

International Conference on Sustainability, Biodiversity and Conservation: Implications for Livelihood and Community Development.

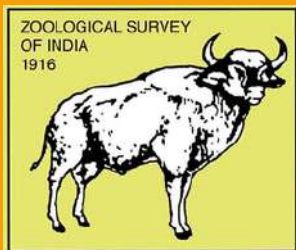


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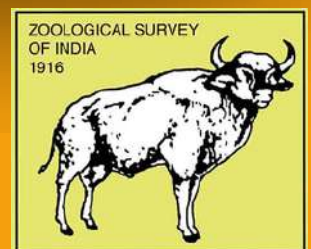
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DR. DAN HARRIES

Assistant Professor,
School of Energy, Geoscience, Infrastructure and Society,
Institute for Life and Earth Sciences
Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, United Kingdom

Dan Harries is a lecturer in Marine Biology at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh UK. His main teaching expertise is in invertebrate zoology and in marine field survey methodologies. His main research is on benthic invertebrate ecology with a particular interest in conservation, biogenic reefs and invasive species. This research is primarily delivered by field survey work by means of Scuba diving.

In his spare time he is an enthusiastic sports caver. His caving activity has spanned almost 50 years and he has been involved in cave exploration throughout the UK and in several other countries. He first visited the Meghalayan caves in 2001 and has returned several times since with the most recent visit in 2026. He has become interested in photographically documenting the cave biota and in collating the observations and records of cave fauna noted by the various members of the cave exploration teams. Such records have now been accumulating since 1992 and represent a rich source of knowledge on Meghalayan cave biology.



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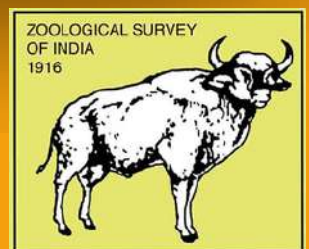


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DR. KASSIAN T.T. AMESHO

Associate Professor,
University of Namibia
Windhoek, Namibia

Dr. Amesho is a globally recognized academic and researcher, celebrated for his contributions to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), Environmental Sustainability, and Climate Change Resilience. Recently appointed as the Research Chair in Climate Change, Environment and Resilience at the University of Namibia (UNAM), he is leading transformative efforts to address complex environmental challenges through innovation and strategic collaboration. His professional journey reflects a profound commitment to advancing sustainability education, research, and community impact, with a focus on creating locally relevant and globally impactful solutions. With expertise spanning sustainable development, natural energy resource management, circular economy, and technology and innovation management, Prof. Amesho has successfully led and collaborated on projects that promote clean energy solutions, responsible resource utilization, and sustainable practices. He thrives in multidisciplinary environments, consistently delivering innovative results while mentoring and inspiring future leaders in sustainability. Passionate about fostering education, innovation, and collaboration, Prof. Amesho seeks to drive positive change through goal-oriented research and community-driven initiatives. His current interests include life cycle assessment (LCA), techno-economic analysis of biofuel production, and material flow analysis (MFA), all of which are critical to achieving a sustainable future. Through his role at UNAM, Prof. Amesho is committed to empowering stakeholders, developing cutting-edge research, and advancing global sustainability goals. He welcomes collaborations with fellow academics, researchers, industry experts, and policymakers to innovate, educate, and inspire a more sustainable world.



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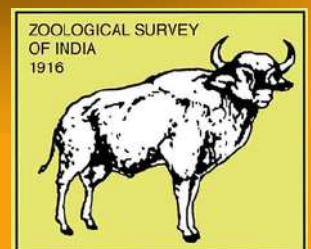
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DR. S. JAYAKUMAR

Professor,
Department of Ecology and Environmental Sciences
Pondicherry University

Prof. S. Jayakumar is a senior faculty member in the Department of Ecology and Environmental Sciences at Pondicherry University with over 30 years of experience in teaching and research. His expertise spans forest ecology, GIS and remote sensing, biodiversity conservation, and ecological restoration. He has coordinated several national and international projects, including Erasmus+ CBHE initiatives, and has contributed extensively to curriculum development, capacity building, and interdisciplinary environmental research.

He earned his Ph.D. in Botany from Bharathidasan University and has achieved significant international recognition through roles as a Research Professor and Postdoctoral Fellow at Yonsei University in South Korea, alongside a national Young Scientist Fellowship from the Department of Science and Technology. His commitment to teaching excellence is underscored by his receipt of the Best Teacher Award from Pondicherry University nine times between 2011 and 2019, and he has successfully mentored 12 PhD and 65 M.Phil graduates. Prof. Jayakumar's extensive research portfolio focuses on geomatics, forest fire dynamics, biodiversity conservation, and urban resilience, leading major initiatives such as the URGENT project and the ENTER environmental open data project. Beyond his academic duties, he serves in various advisory capacities for bodies like the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and the Vector Control Research Centre, highlighting his leadership in environmental science and policy.



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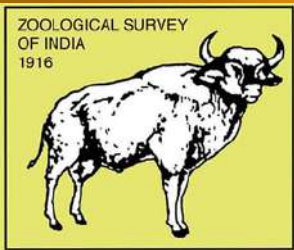


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DR. NEHA JAISWAL

Project Scientist,
Wildlife Institute of India,
Dehradun

Dr. Neha Jaiswal is a forest ecologist with expertise in biodiversity conservation, vegetation ecology, forest structure and dynamics, landscape ecology, and ecosystem assessment. She completed her Ph.D. from Pondicherry University in December 2024. Her research interests include forest restoration, climate change impacts on ecosystems, biodiversity conservation, ecological monitoring, and sustainable forest management. Dr. Jaiswal has contributed to several research and management projects involving biodiversity assessments, forest management planning, ecological restoration, and conservation planning. She is currently associated with the IUCN-led RECAP4NDC project, where she has been involved in the biophysical assessment component. This includes baseline ecological studies, biodiversity and ecosystem assessments, and evaluating landscape-level ecological characteristics to support Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Currently serving as a Project Scientist, she works on interdisciplinary projects that integrate ecological research, spatial analysis, and conservation science to support resilient and sustainable forest landscapes. Her current research assesses the ecological impacts of highway widening on flora, fauna, and habitat connectivity across the Central Indian Landscape. The focus is on biodiversity conservation, wildlife movement, and developing evidence-based mitigation measures for linear infrastructure projects.



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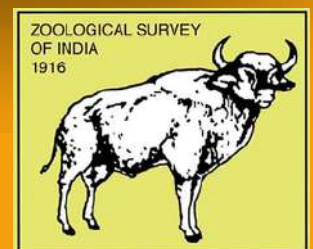
DR. THOTA SIVASANKAR

Assistant Professor (Selection Grade)
School of Computer Science at UPES,
Dehradun

He holds a Ph.D. in Geospatial Intelligence from IIT (ISM) Dhanbad, where his doctoral research focused on retrieving vegetation biophysical parameters using RISAT-1 hybrid polarimetric SAR data. Prior to this, he completed his M.Tech. in Remote Sensing from Andhra University and earned his B.Tech. in Electronics and Communication Engineering.

Dr. Sivasankar brings a unique blend of academic and applied research experience, having worked as a Research Scientist at the North Eastern Space Applications Centre (NESAC), ISRO, and as a Research Scholar at the Indian Institute of Remote Sensing (IIRS), Dehradun. His primary research focuses on the use of geospatial intelligence for natural resource management and disaster management applications.

He is a prolific author with over 10 peer-reviewed journal articles, several conference proceedings, and book chapters to his credit. Dr. Sivasankar has delivered invited talks and training sessions for national and international organizations, and he actively contributes as a reviewer to several reputed scientific journals.



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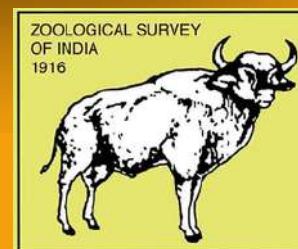


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DR. BIBHAB KUMAR TALUKDAR

Secretary General, and Executive Director
Aaranyak (A Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation)

Dr. Bibhab Kumar Talukdar has been engaged with Wildlife Research and Conservation and one of the founders of Aaranyak in 1989. He is the Secretary General and CEO of Aaranyak and currently the Chair of IUCN/SSC; Asian Rhino Specialist Group. He worked as the Senior Advisor of International Rhino Foundation for Asian Rhinos. He is also a member of Rhino Taxon Advisory Group of European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA). He is an Ashoka Fellow since 2007 and recipient of IUCN SSC's Chair Citation in 2008 and Harry Messel Award of IUCN SSC in 2024. He has served as a member of National Board of Wildlife (NBWL), including the Standing Committee of NBWL and Project Elephant Steering Committee formed by Govt. of India. He is a member of Rhino Task Force of Assam and Rhino Task Force of Bihar to help governments in rhino range expansion with the respective states. He served as a member of State Board of Wildlife, Assam and Assam State Biodiversity Board.



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DR. AKALESH KUMAR VERMA

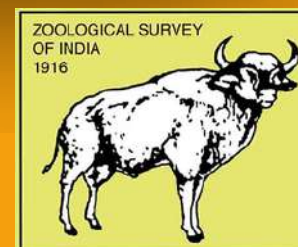
*Assistant Professor,
Department of Zoology,
Cotton University, Assam*

Dr. Akalesh Kumar Verma is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Zoology, Cotton University, Guwahati, Assam. His research contributions span diverse areas of Life Sciences, including Molecular Oncology, Natural Product Chemistry, Bioinformatics and Freshwater Pearl Farming.

His research in cancer biology focuses on exploring bioactive natural compounds, molecular mechanisms of tumor regulation and identification of potential therapeutic molecules through experimental and computational approaches. He has worked on anticancer evaluation of natural products and molecular targets associated with cancer progression.

A major area of his recent work is freshwater pearl culture technology, where he has contributed towards developing innovative and sustainable pearl farming techniques using freshwater mussels. His research includes biocompatible/biopolymer-coated pearl nuclei, improvement of pearl quality, mussel survival and promotion of pearl farming as a livelihood and entrepreneurship opportunity in Northeast India.

Dr. Verma has also been involved in academic innovation, capacity building and community outreach through training programmes and awareness initiatives related to pearl culture and entrepreneurship development among students, farmers and young entrepreneurs.



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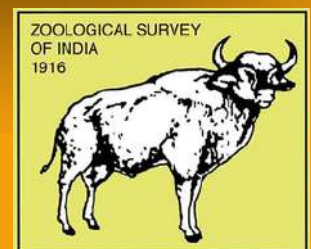
DR. S. R. HAJONG

Professor,
Department of Zoology,
North Eastern Hill University, Meghalaya

Prof. S. R. Hajong has over two decades of teaching, research, and academic leadership experience, he has made significant contributions to the fields of insect diversity, taxonomy, and ecology. His work has been instrumental in documenting and understanding the rich insect fauna of Northeast India, a globally recognized biodiversity hotspot.

Prof. Hajong is widely recognized as an expert on the cicadas of Northeast India. He has played a key role in the discovery and description of new cicada species, including *Platylomia kohimaensis*, thereby adding valuable knowledge to the taxonomy and biogeography of the region. His fieldwork and systematic studies have helped position NEHU as a centre for entomological research in the Eastern Himalayas.

In addition to his research, Prof. Hajong has an extensive publication record with numerous research papers in national and international peer-reviewed journals and book chapters. He has guided many M.Sc. and Ph.D. scholars in the field of honeybee biology and polymorphism; bee diversity, Ant ecology and defensive strategies, Butterfly diversity across protective habitats of Meghalaya and Northeast; mating and foraging behaviour of butterflies; Cicada taxonomy and diversity of north-east India and its bioacoustics and exploration of insect diversity from northeast India.



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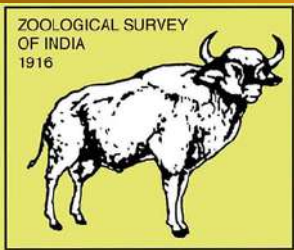


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DR. RAJESH BAJPAI

Associate Professor,
Department of Environmental Studies
North Eastern Hill University, Meghalaya

Dr. Rajesh Bajpai is a distinguished environmental scientist currently serving as the Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Environmental Studies at North Eastern Hill University (NEHU), Shillong. He earned his Ph.D. from Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University and CSIR-National Botanical Research Institute, specializing in lichen research for biodeterioration and biomonitoring. Throughout his career, Dr. Bajpai has made significant contributions to lichen systematics and climate change studies, describing four new species and forty-two new records for India. His professional journey includes roles as a Scientist Pool and Young Scientist at CSIR-NBRI, complemented by specialized training from SAC-ISRO and IIRS-ISRO in alpine ecosystem dynamics and remote sensing. With over 100 published papers and several co-authored books with major publishers like Springer and Wiley, his academic impact is demonstrated by an H-index of 24 and over 1,700 citations. He has received numerous awards, including the Environmental Conservation Award and multiple best research paper honors. Dr. Bajpai is a Fellow of the National Academy of Sciences, India, and serves as the Joint Secretary of the Indian Lichenological Society. His current research interests encompass lichen bioresource mapping, bioprospection, and long-term climate change assessments in the Indian Himalayan Regions.



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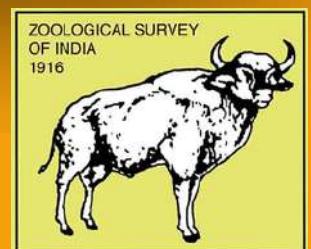
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DR. UTTAM SAIKIA

Scientist 'D'

*Zoological Survey of India, North Eastern Regional Centre
Shillong, Meghalaya, India*

Dr. Uttam Saikia is currently serving as Scientist 'D' at the Zoological Survey of India, North Eastern Regional Centre, Shillong. He obtained his PhD in Zoology from Gauhati University working on the taxonomy and distribution of the bat fauna of Himachal Pradesh. He is an accomplished zoologist with over two decades of experience in biodiversity research, taxonomy, and conservation biology. He is widely recognized for his expertise in the systematics, taxonomy, distribution, and conservation of small mammals, particularly bats, with extensive field experience across the Himalayan and Northeastern regions of India. He also has a deep interest in exploration of subterranean fauna. Over the course of his career, Dr. Saikia has made significant contributions to faunal surveys, biodiversity assessments, cave ecology, ecological monitoring, including discovery of a few new species of bats from India. His research has advanced our understanding of India's mammalian diversity and has supported evidence-based conservation initiatives. He has authored more than 50 peer-reviewed research papers, books, scientific reports, and review articles published in reputed national and international journals. He is the author of the pictorial handbook "Bats of Meghalaya". He was also a key contributor to the recently published report "State of India's Bats 2024-25". In addition to his research accomplishments, Dr. Saikia is actively engaged in scientific outreach and public awareness programmes, promoting the importance of biodiversity and environmental stewardship.



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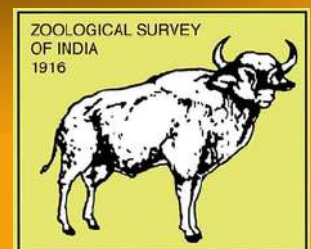
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MR. BHASKAR SAIKIA

Assistant Zoologist

Zoological Survey of India, North Eastern Regional Centre
Shillong, Meghalaya, India

Bhaskar Saikia is working as an Assistant Zoologist at Zoological Survey of India, North Eastern Regional Centre, Shillong. He has over 17 years of research experience in amphibian taxonomy particularly in North-East India. During his career, he has described 11 new amphibian species, including two species from Meghalaya and has made significant contributions to documenting the region's faunal diversity. He has authored more than 55 research papers in national and international journals and has written three books, including the widely acclaimed *Amphibians of Meghalaya* in 2025. He has also completed the IUCN Red List Assessor Training and actively mentors students through internships and scientific outreach programmes, promoting taxonomy and natural history among the next generation of researchers.



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DR. JUNIE PEARL LYGDOH

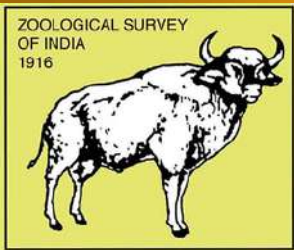
Senior Scientist and Assistant-Director
Bio-Resources Development Centre, Science & Technology Cell,
Planning, Investment Promotion & Sustainable Development
Department, Government of Meghalaya

Dr. Junie has over 20 years of expertise in bioresource conservation and sustainable development, she has played a pivotal role in local seed conservation efforts, initiation of Community Seed Saving in Meghalaya. She has successfully guided biotechnology interventions in orchids and banana micropropagation, promotion of potato seed tuber production through apical rooted cuttings (ARC) technology in the state.

Her work has significantly contributed to sustainable agriculture, community-based biotechnology programmes, with a particular focus on women-led bioentrepreneurship in orchid floriculture and livelihood enhancement.

Top of Form
She also leads various centrally funded projects, documentation of traditional knowledge, and the promotion of indigenous medicine systems in the state. She has implemented various programmes and projects to bring the healers under a common platform, to improve the traditional healing practices and promote this indigenous knowledge system. She is also a member of the Khasi Traditional Medicine Commission of the Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council which is working for the promotion and protection of the Khasi Traditional Medicine.

Following the notification of BRDC as the State Organic Certification Agency, she has played a key role in promoting organic certification programmes and strengthening awareness and adoption of organic farming practices across the state, supporting sustainable agricultural growth in the state of Meghalaya.



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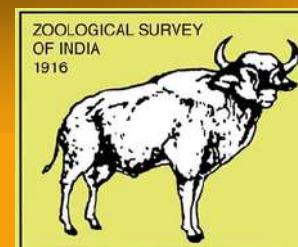
DR. D. EVANOREEN ANN KHONGWIR

Scientist

Meghalaya Biodiversity Board,
Shillong

Dr. Evanoreen plays a key role in the implementation of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002. Her work encompasses biodiversity conservation, biodiversity policy implementation, community-based natural resource management, biodiversity documentation, capacity building and supporting the implementation of national and global biodiversity frameworks. Her work also focuses on strengthening Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs), coordinating the preparation and upgradation of the People's Biodiversity Registers (PBRs), facilitating the development of Biodiversity Management Plans, promoting Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS), identifying Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHS) and providing technical guidance for their protection, conservation and sustainable management.

She has been actively involved in biodiversity documentation, capacity building, awareness and outreach programmes, and the documentation of traditional knowledge. Her professional interests include ecosystem restoration, the sustainable use of biological resources, community-led conservation and mainstreaming biodiversity into local development planning. Through her work, she strives to strengthen collaboration among local communities, government agencies, academic institutions and other stakeholders to advance biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in Meghalaya.



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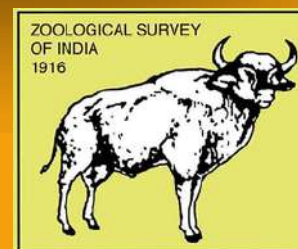


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DR. BASHIDA MASSAR

Associate Professor
Department of Zoology
St. Anthony's College, Shillong

Dr. Bashida Massar is a conservationist, educator, and nature enthusiast committed to biodiversity conservation through community-led initiatives. Working closely with local communities, she has played a pivotal role in safeguarding fish populations in their natural habitats, contributing to the recovery and resurgence of several species that were once on the brink of local extinction and are now thriving in river ecosystems. Deeply rooted in Ri War, she has documented the region's rich biodiversity, indigenous heritage, and traditional ecological knowledge through her published works, thereby strengthening efforts to preserve and promote local wisdom. As a Zoology educator at the undergraduate level, Dr. Bashida Massar is dedicated to nurturing environmental stewardship among students by integrating scientific inquiry with indigenous knowledge systems. Her work exemplifies the power of community participation, cultural heritage, and ecological understanding in advancing sustainable biodiversity conservation.



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DR ALBERT CHIANG

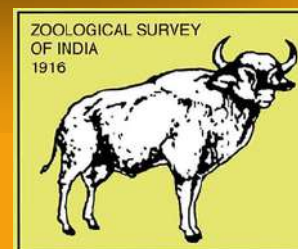
Officer on Special Duty

Meghalaya Basin Development Authority (MBDA)

*& Co-Principal Investigator, Meghalaya Climate Change Centre
Govt of Meghalaya*

Dr. Albert Chiang is a distinguished scientist specializing in Restoration with special interest in the field of Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation, Climate Resilient Livelihoods and Climate Finance. His academic foundation includes a Ph.D. from the National Centre for Biological Sciences (TIFR) and an M.Sc. in Zoology from North Eastern Hill University, where he was recognized with the Prof. M.K. Khare Award for academic excellence. Dr. Chiang's career is marked by prestigious honours, most notably the Welcome Trust-DBT India Alliance Early Career Fellowship and a tenure as an Honorary Research Associate at University College London (UCL).

Beyond his fundamental research, he has held diverse professional roles. He has been a pivotal figure in regional environmental governance, serving as a Special Invitee to the Meghalaya Biodiversity Board and a core organizer for the India International Cherry Blossom Festival. His leadership was also instrumental in the National Workshop on the conservation and management of the Sangai. With specialized training from EMBL Germany and various international travel grants for research in cell biology and neuroscience, Dr. Chiang continues to contribute significantly to climate change mitigation, ecological restoration and bioresource management in the Himalayan region.



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