

ZSI survey records 374 faunal species in W Ghats

Dipannita Das, TNN, Feb 15, 2011, 04.05am IST

PUNE: The faunal diversity survey conducted by the [Zoological Survey of India](#) (ZSI), Pune, at the Chandoli National Park in Sangli district and the Radhanagari Wildlife Sanctuary in Kolhapur district, has recorded presence of 374 species, marking them as rich biodiversity sites.

The ZSI scientists documented the animal species in both the protected areas during the three-year survey. The species include 35 species of zooplankton (organisms), 40 species of dragon flies, 10 species of molluscs (invertebrates), 10 species of grasshoppers, 88 species of butterflies, 40 species of freshwater fish, 82 species of birds and 69 species of mammals.

The ZSI survey started in 2007 and was planned in three different phases - pre-monsoon, monsoon and post-monsoon, as the insect life and plant species change according to the phase. At present, samples collected are being classified and documented by experts. It will take another year to come up with the final report.

R M Sharma, deputy director, ZSI, Pune told TOI that out of the 16 endemic birds seen in Western Ghats, eight of endemic birds are found in Chandoli National Park and Radhanagari Wildlife Sanctuary. One can also find endangered and threatened bird species here.

"The eight endemic species of birds includes Nilgiri Wood Pigeon, Blue-Winged Parakeet, Malabar Grey Hornbill, Small Sunbird, White-bellied Blue Flycatcher, Rufous Babbler, Grey-Headed Bulbul. The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) has identified Radhanagari Wildlife Sanctuary as one of the important bird areas (IBA) of the state," he added.

Scientist K A Subramanian said that Radhanagari is the state's first wildlife sanctuary and is known as bison sanctuary as the Indian bison or gaur is the most important species found here. He said the faunal diversity survey will help the forest department to come up with strategic management and conservation plan.

These two sites are important areas in Western Ghats and are in the proposed list of the UNESCO's Natural Heritage Cluster sites.

An earlier report commissioned by the ministry of environment and forests about these two protected areas highlighted that Radhanagari sanctuary has some tropical evergreen forests typical of the northern Western Ghats and tropical rainforest vegetation with over 1,500 flowering plants. The biological wealth of the Chandoli national park is characterised by tracts of evergreen and semi-evergreen forest supporting high diversity.