

Celebration of the Year of the Frog, 2008 in Guwahati, Assam

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A strategy is indeed necessary for planning and carrying out species assessments in order to save species from extinction. The Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG), the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA), and the IUCN Amphibian Specialist Group (ASG), globally and the Zoo Outreach Organisation and Amphibian Network of South Asia, (ANSA) etc. regionally have taken active role to help keep threatened amphibian species afloat. As a part of the 2008 year of frog, it has become very important to contribute our part to save our irreplaceable amphibians. This group of animals matters so much in our ecosystems because of the role played from being both predator eating away the pesky bugs and pests and as prey for some other animals. Their utility in medical research for testing new drugs and moreover the sensitive skin which soaks up harmful substances in the environment which can threaten human beings. Also, they are notable as nature's indicators providing an early warning system for environmental troubles. In short they are the first kind of animals to be affected by problems in the environment.

In connection with Year of the Frog YOTF in 2008 lectures were arranged at Institute of Advanced Study in Science and Technology (IASST) by eminent amphibian specialists for popularization of the study amongst researchers of other subjects and the general public. As a part of the celebration of the Year of the Frog YOTF in different parts of the country, the IASST, Paschim Boragaon, Guwahati in Assam, a leading institute involved in exploration and study of biodiversity in the North Eastern region of India, initiated the celebration with a talk by Prof. Annemarie Ohler, Professor and Curator of Reptiles & Amphibians, Museum National D'Histoire Naturelle, Paris, who is one of the leading amphibian taxonomists of the world.

The first talk was arranged on 9th January, 2008. The title of her presentation was Studies on Frogs. Prof. Ohler covered a wide range of topics viz. systematics and taxonomy of Asian and African amphibians, behaviour of amphibians and nomenclature, methodologies used in taxonomy, ecology, distribution and breeding behaviour of selected species of frogs. Each of these were dealt with at length.

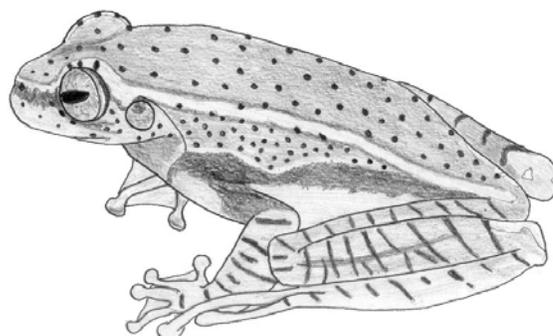
The talk was an eye opener for many of the young researchers of the Institute. All the research scholars and faculty members of different Divisions attended the talk. Prof. Ohler stressed the importance of amphibian study and the steps to be taken for conservation of the amphibian species. The research scholars and the faculty members enthusiastically interacted with Prof. Ohler and benefitted from the experience and knowledge shared by the expert taxonomist.

Next in the series of lectures for popularizing amphibian study was organized on 5th June, 2008 at IASST auditorium. The primary objective of the celebration is to create awareness among students and researchers about the importance of amphibians which are the excellent indicators of environmental stresses. First lecture was delivered by Prof. Annemarie Ohler on Frog Diversity and Conservation.

The programme started with an illustrated slide show on Frog Diversity and Conservation. by Prof. A. Ohler. Second lecture on same day was delivered by Dr. Stephan Grosjean, Post Doctoral scholar and an expert on tadpole studies from Museum National D'Histoire Naturelle, Paris, France.

The title of the topic was Tadpoles and Taxonomy. The research scholars and faculties learned their significance in the environment. It was an interesting experience for the participants exchanging their views. Discussions expressed then good feelings about the lecture session which was arranged as a part of the Year of Frog celebration 2008.

As a part of popularization and creating awareness among the scientific community a keynote address was given in the National U.G.C. sponsored National seminar on Recent Trends in Biodiversity: Exploitation, conservation and management held at Gargaon College, Sivasagar, Assam. The talk was arranged on 15th November 2008 by Dr. Sabitra Choudhury Bordoloi, Associate professor and Head, Resource Management and Environment Division, IASST on Study of Amphibian Biodiversity, environmental degradation and loss of habitat. The talk was delivered in Gargaon College from where the new species *Rhacophorus suffry* has been described in 2007.



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