli* and *patee* (due to the curled tips of its leaves) and , *thontri* (derived from its curling grasp).

Habitat: Tropical forests, grasslands and woodlands, sand dunes, and in places 2500 metres above sea level.

Properties: Perennial climber ; fleshy, white, cylindrical tubers ; Poisonous and noxious weed (contains colchicine, a toxic alkaloid) ; Known for its medicinal properties

Uses: Treats gout, joint pains, rheumatism, open wounds, snakebites, ulcers, stomach worms, etc. ; Sap kills head lice ; Used to induce labour for child birth

It is widely cultivated in Tiruchi, Karur, and Ariyalur districts in Tamil Nadu and exported for its medicinal properties.

BIODIVERSITY NEWS

IMPORTANT DAYS (JAN-MAR)

- 2 Feb - World Wetlands Day
- 28 Feb - National Science Day
- 3 Mar - World Wildlife Day
- 20 Mar - World Sparrow Day
- 21 Mar - Intl. Day of Forests
- 22 Mar - World Water Day

EDITORIAL TEAM

- Dr. Shekhar Kumar Niraj,
IFS, PCCF and Secretary,
TNBB
- Mr. Ajeeth A N,
Technical Executive, TNBB
- Ms. Varsha S,
BSIP intern, TNBB

Published by

Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board,
TBGP Campus, II Floor,
Velachery-Tambaram Main
Road, Nanmangalam,
Medavakkam Post, Chennai
600100

Contact No.: 044-22782730
E-mail: secy.tnbb@tn.gov.in

Connect with Us



TNBB_Secy



@tnbb_secretariat



Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board

A new mammal species, the White Cheeked Macaque (*Macaca leucogenys*), has been discovered in Arunachal Pradesh by the Zoological Survey of India. First discovered in China in 2015, its presence in India has been confirmed only now.

Source: Avijit Ghosh, Supriyo Dalui, Tanoy Mukherjee, Bheem Dutt Joshi, Sujeet Kumar Singh, Gopinathan Maheswaran, Lalit Kumar Sharma, Kailash Chandra, Mukesh Thakur, *Serendipitous discovery of white-cheeked macaque (Macaca leucogenys) from Arunachal Pradesh, India*, Animal Gene, Volume 23, 2022, 200124, ISSN 2352-4065, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.angen.2022.200124>.

Eriocaulon goaense, a new species of flowering plant has been found on Goa's lateritic plateaus thereby proving the richness of the biodiversity on plateaus.

Source: Rutuja R Kolte, Indu Yadav, Malapati K Janarthanam, *Eriocaulon goaense (Eriocaulaceae), a new species from lateritic plateaus of Goa, India*, Phytotaxa, Vol. 532 No. 2: 28 January 2022, <https://doi.org/10.11646/phytotaxa.532.2.8>

Two new species of wasp mimicking flower flies of the rare genus *Monoceromyia* have been discovered in the forests of the Western Ghats and North East after a gap of 80 years. The newly discovered species have been named *Monoceromyia flavoscutata* and *M. nigra*.

Source: <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/2022/jan/09/two-new-species-of-flower-flies-discovered-2404696.html>

Carrhotus tholpettyensis, a new species of spider was discovered in Western Ghats and has been named after the forest range Tholpetty from where it was collected.

Source: Sudhin, Puthoor & Nafin, Karunnappilli & Caleb, John & Sudhikumar, Ambalaparambil. (2021). A new spider species of the genus *Carrhotus* Thorell, 1891 (Aranei: Salticidae: Salticini) from Western Ghats of India. *Arthropoda Selecta*. 30. 551–556. [10.15298/arthsel.30.4.11](https://doi.org/10.15298/arthsel.30.4.11).

A new species of millipede (*Delarthrum anomalans*) was discovered from Calicut University campus and belongs to the family of a group of minute millipedes.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/new-species-of-spider-and-millipede-discovered/article38383375.ece>

About Dr. Shekhar Kumar Niraj

Dr. Shekhar Kumar Niraj, IFS, was previously the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and State Chief Wildlife Warden in charge of overseeing wildlife management for the whole of Tamil Nadu. In a career spanning more than 25 years, Dr. Niraj has held various assignments in forest management, wildlife management, participatory management of natural resources by local communities and policy development. Dr. Niraj served as the first Director of Advanced Institute of Wildlife Conservation (AIWC) from 2018 to 2020, where he set up state-of-art DNA forensic and morphometric labs for conducting advanced conservation research in wildlife. Dr. Niraj also created a nation-wide intelligence network to combat illegal wildlife trade and wildlife crimes, leading in more than 600 cases of seizures and arrests. Dr. Niraj holds a PhD degree from the University of Arizona, USA where his dissertation was on the subject of Sustainable Development, Poaching and Illegal Wildlife Trade in India. He was a recipient of the Royal Bank of Scotland Foundation Earth Heroes Award in 2017.