

Nocturnal visitors around Gothra campus

Gothra campus was established as a result of Gothra mission, the mission established by KVASU- centre for wildlife studies department of Kerala veterinary and Animal Science University ,Pookode, Wayanad for participating and empowerment of tribal communities and welfare. The area around campus is a perfect ecological spot , surrounded by evergreen hill tops Attipara , Mullanpara. The campus is home to wide variety of birds , reptiles , Amphibians and mammal species . the campus consist of two artificially constructed pond habitat , which is a home to several fish and frog species , the pond habitat also attracts aquatic birds. The centre has landscape with attractive vegetation home for several insects, skinks, geckos , snakes ,frogs , the area is also perfect key spot for herping and birding.

In night , the atmosphere around campus gives us horrific and mystic experience ,with presence of moonlight the nature becomes more transparent . The rustling of leaves in cold breeze, call of nightjars , hooting of owls, croaking sounds of frogs , crying sound of geckos , buzz of cicadas, bleats of sambar deer and howling of dogs. All those scenari reminds us nostalgic grandmother stories of ‘Yakshis ’ and ‘Gandharvas’. The animals we encountered during herping at night in campus are:-

Bicolored Malabar frog



Bicoloured Malabar frog from campus ground

Our mission was to find Shield tail snakes , but instead we found some other frogs and snakes species , when we first observed bicolored frog , we found out that the skin of this frog species are moist, they have large rounded eyes, upper half has an yellowish tinge and lower abdomen is dark in colour , there are black stripes around eyes. Many people mistake it for a toad due to its genetic design. According to IUCN red list this species is near threatened . This species are terrestrial frogs , even they have webbed feet , they prefer water bodies only for breeding purpose, During mating their skin colour changes to a reddish colour. They often prefer, ever green, semi evergreen and deciduous forests.

Brahminy blind snake



Brahminy blind snake , we found it under leaf litters around college campus

Brahminy blind snake is one of the world’s smallest snake species found in Africa and Asia , it has shiny black colour and worm like body, many people mistake it for a caecilian. We found it under a mixture of detritus and leaf litters. She was very shy when we tried to took her photo. Brahminy blinds are non- venomous and they oftenly feeds on termites , small insects and their larvae. According to IUCN their conservatory status is least concern.

Olive forest snake



Olive forest snake , our team found it in a small stream during herping

Olive forest snake is a snake species that is endemic to India, This snake species is extremely rare . it has a pale olive green vibrant colour with black spots like pattern , they have small eyes and poor vision .Head and body has same shape (cylindrical) ,When we took he was very calm and feels like he has friendly attitude towards us, he gives us perfect pose for photography , after taking photos ,we released him back to water. Olive forest snakes are non venomous , they often feeds on small aquatic animals like tadpoles and small fishes, frogs etc... IUCN conservatory of olive forest snake is least concern.

Indian golden backed frog



Indian golden backed frog , sitting in rookbeside a stream near campus

Indian golden backed frog , small sized elegant looking amphibian, they sizes between 2.5 cm to 35 cm in length. It has a vibrant golden colour , they have larger tympanum , anterior portion is bordered by yellowish orange margin .eyes ,tympanum and snout are present in this lining , IUCN status of this frog species is near threatened . They commonly lives in ever green forests , swamps and wetlands. Their call is distinct from other frogs , which sounds to like that of whistles , can be heard during rainy seasons. This species provides an important benefits to ecosystem by controlling pest and it also act as an indicator species . They commonly resides near ponds , streams and brooks.

Malabar vine snake



handling a Malabar vine snake from thorny bushes.

Malabar vine snake is one of the snake species that is endemic to Southern portion of central western ghats . We found him in Mullanpara area near our Campus, when we approached him he was sleeping in thorny bushes. the snake was very beautiful , shiny light green in colour, with white pattern , it has long elongated slim body with triangular head ,their eyes are capable of binocular vision, they have key hole shaped pupils . This snake species belongs to Coloubridae , that is family of “rear fanged” snakes . Malabar vine snake is mildly venomous , their venom is often used to makes medicines for humans. They often feeds on small amphibians, tree lizards etc.. when we tried to handle him he was very aggressive , start hissing towards us , Due to his stress , we released him back into bush, conservatory status for this species is not known.

Oriental garden snake



Oriental garden lizard sleeping in a bush in Mullanpara area

Oriental garden lizard, commonly known as Indian garden lizard, light brownish olive colour, this guy was juvenile, at juvenile stage it is difficult to determine sex of this species, when we approached it, it was sleeping , they normally use Vander walls force of attraction to hung from trees or bushes to sleep, they have little spines around body, they are capable of changing skin colour as defensive mechanism , during adult stage males head becomes a distinctive red in colour, they often feeds on small insects, According IUCN status this lizard is least concern.

