

Project Update: December 2012

1. Workshop on challenges for conservation of freshwater biodiversity in India - science and policy

The Conservation Research Group (CRG) at St. Albert's College, Kochi in association with Zoo Outreach Organization (ZOO), Coimbatore and the recently established South Asia Office of the IUCN Freshwater Fish Specialist Group (IUCN-FFSG) organized a workshop on the 27-28 September 2012, to discuss, deliberate and develop suitable action plans and mechanisms to create awareness, as well as develop and implement conservation, management and policy actions for freshwater biodiversity conservation. Of special focus a session was devoted to the conservation of endemic fishes of Periyar Tiger Reserve. I gave a talk on Fishes of Periyar Tiger Reserve and Conservation Implications.

The Workshop was attended by leading researchers and wildlife managers, including the Deputy Director of Periyar Tiger Reserve, Mr. Sanjayan Kumar IFS, Dr. C. P. Shaji of Kerala State Biodiversity Board, Dr. Rajeev Raghavan, Co-Chair, IUCN- FFSG South Asia, Dr. Sanjay Molur, Executive Director, Zoo Out Reach Organization, Dr. M. Arunachalam, and Dr P.O. Nameer from College of Forestry, Kerala Agricultural University.

2. Fieldwork progress:

The data collection is being carried out with the support of the local community (who was oriented by the project team); a mass campaign against the exotics is planned with the support of the Forest Department.

The population of African catfish was found to be high in a canal that drains into the lake, and a mass programme will be organised in mid-January 2013 to remove all the exotics in that particular canal by netting them out. This was one of the major suggestions which came up from the workshop and Forest Department of Kerala assured full support.