2020 Conference Report

Student Conference on Conservation Science Bengaluru (Virtual)



SCCS is strengthening the careers of young conservation scientists around the world with events in Bengaluru, Beijing, Brisbane, Cambridge, New York and Tihany



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| OVERVIEW | 2 |
|--|-----------------------------|
| PLENARY TALKS 1. Dr. Asmita Kabra 2. Dr. Rohan Arthur 3. Ms. Syeda Rizwana Hasan | 4 4 5 6 |
| STUDENT PRESENTATIONS STUDENT TALKS STUDENT POSTERS | 7 8 8 |
| NETWORKING AT SCCS-Bengaluru 2020 1. BIRDS OF A FEATHER SESSION 2. CAREERS IN CONSERVATION 3. WHO'S WHO IN CONSERVATION | 10 10 12 13 |
| STUDENT AWARDS TALK AND POSTER WINNERS Talk Poster | 15 15 15 15 |
| DONORS AND FINANCIALS DONORS EXPENDITURE | 17 17 18 |
| PEOPLE BEHIND THE CONFERENCE I. CONFERENCE TEAM II. ABSTRACT REVIEWERS III. STUDENT PRESENTATIONS JUDGES IV. KEY SERVICE PROVIDERS V. OTHER SUPPORT | 19 19 21 21 21 |
| DAY WISE SCHEDIII E | 22 |

OVERVIEW

The Student Conference on Conservation Science (SCCS) – Bengaluru 2020 was held on an online platform from October 9th – 11th bringing together students and young researchers in the science and practice of biodiversity conservation.

SCCS-Bengaluru facilitates interaction, encourages exchange of research ideas and methods, sharing of knowledge and experience related to conservation and helps build contacts and capacity. Our geographic focus is countries from Africa, South and South-East Asia. This year, we had 214 participants with 86 abstract submissions.

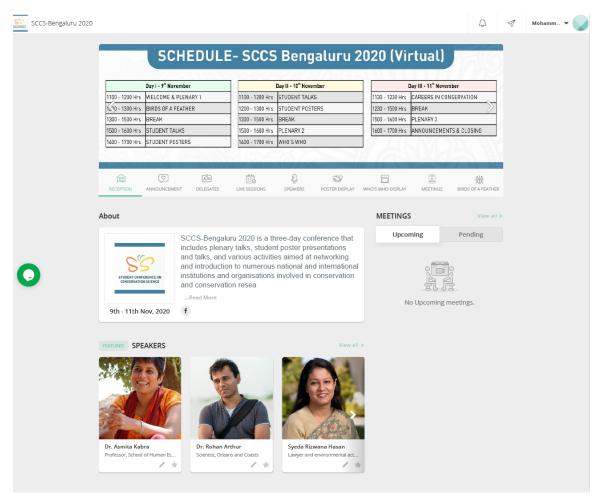


SCCS-BNG Official Website Homepage

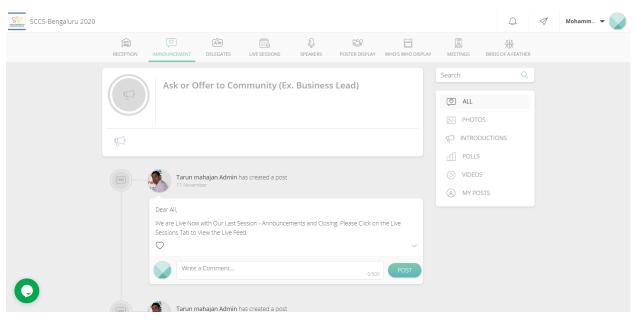
This was the 11th edition of the conference and the first time that it was hosted virtually. It was a three-day event, inaugurated by Jayashree Ratnam (Associate Director for Wildlife Biology and Conservation programme, NCBS), Mousumi Ghosh (Academic Dean, NCF) and Marianne Manuel (Member, Organizing Committee, SCCS-Bengaluru 2020). SCCS-Bengaluru 2020 had 3 plenary talks, 8 student talks, and 10 student posters this year.

The panel discussion, Careers in Conservation, and the breakout sessions - Who's Who in Conservation and Birds of a Feather - were each received enthusiastically. These sessions form a part of the public-outreach wing of SCCS-Bengaluru, which are widely publicized in social media and concluded with helpful feedback that will help in creating sessions in the future.

SCCS-Bengaluru is unique in that it is organized by a consortium of institutions and supported by a much wider set of institutions and individuals. This model has enabled us to run the conference efficiently, to control costs and draw upon a wide and diverse range of expertise and resources



SCCS-BNG Virtual Conference Platform - Reception



SCCS-BNG Virtual Conference Platform - Announcements

PLENARY TALKS

1. Dr. Asmita Kabra



Dr. Asmita Kabra joined Ambedkar University, Delhi in 2010 after fifteen years of undergraduate teaching at the Department of Economics, Ramjas College, University of Delhi. She works on the interface of critical development studies and political ecology. Some of the themes she studies are conservation and rural livelihoods, forced displacement, social impact assessment, agrarian change and rural education. Asmita is also the founder and President of the NGO Adharshila, and founder trustee of the NGO Samrakshan Trust. Both organizations work for

sustainable and dignified livelihoods and education in the dryland forested areas in the Chambal region of Central India.

Plenary Title: The politics and anti-politics of Asiatic Lion reintroduction in India

Abstract: The Government of India's ambitious lion reintroduction project initiated in 1995 continues to languish despite a Supreme Court order in 2013, a canine distemper scare since 2018 and sustained pressure from global and Indian conservationists. I will give the audience a glimpse of how social science approaches can help us to make sense of the failure of the lion reintroduction project. I will set out by NOT asking the usual (although very important) questions about this project, like what should be done to make lion reintroduction happen successfully, or what should be done to make amends to the people forcibly displaced from Kuno to make way for the lions. Instead, I will examine what this project managed to do apart from failing in its stated objective. I will show the analytical power of this shift in gaze towards 'unintended' outcomes of large-scale projects. Focusing on the politics (and anti-politics) of conservation can help to make visible processes that occur right under our nose yet remain invisible. I believe that young conservationists can add a powerful tool to their armoury by learning to recognize the politics of conservation. This, I believe, will help us to make conservation more effective and more equitable.

2. Dr. Rohan Arthur



Dr. Rohan Arthur is a senior scientist and founding trustee of the Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF) in Karnataka, India. He heads NCF's Oceans and Coasts program, an interdisciplinary group that works on a range of issues, including understanding human-wildlife interactions in aquatic environments. His research interests concern issues of conservation, particularly the implications of climate change for marine ecosystems, the rational management of marine systems and fisheries in India, and the interface between policy, traditional practices, and ecosystem management.

Plenary Title: Tracking change in the coral reefs of Lakshadweep or how I became pessimistic about conservation optimism

Abstract: There is a growing movement in conservation that is reversing the way we think about the conservation crisis. Not everything is grim, it says. There are stories of hope around. These are the stories we need to focus on, not the normally catastrophist narratives we are typically fed. The citizenry, it seems, is inured to such tales of despair, and needs something optimistic to hold on to if we do not want it to descend into a paralysis of doom. In this talk, I will reflect on my own troubled relationship with these ideas from my own small experience in the Lakshadweep Archipelago. Our team has been tracking changes to the coral reefs in Lakshadweep since 1998, exploring how these reefs have been responding to climate change. In many ways, the complex, sometimes chaotic trajectories these reefs have taken mirror my shifting position in relation to ocean optimism. After two decades of studying coral reefs, I am no longer as certain as I may have been when I began about the right way to think about their conservation, far less talk about it. Without offering any solutions, I will argue against the push towards solutionism when thinking about the future of tropical coral reefs or the other conservation problems that surround us.

3. Ms. Syeda Rizwana Hasan



Ms. Syeda Rizwana Hasan is a lawyer and executive director of the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA), a public interest law firm. Growing up in a politically engaged family, she committed herself to public service and, after receiving her master's degree in law at age 24, joined BELA. She soon became one of the country's leading voices for the environment. Today, Hasan manages six offices with nearly 60 staff and is one of the leading environmental lawyers enrolled with the Supreme Court of Bangladesh. It is for her persistent legal activism for regulations for

the ship breaking industry in Bangladesh that she was awarded the Goldman Environmental Prize in 2009.

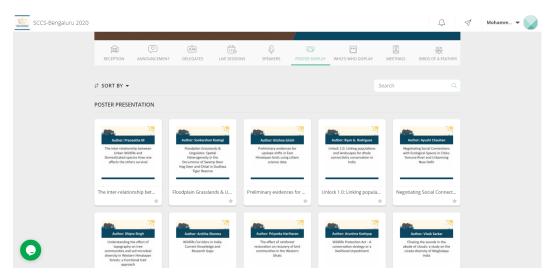
Plenary Title: Environmental justice: regional perspective

Abstract: The session shall outline the major environmental challenges faced by the region to be followed by discussion on legal responses to the same. The discussion shall highlight the evolution of the concept of environmental justiceand its legal parameters in South Asian countries. This shall logically include sharing of some key facts on the state of environmental performances of the countries, the basic features of the regulatory regime, the role being played by the judicial fora in upholding environmental rights and demanding performances, and of course the challenges for sustainable development. Factors and actors that promote and restrain the realization of environmental justice shall also be discussed. Some common environmental challenges that require regional approach for solution and legal synergies that exist in the South Asian countries shall be flagged. The achievements in enacting progressive laws, setting up strong institutions, and fashioning new remedies shall be discussed. Finally, some recommendations shall be put forward for addressing administrative, policy and legal challenges-crucial for undoing the legacy of culture of impunity and for responsive, pro-nature and pro-people environmental governance.

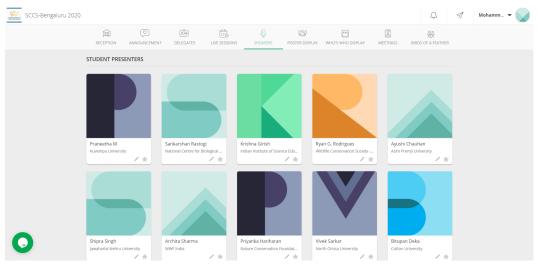
STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

We continued with the tradition of having a single session (no parallel sessions) at a time with 10 minutes allotted for each student, which comprised 7 minutes of presentation and 3 minutes for questions and interaction for student talks. On the other hand, student posters presentations were to be conducted in 3 minutes each with 7 minutes for questions from judges and audience members.

Talks and posters covered a variety of topics such as Genetics, Deforestation, Evolution and Recovery Assessment, Understanding Mammalian Diversity, Impact of Rainforest Fragmentation on Anuran Diversity, Wildlife Conflict Mitigation, Understanding Distribution Dynamics, Bio-culture Conservation, Spatial Heterogeneity, Rainforest Restoration etc. Presentations covered a wide range of taxa: from fishes and mammals, to birds and microbes, across an equally diverse range of habitats such as marine ecosystems and rain-forests.



Student Poster Display



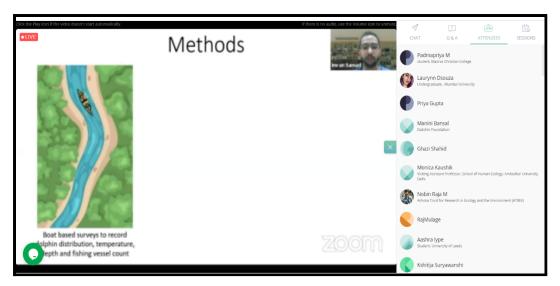
Student Talk Presenters

STUDENT TALKS

| Speaker | Title | |
|-----------------|--|--|
| Bitupan Deka | Forest or Monoculture: A study of deforestation in Goalpara district of Assam | |
| Divyashree Rana | Investigating genetic landscapes of the fishing cat Prionailurus viverrinus in India | |
| Ansha Sehgal | Impacts of free-ranging dogs (Canis lupus familiaris) on wetland-dependent avifauna | |
| Arjun Kamdar | Human-elephant conflict mitigation as a public good: what determines fence maintenance? | |
| Imran Samad | mran Samad Life under control? Understanding the distribution dynamics of the Ganges river dolphin in a flow regulated river-canal system | |
| Kanishka Mehta | Urbanization's worst is yet to come: bird species richness responses to built-up areas and non-native vegetation in Udaipur city | |
| Aditya Pradhan | Aditya Pradhan Socio-cultural valuation of ecosystem services in the socio-ecological landscape of Darjeeling-Sikkim Eastern Himalaya | |
| Abriti Moktan | Devithans: the sacred sites embodying biocultural conservation | |

STUDENT POSTERS

| Name | Title | |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| Sankarshan | Floodplain Grasslands & Ungulates: Spatial Heterogeneity in the Occurrence of Swamp Deer | |
| Rastogi | Hog Deer and Chital in Dudhwa Tiger Reserve | |
| Arunima Kashyap | Wildlife Protection Act - A conservation strategy or a livelihood impediment | |
| Krishna Girish | Preliminary evidences for upslope shifts in East Himalayan birds using citizen science data | |
| Ayushi Chauhan | Negotiating Social Connections with Ecological Spaces in Cities: Yamuna River and Urbanising New Delhi | |
| Shipra Singh | Understanding the effect of topography on tree communities and soil microbial diversity in Western Himalayan forests: a functional trait approach | |
| Vivek Sarkar | Chasing the sounds in the abode of clouds: a study on the cicada diversity of Meghalaya India | |
| Ryan G. Rodrigues | Unlock 1.0: Linking populations and landscapes for dhole connectivity conservation in India | |
| Priyanka Hariharan | The effect of rainforest restoration on recovery of bird communities in the Western Ghats | |
| Praneetha M | The inter-relationship between Urban Wildlife and Domesticated species: How one affects the other's survival | |
| Archita Sharma | Wildlife Corridors in India: Current Knowledge and Research Gaps | |



Student Talk



Student Poster

NETWORKING AT SCCS-Bengaluru 2020

1. BIRDS OF A FEATHER SESSION

Birds of a feather is a networking session that lasts an hour or so. This year, it took place on Day 1 after the plenary session, wherein participants would join a virtual conference room titled with the topics given below to discuss or debate the headlining topic.

Participants were free to join the room of their interest with the only limitation being the capacity of each room - 16 members (including the facilitator). We identified, in advance, a few broad conservation themes, and assigned facilitators to each room where they monitored and directed the conversation towards the topic at hand. The purpose of this session is that the participants can make like-minded friends at the conference as well as network with experts in their area of interest.



Nature/conservation education and outreach



Working with the media towards effective conservation campaigns

Birds Of A Feather 2020 Topics

| S. No. | Topics | Resource person/s |
|---------|---|------------------------------|
| 1. | One health: zoonotic diseases and disease | Abi Tamim Vanak |
| | spillover to humans | |
| | | |
| 2. | Forest restoration | Divya Mudappa and TR Shankar |
| | | Raman |
| | | |
| 3. | Plastic pollution and its mitigation in marine | Chetana Purushottam |
| | systems | |
| | D 1'c' 1 1 | M II 'D I |
| 4. | Political ecology | Madhuri Ramesh |
| 5. | Working with the media towards effective | Cara Tejpal |
| | conservation action/campaigns | Cara Tejpar |
| | conscretion denony compargns | |
| 6. | Impacts of feral species on native biodiversity | Chandrima Home |
| | | |
| 7. | Nature/conservation education and outreach | Karishma Modi |
| | - | |

For each "flock", we identified at least one resource person as a "facilitator" from amongst the pool of resource persons or PhD students known to the organisers. These focus groups were provided space and time to network amongst themselves. Participants were given the choice to migrate between flocks or form their own flocks as well, if they chose to do so.

2. CAREERS IN CONSERVATION

The aim of this panel discussion was to introduce students to the diversity of careers available and to give them the opportunity to interact with invited panelists who work and contribute to different aspects of conservation. For students who are mostly ecologists and conservation biologists early in their academic careers, we had hoped that this session would enable them to think beyond the traditional research-related careers and inform them about the alternative routes to careers in conservation.

The panel discussion took place on Day 3. Responses on the conference feedback can vouch for the fact that the participants found this extremely helpful. The session was moderated by Dr. Uma Ramakrishnan, who introduced the panelists – who were chosen as a representative sample of the major careers commonly observed in conservation circles. Following this, the panel answered questions from the audience.



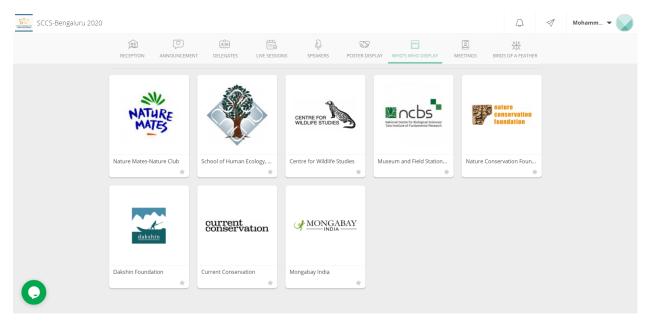
SCCS 2020 "Conservation Careers: Women in Conservation" panelist (left to right & top to bottom) Sandhya Sekar – Mongabay India, Nayana Udayashankar - EQUATIONS, Vanjulavalli Karthick – IFS, Arpitha Kodiveri – European University Institute, and Uma Ramakrishnan (Moderator) - NCBS

3. WHO'S WHO IN CONSERVATION

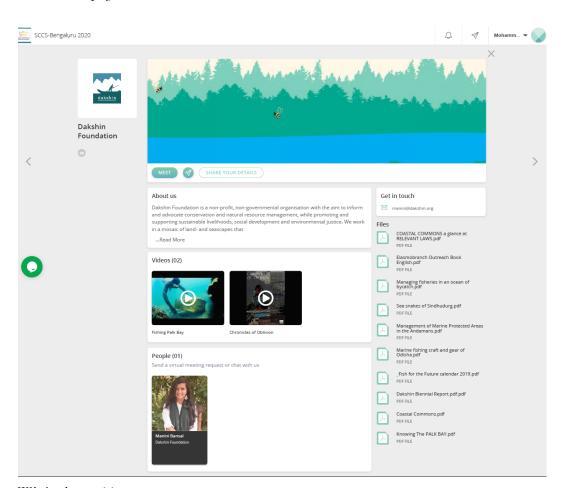
The Who's Who in Conservation session provides a platform for conservation agencies including NGOs, research institutions and university departments to showcase their work. This session provides an opportunity for conference participants to learn about the work of these agencies as well as discuss possible career opportunities and collaborative work.

This year, we had 8 Who's Who participants, with a mix of conservation action groups, NGOs, magazines and research institutions:

- 1. Nature Mates Nature Club
- 2. School of Human Ecology, Ambedkar University Delhi
- 3. Centre for Wildlife Studies
- 4. Museum and Field Stations facility- National Centre for Biological Sciences
- 5. Nature Conservation Foundation
- 6. Dakshin Foundation
- 7. Current Conservation
- 8. Mongabay India



Who's who display



Who's who participant page

STUDENT AWARDS

Evaluators chose two noteworthy/exceptional talks and two poster presentations. Instead of assigning ranks, the top 2 candidates (each for talks and posters) were announced as winners. Evaluators took cognizance of different attributes of the study including academic rigour, enterprise of the researcher, novelty of the research, the background in which the research was conducted and potential impact the research may have on conservation research, practice and/or its discourse – all important factors that go into making conservation research relevant and important in the real world. The above criteria were provided as pointers and not as a prescriptive list; referees decided amongst them what attributes they thought were important, based on which they evaluated the presentations.

Additionally, evaluators were also requested to provide written/online feedback to each individual presenter ranging from their presentation style, the quality of their science, research and conservation recommendations, and the improvements they suggested.

A single panel evaluated all the talks, while different groups of evaluators reviewed the posters in different themes.

TALK AND POSTER WINNERS

Talk

- Imran Samad: Life under control? Understanding the distribution dynamics of the Ganges river dolphin in a flow regulated river-canal system
- Aditya Pradhan: Socio-cultural valuation of ecosystemservices in the socio-ecological landscape of Darjeeling-Sikkim Eastern Himalaya

Poster

- Krishna Girish: Preliminary evidence for upslope shifts in East Himalayan birds using citizen science data
- Sankarshan Rastogi: Floodplain Grasslands & Ungulates: Spatial Heterogeneity in the Occurrence of Swamp Deer Hog Deer and Chital in Dudhwa TigerReserve

| STUDENT CONFERENCE ON CONSERVATION SCIENCE 2020 |
|--|
| http://www.sccs-bng.org • sccs@sccs-bng.org |
| CERTIFICATE |
| OF |
| EXCELLENCE |
| EXCELLENCE |
| |
| This certificate is proudly presented to |
| in recognition of an outstanding talk presentation titled |
| given at the |
| Student Conference on Conservation Science - Bengaluru 2020 |
| which was held virtually between 9th and 11th November 2020. |
| |
| Naman |
| Marianne Manuel Member |
| Organizing Committee SCCS-Bengaluru 2020 |
| 3CC3-Bengdiara 2020 |
| |
| V. |
| |
| y |
| |
| |
| Encbs English |
| ALAN TOWN IN A AND IN |
| The Student Conference on Conservation Science is strengthening the career of young conservation scientists around the world through |
| events in Bengaluru, Brisbane, Beijing, Cambridge, New York and Tihany. |
| |

Certificate Template: Best Student Talk

DONORS AND FINANCIALS

SCCS-Bengaluru is developing long-term relationships with many of its donors and is glad to be supported by a diverse set of institutions and individuals. Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF) managed the finances for SCCS 2020.

DONORS

Given our understanding of the funding crunch being experienced by the conservation sector and our reduced costs from transitioning to an online event, we did not approach any organisations for funding this year. However, our past donors who financially supported SCCS-Bengaluru over the last 10 years have made it possible for us to be able to annually save some of our registrations funds and build a corpus which we used this year.























































We also gratefully acknowledge in-kind support from Oryx and Fauna and Flora International

EXPENDITURE

WSCCS 2020 incurred a total expenditure of

| Budget line | Total |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Administrator | 1,20,000 |
| Virtual Conference Platform | 3,09,885 |
| Prizes | In-kind |
| | |
| Total | Rs. 4,29,885 |

PEOPLE BEHIND THE CONFERENCE

The eleventh edition of SCCS-BNG was largely successful due to excellent assistance and support of key people.

I. CONFERENCE TEAM

Organising Committee

- 1. Abinand Reddy (Nature Conservation Foundation)
- 2. Marianne Manuel (Dakshin foundation)
- 3. Nupur Kale (WCS-India)
- 4. R. Sukumar (Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science)
- 5. Siddhartha Krishnan (ATREE)
- 6. Suhel Quader (Nature Conservation Foundation)
- 7. Vani Sreekanta (Independent researcher)
- 8. Uma Ramakrishnan (National Centre for Biological Sciences)
- 9. Umesh Srinivasan (Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science)

Administrative and Support Team

- 1. Mohammed Aamish (Conference Administrator)
- 2. Smita Prabhakar (Nature Conservation Foundation)
- 3. Shivkumar (Nature Conservation Foundation)
- 4. S. Nirmala (Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science)
- 5. Vinay Hegde (Nature Conservation Foundation)
- 6. Bhavya S (National Centre for Biological Sciences)

Advisory Board

- 1. Advait Edgaonkar (IIFM)
- 2. Asmita Kabra (Ambedkar University Delhi)
- 3. Deepak Apte (BNHS)
- 4. Firoz Ahmed (Aaranyak)
- 5. Ghazala Shahabuddin (CEDAR)
- 6. Gopi Sundar (NCF)
- 7. Kamal Bawa (ATREE)
- 8. Krithi Karanth (CWS)

Advisory and Welfare Council

- 1. Jayshree Ratnam
- 2. Hari Sreedhar
- 3. Arshiya Bose
- 4. Kavita Isvaran
- 5. MD Madhusudhan

Abstract Working Group:

- 1. Mousumi Ghosh
- 2. Ovee Thorat
- 3. Seshadri KS
- 4. Venkat Ramanujam

Plenary Working Group:

- 1. Aarthi Sridhar
- 2. Munib Khanyari
- 3. Jayashree Ratnam
- 4. Koustubh Sharma
- 5. Ranjini Murali

II. ABSTRACT REVIEWERS

- 1. Aarthi Sridhar
- 2. Abi Tamim Vanak
- 3. Aniruddha Marathe
- 4. Arpitha Kodiveri
- 5. Bharath Sundaram
- 6. Bharti Dharapuram
- 7. Budhaditya Das
- 8. Chandrima Home
- 9. Devcharan Jathanna
- 10. Gopi Sundar
- 11. Hari Sridhar
- 12. Jeganathan P.
- 13. Karthik Teegalapalli
- 14. Krishnapriya Tamma
- 15. MD Madhusudan
- 16. Meera Oommen
- 17. MO Anand
- 18. Munib Khanyari
- 19. Murali M.
- 20. Nachiket Kelkar
- 21. Narayan Sharma
- 22. Nisarg Prakash
- 23. Nitya Mohanty
- 24. Raman Kumar
- 25. Ravi Jambhekar
- 26. Robin VV
- 27. Rohit Naniwadekar
- 28. Shomita Mukherjee
- 29. Shreekant Deodhar
- 30. Uttara Mendiratta
- 31. Vardhan Patankar
- 32. Varun Torsekar
- 33. Viraj Torsekar

III. STUDENT PRESENTATIONS JUDGES

Poster Judges

- 1. Budhaditya Das
- 2. Meghna Krishnadas
- 3. Narayan Sharma

Talk Judges

- 1. Advait Edgaonkar
- 2. Nitin Sekar
- 3. Vishnupriya Kolipakam

IV. KEY SERVICE PROVIDERS

Website & Virtual Conference Management

Alpcord Network Events - Chetan Mansharamani, Saurabh Sharma, Tarun Mahajan, Gulshan Singh

V. OTHER SUPPORT

We also thank the organising institutions of SCCS-Bengaluru 2020 for all the institutional support that they have provided.

- 1. Centre for Ecological Sciences, IISc
- 2. National Centre for Biological Sciences
- 3. Nature Conservation Foundation
- 4. Foundation for Ecological Security

DAY WISE SCHEDULE

| SCHEDULE- SCCS Bengaluru 2020 (Virtual) | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| Day I - 9 th November | | |
| 1100 - 1200 Hrs | WELCOME & PLENARY 1 (DR ASMITA KABRA) | |
| 1200 - 1300 Hrs | BIRDS OF A FEATHER | |
| 1300 - 1500 Hrs | BREAK | |
| 1500 - 1600 Hrs | STUDENT TALKS | |
| 1600 - 1700 Hrs | STUDENT POSTERS | |
| Day II - 10 th November | | |
| 1100 - 1200 Hrs | STUDENT TALKS | |
| 1200 - 1300 Hrs | STUDENT POSTERS | |
| 1300 - 1500 Hrs | BREAK | |
| 1500 - 1600 Hrs | PLENARY 2 (DR ROHAN ARTHUR) | |
| 1600 - 1700 Hrs | WHO'S WHO | |
| Day III - 11 th November | | |
| 1130 - 1230 Hrs | CAREERS IN CONSERVATION | |
| 1230 - 1500 Hrs | BREAK | |
| 1500 - 1600 Hrs | PLENARY 3 (SYEDA RIZWANA HASAN) | |
| 1600 - 1700 Hrs | ANNOUNCEMENTS & CLOSING | |