

**Sálim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History (SACON)
Annual Research Seminar – 2018**

Report

The Annual Research Seminar 2018 of SACON was conducted on 13th August 2018 in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu under the Chairmanship of Dr. Ramakrishna, Former Director, Zoological Survey of India and RMAC Chairman-SACON. Dr. K. Sankar, Director, SACON welcomed the gathering which was followed by Chairman's address. After a brief inaugural address by Dr. S.K. Niraj, Addl. PCCF, Tamil Nadu, the Chief Guest of the seminar, Dr. Mohit Gera, IFS, Director, Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding, Coimbatore gave his special address.

The meeting was attended by Members of Research, Monitoring and Advisory Committee (RMAC) of SACON, Forest Officials from different states, officials from the Airport Authority of India, scientists from various research organizations from Coimbatore, faculty, researchers and post-graduate students of SACON.

During the inaugural session following publications were released by SACON:

1. Spatio-temporal burrow use patterns by vertebrates in Keoladeo National Park, Bharatpur, Rajasthan; **Final Report.**
2. Conservation of the Andaman Serpent Eagle (*Spilornis elgini*) in the Andaman Islands – Phase – I; **Final Report.**
3. Impact of developmental projects like road widening on the bird population of Gulbarga city, Karnataka; **Technical Report.**
4. Supplementary Environmental Impact Assessment for the proposed High Level Bridge across Pulicat Lake, Tamil Nadu, with special focus on Birds; **Technical Report.**
5. **CD** on Bird Songs of SACON Campus.
6. SACON **Newsletter** & SACON ENVIS **Newsletter.**

During the ARS, a total of 23 presentations involving 15 researchers, 5 faculty and 2 INSPIRE Fellows and one DST Young Scientist were made. Topics of presentation made under each Technical Sessions are given below:

- I. Threatened Birds
- II. Human-Wildlife Interface
- III. Wildlife Conservation & Management
- IV. Wetlands

The technical sessions were chaired and co-chaired by eminent scientists/forest managers. The presentations under each technical session were followed by a discussion involving question and answers as well as suggestions for improvement. The seminar events included awarding of Best Presentation Awards and Best Photographic Award.

The following presentations were adjudged best presentations of the ARS - 2018:

Sl. No	Presentation Topics	Presenter/s	Prize
1	Developing a conservation action plan for the endangered Forest Owlet (<i>Heteroglaux blewitti</i>) - preliminary findings	Mr. Kaushik Koli, Junior Research Biologist.	I
2	Macro and micro-characteristics of feathers of Indian Pitta (<i>Pitta brachyura</i>): A pilot study for making feather catalogue	Ms. Swapna & Mr. Prateek Dey Junior Research Biologists.	II
3	Mapping the subterranean fauna in the limestone caves of the tropical islands of India	Ms. Amruta Dhamorikar & Ms. Dhanusha Kawalkar - Junior Research Biologists.	III
4	How common are our common birds? Preliminary findings from the survey of synanthropic birds in Maharashtra	Ms. Pallavi Arora - Junior Research Biologist.	IV
5	Surveillance and monitoring of impact of environmental contaminants on birds in India	Ms. V. Bhagyasree - Junior Research Biologist	V

For photographic competitions, a total of 34 entries were received, of which six photographs received for camera trap category, 28 for field activities, 44 for behavior and 63 for flora and fauna category. For judging the photographs, criteria such as appropriateness to the theme, message, and composition of the photograph were considered.

Following were the winners of the Photographic Competition Award:

SN	Theme	Topic	Photographed by	Prize
1.	Camera Trap	Leopard	Mr. P. Karthik	I
		Himalayan masked civet (Andaman race)	Ms. Dhanusha K	II
2.	Non Theme	Landscape with mountains and wetland with plants reflection.	Mr. Anoop V	I
		Wanderlust	Mr. Sarbasis Dutta	II
		Sayadhri mountains with low lying clouds	Ms. Priyanka Bansode	III
3.	Behaviour	Baya weaver bird on the nest	Ms. Hima H	I
		Andaman Crake playing dead during threat	Ms. Amruta H Dhamorikar	II
		Birds fighting for nesting material in mid air	Mr. Baburao G	III
4.	Field Activity	Swab taken from the Eurasian Curlew	Ms. Subhiksha Maxima	I
		Moth on the mobile phone with the landscape background	Ms. Purnima Mohite	II
		Students crossing a stream during the field activity	Ms Purnima Mohite	III

SN	Theme	Topic	Photographed by	Prize
5.	Flora and Fauna	Indian Eagle Owl and House Crow	Mr. Siva T	I
Dancing girl ginger <i>Globba marantiana</i>		Mr. Jeevith	II	
White-cheeked Barbet.		Mr. Darshan Potdar	III	

The concluding session of the ARS was chaired by Dr. Ramakrishna and Co-chaired by Dr. R. Geeta, Member RMAC and Dr. K. Sankar, Director, SACON.

At the concluding session, Dr. Geeta said that the presentations were precise and the quality of presentations was remarkable and also the way they were presented by the research personnel at the seminar. Further she mentioned that the abstract should include introduction, methodology, results and discussions and it should be structured properly and comprehensibly in such a way to attract reader's attention.

In his concluding remarks, Dr. Ramakrishna, Chairman (RMAC, SACON) congratulated the SACON's researchers for their excellent presentations and acknowledged the competitive spirit that they had. While applauding the high quality presentations that were made by the researchers, he said that he did not see much of difference in marks scored by the presenters during the evaluation. He expressed his satisfaction that most of the research studies on birds, mammals, insects and plants that are presently being carried out by SACON, mainly focuses on the IUCN threatened species. Dr. Ramakrishna congratulated the Director, SACON for his untiring efforts for initiating the PG Course in Ornithology and Conservation Biology in SACON which was an unrealized mandate of SACON for the past 25 years and first of its kind in India. Dr. Ramakrishna suggested that SACON should take necessary steps to get the recognition of the National Biodiversity Authority of India to serve as a centre of Repositories for wildlife specimens including tissue and DNA material of birds as is being done by Zoological Survey of India and Botanical Survey of India under the Biodiversity Act.

Dr. K. Sankar, Director, SACON recorded his sincere thanks to the Chairman - RMAC, SACON, Members of the RMAC, Officials of the Forest Departments, Officials of the Airport Authority of India, scientists from various research organizations, faculty, researchers and post-graduate students of SACON for making the event a grand success.