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## INSECT CONSERVATION - A REACTION TO NARENDRAN AND CHERIAN

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Narendran and Cherian (2002) have vividly brought out the great survival capacity of the group Insects. Man's "war" against harmful insects has led only to partial and often to doubtful success. I fully agree with these authors on that insect taxonomy cannot be learnt unless students themselves collect, preserve and identify insects. For higher studies on insect taxonomy, physiology etc. too insect collection is an absolute necessity. Collection of a small number of insect specimens for scientific study should not be a worth considering negative factor, when aiming at insect conservation.

But it has to be accepted that insect species are fast facing extinction. As E.O. Wilson has pointed out the present rate of extinction of invertebrates has become 1000 to 10,000 times greater due to human intervention. Narendran and Cherian have rightly pointed out that insect extinction is mostly due to habitat destruction. To become familiar with habits and habitat of insect species and preventing habitat destruction would be the effective way for insect conservation.

Much of insect fauna however remains to be discovered and described. Even for most of those insects, which have been described, classified and named, habitat and biology details are not known. To get acquainted with biology of most insect species will take a very long drawn out concerted effort by any country's entomologists. Meanwhile much of biodiversity through insects will be wiped out. A practical step to prevent this loss is that small patches of land with different habitats be set aside as reserves, which should be free from human activity. This step for invertebrate conservation have been suggested by Verma (1995) and Verma and Saxena (1996).

It may be emphasised again that ban on or discouraging insect collection for scientific study will not help insect conservation. On the other hand such steps may hamper conservation.

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