



# SACON NEWS

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Sálim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History,  
South India Centre of Wildlife Institute of India,  
Anaikatty, Coimbatore - 641 108, Tamil Nadu, India.



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### ERRATUM

With reference to the popular article– "Nesting of *Calotes calotes* (Linnaeus 1758) in Anaikatti Forest Reserve" by Mr. Singh Gaurav Sanjay published on page 23 and 24 of the SACON News, Vol. 20 (1) January - March 2023, there was a missing citation in the last paragraph of the text on page 24.

The correct text is as follows:

"The present article describes the nesting behavior of *C. calotes* from Coimbatore, observed once on 28 January 2021 (Sayyed et al. 2021) and another on 27 February 2023 (In the present article)."

We apologize for any inconvenience this error may have caused.

Front Cover: Great Hornbill  
© Praphul G  
Design & Layout: Swaathi. Na





Director visiting SACON Facilities

## *Visit by Director, WII*

SACON was delighted to welcome Shri. Virendra R. Tiwari (Director, WII), Dr. S. Sathyakumar (Registrar, WII), and Dr. K. Ramesh (Scientist-F, WII) on 26 May 2023. During their first visit to SACON post-merger order of SACON with WII, DWII had detailed discussions with the Faculty, Administration & Finance Staff, and Research Scholars. They also inspected various facilities of SACON including the Ecotoxicology Laboratory, National Avian Forensics Laboratory, Wetland Laboratory, GIS Laboratory, EIACP Centre, Classrooms, and the Library.



Director interacting with SACONites during the visit





# *Superannuation of* **SACON Faculty**

## *Dr. S. Muralidharan*



Dr. S. Muralidharan embarked his journey at SACON, commencing as a Scientist in the Ecotoxicology division on 26 August 1992. His role as Senior Principal Scientist has been pivotal in advancing SACON's mission and fostering a culture of scientific excellence. With almost three decades of expertise, Dr. Muralidharan assumed the role of Director in charge on 06 March 2021, steering SACON towards remarkable achievements in research and conservation. Throughout his tenure, Dr. Muralidharan has been instrumental in furthering research initiatives, fostering collaborations, and nurturing talent within the organization. Dr. Muralidharan superannuated on 30 April 2023.

As Dr. Muralidharan gracefully transitions into the realm of retirement, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Muralidharan for his years of service and profound impact on SACON's legacy. His leadership and passion have left an indelible mark, inspiring future generations of scientists. As he embarks on a new chapter, we wish Dr. Muralidharan a fulfilling and rewarding retirement, knowing that his legacy will endure in the fabric of SACON's endeavors.





# Guest Lecture by Dr. John Innes

Dr. John Innes, FRBC Chair of Forest Management, Faculty of Forestry, University of British Columbia (UBC), Vancouver, Canada, visited SACON on 03 July 2023 and delivered a talk on "Old growth forests in British Columbia: preservation or harvest?". This was followed by his student Ms. Vaishali Vasudeva who spoke about her Master's internship work, "Terrestrial-aquatic continuum approach to assess linkages between ecological communities and riverscape health". This internship was carried out with UBC, WII, and SACON. Later they interacted with the students, researchers, faculty, Director, and Dean. The talks were arranged by SACON faculty Dr. Vidyadhar Atkore.







# *Guest Lecture by Dr. Trevor Price*

Celebrated evolutionary biologist and ornithologist, Dr. Trevor Price, Professor Emeritus, Dept. of Ecology and Evolution, University of Chicago, visited SACON on 04 July 2023 and delivered a guest lecture on "Biogeography of Himalayan Birds in Breeding and Wintering Ground: The importance of competition. Subsequently, he also interacted with SACON MSc Students, Researchers, and Faculty. The talk was organised by SACON faculty Dr. Ashutosh Singh.



# *PhD Open Defence & Viva Voce Examination*

*Ms. Swapna Devi Ray*

Research Scholar, Swapna Devi Ray's PhD Open Defence and Viva Voce Examination happened on 07 June 2023 at SACON. Her thesis was on Molecular Markers and Feather Microstructure of select traded Avian Species in Assam under the supervision of Dr. Ram Pratap Singh, Associate Professor & Head, Department of Life Science, Central University of South Bihar, Gaya, and co-supervision of Dr. P. Pramod, Senior Principal Scientist, SACON, Coimbatore.





# Independence Day Celebrations

The 77th anniversary of India's Independence Day was observed at SACON on 15 August 2023. Dr. P.R. Arun, Senior Principal Scientist, hoisted the flag and addressed the gathering. SACON Members, including scientists, faculty, researchers, and students, enthusiastically participated in the event.



# Health Check-up Camp

The Tamil Nadu Government and SACON organised a basic Health Check-up camp for SACON personnel and their families at SACON on 19 April 2023. Everyone at SACON made use of this opportunity and underwent a basic health assessment.







Mr. Ankit Moun delivering lecture on Otters



Mr. Praphul G. talking about Otters and wildlife trade

# *SACON Researchers & Faculty Invited to Deliver Guest Talks*

## *World Otter Day*

On the occasion of World Otter Day on 31 May 2023, SACON Researchers Mr. Ankit Moun and Mr. Praphul Gopal were invited to give a special lecture on otters, their ecology, and trade. The event was organised by the Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary, Chamrajanagar, Karnataka Forest Department.



Group Photo taken at the special lecture on World Otter Day held at Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary.





## Workshop on Himalayan Freshwaters

Dr. Vidyadhar Atkore, Scientist, Landscape Ecology division, was invited as a panel member in a one-day workshop on Himalayan Freshwaters: Assessing the services and vulnerability of Freshwater Ecosystems in the Himalayas, organised by the Department of Hydrology, Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee.

The workshop was conducted on 06 June 2023 under the project "Regional cooperation for Freshwater Ecosystem Services in Himalayas (REFRESH): Understanding the influence of monsoon variability and compound extremes". Dr. Vidyadhar was felicitated by Dr. Subodh Sharma, Professor at Kathmandu University, and Prof. Ashutosh Sharma, Dept. of Hydrology, IIT Roorkee.

SACON Researchers also presented posters on 'An eco-hydrological assessment of Ranganadi river, Arunachal Pradesh' by Atkore V, Mohammad Farhaan T, and Kavim D. and on 'Understanding the current fishing practices of three indigenous communities of Changlang and Lohit districts in Arunachal Pradesh' by Kavim D and Atkore V at the event.



Mr. Kavim D. being felicitated at the Himalayan Freshwaters Workshop



## Other Talks and Poster Presentations by Dr. Vidyadhar Atkore & Team

Date	Details
23 April 2023	As a part of Prayojan-Indian National Yonung Academy of Sciences (INYAS) Flagship event for Post PhD opportunities, Dr. Vidyadhar Atkore, delivered a talk on the Career opportunities in Environment, Forest and Wildlife Science
26 June 2023	Dr. Vidyadhar Atkore gave an online lecture to the MSc Wildlife Biology & Conservation Students of NCBS on Community ecology of stream fishes.
02 July 2023	Mr. Kavin D and Dr. Vidyadhar Atkore spoke about the Preliminary Freshwater Fish Fauna of Namdapha Tiger Reserve in Eastern Arunachal Pradesh at the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation (ATBC)
10-15 July 2023	Vaishali Vasudeva, Vidyadhar Atkore, John L. Innes, and Ramesh Krishnamurthy presented a poster on Exploring Multi-taxa based Ecological Indicators to Inform Riparian Integrity in a Tropical Watershed at the International Association for Landscape Ecology Conference, Nairobi, Kenya.
19 July 2023	As part of a three-day training program on Wetland conservation and Management in Tamil Nadu, Dr. Vidyadhar Atkore was invited to deliver a guest talk on the Significance of stakeholder participation in wetland management at the Tamil Nadu Forest Academy, Coimbatore.

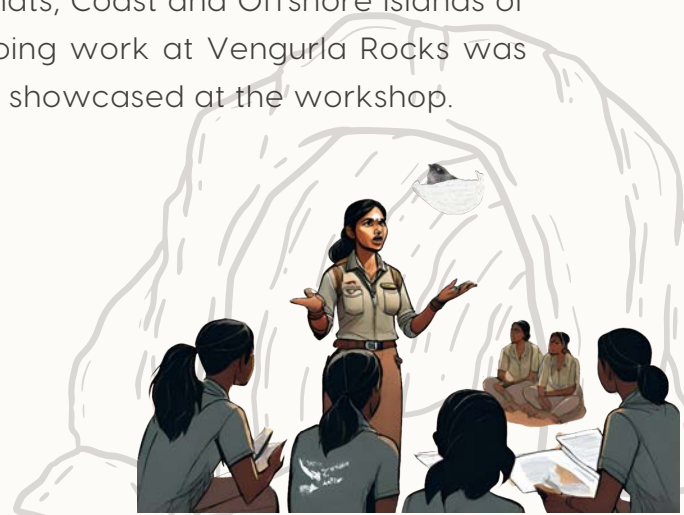




Ms. Dhanusha Kawalkar in the National Workshop at Vengurla

## National Workshop at Vengurla

A national workshop on Yamodari, Bonsai, and Suiseki was held at Vengurla on 15 and 16 July 2023. This workshop was organised by Vengurla Nagar Parishad, Vengurla, Kolhapur Bonsai Club, Kolhapur Gardens Club, South Asian Bonsai Federation (SABF), and Br. Balasaheb Khardekar College in Maharashtra. At this workshop, SACON research scholar, Ms. Dhanusha Kawalkar, spoke about speleology (study of caves) and presented her ongoing work on the Indian Swiftlet (*Aerodramus unicolor*) in the Western Ghats, Coast and Offshore Islands of Maharashtra. A short documentary on the ongoing work at Vengurla Rocks was made by Tarun Bharat, Mumbai, which was also showcased at the workshop.





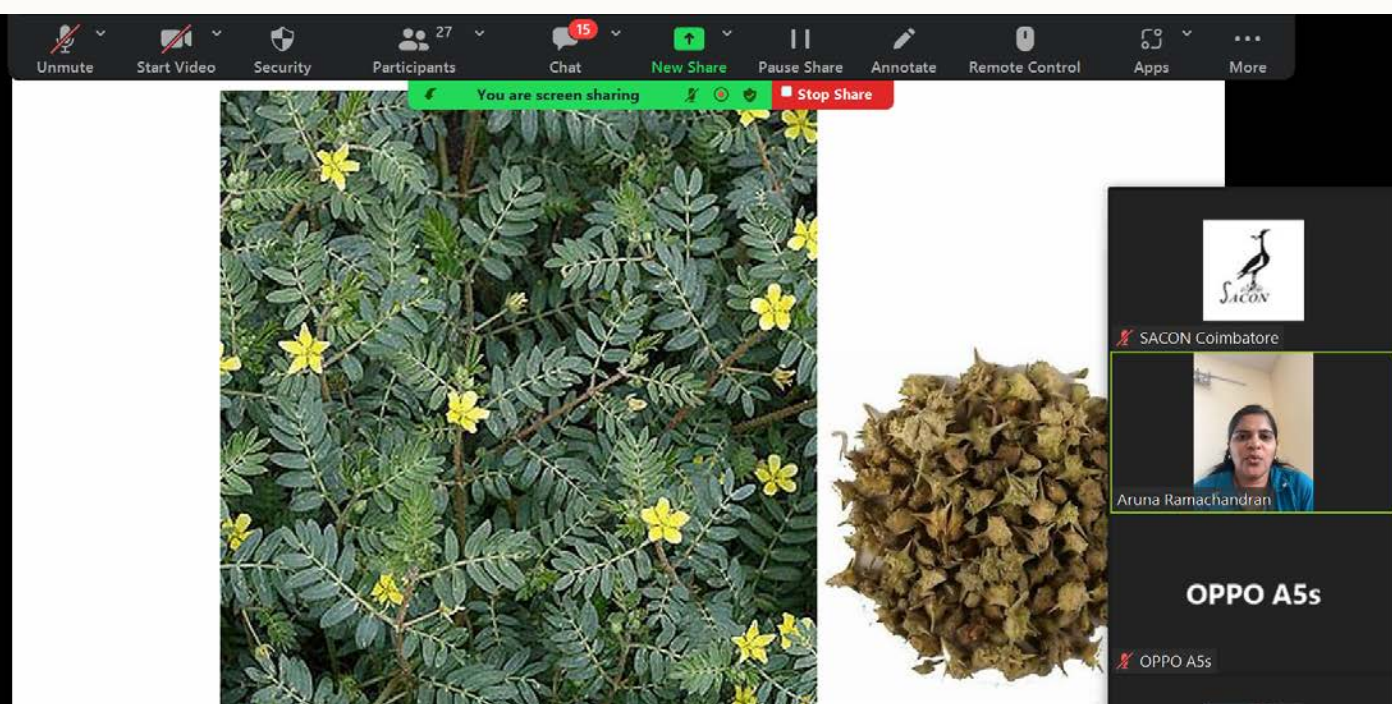
# *EIACP & Mission LiFE Activities*

As introduced by India's Prime Minister, Shri. Narendra Modi at COP26 in Glasgow, the Mission LiFE program strives to encourage individuals and communities to adopt a lifestyle that aligns harmoniously with nature without causing harm to it. Here are a few glimpses of the activities that the SACON EIACP (Environmental Information, Awareness, Capacity Building, and Livelihood Programme) team has conducted during April–September.

In Connection with Mission LiFE, a webinar was organised on the topic "Millets– Health and Nutritional Benefits", presented by Ms. Bindu Gouri, Faculty, Agri Business School for Women, ICAR-KVK, Coimbatore on 27 April 2023. The session highlighted the nutritional richness of millets and their potential in promoting healthier diets and sustainable agriculture.

## *Webinar on Health Care with Medicinal Plants*

A webinar on, "Health Care with Medicinal Plants", was organised in connection with Mission LiFE on 12 May 2023. The resource person, Dr. R. Aruna, Assistant Professor, PG and Research Department of Botany, Thiagarajar College, Madurai, highlighted the diverse applications of medicinal plants in healthcare, emphasizing their natural healing properties and holistic wellness benefits.





## *Virtual Debate Stage-I Youth Parliament Selection*

SACON EIACP hosted the Stage-I Virtual Debate of Youth Parliament on 11 May 2023 in connection with Mission LiFE. A total of eight students from different colleges in Coimbatore, Nagapattinam, and Tiruppur participated in this event. The students were asked to express their opinion for or against the theme, "Individual Behaviour and Habits Have an Impact on Environment and Climate Change", for two to three minutes followed by a group discussion/debate for 30 minutes. The Jury selected one best candidate based on the performance in individual and group discussion.



## *International Day for Biodiversity*

A short write-up competition was announced online on 15 May 2023 to celebrate the International Day for Biodiversity. Around 85 participants competed under three categories- Higher Secondary students and Undergraduates, Postgraduates, and Researchers. The theme for the competition was, "Wetland Biodiversity I have seen during my childhood and changes that I have observed now". The best three write-ups in all categories were selected and the winners were announced on 07 July 2023. They were awarded certificates and SACON souvenirs.



## *World Environment Day 2023*

On the occasion of World Environment Day 2023, SACON EIACP conducted an online Quiz Competition under Mission LiFE Campaign from 02 to 05 June 2023. Around 413 participants were tested on their basic knowledge of the environment and e-certificate was provided to the participants.

## *Van Mahotsav Week celebration*

SACON EIACP celebrated "Van Mahotsav" with the students and teachers of 2 schools, the Public Union Primary School, Pannapalli, Anaikatty, Coimbatore, on 03 July 2023, and KSK Vriiksham Kidz School, Kavundampalayam, Coimbatore on 04 July 2023. A painting competition was conducted and prizes were distributed among the winners. EIACP staff and teachers took the Mission LiFE pledge. Following that tree saplings were planted in both the school premises.

On 05 July 2023, Van Mahotsav was celebrated with the students and teachers of Government ITI, Anaikatty, Coimbatore. The EIACP team briefed about the importance of tree plantation and highlighted the 75 action points of Mission LiFE, following which tree saplings were planted on the institute premises.

## *International Day of Mangrove Ecosystem*

To commemorate the International Day of Conservation of Mangrove Ecosystem, a webinar on Birds of Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary was organised on 26 July 2023 by the SACON EIACP team in collaboration with M.D College, Mumbai. The talk was delivered by Dr. Goldin Quadros, Senior Scientist, Wetland Biology Division in which around 65 participants took part including SACON researchers, EIACP staff, students and staff of MD College participated.





## Save Wetlands campaign

In connection with Mission LiFE and Save Wetlands campaign, a series of webinars on various wetlands in India was organised by the team.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Speaker</i>
<i>22 May 2023</i>	Biodiversity Of Wetlands From Porbandar District, Gujarat	Dr. Dharval Vargiya, Programme Officer, Centre for Sustainable Conservation Action for Protection of Ecosystems of the seas. (C=SCAPES) An initiative of TATA chemicals.
<i>23 May 2023</i>	Urban Wetlands And Its Struggle For Survival - Case Study Of Panval And Kharghar	Ms. Jyothi Nadkarnai, Environmentalist, Social Worker and Home maker.
<i>24 May 2023</i>	World Heritage Dhamapur Lake - Challenges And Solutions	Mr. Sachin Desai, Founder Presidents, Syamantak University of Life, Malvan, Sindhudurg.
<i>31 May 2023</i>	Chicalim Bay Of Goa: An Eco-Fragile Estuarine Wetlands	Dr. Manoj Borkar, Head of Zoology Dept. Founder- Biodiversity Research Cell, Carmel College of Arts and Science and Commerce for Women, Goa.

As part of Mission LiFE and Save Wetlands campaign, SACON EIACP PC RP (Programme Centre-Resource Partner) organised a river clean-up drive to commemorate World Rivers Day 2023 which is celebrated annually on the 4th Sunday of September. The event was organised in collaboration with the Zoology Dept. of Bharathiyar University, Coimbatore on 22 September 2023. Around 150 volunteers participated in the drive and collected around 25 garbage bags of litter from the check dam inside the university campus and handed them over to Coimbatore corporation.





River clean-up drive done in collaboration with  
Bharathiyar University

## World Ozone Day

SACON EIACP PC RP conducted a mass awareness campaign on Mission LiFE and World Ozone Day 2023 on 14 and 15 September 2023. The team focused on primary school students for the visually impaired, colleges, govt. schools, fire and rescue station officers, and the general public in and around Coimbatore city. Seedball pen & pencil kit, pamphlets and awareness materials were distributed to the participants. The team successfully sensitized approximately 1000 students about the importance of protecting the ozone layer and the objectives of Mission LiFE.

List of Prominent Educational Institutions that participated:

- Government College of Technology, Coimbatore
- Bharathiar University, Coimbatore
- Kongunadu Arts & Science College, Coimbatore
- Kongunadu Nursing College, Thondamuthur
- Government Arts & Science College, Thondamuthur
- Government Primary School for visually impaired, Uliampalayam, Coimbatore
- Fire and Rescue station, Thondamuthur

An online webinar was also organised on this occasion. The resource person, Dr. Kirubanandhini delivered a talk on the topic titled, "Impact of Ozone Depletion and also Resilience" in regional language (Tamil), which witnessed nearly 70 participants. Additionally a poster depicting the harmful effects of Ozone Depletion was also created and shared with schools, colleges, general public, various other stakeholders and concerned social media platforms.





## Awareness Drives and Campaigns

As a component of the Mission LiFE campaign, SACON's EIACP team created a photo booth to evoke an interest in Mission LiFE and increase awareness among the audience. Shri. Chandra Prakash Goyal, IFS, DGF & Special Secretary, MoEFCC, Gol inaugurated the Mission LiFE photo booth on 02 September 2023. Shri. Virendra R. Tiwari, Director, WII, Dr. S. Sathyakumar, Registrar, WII, Dr. Kunnikannan, Director, IFGTB, SACON Faculty members, Researchers, and other Forest officials were present during the event.

SACON EIACP organised a Mission LiFE awareness drive at the Regional Science Centre, CIT College, Coimbatore junction targeting the general public, school children, and college students.



DGF inaugurating the Mission LiFE Photo Bhooth





EIACP team with students of Bharathiyar University

The SACON EIACP team conducted awareness sessions for the Government school students who took part in the Coimbatore Book Festival, for the faculties of Bharathiyar University, and for the students and staff of Govt. Higher Secondary School, Valparai. The team briefed A-Z Sustainable Lifestyle Practices and also disseminated the LiFE brochures, bookmarks, and EIACP Newsletters. In addition to this, an Elocution competition was also conducted for the students of Govt. Higher Secondary School, Valparai on the topic "Adapting Sustainable Practices in Day-to-day life" in which 250 members participated.

Mission LiFE awareness activities were also conducted for 131 students and 59 staff of Aditya Vidyashram Gurugram School, Coimbatore, who visited SACON as part of the Nature Education Programme from 21 to 23 August 2023. The team briefed about the lexicon of LiFE and disseminated the seedball pen & pencil kit and other Mission LiFE awareness materials to the students and staff.



Awareness Campaign at the Coimbatore Book Festival





# One-day Training Programme for TNFA Foresters

One-day training was given to 50 Foresters from Tamil Nadu Forest Academy on 10 August 2023. SACON faculty Dr. Manchi Shirish S, Dr. S. Babu, and Dr. Ashutosh Singh, Dr. K. Nambirajan, Project Scientist and Ms. Bhawani Sabat, Research Scholar, briefed them about SACON's research activities with specific sessions on Bird Identification and Forensics. They also visited SACON's Ecotoxicology and Avian Forensic laboratories. The EIACP team conducted Mission LIFE awareness session for the participants.

Ms. Bhawani Sabat explaining the forensic procedures to the Foresters





# Training Program for Indian Air Force Officers

SACON organized a comprehensive five-day National Training Programme aimed at enhancing the knowledge and skills of Indian Air Force Officers in the management of bird and wildlife hazards to aircraft. The event took place from 24 to 28 July 2023, coordinated by Dr. P. Pramod, Senior Principal Scientist and his project team.

The program commenced with an inaugural session, which provided insights into the significance of the training and its relevance to the Indian Air Force.



IAF officers birdwatching during field trips

Dr. K. Karunakaran delivering a technical lecture



The training featured informative technical sessions covering a range of topics. SACON's research activities and the problems associated with the study and management of bird/wildlife hazards to aircraft were introduced. Participants gained valuable knowledge on habitat factors, management strategies, and experiences from Indian Civil airfields in bird/wildlife hazards studies.





A field trip was organized for bird watching and identification, exposing the participants to diverse ecosystems. The team visited locations in Sholayur, the SACON campus, and Singanallur wetland areas, enhancing their practical understanding of bird behavior and habitats.

Additional technical sessions delved into the ecology of potential problematic species to aircraft, the status of bird/wildlife strikes in India, and best practices adopted globally. Experiences in bird/wildlife studies and management in defense airports were shared, alongside insights into technological advancements and ecological solutions, drawing on the experience of Bengaluru International Airport.

The program concluded with takeaways shared by Indian Air Force personnel, emphasizing the practical application of the knowledge gained. A valedictory session marked the end, where certificates were awarded to the participating IAF officers in recognition of their successful completion of the training.





# One-day Nature Awareness Program

One-day Nature Awareness Program was conducted by Nature Education and Extension Divisions for around 77 Students and seven staff from Sri Jayendra Saraswathi Vidyalaya in two batches on 12 and 13 April 2023. The students went on SACON's nature trail along with SACON faculty. During the excursion, students were taught to engage with nature using all their senses, allowing them to truly appreciate its unspoiled beauty and inspiring a sense of wonder within them. A group of 35 participants of the Faculty Induction Programme conducted by the UGC - Human Resource Development Centre, Bharathiar University visited SACON on 01 August 2023. These participants discussed nature and wildlife with Dr. P. Pramod, Senior Principal Scientist, and visited various SACON's facilities. They also attended a talk on 'Studies & Career in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation: an Indian perspective' given by Dr. Rajah Jayapal, Senior Principal Scientist of Ornithology Division.





सालिम अली पक्षिविज्ञान एवं प्रकृतिविज्ञान केन्द्र

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### *Editorial Board*

**Aditi Mukherjee, Manchi Shirish S., Vidyadhar Atkore & R. Jayakumar**

Views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Editors or the Sálim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History.

*To*

**April - September 2023**

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