



Field Training for Interns

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Training Objectives

The primary objectives of the training were:

- To provide hands-on experience in exploring and understanding different forest ecosystems.
- To impart practical skills in data collection and ecological study methodologies.
- To familiarize interns with the conservation strategies and challenges related to hornbill populations in the landscape.

From July 18 to 21, 2024, a three-day field-based training program was conducted for the interns of the CETC Hornbill Foundation under the Department of Botany, MES Asmabi College. The training, held in the Sholayar Vazhachal rainforests of Kerala, aimed to provide practical exposure to forest ecosystems, biodiversity, and conservation practices. The program was an immersive experience designed to enhance the interns' understanding of forest ecology and conservation, with a particular focus on hornbill ecology.

Ecology and Taxonomy Research Lab



Overview of Activities

The field training covered diverse ecosystems, including:

- **Low-Elevation Riparian Forests:** Interns studied the unique dynamics of riparian zones, understanding their importance in water regulation, biodiversity sustenance, and ecosystem health.
- **Evergreen Forests:** This session highlighted the structural complexity and rich biodiversity of evergreen forests, emphasizing their role in carbon sequestration and habitat provision.
- **High-Elevation Forests of Sholayar:** Interns explored the ecological characteristics of high-altitude forests, focusing on their distinct flora, fauna, and climatic adaptations.

The participants gained a deeper understanding of the interconnections within these ecosystems and their significance in sustaining regional biodiversity.

Outcomes

The training successfully achieved its objectives by:

- Enhancing the interns' knowledge of the biodiversity and ecological significance of the Western Ghats.
- Providing practical exposure to fieldwork techniques and ecological data collection.
- Raising awareness about the importance of hornbill conservation and the role of community-driven initiatives.



Key Highlights

1. Forest Dynamics and Data Collection:

- Practical sessions were conducted to teach interns various methods of ecological data collection. This included vegetation analysis, species identification, and documenting forest dynamics. These hands-on activities equipped participants with the necessary skills to conduct field-based research.

2. Hornbill Conservation Insights:

- A visit to a hornbill nest site was one of the highlights of the program. During this visit, experts provided detailed insights into hornbill behavior, nesting ecology, and the significance of conserving their habitats. Discussions also covered the ongoing conservation initiatives in the region, challenges faced, and community participation in protecting these iconic species.

3. Interactive Learning:

- Informal discussions and Q&A sessions were held during the training, fostering a deeper understanding of forest ecosystems. The interns were encouraged to share observations, pose questions, and engage with field experts, enhancing their learning experience.