

Study on tarantulas of Uttara Kannada district, Karnataka and adjoining areas in Goa

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The study was carried out to understand the status of ground burrowing tarantulas, *Thrigmopoeus truculentus*, *T. insignis* and *Chilobrachys fimbriatus* in Castle Rock, Karnataka and adjacent areas like Mollem WLS and Cotigao WLS in Goa. There had been informal reports of theraphosid spiders being collected for pet-trade from these areas. During the study I did not come across any direct evidence of collection of these spiders for pet trade. Moreover, local people were also not aware of any collection of these large-bodied spiders by foreigner or locals for pet-trade. This could be due to various reasons like Castle Rock area supports Reserve Forest and monitoring is not very strict due to large area and lack of staffs; collection is not at regular basis and the visit did not coincide with time of pet trader's visit; collection may be taking place from outside the Protected Area and therefore not being noticed so far.

In all the three sites the distribution of theraphosid spiders was patchy. In Castle Rock, there were two sites where theraphosid spiders (*Thrigmopoeus truculentus*, *T. insignis* and *Chilobrachys fimbriatus*) were found in high density. These two sites are ideal to be named 'tarantula ghats' due to high number of theraphosid burrow congregations. A recommendation to forest department will be made to give special emphasis for conservation of these two patches where

ground theraphosid spiders are thriving well. These are ideal sites to study threshold, habitat preference/characterization, inter/intra-species competition for habitat, co-existence of two or more species in small stretch of area, dispersal ranges, etc. In one of the site, the numbers of burrows were above 350 in a stretch of 200m. In Castle Rock, the dominant species amongst theraphosid spider were *Thrigmopoeus spp.*, whereas in Mollem WLS and Cotigao WLS, Goa *C. fimbriatus* was dominant species. In Mollem and Cotigao, burrows of *C. fimbriatus* were commonly found on tree holes, trunks and in depression of forked branches apart from the roadside bunds. Burrows of adults and juveniles spiders of the genera *Thrigmopoeus* and *Chilobrachys* were easily distinguishable based on burrow structure.

The common threats observed in all the three sites were human disturbance and habitat loss, which had lead to a fragmented population of theraphosid spiders. These areas have potential population of the three theraphosid species which needs to be conserved. Therefore, there is an urgent need to include them under the local forest management plans and take necessary actions to conserve these areas where theraphosid spiders are occurring in high densities.

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CEE Material Available

The theme and slogan for the World Environment Day in 2008 was '**CO2: Kick the Habit! : Towards a Low Carbon Economy**'. The slogan announced by UNEP was adapted by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India as "CO2, Pick Right! Towards Sustainability and Growth".

Pick Right! Is a positive message which encourages each individual to reflect on lifestyle choices which matter in dealing with Climate Change. The choices we make are vital in the carbon footprint that we leave on earth. By making the right choices we can lead our future towards sustainability and growth.

The Campaign kit consists of

- Booklet: The booklet contains information on the right choices one can make to reduce the impact of climate change.
- Poster (set of 2): Pick Right related messages & Paryavaran Ambassador campaign.
- Sticker-sheets: logo and slogan 'CO2: Pick Right!'; caricatures of leading Indian celebrities/personalities and right choices for climate change.
- Stencil: A plastic stencil bearing 'CO2 Pick Right!'

CO2 Pick Right Campaign Kit in 15 Languages

English, Hindi, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Assamese, Boro, Bengali, Ladhakhi, Marathi, Oriya, Urdu and Punjabi.

Methodology

Dissemination of a campaign kit, followed by training of teachers and those responsible for communicating with schools.

Availability

CO2 Pick Right Campaign Kit is still good and useful for teaching and is being distributed by Centre for Environmental Education, Ahmedabad.

Contact : Centre for Environment Education,
Nehru Foundation for Development,
Thaltej Tekra, Ahmedabad 380 054.
E-mail: cee@ceeindia.org

