

**INDIAN JOURNAL OF NATURAL SCIENCES (IJONS)**  
BIMONTHLY INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

**Editor-in-Chief**  
**Dr.S.Vijikumar**

**Published by**  
**TAMILNADU SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ORGANISATION**

39,MURA BHAVAN,KOODAL NAGAR,RAJAGOPALAPURAM POST,  
PUDUKKOTTAI, TAMIL NADU, INDIA.

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## Indian Journal of Natural Sciences (IJONS)

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## Indian Journal of Natural Sciences (IJONS)

Volume II		October 2012
CODEN: IJONS (14) (2012)		Issue 14
		ISSN: 0976 - 0997
S. No	CONTENTS	Page No
	Editorial	
1	Seismic Analysis of RC Frame Structure with and without Masonry Infill Walls. Haroon Rasheed Tamboli and Umesh.N.Karadi	1137-1148
2	Effect of Leaf Litter Waste in Vermicompost. Jesikha. M, H.Kavitha and G. Nithya	1149-1152
3	Isolation and Characterization of Polyhydroxyalkanoates (PHAs) Producing Bacteria from Sago Industrial Wastewater. Umamaheswari.S, P. S Dheenana, S. Govindra, Kishna Kumar.S, Sri Murali, S, Sri Priya.J and R.Babu Rajendran	1153-1158
4	Investigation of Marine Actinomycetes from Karankadu, Ramanathapuram District, South East Coast of TamilNadu, India. Baskar,V and Panneerselvam,A.	1159-1166
5	Growth and Reproduction Rate of <i>Eisenia fetida</i> (Savigny) During Vermicomposting of Banana Agro Wastes. Kavitha.P, G.Ravikumar and S.Manivannan	1167-1172
6	Masspropagation of <i>Spilanthes calva</i> L.through Nodal Explants. Bastin Churchill M., B. Muthukumar and E. Natarajan	1173-1176
7	Laboratory Culture of Marine Cyclopoid Copepod <i>Oithona rigida</i> Giesbrecht. Raju, P.,M.Kathiresan., S.Ananth., R.Nandakumar., T.Jayalakshmi., P. Ananthi.,A.Shenbaga Devi and P. Santhanam	1177-1181
8	Short Term Investigation on Vertical Distribution of Physico-Chemical and Phytoplankton Biomass in Pambanar Estuary, Southeast Coast of India. Vasudevan,S., S.Dinesh Kumar., M.Kathiresan., T.Jayalakshmi., M.Kaviyarasan., A.Rameshkumar.,R.Nandakumar and P.Santhanam	1182-1190
	Instruction to Author	

## Editorial

Dear Readers...

### SAVE OUR SPECIES.....

#### *Geochelone elegans (India)*



India has a staggering variety of flora and fauna, including some of the rarest species in existence on the planet. There is so far a paucity of information for the general public on the status, biology, and major threats to the endangered species of our country. As per the latest (2011) quantitative evaluation done by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) there are 57 critically endangered species of animals in India. Critically endangered is the highest risk category assigned by the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) red list to wild species. It is estimated that 18% of Indian plants are endemic to the country and found nowhere else in the world. Among amphibians found in India, 62% are unique to this country. Among lizards, of the 153 species recorded, 50% are endemic. High endemism has also been recorded for various groups of insects, marine worms, centipedes, mayflies and fresh water sponges. India has 50,000 known species of insects, including 13,000 butterflies and moths. It is estimated that the number of unknown species could be several times higher. A major proportion of amphibian and reptile species, especially snakes, are concentrated in the Western Ghats, which is also a habitat for 1,500 endemic plant species. Coral reefs in Indian waters surround the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep Islands, the Gulf areas of Gujarat and Tamil Nadu. They are nearly as rich in species as tropical evergreen forests. Man has begun to overuse or misuse most of these natural ecosystems. Scientists have estimated that human activities are likely to eliminate approximately 10 million species by the year 2050. Loss of species occurs due to the destruction of natural ecosystems, either for conversion to agriculture or industry, or by over-extraction of their resources, or through pollution of air, water and soil. Most of us are only aware of the plight of a few glamorous large mammals, but we need to appreciate the threat to the less known species of plants and animals. We need to find ways to support the conservation of our incredible wildlife for future generations.

Naturally yours

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vijikumar. S.', written over a light-colored rectangular background.

Vijikumar. S

Chief Editor