



Biodiversity Chronicle

Quarterly e-Newsletter

West Bengal Biodiversity Board



Biodiversity Heritage Sites
Page 4



State Level Photography Competition
Page 3



State Level Poster Drawing Competition
Page 3

Nature Study at Chilapata Forest
Page 3



First Year 🌿 Third Issue 🌿 July-September 2025



Celebrating International Day for Biodiversity 2025

The West Bengal Biodiversity Board (WBBD) celebrated the International Day for Biodiversity (IDB) 2025 on 22nd May, 2025 at Biswa Bangla Convention Centre, Kolkata. Theme of this year was “Harmony with Nature and Sustainable Development,” aligned with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the Sustainable Development Goals. Over 700 participants— including students, BMC members, NGOs, officials, and biodiversity enthusiasts— joined the grand event.

The programme was graced by Mrs. Chandrima Bhattacharya,

Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge), Dept. of Environment, Govt. of West Bengal; Smt. Roshni Sen, IAS, Addl. Chief Secretary, Dept. of Environment, Govt. of West Bengal; Dr. Kalyan Rudra, Chairman, West Bengal Pollution Control Board; Smt. Sharmistha Das, IAS, Secretary & Managing Director, BENFISH, Govt. of West Bengal; Shri Dharmdeo Rai, IFS, Chief Environment Officer, Dept. of Environment, Govt. of West Bengal; and Shri Swapnamoy Chakraborty, Bengali Littéra-

teur. Besides, the Chairman of the West Bengal Biodiversity Board Dr. Himadri Sekhar Debnath and Member Secretary Mrs. Tripti Sah, IFS were also present. Dignitaries inaugurated the programme by watering a Tulsi plant— a symbol of nature's sacredness.

Welcoming all, Mrs. Tripti Sah emphasized the need of conserving biodiversity for our sustenance. She highlighted that conservation of biodiversity is not just the government's role but a shared duty of every citizen.

contd. pg.-2

Biodiversity Award 2025

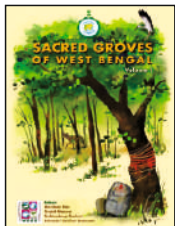
Like previous years, Biodiversity Award 2025 was conferred, on the occasion of International Day for Biodiversity 2025, to Shri Somnath Das Adhikary and Pochak Spring Management Society in recognition of their exceptional contribution towards the conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity.



Sri Somnath Das Adhikari of Purba Medinipur has been maintaining more than 4 bighas of his own property for wild plants and animals. The unique assemblage of more than 250 species of trees, shrubs, herbs and climbing plants provides shelter of diverse animal groups. Besides, he is tirelessly trying to

contd. pg.-4

New Publications of the Board



Sacred Groves of West Bengal, Vol. I – The classic example of Nature Conservation by the ethnic communities through

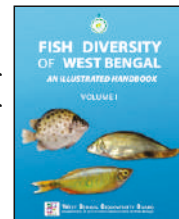
socio-cultural and religious tradition is the Sacred Groves—the fragmented wild patches and mostly age-old forest remnants. These ‘local biodiversity hot-

spots’ with unique vegetational architecture are not only abode to the mosaic life forms including threatened ones, but provide great ecological services like carbon sequestration, pollination, nutrient cycling, soil conservation, etc. to the human society. The dots of sacred groves in the vast geographical terrain of West Bengal, from Himalayan region to coastal plains, are indeed the reservoir of veritable gene pool. The present

volume contains the sacred groves of three districts of the state covering parts of Gangetic and coastal plains: Purba Medinipur, Howrah and North 24 Parganas. The details of each sacred grove focusing on the history, biodiversity, threats and traditional management practices are neatly sketched in this volume.

Fish Diversity of West Bengal: An Illustrated Handbook Vol. I—

This book documents the diversity of fishes of eleven districts of the state along with the availability of these species and threats towards those. Brief description & photographs have added value to this. It serves as a valuable reference for future monitoring and conservation of fish faunal diversity of the state.



Chairman's Desk

In today's world, living in harmony with nature and embracing sustainable development are essential for our future. Facing challenges like climate change, environmental degradation, and resource depletion highlights the urgency of re-evaluating our relationship with the planet. We must adopt practices that prioritize both human well-being and ecological health.

Living in harmony with nature involves understanding the interconnectedness of all living beings and ecosystems. It means respecting natural limits, protecting biodiversity, and reducing our ecological footprint. This philosophy encourages us to develop sustainably—balancing economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection. Sustainable development aims to meet present needs without compromising future generations' ability to do the same.

Key principles include transitioning to renewable energy sources such as solar and wind, promoting sustainable agriculture practices like organic farming, conserving natural resources, and managing waste effectively through recycling and composting. Encouraging responsible consumption and eco-friendly products further minimizes our environmental impact.

The benefits of aligning with nature and practicing sustainability are profound. They include conserving the environment, protecting biodiversity, and combating climate change. Economically, sustainable practices create jobs and foster innovation. Socially, they improve health and quality of life while promoting fairness across communities. Most importantly, they ensure that future generations inherit a healthy, thriving planet.

In conclusion, harmony with nature and sustainable development are vital for a sustainable future. By working collectively to conserve resources and adopt eco-friendly practices, we can build a world that is equitable, prosperous, and environmentally resilient for generations to come.

Dr. Himadri Sekhar Debnath



...Celebrating IDB 2025

Dr. Himadri Sekhar Debnath spoke about the critical role of nature in sustaining life and the dangers of overusing natural resources. Stressing sustainable development, he shared the activities and achievements of the Board towards conservation of biodiversity of the state.



Smt. Roshni Sen urged everyone to act against biodiversity loss and promote sustainability. She announced the launch of a flag-ship outlet in Salt Lake for traditional crop varieties under the Department's patronage.



Dr. Kalyan Rudra expressed concern on impact of over population on natural resources and biodiversity, noting a 73% global decline in wildlife since the 1970s. He emphasized

the need to reassess our environmental values and take immediate action.



Shri Swapnamoy Chakraborty highlighted the interconnectedness of all species and how even minor ecological disruptions can have large impacts. He called for urgent action to check human greed and conserve biodiversity for future generations.



Mrs. Chandrima Bhattacharya, appreciating Board's initiatives, emphasized the importance of undertaking awareness programmes continuously. She proposed collaborations with other departments to integrate conservation with sustainable community development.

Exhibition-cum-Sale counter of traditional varieties of rice



An Exhibition-cum-Sale counter of traditional varieties of rice was also installed. The farmers from different districts of the state were present with their traditional varieties of rice and other produces developed with the support from the State Biodiversity Board and Calcutta University.



Documentary Screening



A documentary titled 'Bangla Praner Gourabe' was screened during the ceremony of IDB, featuring the 10 notified Biodiversity Heritage Sites of the state. The documentary provides a detailed overview of these sites, highlighting their unique eco-systems and rich biodiversity, which includes a number of threatened species.



YouTube Link : https://youtu.be/HpY_r8z9Alg

Editor's Column

Its July and monsoon has arrived in its full glory. The burgeoning monsoon rains bring relief from the scorching summer heat and transform Mother Earth into a green paradise. This rejuvenating season typically lasts from June to September in Bengal.



Monsoon's advent is marked by Van Mahotsav, with plantation drives nationwide and environmental conservation efforts like the distribution of seedlings and awareness generation programmes on conservation and sustainability. These plantations gain more significance during monsoons as the rain provides the ideal conditions for successfully raising trees.

Nowadays, there is an emphasis on planting indigenous species in forest lands such as Sal, Bahera, Hartaki, Peal, Kusum, Neem, Kendu, Mahua, Jackfruit, Jamun, Aswatha among others. Planting native species support local biodiversity as they provide shelter and food to birds, insects and animals, and being adapted to the local environment, are low maintenance, while also holding cultural significance for some communities.

Today, one can't be solely dependent on the government for taking up plantations. Public involvement is an important part of this initiative. Planting Neem, Tabebuia, Banyan, Jamun, Imli, Arjun etc along roads provides shade and keeps the area cool. Along with fruit trees these can be planted on community lands in villages and cities. In fact one can even contribute to the cause this monsoon by planting species such as Mango, Guava, Lemon, Safeda, Shiuli, Tagar etc in their homes.

Happy planting this monsoon.

Mrs. Tripti Sah, IFS
Member Secretary

State Level Photography Competition

On celebration of the International Day for Biodiversity 2025, the Board organized a state-level photography competition on the theme “Biodiversity for Life” to generate awareness about biodiversity and its significance.



1st Position: Subhankar Bardhan (Cooch Behar)



2nd Position: Kishore Das (South 24 Parganas)



3rd Position: Susayan Das (Murshidabad)

State Level Poster Drawing Competition

As a part of the celebration of International Day for Biodiversity 2025, the Board organized state-level poster drawing competition on the theme “Love to Nature” across the state for school students of Classes VIII to XII.



1st Position: Aritra Biswas
Ramnagar High School, Murshidabad



2nd Position: Anirudra Maity
Sri Ramkrishna Sikshalaya, Howrah



3rd Position: Dishita Ghorai
JKN Vidya-bhaban (HS), Paschim Med.

Publications of the Board



Interested persons are requested to enquire:
West Bengal Biodiversity Board
Contact No.: 033 2335 2731
Email: biodiversity.wbbb@gmail.com

Activity Based Students' Awareness

Nature Study at Kaikhali, South 24 Pgs.

A 3-Days Nature Study Camp was conducted from 26th to 28th April, 2025 at Kaikhali, South 24 Parganas, exclusively for the fifty students from six girls' schools of South 24 Parganas district. The majority of the participating students came from marginalized sections of society. The location was ecologically rich and sensitive Sundarbans mangrove region. The camp was organized by Science Communicators' Forum (SCF) in collaboration with



Indian National Science Academy (INSA), Samagra Shiksha Mission (SSM), Kolkata, Sri Ramkrishna Ashrama, Nimpith, Rotary Club of Calcutta Jadavpur, Deenabandhu Trust & Kultali Govt. Model School. This camp was more than just an educational excursion— it was a transformative experience. The students gained a living understanding of both nature's wonder and its vulnerability. The programme was technically and financially supported by the Board.

Nature Study at Chilapata, Alipurduar

A three-day Nature Study Camp was successfully organized from 18th to 20th April 2025 at the Chilapata Tent House in Alipurduar district. The event brought together fifty enthusiastic school students representing fifteen schools of Cooch Behar. The camp was jointly organized by the NGO Cooch Behar Anasrishti of Cooch Behar district and West Bengal Biodiversity Board. Throughout the camp, participants engaged in a



variety of activities, including guided treks through the nature. These treks, led by biodiversity experts, allowing students to observe and identify a wide range of avian and insect species native to the area. The camp concluded with a series of interactive events such as an experience-sharing session, a quiz competition on biodiversity and conservation, and a sit-and-draw competition that allowed students to express their connection with nature creatively.

Biodiversity Heritage Site (BHS) : Amkhoi Wood Fossil Park



Amkhoi wood fossil Park is located near Illambazar of Birbhum district. This area is the part of the Rajmahal trap of Gondwana land. The present landscape of the area is the outcome of various geomorphological evolution. This undulated lateritic plateau consisting of different forms of iron ore like Magnetite, Limonite, Haematite, etc. entails the evidence of pre-Jurassic period. The wood fossil also explains the change in Paleo environment at the world especially the ecosystem and biodiversity due to climate change over the time. This area was covered by large deciduous

or semideciduous forest during the late Miocene. The large forest was transformed into a paleo-forest with wood fossils due to change in the climate of the period. The moist environment of the area with heavy rainfall transformed to dry conditions facilitating to develop dry deciduous forest.

Amkhoi wood fossil park covers an area about 10 ha where most of such fossils are deposited forming a fossil bed. Forest Department of the Govt. of West Bengal has taken a special initiative to develop a wood fossil park in this fossil bed displaying the collected fossils

of this area. The park is a part of Sal Forest; it nurtures the plants like Mohua (*Madhuca longifolia*), Piyal (*Buchanania lanzan*), Kend (*Diospyros melanoxylon*), Bohera (*Terminalia bellirica*), Haritaki (*Terminalia chebula*) etc., along with many other medicinal plants. This area also harbours the habitats of fox, jungle cat, grey wolf, wild hare, different species of bat, snakes, lizards and birds. Several of them are under the schedule of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (amended as on date).

This site has been declared as BHS to safeguard and conserve the fossil bed, local age-old trees and associated fauna.

...Biodiversity Award 2025

make people aware of biodiversity and its importance.

Pochak Spring Management Committee, with the support from a local NGO PRASARI, rejuvenated 17 springs in Darjeeling and Kalimpong Districts involving the communities, particularly the women. A



Yashoda Thakuri



Margrate Lepcha

number of such springs are under the restoration program. Smt. Yashoda Thakuri and Smt. Margrate Lepcha received the award on behalf of the Pochak Spring Management Committee, Girdabing, Kalimpong.

Biodiversity in rituals and festivals: Conservation ethics

Bipad Tarini Puja, is a traditional worship ritual practiced primarily in West Bengal, dedicated to the goddess Bipad Tarini— Savior from Perils. The name itself reflects the belief in the goddess as a protector from unforeseen calamities, whether natural, personal, or societal. This puja is particularly observed by families and communities seeking relief from distress, health crises, and other adversities.

The puja is centered around Goddess Bipad Tarini, a form of Shakti (the divine feminine energy). She is considered an embodiment of protection and salvation, invoked during times

of personal or collective challenges.

West Bengal's traditional rituals, including Bipad Tarini Puja, highlight a deep connection with nature. The use of natural components is both symbolic and ecological: Flowers such as

hibiscus, lotus, and marigold are essential offerings, symbolizing beauty, devotion, and purity. They are often sourced locally. Seasonal fruits like bananas, coconuts, and mangoes are used as offerings, representing nourishment and abundance. Mango and betel leaves are



integral, representing purity and auspiciousness. Earthen diyas (lamps) and pots are used extensively, promoting the traditional craft and sustainable practices. Natural organic elements like turmeric, vermillion, rice, and mustard oil are used, reflecting an eco-friendly approach.

By incorporating biodegradable and eco-friendly materials, these rituals minimize environmental harm. The practices also reflect a respect for natural cycles, as many components are seasonal and locally sourced.

The puja fosters communal harmony, as neighbors and families come together to prepare for and celebrate the rituals. Women often play a central role in organizing the puja, preparing offerings, and decorating the altar.

Bipad Tarini Puja is not just a religious observance but also a reflection of West Bengal's cultural ethos, deeply rooted in the principles of sustainability and respect for nature. The incorporation of natural components in the rituals highlights a timeless connection between spirituality and the environment.

■ Dr. Himadri Sekhar Debnath