

**International Conference on the
Biology & Conservation of the
Amphibians & Reptiles of South Asia**

ABSTRACTS



Editor
Anslem de Silva

Jointly organized by

Amphibia and Reptile Research Organization of Sri Lanka (ARROS)
University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka
Department of Wildlife Conservation/GEF, Sri Lanka
Institute of Fundamental Studies, Sri Lanka
IUCN/SSC/ South Asian Reptile and Amphibian Specialist Group

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University of Peradeniya, Peradeniya
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The Department of Wildlife Conservation is committed in protecting, conserving both Fauna and Flora, their habitats and in general the environment of Sri Lanka. Research and awareness programmes in this field, therefore, form a major component of its activities. Among its various programmes the Department of Wildlife Conservation has taken many steps in helping and conducting research and awareness programmes of both Reptiles and amphibians of Sri Lanka. It funded the first National Conference on Herpetology Research & Conservation in Sri Lanka, and once again the Department is happy to be associated with this prestigious international forum. While wishing the Conference all the success the Department of Wildlife Conservation expects a better dialogue and understanding with the respective wildlife managers of the world and in particular of the region as a result of this conference.

*Director, Department of Wildlife Conservation
June 12th, 1996*

The IUCN/SSC South Asian Reptile And Amphibian Specialist Group

Home of one of tropical Asia's greatest areas of biological diversity, southern Asia, including the countries next to, or in the proximity of, the Indian Ocean, including Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, is a region of exceptional diversity of amphibians (247 species) reptiles (632 species). These figures are greater than species counts for much larger areas, such as China, North America or Europe.

The biological roles played by amphibians and reptiles are well documented. Man himself benefits from the presence of amphibians and reptiles in numerous ways. Indigenous, Unani (Greco-Roman) as well as western medicine are dependent on extracts from amphibians and reptiles. Farming of crocodiles is a legitimate and lucrative industry for many of the tropical world's developing countries, producing leather, food, poultry fed and other products. Snake venom is used in medical research, for the production of life-saving drugs and pain-killers. amphibians have been proposed as bio-indicators, being known to be important in detecting excessive nutrient levels in waterbodies, radioactive contamination, thermal and chemical pollution. The loss of habitat through deforestation, and other causes is considered to be a major threat to the long-term survival of many species. Equally worrying is the significant volume in the illegal amphibian and reptile trade. The IUCN South Asian Reptile and amphibian Specialist Group succeeds the IUCN/SSC Indian Subcontinent Reptile and amphibian Specialist Group, which was formed in 1989 to address these and other problems. It has at present a membership of 29, representing six of the seven counties of the region. The group had its first meeting at Utkal University in the spring of 1992. The second meeting is now being organized at the University of Peradeniya and Institute of Fundamental Studies, Sri Lanka, through the hard work of our Sri Lankan colleagues under the guidance of Ansem de Silva. Besides permitting colleagues in this part of the world to meet, it will allow us to make a fresh effort to grapple with common