

# Mario Eric Ramanujam

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I met Eric for the first time when he visited Zoo Outreach Organization in 1994 with his dad. A tall lanky chap wanting to get out of the advertising field and looking for opportunity to work in wildlife, he joined us briefly as a wildlife illustrator. Sally and I were very impressed by his abilities and Eric stayed with us in the office for a month. Only, we hardly met as he was nocturnal. He created some amazing art work for ZOO, but his habits were better suited for working from home. So he went back to Pondicherry and continued working part time for ZOO. He took on other occupations and finally joined Pitchandikulam where he blossomed and excelled in bringing his skills of wildlife art, corporate talk, and people management to the fore.



He took on various biodiversity inventory studies — he had keen interest in fishes and small mammals. Various surveys in little known areas for fishes led him to lead parallel lives.

His keen interest in observations were unparalleled. With little training in behavioural studies, Eric went on to master his skills with observing the Indian Eagle Owl, eventually helping in establishing the Indian subspecies' identity apart from the widely known European one. His unique approach to these observations included sketching the behaviours out in classical detail. Read the many publications on the subject in Zoos' Print Journal and the Journal of Threatened taxa.

Eric and I shared many commonalities and were pretty close philosophically and colourful language. We were perfect sounding boards for our troubles and spent quite a number of non-sober evenings on the phone and ensured the details were worked out on his occasional trips to Coimbatore or Bangalore, or mine to Pondy.

Eric contributed his time and a complete series of drawings for JoTT covers for five years — his way of helping out with the journal. His works on wildlife art and sculptures are best seen at Pitchandikulam, Nilgiri Biosphere Nature Park, Adayar Poonga, Toyota Kirloskar Campus, East Coast Road, among other places. Gentle soul, kind hearted although very misunderstood, Eric found a good place and friend in Joss Brooks who supported him throughout and let him work his magic.

Thank you, Eric for who you were and what you did. I'll miss you. I know you wouldn't want to get emotional or go on with saying more. So, I'll just shut the fuck up!

Sanjay Molur

