

Dr. Malhar Shyamsunderrao Pradhan



11.01.1947 - 02.04.2018

Dr. Malhar S. Pradhan one of the most distinguished mammalogists in India, passed away on 2nd April, 2018 due to pancreatic cancer at Pune. With his demise, India has lost a renowned mammalogist and taxonomist of small mammals. Dr. Pradhan was born on 11th January, 1947 in Nagpur, Maharashtra, India.

He had his school education at New English High School and graduated from Shivaji Science College, Nagpur. He completed his post-graduation in Zoology from Post Graduate Teaching Department, Nagpur University in 1969. He was awarded doctoral degree in 1975 by the University of Bombay for his studies on Bombay Rats under the guidance of the legendary herpetologist Dr. P. J. Deoras of Haffkine Institute, Mumbai.

He joined the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) in December, 1976 as an Assistant Zoologist. He retired from his service in ZSI in January 2007 in the position of Joint Director.

After joining ZSI he continued his studies on small mammals. He established the chemotaxonomy laboratory at ZSI Pune and worked on Serum protein, polymorphism of eye-lens proteins, electrophoretic proteins haemoglobin and polyacryamide gel electrophoresis analysis of small mammalian species particularly rodents from Western Ghats. As a result of his studies employing chemotaxonomy, hair impression pattern and structural differentiation in the skull, he described a new rodent species, *Bandicota maxima* along with his other collaborators.

During his career he had conducted number of faunal surveys in Peninsular India especially in the national parks, sanctuaries and biosphere reserves of Western Ghats resulting in the documentation of the mammalian and herpetofaunal diversity of Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, Eravikulam National Park, Sanjay Gandhi National Park, Borivili, Tansa Wildlife Sanctuary, Pench National Park, Melghat Tiger Reserve, Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve etc. and wetland ecosystems

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like Wardha river valley, Ujani Wetland, Nathsagar & Jaikawadi Wildlife Sanctuary and Lonar-Crater Wildlife Sanctuary. His State faunal studies cover Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Goa.

Dr. Pradhan has to his credit about 100 publications and seven books/Occasional papers. His works such as Identification of small mammals through Owl Pellet analysis, List of valid Rodent taxa (Class : Mammalia, Order: Rodentia) from the Indian sub-continent region including Myanmar, Status survey of Endangered species: "Wroughton's Free-tailed Bat, *Otomops wroughtoni*, Validation of Threatened Mammals of India, Indian Mammals : Checklist with comments on Type Locality, Distribution, Conservation Status and Taxonomy and All About Indian Snakes : Myths and Facts are valuable resource for the researchers doing work in the field. He was also a reviewer of several National and International journals.

He also conducted Environmental Impact Assessment studies in the Konkan railway area in Raigad district, different irrigation and hydroelectric project sites and he continued his work as a consultant after retirement from the central government service.

He was a recognized guide of the Pune University and guided a number of students for their M.Sc. and Ph.D degrees. As a recognized research guide of the university, he was affiliated with the Zoology research centre, Shri Shiv Chhatrapati College, Junner, Pune District.

Dr. Pradhan was an active member of the IUCN-Species Survival Commission, Rodent Specialist Group since 1996 and assessed Indian small mammalian species (Rodents, Bats and Shrews) particularly the taxa of endangered and critically endangered category like *Millardia kondana*, *Mus famulus*. He attended Conservation Assessment and Management Plan (CAMP) Workshops for Mammals of India at Bangalore, Karnataka in August, 1997, Status of South Asian Chiroptera at Madurai in January, 2002 and Status of South Asian Non-volant Small Mammals at Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu in February, 2004 for assessment of IUCN status of South Asian Mammal species organized by the Zoo Outreach Organization, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu.

He was member of the research advisory committee and financial negotiation committee for World Bank aided Maharashtra State Forestry projects, Zoo Advisory Board of Pune Municipal Corporation, All India Network Project on Rodent Control-Central Arid Zone Research Centre, Jodhpur and other institutes. He was also a Coordinator/principal investigator in the All India Coordinated Project on Taxonomy (AICOPTAX) and capacity building of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Govt. of India.

He wrote and published popular articles on the subjects of Indian fauna, wildlife and environment in Hindi and Marathi languages in local and national newspapers and journals.

With his dedication and immense expertise in taxonomy, he successfully completed a project on validation of Threatened Mammals of India with different experts on specific mammalian species of threatened category, the results of which was a book published in 2006 covering accounts of a total 144 threatened mammal species with distribution maps.

He was Head of the office and Officer-in-charge of the Western Regional Centre of ZSI at Pune from 1st February 1996 to 18th December, 2001.

We pay our respectful homage to Dr. Pradhan and express our deepest sympathy to his bereaved family.

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