## Project Update: February 2018

This phase of my project aimed at -

- 1. Studying the pest control efficiency of herpetofauna by experimentation based on field realistic data and disseminating the results to farming community.
- 2. Raising awareness among the community about conflict in agricultural landscape and highlighting the importance of herpetofauna as a biological pest control.
- 3. Pesticide residue analyses.

## Stage in progress

- A. For the experiment, we could not execute the fieldwork for some unforeseen field hazards and also the season for paddy was near to an end, so the time was less for the entire work plan to be executed.
- B. We also had to change our experimental methodology making it more feasible and realistic.
- C. Construction of enclosures is almost near to an end we are expecting to start the experiment by April of 2018.

## Conflict and Awareness

We have very successfully arranged a farmers meet in our experimental garden which also involved some students and others who are involved in farming in the area.

Detailed Report of Farmers' Awareness Camp

The response that we got from the farming community from our previous surveys that involved a huge number of 360 farmers across 32 villages, it showed that almost 78% of these farmers were aware of herpetofaunal use as a biological pest control and they are also aware of harming them. But this unprecedented killing were mostly driven out of fear and not knowing the difference between the harmful snakes and those that are actually harmless.

In contrast to this there was also another aspect that is to a large extent related to conservation and this was their religious faith where some snakes are revered as god in these areas and are thus not harmed that leads to having these reptiles rather conserved in their fields.

This scenario led us introduce another perspective to their beliefs and reaction - this was to make them aware of the importance of having reptiles and amphibians in their field from ecological and scientific perspectives so that not only specific species of reptiles but the whole group is conserved.

The agenda of the awareness camp was-

- 1. To bring to their notice the negative impacts of extending agricultural lands
  - a) Deforestation.
  - b) Increase in conflict.
  - c) Increase of Pesticide Input.

Context- the rate at which forests are cleared for increase in agriculture which forces the animals to come to come close to human settlement and eventually increasing human-animal conflict resulting in relentless killing. We displayed a video to bring out the nature of conflict that the reptiles face in an agricultural landscape.

- 2. The major negative effects of pesticide input
  - a) Soil health.
  - b) Crop nutrient loss.
  - c) Loss of biological diversity of which these bio controlling agents form a major part.

3. Identifying some important and common reptiles and amphibian in an agricultural landscape.

- 4. Types of pest- mammals and insects
- 5. When is an agent claimed to be a pest and when to control it and in this context how can we use the bio control agents
- 6. The ways pests could be controlled
  - a. By trapping.
  - b. By pesticides.
  - c. By biological control special reference to reptiles and amphibians.

Describing the positive and negative aspects of each

- 7. How do pesticides effect these bio controlling agents of which reptiles and amphibians form a major part
- 8. How do amphibians and reptiles work as environmental indicators?
- 9. The camp ended with distributing pamphlets to the farmers with information regarding the topics we discussed and a farmers' interaction session.

We tried to involve not only the farmers from the villages but also those who were workers in the Baruipur farm and some Master's degree students also some who are studying agro-ecology.



Fig.1 session: "conservation status and service provided by herpetofauna in an agricultural landscape"



Fig. 2 Negative effects increase in agricultural lands



Fig. 3 Explaining the rate of deforestation



Fig. 4 When is a biological agent called a pest and when to control its growth



Fig. 5 Methods for pest control- explaining different trapping methods

	কীট নাশকের খারাপ প্রভাব
6	• কীট নাশক শুধুয়ে অপকারি কীট পত্তঙ্গ কে নষ্ট করে তা নয়- • এছারাও আর অনেক স্থতিকারক প্রভাব আছে –
	মাটার সাত লট্ট হয় হয় হয় উপকারি জীব অন্তন ক্ষতি

Fig. 6 Negative effects of pesticide



Fig. 7 Showing photographs of some common snakes and amphibians found in agricultural fields



Fig. 8 Some bio-controlling agent

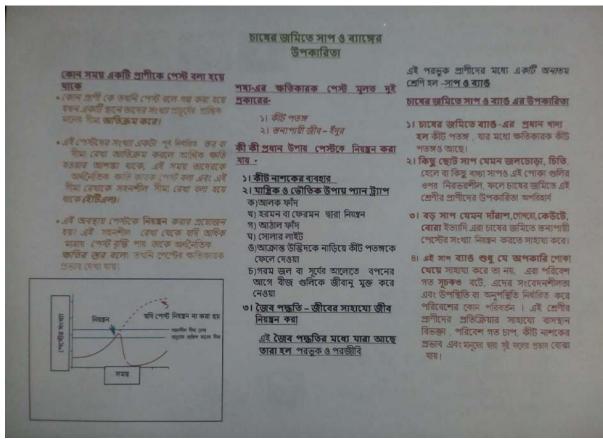


Fig. 9 Herpetofauna as a biocontrol



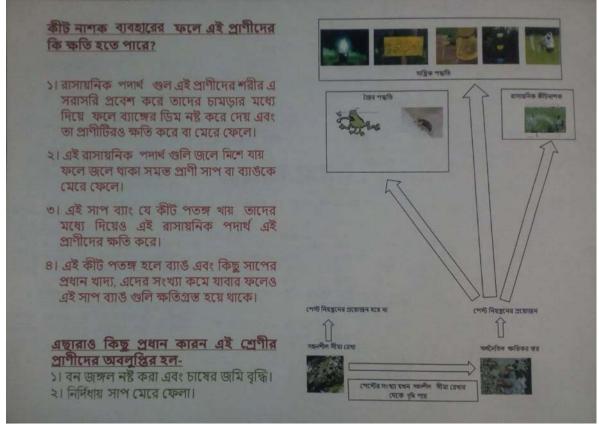
Fig. 10 Bridging the gap: how and where herpetofauna are important for agriculture

## Pamphlet distributed to the farmers



Content-

- I. When to call an agent a pest.
- II. Types of pests.
- III. Ways of pest controlling.
- IV. Utility of herpetofauna in agricultural lands.



Content-

- I. Harmful effects of pesticides on amphibians and reptiles.
- II. Other threats to herpetofauna.
- III. Diagrammatic representation of pest attack and pest control scenario.