

Project Update: June 2015

We are done with all initial surveys, with comprehensive lists of the avian, amphibian, reptilian and mammalian fauna of the laterite grasslands of south coastal Karnataka. We intend on publishing some of our findings soon. Our camera trap exercises were fruitful, and we were able to prove the presence of a breeding population of leopards in the region. The presence of an apex predator helps our case in taking forward the applications to notify at least some area as a biodiversity heritage area which is our next move.

The awareness outreach program has been working well. We have so far reached out to approximately 2300 school students (across 30 schools) and approximately 1000 college students through various internship programmes, workshops, events, etc. We have also presented and delivered sessions at local organisations such as The Lions' Club, The Rotary Club, AIESEC etc. The schools have been shut for their vacations from April-June so we will get better outreach by end of August 2015.

We have worked on two short films (links below) with teams of media students from local colleges which have been shown at various platforms - social media, regional events, school workshops, etc. There will also be a special section for laterite-based conservation in the next Handbook to Birders for Manipal.

Media representation has been good with our work and reports about the documentary has been published in four Kannada dailies and three English dailies in the region.

We have started a backyard frogging programme where local estate owners and farmers who have microhabitats exhibiting high abundance and richness in frogs on their lands are made aware of this and some have agreed to guided tours in their backyards, the earnings from which go back to the households or nearby schools, on the condition that the habitat remains intact.

Lastly, I have been conferred with the prestigious Carl Zeiss Wildlife Conservation Award this year for our work in the laterite landscapes in southern coastal Karnataka.

Links:

Link 1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQ2p21J_dw0

Link 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ptrTPu4nrqg>

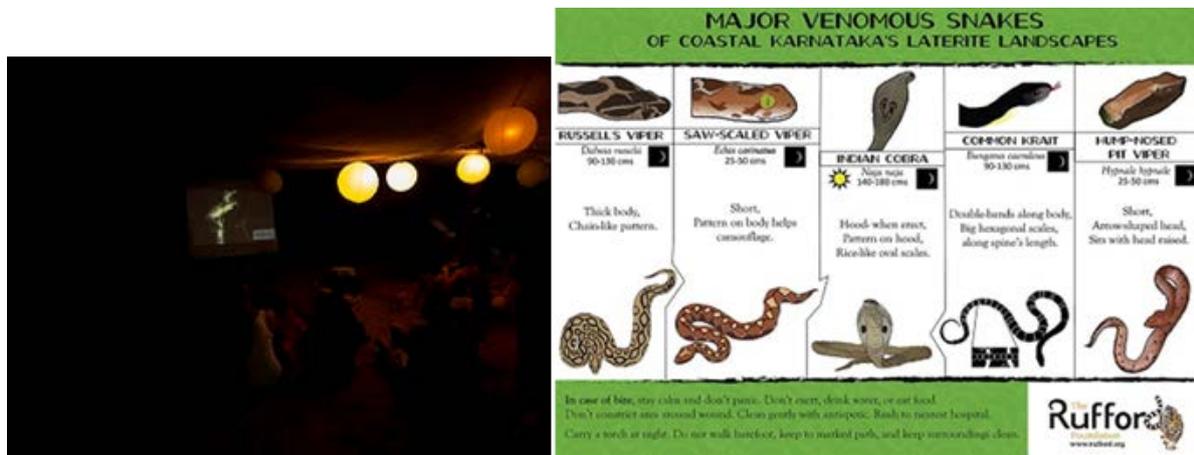
I forgot to add - we used audio as well as visual encounter surveys for amphibians and our frog recordings from those surveys have been published as part of a CD - Mandookavani, the first acoustic guide to the frogs of peninsular India. I will send images of the same in a few days.

<http://gubbilabs.in/mandookavani>

Meanwhile, PFA the following images:



1. Leopard mother and cub captured in a camera trap. 2. Presentation and recognition of the project at the Zeiss Conservation Awards Ceremony 2015.



3. Screening and presentation of the short films at Beach Movie Night - a small regional film festival. 4. A poster that has been put in various shops, offices, schools with information about the 5 venomous snakes of the region to prevent unnecessary panic and attacks on snakes.