



ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR REGIONAL CENTRE

Zoological Survey of India

Port Blair, Andaman and Nicobar Islands

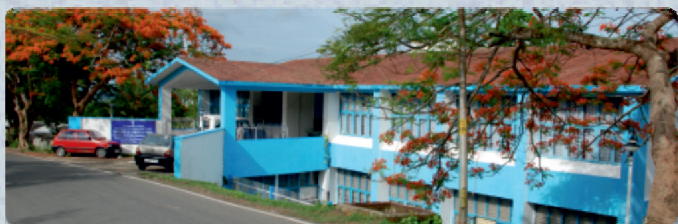


Government of India
Ministry of Environment and Forests

The Andaman and Nicobar archipelago comprises of 572 islands extending over 800 km in Bay of Bengal. These islands were once a part of the Asian mainland but got detached some 100 million years ago during the Upper Mesozoic Period due to geological upheaval. The existing groups of islands constitute the physiographic continuation of the mountainous ranges of Naga and Lushai Hills and Arakan Yoma of Burma through Cape Negrais to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and southeast of Achin Head in Sumatra. The chain of these islands are in fact the camel backs of the submerged mountain ranges projecting above the sea level running north to south between 6°45' N and 13° 30' N latitudes and 90° 20' E and 93° 56' E longitudes. Andaman Islands are separated from Nicobar by a 160 km wide channel known as Ten Degree Channel. Andaman and Nicobar Islands are an internationally acknowledged 2 biodiversity hot spot, off the Indian mainland and lying isolated is 8,249 km² areas. These islands encompass a very high degree of endemism in especially plants, reptiles, insects, birds and mammals. Geographically these islands falls under Indo-Malayan biogeographic regime in which Andaman bears close biogeographical affinities with Myanmar and Thailand while Nicobar has affinities with Indonesia and South-east Asia. The notified forest area of Andaman and Nicobar Islands is 7,171 km² in which 105 protected areas including 96 sanctuaries, 9 national parks and one biosphere reserve have been declared.

Andaman and Nicobar Regional Centre of Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) established at Port Blair on 21st April 1977 under the Sixth Five Year Plan of Government of India. It is one among the 16 Regional Centres of ZSI.

The jurisdiction of the Centre covered entire Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and its territorial waters. The faunal communities of marine and terrestrial ecosystems of these islands are being inventorized by the Centre by conducting exploratory surveys.



Major programmes undertaken

- Gall causing insects and mites of Andaman Islands
- Bio-ecological studies on insect woodborers of Andaman
- Survey of the faunal resources of Andaman and Nicobar Islands
- Fauna associated with corals in Andaman Islands
- Studies on the soft corals of Andaman and Nicobar Islands
- Faunal inventory of Mahatma Gandhi Marine National Park
- Studies on the poisonous and venomous fishes of Andamans
- Studies on commercial fishes of Andamans: Carangidae and Lethrinidae
- Ichthyofauna of mangrove ecosystem of Andaman and Nicobar Islands
- Corals and coral associates of Andaman and Nicobar Islands
- Corals of protected areas of Andaman and Nicobar
- Fauna of Inglis Island Sanctuary
- Coral and coral Associated fauna of Rutland and Great Nicobar Islands
- Birds of Rutland and Dugong Creek of Andaman
- Fauna of Saddle Peak National Park

Area Surveyed

Terrestrial and marine ecosystems Mahatma Gandhi Marine National Park, Rani Jhansi Marine National Park, Ritchie's Archipelago, Mount Harriet National Park, Inglis Island Sanctuary, Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve, Button Island Sanctuary, Nancowry Islands, Saddle Peak Wildlife Sanctuary, South Andaman, Middle Andaman, Landfall Island Sanctuary, Interview and North Reef Islands Sanctuary, Little Andaman, Mayabunder, Car Nicobar etc. have been surveyed for faunal studies.

Major Scientific Contribution

New record to Indian fauna: Over 500 species including scleractinian corals, echinoderms, gorgonids, sponges, ascidians, opisthorhynchans, polyclads, fishes, gastropods, butterflies and moths identified from Andaman and Nicobar Islands were new to the country.

National Coral Reef Research

Institute: Monitoring the health of corals and coral associated faunal communities are being undertaken.

Lead Institution: Serving as a lead institution for undertaking research in Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve (GNBR) towards the recognition of GNBR under UNESCO - Man and Biosphere Programme Network.

Status Survey: Conducted the status survey on Schedule – IV gastropod *Trochus niloticus* in Andaman and Nicobar Islands and submitted recommendations to Government of India to delist the species from Schedule category as their wild population increased considerably.

Presently status survey for Schedule – I holothurians is underway.

EIA studies: Conducted for construction of marine jetties in Katchal and Teresa Islands in Nicobar. EIA studies for the alignment of road in Great Nicobar Island, extension of airstrip in North Andaman are presently being undertaken.



Available Taxonomic expertise

Expertise on molluscs, echinoderms, corals, gorgonids, crustaceans, fishes, butterflies, moths, birds and mammals are available at the Centre.



National Zoological Collection

A total of 7,089 marine and 2,744 terrestrial identified specimens are available at the Centre.

Modern Infra-structure and Advanced Research Facilities

The Centre is equipped with state-of-art facilities for undersea survey such as SCUBA diving equipments and marine sampling instruments, Leica M205A automated stereo-zoon microscope, compound microscopes with computer connectivity, high resolution cameras with tele-lens, and still and video cameras with underwater housing facility.



Publications

Scientists of the Centre published 22 books and 320 research papers in various peer reviewed national and international journals.

- Ichthyofauna of Bay Islands
- Fauna of Mount Harriet National Park
- Studies on the soft corals of Andaman and Nicobar Islands
- Echinodermata of Andamans
- Studies on the poisonous and venomous fishes of Andamans
- Field guide to reef fishes of Andaman and Nicobar Islands
- Ichthyofauna of mangrove ecosystem of Andaman and Nicobar Islands
- Corals and coral associates of Andaman and Nicobar Islands
- Taxonomy, eco-biology and distribution pattern of the Brachyuran crabs of mangrove ecosystem in Andaman Islands

- Coral reef ecosystem of Andaman Islands - Remote Sensing and Rapid Assessment Survey
- Recent trends in biodiversity of Andaman and Nicobar Islands
- Guide to fungiids of Andaman and Nicobar Islands
- Status survey of *Trochus niloticus* (Linnaeus, 1767) in Andaman and Nicobar Islands
- New Record of scleractinian corals in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- An account of addition to the Ichthyofauna of Andaman and Nicobar Islands
- Guide to opisthobranchs of Andaman and Nicobar Islands



Library

The library of the Centre holds 2,100 books dealing with various aspects of zoology mostly pertaining to Island Ecosystem and Marine Biology. Besides, 13 journals are subscribed.

Museum

The museum of Zoological Survey of India is the only Natural History Museum in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. There are about 2,500 of exhibits displayed in the museum exposition, which covers various groups of animals in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Besides, posters depicting the faunal diversity have been displayed to create awareness among the school children and general public.



Other extension activities

Identification and advisory services are being rendered to Department of Environment and Forest, Andaman and Nicobar Administration, law enforcing authorities on the various confiscated and seized animal/material. Delivering lectures, talks and presentations at various fora on the conservation of faunal resources of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Preparation of Management Plans for protected areas.

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For more details visit <http://www.zsi.gov.in>