

South Asian Invertebrate Specialist Group (SAsISG) & Invertebrate Conservation Information Network of South Asia (ICINSA)

Background

SAsISG and ICINSA focuses on conserving invertebrates in the South Asian region. The project targets on expanding membership and building networks with invertebrate experts across South Asia; completing global Red List assessments for more invertebrate groups; identifying important invertebrate habitats; identifying overlooked & exploited invertebrate groups; develop and implement conservation action plan model for invertebrate groups; promoting research on taxonomy & natural history; promoting conservation awareness among the public and wildlife enthusiasts; develop policy interventions; capacity building workshops to train conservationists in all aspects of invertebrate conservation; and supporting more invertebrate conservation works in the region.

Activities, key achievements, and outcomes during the reporting period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026

🦋 Five subnetwork groups under SAsISG have been formed: Marine Molluscs, Tiger Beetles, Tarantulas, Diplopoda. Five leaders have been nominated to lead the subnetwork groups for the South Asian region: R. Ravinesh (Marine Molluscs), J. Chaithra Shree (butterflies), V. Sharan (Tiger Beetles), (Gautam Kadam & A. Abinesh (tarantulas), and Aparna Kalawate (Diplopoda). They have been tasked to expand the network across South Asia and to take up activities to promote the



Observations from 'Tiger Beetle Quest' conducted by Tiger beetle watch group and Rhopalocera and Odonata Association of Rajapalayam (ROAR) © Bikash Kumar posted on Tigerbeetlewatch insta page

conservation of their respective invertebrate groups in the region.

🦋 More than 250 members (major representations being from India and fewer from Sri Lanka, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Abu Dhabi, Bangladesh, Maldives, and UK) joined ICINSA. Based on the commitment and actions of active members in the upcoming years, they will be appointed to SAsISG membership. Around 24 members have been added to the SAsISG given their contributions to invertebrate conservation.





'Spend time with butterflies', one day workshop to butterfly enthusiasts in collaboration with Nilgiri Biosphere Nature Park (NBNP) on 9 August 2025 at NBNP. © Usha Ravindra

🌿 The SAsISG vision, activities, and invertebrate conservation topics were communicated in international conferences, regional talks, workshops, and social media posts. To name a few, SCB's International Conference for Conservation Biology Conference at Brisbane 15–20 June 2025; Butterfly workshop with Niligiri Biosphere Nature Park on 09 August 2025; A talk & field visit on firefly conservation by Sri Ram Murali & Chandrasekhar Ratnam



***Quedara basiflava*, a Western Ghat endemic. One of the 350+ species of butterflies of India that will be assessed in the future IUCN Red List workshop for butterflies. © Tarun Karmakar**

for Ram Hattikudur Advanced Training in Conservation fellows in December 2025; and seven SAsISG social media posts.

- 🌿 The IUCN Red List Training workshop was conducted on 18–22 October 2025, training 12 people from across India in the Red Listing framework & methods.
- 🌿 11 November launched as World Tiger Beetle Day by SAsISG during the Tiger Beetle Red List workshop in July 2024 was successfully celebrated the following year in 2025 by Graphic Era University, Wildlife Institute of India, Rhopalocera and Odonata Association of Rajapalayam (ROAR) organisations via international talk. The event was celebrated by ROAR & Tiger



New members, Sriram Murali & Chandrasekar Ratnam, added to the SAsISG network by SAsISG co-chair, Dr. Sanjay Molur. © Usha Ravindra

Beetle Watch group by conducting a 'Tiger Beetle quest' on iNaturalist from 28 June 2025 – 06 July 2025 which yielded good observations.

- 🌿 11 'Bugs r all' publications focused on invertebrates taxonomy, natural history, conservation published in Zoo's Print.
- 🌿 For Red List assessments for butterflies of India, a checklist of a total of 1,383 butterfly species found in India was listed from

literature, of which, 151 species are endemic and 190 species are near-endemic to the country. Data like distribution, habitat type, habitat threats, species threats, natural history, host plant data (including their distribution and threats) required for assessments from literature have been collated for all endemics from 420 papers and consulting more than 30 experts to keep the database updated. Partial funds needed for the Red List workshop have been raised from the MbZ Species Conservation Fund & IUCN.

Challenges faced

Lack of funds remains to be the core challenge given the humongous amount of work we are yet to do for invertebrate conservation. Being rich in invertebrate diversity, it is crucial we move fast and are able to support the network/s to carry on the tasks.

Key partnerships and collaborations

Partnerships were formed with Tigerbeetlewatch group, The Naturalist School, Rhopalocera and Odonata Association of Rajapalayam (ROAR), Nilgiri Biosphere Nature Park (NBNP), IUCN SSC Dragonfly Specialist Group, and Wild & Dark Earth for various SAsISG & ICINSA activities.

Acknowledgments

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Next steps

We will be maximizing the SAsISG & ICINSA networks in South Asian regions with the help of current members and leads; launch website for SAsISG; plan taxonomy & conservation training workshops; Conduct Red List assessment workshop for butterflies of India; plan Red List assessments for more invertebrate groups; and develop a first Conservation Action Plan model for invertebrates.



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