

IUCN Red List Assessment Workshop and Assess-To-Plan for Snakes of Western Ghats



The newly formed Snake Conservation Coalition of the Western Ghats (SCC-WG) along with Zoo Outreach Organisation and Conservation Planning Specialist Group (South Asia) organized a 5 day Western Ghats Snake IUCN Red list Assessment and Assess-to-Plan Workshop from 1–5 June 2026, at Anaikatti, Coimbatore. The workshop was funded by Upadhyaya Foundation and Elins Switch Boards Pvt Ltd. The exercise helped bring together 22 experts from 18 organizations, including experts in snake conservation, ecology, taxonomy, rescue, management, and policy, establishing a multidisciplinary approach for snake conservation in the Western Ghats. The workshop is the first comprehensive reassessment for the Snakes of Western Ghats since 2019, and also additionally assessed 24

snake species that were described after 2019 and had never before been evaluated for the IUCN Red List.

A total of 152 species of snakes of the Western Ghats were considered with the primary focus of assessment was the endemics, totaling 98 species. During the course of the assessments, apart from the Red Listing questions, a series of detailed queries to determine conservation priorities were administered.

The workshop was facilitated by Dr Sanjay Molur from CPSG South Asia, who guided participants on the assessment process and IUCN Red List standards. On the second day the participants were divided into 3 working groups, each facilitated by Dr Chelmala Srinivasulu from South Asian Reptile Network, Dr Aditya Srinivasulu from Zooreach, and Dr Bhargavi



Dr Sanjay Molur explaining all the participants about Criteria and Categories for IUCN Red List for Species Assessment
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Workshop volunteers organizing the different documents and maps before the workshop began. © Payal Molur



One of the working groups discussing about the threats faced by Uropeltids in the Western Ghats. © Payal Molur



Working groups discussing the threats faced by snakes and uploading on the SIS datasheet. © Payal Molur



Dr Srinivasulu explaining participants the need of the Red List Assessments and success stories from past Reptile Assessment Workshops. © Payal Molur



Group Photo: IUCN Red List Assessment Workshop and Assess-To-Plan for Snakes of Western Ghat 2026. © Gowri Shankar

Group discussing about the species, preliminary assessed as threatened by during the workshop and understanding how to use the Assess to Plan process for better conservation efforts. © Payal Molur



Srinivasulu from Zooreach & Ms Priyanka Iyer from CPSG South Asia / Zooreach. The three groups focused on different sets of species, collating the available scientific data and expert knowledge to evaluate risk of species extinction.

After species assessments, the participants again formed a single group and discussions on Assess-to-Plan (A2P) and Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) were held to understand how the assessments will help in informing conservation action. The experts tried to explore the major threats that snakes face across Western Ghats including habitat loss, degradation, fragmentation, persecution, tourism, infrastructure development, and emerging climate crisis pressures. Locations, habitats, or species requiring urgent priority were discussed for major Key Biodiversity Areas.

The workshop gave opportunity to 12 early career conservationists from different parts of the country to support the event by documenting discussions, updating species

distribution maps in real time, managing assessment records, and collecting planning-relevant information from experts for each species. The workshop helped them understand how Red Listing Workshops take place and got the opportunity to interact with herpetology experts and in turn ensured efficient data management & collating conservation knowledge.

Now, the outcomes of the assessment will be used to

prioritize conservation needs, inform future research & monitoring, and understand potential of different priority sites for snake conservation. By linking species-level assessments with site-based conservation planning, the workshop brings a holistic, evidence-based approach to conserve snakes of Western Ghats.



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