

Newsletter

Volume 2 Issue 2



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WHAT'S INSIDE?

- News and Activities
- IDB 2022 celebrations
- Field Visits
- Legal Explainer
- Did You Know

NEWS AND ACTIVITIES

International Day for Biodiversity 2022: Celebrations at Chennai

May 2022

On 22 May 2022, the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) held national level celebrations commemorating the International Day for Biodiversity (IDB) 2022 at Kalaivanar Arangam, Chennai under the theme “Building a shared future for all life”.



Thiru. Bhupender Yadav inaugurating the Biodiversity Exhibition.



Thiru. Siva V. Meyyanathan addressing the gathering.

Thiru. Bhupender Yadav, Hon'ble Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, and Thiru. Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Hon'ble Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, inaugurated the Biodiversity Exhibition on the theme “Biodiversity, Nutritional Security and Human Well-being” at Kalaivanar Arangam Exhibition Hall, Chennai. Thiru. Siva V. Meyyanathan, Hon'ble Minister for Environment-Climate Change and Youth Welfare and Sport Development, Government of Tamil Nadu also attended the event.

Other dignitaries present at the event included Tmt. Leena Nandan, Secretary, MoEFCC, Tmt. Supriya Sahu, Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Environment, Climate Change and Forests, Government of Tamil Nadu, the Resident Representative of UNDP-India, and other senior officials.

From the state of Tamil Nadu, a total of 300 Biodiversity Management Committee (BMC) members attended the event and interacted with Thiru. Bhupender Yadav. Members were selected from across the state to ensure equal representation from all the 38 districts. A BMC member from Pattukottai block in Thanjavur district raised a query as to how the funds from the central and state governments to BMCs may be utilized for conservation activities. The Hon'ble Minister Thiru. Bhupender Yadav responded that the Central and State Government would soon come out with a Standard Operating Procedure for the same.



The gathering for IDB 2022 celebrations at Kalaivanar Arangam, Chennai



Thiru. Bhupender Yadav answering questions from the audience during the event



A BMC member from Thanjavur district asking questions during the interactive session.

Thiru. Bhupender Yadav revealed a Special Cover released by India Post and the National Biodiversity Authority. The Special Cover contains the Indian logo for the International Day for Biological Diversity in the 75th Year of Indian Independence. The winners of the India Biodiversity Awards 2021 were also felicitated; Mr. S. Sathish, Forest Range Officer, Ramanathapuram Wildlife Range, was one of the awardees in the category “Sustainable Use of Biological Resources (Individual).

The Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board (TNBB) collaborated with R.K. Algae Project Centre and Keystone Foundation for a stall at the Biodiversity Exhibition. The Board had sample PBRs on display as well as books, pamphlets, brochures, and posters about the biodiversity of Tamil Nadu, the activities of the Board and information related to the Biological Diversity Act, 2002.

Thiru. M. Rajendrakumar of R.K. Algae Project Centre displayed seaweed species and a mini working model of how they are cultivated. *Kappaphycus alvarezii* was the focus of display although native seaweed species such as *Gracilaria edulis*, *Hypnea musciformis* and *Sarconema filiforme* as well as products made out of seaweeds were also displayed. Keystone Foundation presented their work with the local community in the Nilgiris district. They primarily work in the Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve. They also displayed an array of products including pure wild honey produced by the local community.



The Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board's stall at the Biodiversity Exhibition featuring members from the Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board, R.K. Algae Project Centre, Keystone Foundation as well as general public.

Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board writes for Down to Earth magazine

April 2022



On the occasion of World Earth Day, an article was published on 22 April 2022 in Down to Earth magazine by the Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board, authored by Dr. Shekhar Kumar Niraj, IFS, PCCF and Secretary, Ajeeth A N (Technical Executive) and Varsha S (BSIP Intern). The article focused on how community participation is paramount in conserving biodiversity and highlighted the achievements of and challenges before the Board in implementing the Biological Diversity Act 2002.

Scan the QR code to read the article or follow the link below:
<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/environment/world-earth-day-2022-community-conserved-biodiversity-is-key-to-sustenance-and-strong-bioeconomy-82519>



Project proposal submitted to the State Government

April 2022

The Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board has submitted a project proposal of approximately ₹8 cr. titled 'Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board: Strengthening and Restructuring Project 2022-25' to the State Government on 12 April 2022 for institutional strengthening and capacity building. In response to this, the Government had sanctioned an amount of ₹1.25 cr. in June 2022 through CAMPA funds for FY 2022-23 for the establishment of a Project Management Unit.

The Board's digital presence

April-June 2022

The Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board is in the process of updating its website with new content as well as creating an online portal for submitting ABS Form-I applications. To provide an overview of activities mandated under the Biological Diversity Act 2002, the Board has created a Dashboard featuring components of ABS, status of BMCs and PBRs and notification of BHSs. In order to ease the application process for ABS, the Board is in the process of creating an online portal for submitting Form-I applications. The Dashboard and the ABS application portal would reflect on the website soon.

The Board also actively engages with the public through its social media channels such as Instagram, Twitter and Facebook.



A snapshot of social media posts created and published by TNBB.

Access and Benefits Sharing (ABS) expert committee meeting

April 2022

The Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board organised an ABS expert-committee meeting on 11 April 2022 to process Form-I applications received by the Board and from NBA. Members present at the meeting included Dr. Shekhar Kumar Niraj, PCCF and Secretary, TNBB, Dr. D. Narasimhan, Dr. Arivvudai Nambi, Dr. S. Elumalai, and Wildlife Warden, Chennai. A total of 41 applications were processed out of which 23 were approved.

In terms of further actions to be taken by the Board with regard to the ABS mechanism, the following points were highlighted by Dr. Shekhar and reiterated by the other members present at the meeting.

- Creating a monitoring mechanism to check the amount of biological resources accessed by entities once approval for access is provided so as to ensure the sustainability of the said resources. This is necessary since companies may quote one quantity on paper but access more in reality.
- Commissioning a study on native species as well as research studies to lessen the harvest period of native species. This will enable the Board to create a list of native species that could gradually replace *Kappaphycus* species for economic use. This was in reference to an application requesting access to seaweed species *Kappaphycus alvarezii*.
- Creating a scheme or policy on ways to utilize the ABS funds received for the Board as well as for BMCs/benefit claimers, including creating minimum standard guidelines for BMCs to levy and use collection fees.
- As an assurance that the resource would be accessed for domestic purposes only and not for export outside India, companies may be asked to sign a declaration or undertaking stating the same.
- Prior to granting approval, confirmation to be sought from applicants regarding the original source of the biological resource accessed and whether it is cultivated.
- Establishing a communication channel or point of contact such as a community resource person or block coordinator with each BMC for communicating regarding ABS applications and other issues. The Board would have a list of such contacts for effective communication.
- In order to ensure the completeness of applications, providing companies with a checklist of supporting documents to be attached to the Form-I application for easy cross-verification by the Board.
- Providing a certification from the Board while granting approval for access stating that the approval would only be for access under the Biological Diversity Act 2002, and other approvals must be taken from relevant authorities (highlighted in the context of export to countries outside India).

In June 2022, the Board received ABS agreements from four entities upon processing of their Form I applications and shall be signed by the Board to execute ABS mechanism. The Board also issued strict instructions to 12 companies who have not executed ABS in furtherance to the processing of Form I application.

FIELD VISITS

UNDP-GEF-MoEFCC project in the Sathyamangalam landscape

April 2022

The United Nations Development Programme – India (UNDP-India) along with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA), is developing a GEF (Global Environment Facility) supported project entitled “Strengthening Institutional Capacities for Securing Biodiversity Conservation Commitments”.

The primary objective of the project is to mainstream biodiversity conservation and its sustainable use and management into village level self-governance institutional planning and budgeting systems in two high biodiversity landscapes of Sathyamangalam in Tamil Nadu and Garo Hills in Meghalaya.

The Sathyamangalam landscape in Tamil Nadu is unique where the confluence of Western Ghats and Eastern Ghats happen and is home to rich biodiversity comprising the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve which is home to almost 90 tigers and around 900 elephants.

The Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board, being one among the partners in developing and implementing the project, participated in the reconnaissance field visits and consequent landscape visits in facilitating the designing of the project.

Ajeeth A N, Technical Executive, TNBB visited the landscape along with a team of experts from UNDP, GEF and independent consultants from 22-23 April and 27 April – 1 May 2022. The team met the local communities & Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs) in the landscape and various other stakeholders of biodiversity conservation such as the district & local administration, training and research institutes, NGOs, etc.

The team took cognizance of the ground reality pertaining to issues and scope in biodiversity conservation. Based on these inputs and findings from the field, the project is currently being developed with incorporation of inputs from various other sources and is set to be implemented from mid-2023.



Interaction with communities along STR buffer area



Interaction with a tribal settlement (Gedhesal) inside STR

Field visit to Deverbetta, a proposed biodiversity heritage site in Krishnagiri district

June 2022



The hillock of Deverbetta in Krishnagiri district.

A team from the Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board (TNBB) visited Deverbetta village in Thally block, Krishnagiri district on 11 June 2022 to inspect the site's potential to be declared as a biodiversity heritage site (BHS). The team was headed by Dr. Shekhar Kumar Niraj, IFS, PCCF and Secretary and included Thiru. A. Kalaiarasan, Assistant (AO Retd.), Thiru. Ajeeth A N, Technical Executive, and Selvi. Varsha S, NBA-UNDP BSIP intern. The team was supported by field staff which included Thiru. Sukumaran, Forest Range Officer, Jawalagiri Range, Dr. Prakash and other staff from the forest department.

The Board had received a proposal in January 2022 for the declaration of Deverbetta in Thally block, Krishnagiri district as a biodiversity heritage site (BHS) from the Wildlife Warden, Hosur Forest Division. The main features of the site are the hill, the avifaunal diversity, particularly endangered vulture species such as Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*), White rumped vulture (*Gyps bengalensis*) and Long billed vulture (*Gyps indicus*), and the Malleswaraswamy temple on the hill.

The team interacted with members of the Unisenatham Panchayat Biodiversity Management Committee (BMC) and members of the local community. The president of Unisenatham panchayat, Mrs. Bharathi and the secretary, Mr. Ramesh, were also present during the interaction.

Thiru. Kalaiarasan gave a brief introduction to the gathering, explained about BMCs and preparation of People's Biodiversity Registers (PBRs). Thiru. Ajeeth explained the concept of access and benefit sharing (ABS) and in what ways its implementation in the area could help the BMC and the local community. Then, Dr. Shekhar Kumar Niraj interacted with the participants to understand their awareness of BMCs and PBRs, and the concept of BHSs.



Thiru. Kalairasan giving a brief introduction to the gathering.



The participants interacting with the TNBB team.

During the interaction, it was observed that the BMC members and the local community did not have knowledge about BMCs and PBRs and were not aware of the concept of BHS. The BMC members were not aware about their roles and responsibilities and the committee was not functioning regularly. There was also a language barrier since the local community majorly spoke Kannada and Telugu and very few understood Tamil.

Despite the shortcomings in terms of awareness and language, the community was interested in taking up activities if provided with adequate support. The participants in the meeting suggested activities to increase income and enhance livelihoods in the area. There is potential for rock climbing and camping activities on the hill with visitors willing to pay up to ₹1000 for the same. Mrs. Bharathi, the panchayat president, also informed that a proposal was submitted regarding the construction of a ropeway for easier access to the temple on the hill. The temple attracts about 400-500 visitors on Mondays and is a popular site in the locality and surrounding areas. The participants suggested that support to setup stalls by the local community, especially women, to sell local products to tourist, would help in enhancing their incomes.

Subsequently, the team visited the hillock that was proposed as a BHS and inspected the area. On the way to the top of the hillock, the following prominent species were sighted – Common leucas (*Leucas aspera*), locally known as *thumbai poo*; *Shorea talura*, the *Jalari* tree that gives out the smell of camphor; Bermuda grass (*Cynodon dactylon*), locally known as *Garike*; and Black stone flower (*Parmotrema perlatum*), locally known as *kal paachi*.

During the visit, it was observed that although the site holds some significant features of being a BHS, most parts of the proposed BHS fall within areas declared as Reserve Forests while the portion of the site on revenue land did not hold significant biodiversity. Hence, it does not entirely satisfy the criteria to be declared as a BHS.



Walking to the top of the hillock

Interaction with BMCs in Dharmapuri district

June 2022

A team from the Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board led by Dr. Shekhar Kumar Niraj, IFS, PCCF and Secretary, held an interaction with BMCs and Block Development Officers of Pennagaram, Karimangalam and Harur blocks in Dharmapuri district on 13 June 2022. The Secretary was assisted by Thiru. A Kalaiarasan, AO (Retd.), TNBB and field staff from the Forest Department.

Others in the meeting included block development officers and secretaries of 16 village panchayats of Pennagaram, Karimangalam and Harur blocks. Thiru. Kalaiarasan (AO Retd., TNBB) welcomed all the participants and explained to the gathering the roles and responsibilities of BMC providing a brief about the Peoples' Biodiversity Register (PBR) and the concept of Access & Benefits Sharing (ABS).



A snapshot of participants of the interactive session.

Dr. Shekhar Kumar Niraj, PCCF & Secretary, TNBB emphasised the importance of BMCs, PBRs & ABS and the benefits that would arise if the mandates of the Biological Diversity Act 2002 are implemented properly. He also mentioned that the BMCs must be strengthened and in case of any issues or clarifications, the BMCs may contact the nodal officer, i.e., the Assistant Director (Panchayats).

Dr. Shekhar Kumar Niraj, PCCF & Secretary, TNBB emphasised the importance of BMCs, PBRs & ABS and the benefits that would arise if the mandates of the Biological Diversity Act 2002 are implemented properly. He also mentioned that the BMCs must be strengthened and in case of any issues or clarifications, the BMCs may contact the nodal officer, i.e., the Assistant Director (Panchayats).

The Block Development Officer of Pennagaram requested that Forest Range Officers help in facilitating the conduct of BMC meetings as well as highlighted the difficulty in identifying and contacting existing BMC members. In this regard, the BDO requested if new members could be appointed. The team took note of the issue and responded that they would contact the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj department requesting them to reconstitute the BMCs in rural local bodies where elections were held as they need to be after every local body election.

A village panchayat secretary raised a query on only model Block BMCs had been provided funds and not the other BMCs. The PCCF and Secretary, TNBB, reiterated that funding to all BMCs shall be provided soon. Other issues and queries raised included the inclusion of women as members of a BMC, payment of honorarium to BMC members, availability of PBR format in Tamil, and the lack of a contact person for BMCs. The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks by Forester Thiru. Munusami.



Participants raising issues and queries during the session.

Sacred groves and proposed Arittapatti biodiversity heritage site in Madurai district

June 2022

On 28 and 29 June 2022, a team from the Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board (TNBB) visited areas in Madurai district that had the potential to be declared as biodiversity heritage sites (BHS). The team was headed by Dr. Shekhar Kumar Niraj, IFS, PCCF and Secretary. The sites visited include sacred groves in Kasampatty and Kodimangalam, a Kadamba tree patch in Idayapatti and the proposed BHS at Arittapatti. Other members of the team included Thiru. A. Kalaiarasan, AO (Retd.), Thiru. Ajeeth A N, Technical Executive, and Selvi. Varsha S, NBA-UNDP BSIP intern. The team was supported on field by officials from the Madurai forest division, and Dr. Badri Narayanan, a nature enthusiast.

Veera Koil Sacred Grove in Kasampatty village



Villagers leading the way into the sacred grove.

The team interacted with the local villagers and were given a brief introduction to the history of the locality, the sacred grove, the traditional practices upheld in conserving the grove, and the issues faced by the local community. Spanning over an area of about 10 acres, the sacred grove of Veera Koil in Kasampatty has been in existence for over 2000 years. The grove is rich in biological diversity with 48 tree species, 29 herbs, 22 shrubs, and 21 lianas.

The local community has been instrumental in conserving the grove through stringent disciplinary measures. Outsiders are strictly prohibited from entering the grove and no one is allowed to take even a single twig from the grove. Women are prohibited from entering the premises where the deity resides, although they are allowed within the grove area.

The area has the potential for ecotourism and related activities could be introduced which may provide the community with an additional source of income. Since the Alagarkoil hills lie nearby, this region, if announced as a BHS, could be brought under the circuit of ecotourism. It can also facilitate researchers to undertake studies on the rich biodiversity of the region. Due to its rich biological, religious and cultural significance, the sacred grove has the potential to be declared as a biodiversity heritage site with the community at the forefront in its conservation.



Dr. Shekhar interacting with the villagers at Kasampatty

Umachikovil Sacred Grove in Kodimangalam village

The sacred grove of Umachikovil in Kodimangalam village covers an area of about 3.5 acres and is protected by a deity who is considered to be powerful. People in the local community follow strict protocols and do not take out even a leaf or twig from the premises of the grove out of respect and fear of the deity.

Although the core area of the grove is protected by the local community, signs of encroachment were found along the border. A local villager also mentioned that the grove was originally five acres and had shrunk to its present size due to encroachments for personal gains. The team noted that although the sacred grove did not meet the potential criteria of a BHS, appropriate interventions could help monitor and protect the grove from further encroachments.



A prayer performed at the sacred tree by a devotee inside the sacred grove in Kodimangalam

Arittapatti, a proposed biodiversity heritage site

The TNBB team visited the proposed BHS at Arittapatti on the forenoon of 29 June. Before inspecting the area, there was a brief meeting with the local villagers and various stakeholders. Officials from the forest department, the Block Development Officer, the President and Secretary of the Village Panchayat, a representative from the Revenue Department, Surveyor, Thiru. Ravichandran, who had submitted the proposal for Arittapatti BHS, Dr Badri Narayanan, bird watchers, photographers and local farmers were present in the meeting.

The TNBB team briefed the gathering on the importance of biodiversity conservation, role of BMCs and the benefits to the community on announcing the area as a BHS. The community was appreciated for taking up the step in making the proposal to announce the area as a BHS. The importance and significance of the locality was emphasized by various individuals at the gathering.



Interaction among the team and the local community



The team spotting birds within the site

Several questions regarding access, restrictions, benefits etc., were raised by the participants and these were clarified by Dr. Shekhar Kumar Niraj, IFS, PCCF and Secretary, who explained that there shall be no restrictions as such and any means of management shall be decided upon by the local biodiversity management committee in consultation with the community. The community also requested if a pathway can be laid bordering the BHS so as to enable farmers to easily access their farm lands.

Thiru. Ravichandran handed over the books prepared by him on the species diversity and water sources of Arittapatti. The staff of the local Forest Department is consolidating the various data regarding Arittapatti BHS such as flora & fauna, boundary survey, GPS coordinates, water sources, hydrology, etc., and shall share them with the Board upon completion.

The team then visited the proposed BHS area and sighted various raptors like the Honey Buzzard, Indian Spotted Eagle, Short Toed Snake Eagle, etc. Other unique plants, insects, and butterflies as well as water bodies were seen during the visit around the area. The team also visited the 7th century rock-cut Siva temple in the area and the portion where age-old Brahmi inscriptions exist. The area is rich in biological, historical, archaeological, geological and hydrological significance. Hence, it has a huge potential in terms of being declared as a biodiversity heritage site. The region is also suitable for ecotourism, especially birding, as well as other activities like rock climbing and camping.

Kadamba tree patch in Idayapatti

The team visited a small patch of forest rich in *Kadamba* tree (*Mitragyna parvifolia*) in Idayapatti village. According to historians, Madurai was originally a forest known as *Kadambavanam* and the region was rich in *kadamba* trees. The tree is known for its medicinal properties and is used in Siddha, Ayurveda and folk medicine.

The *kadamba* patch at Idayapatti is spread across an area of 130 acres; however, the patch originally covered 500 acres. It is a unique locality where the natural regeneration of *Mitragyna parvifolia* (*Kadamba* tree) occurs and the area is dominated by the species. Other species that occur in the area are *Albizia amara* (known as *usila maram* in Tamil) and *Euphorbia antiquorum* (*Thirugukalli* in Tamil).

The area could be declared as a biodiversity heritage site with studies on *Mitragyna parvifolia* initiated. It is also prone to quarrying activity which affects the site. The site also needs protection from further deterioration due to quarrying and developmental activities.



Flower of *kadamba* tree



The *kadamba* forest patch at Idayapatti



Leaf of *kadamba* tree



Visiting the *Kadamba* tree patch in Idayapatti

LEGAL EXPLAINER

During the field visits by the Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board, it was found that there is a lack of awareness among the local community about the concept of a biodiversity heritage site (BHS). It is often misinterpreted as declaration of a Protected Area and the imposition of restrictions to entry and access. This was evident when the Board visited a few sacred groves in Madurai district in June 2022 to assess their potential for declaration as a biodiversity heritage site.

In the history of conservation in India, a prominent feature is the concept of protected areas (PAs). The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 (WPA 1972) in Section 18 provides the State Government with the authority to declare an 'area with adequate ecological, faunal, floral, geomorphological, natural or zoological significance', as a national park, wildlife sanctuary, conservation reserve or community reserve, for the 'purpose of protecting, propagating or developing wildlife or its environment'.

On the other hand, the Biological Diversity Act 2002 (BDA 2002) in Section 37 provides that the State Government in consultation with the local bodies may declare any area of biological importance as a biodiversity heritage site (BHS) for the purpose of conservation of biodiversity. The 'Guidelines for Selection and Management for Biodiversity Heritage Sites' published by NBA, defines BHS as well-defined areas that are unique, ecologically fragile ecosystems - terrestrial, coastal and inland waters and, marine - having rich biodiversity comprising of a number of components such as high endemism, presence of rare and threatened species, wild ancestors of domestic/cultivated species or their varieties, having significant cultural, ethical or aesthetic values, etc.

So, how is a biodiversity heritage site different from a protected area?

While PAs have restrictions in terms of entry and access, declaring an area as a BHS does not automatically impose any restriction on the local community to access and use the biological resources within the area other than those voluntarily imposed by the community. Communities also get to decide for themselves how the BHS is to be managed and protected.

Moreover, areas that fall outside the protected areas and reserve forests notified by the State Government can only be declared as biodiversity heritage sites. Hence, sites such as sacred groves, sacred trees and plants, wetlands, and community conserved areas have the potential to become biodiversity heritage sites.

Section 37 of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, also provides that the State Government may frame rules for the management and conservation of all biodiversity heritage sites in the state. In this regard, the Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board has prepared a draft rules for the conservation and management of BHS in Tamil Nadu, which shall be submitted to the Government shortly. TNBB is also in the final stages of preparing the draft notification for declaring Arittapatti in Madurai district as a biodiversity heritage site (BHS).

IMPORTANT DAYS (APR-JUNE)

- 03 Apr - World Aquatic Animal Day
- 18 Apr - World Heritage Day
- 22 Apr - Earth Day
- 14 May - World Migratory Bird Day
- 22 May - Intl. Day for Biodiversity
- 05 June - World Environment Day
- 08 June - World Oceans Day
- 17 June - World Day to Combat
Desertification and Drought

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

DID YOU KNOW?

'Nilgiri Tahr' (*Nilgiritragus hylocrius*): State animal of Tamil Nadu



Nilgiri tahr (*Nilgiritragus hylocrius*), state animal of Tamil Nadu.

Common Name: Nilgiri Tahr

Scientific Name: *Nilgiritragus hylocrius*

Local Name (in Tamil): *Varai aadu* (meaning cliff goat)

Habitat: Open montane grasslands of montane rain forests of the south Western Ghats

Population: approx. 2500 individuals

Appearance: Height - about 100 cm (from the shoulder), Weight - 80-100 kg ; Short, coarse coat (male: blue-black, female: dark brown) ; Throat and abdomen are white ; Parallel and curved horns

Diet: Herbs, shrubs and grass

Breeding season: June to August (south-west monsoon) ; gestation period of about 6 months ; births peak during January and February

Threats: Habitat loss and fragmentation, poaching

Conservation Status: listed as 'Endangered' on IUCN Red List of Endangered Species ; listed under Schedule I of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972

Although largely found in the Anamalai hills (Kerala) and the Nilgiris, smaller populations are found in the Palani hills, Srivilliputtur, Meghamalai and Agasthiyar ranges.