

## MEERA ANNA OOMMEN

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### CURRICULUM VITAE

**Date of Birth** : 20<sup>th</sup> February 1974  
**Nationality** : Indian  
**Address** : Dakshin Foundation, C 305, Samvridhhi Gardenia Apartments,  
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### PROFILE

I have over ten years of experience working as a researcher and academic on large-scale interdisciplinary projects related to biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in various parts of India. These include conducting pure as well as applied quantitative research related to biodiversity conservation, as well as contributing to large-scale linkages studies and stock-taking assessments of institutional capacities and policies at the national level. For the past five years, I worked as the Managing Editor of *Conservation & Society*, a peer-reviewed interdisciplinary journal of conservation and coordinated the journal team. I am interested in the interface between ecological science and its application with special reference to forest and modified systems, policy and management, and conservation biology. Most of this work is centered around the concepts of species diversity, biogeography and macroecology in mountain ecosystems.

### EDUCATION

- 1996      Geography, (special subjects Biogeography, Ecological Issues in Development), Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi
- 1994      B.Sc. Geography (Statistics and Geology as subsidiaries), University of Kerala, India

### EMPLOYMENT AND CONSULTANCIES

- **Managing Editor**, (April 2005 – 2009), **Assistant Managing Editor** (October 2004 – April 2005), **Conservation and Society** (<http://www.conservationandsociety.org>). Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), Bangalore.
- **Principal Investigator & Team Leader** (2004) 'Developing an Educational CD-ROM for the Western Ghats in southern India'. Rufford Foundation, UK.
- **Independent Consultant, National Capacity Needs Self Assessment (NCSA) Project Biodiversity Component** (February 2006 to March 2007). Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment

(ATREE), Bangalore. NCSA Project of the United Nations Development Programme, Global Environmental Facility and Ministry of Environment and Forests, India. Core Team Member and Independent Consultant for the Western Himalaya and Trans-Himalaya Biogeographic Zones.

- **Project Assistant** (2001 – 2002) – Monitoring nesting population of leatherback turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*) at Galathea National Park, Great Nicobar Island. Andaman Nicobar Environmental Team and Centre for Herpetology, Madras Crocodile Bank Trust, Tamil Nadu, India.
- **Field Biologist** (2001 – 2002) – A preliminary study on the status, distribution, ecology and behaviour of the Nicobar Treeshrew (*Tupaia nicobarica*) in Galathea National Park, Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve. Andaman Nicobar Environmental Team and Centre for Herpetology, Madras Crocodile Bank Trust, Tamil Nadu, India.
- **Technical Assistant** (1996 – 1998), **Junior Research Fellow** (1998 – 2000), **Senior Research Fellow** (2000 – 2001) **and Technical Editor** (2001), Wildlife Institute of India – United States Fish and Wildlife Service collaborative project “Identify potential areas for conservation of biodiversity in the Indian Himalaya”. Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun.

## **KEY AREAS OF EXPERIENCE**

### **Independent Consultant and Core Team Member, National Capacity Needs Self Assessment (NCSA)**

**Project:** The biodiversity component of the National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA) process aimed to assess the capacities available with a country for fulfilling its mandate towards the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The Core Team worked closely with the Ministry of Environment and Forests, India and the UNDP to design and execute this study. As a Core Team member, I was involved in all stages of the project from design and execution of the project to the preparation of the final report. As an Independent Consultant, I developed the thematic assessments for the Western Himalaya and the Trans-Himalaya.

**Managing Editor, Conservation and Society:** Conservation and Society is a peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary, open-access journal dedicated to the theory and practice of conservation. My formal involvement with the journal has been since October 2004 as the Assistant Managing Editor, and from April 2005 as the Managing Editor.

**Field Biologist, Andaman and Nicobar Environmental Team, Madras Crocodile Bank Trust.** I carried out the first study on the endangered Nicobar treeshrew (*Tupaia nicobarica*), a little known small mammal endemic to the Great and Little Nicobar islands. Apart from ascertaining status and distribution, significant results of this study include insights into the extreme arboreal nature of this species, absentee parental care system and unique commensal feeding associations of these small mammals with sparrow hawks and greater racket-tailed drongos.

**Research Fellow, Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Dehradun.** I worked on a collaborative project entitled 'Identify Potential Areas for Conservation of Biodiversity in the Indian Himalaya' in Hemis National Park, Ladakh (Jammu & Kashmir) and Kedarnath Musk Deer Sanctuary (Uttar Pradesh). This project was a

collaborative effort between the Wildlife Institute of India, the U. S Fish and Wildlife Service and the International Snow Leopard Trust, which aimed at evaluating the present protected area network in the Himalaya and to develop a biodiversity model for the region. From 1996 – 2002, I was involved in research, design and development of the various components of the project. I have conducted extensive surveys of mammals and vegetation in protected areas in the main Himalaya (Garhwal Region of Uttaranchal) as well as the Cold Desert biomes of the Trans Himalaya (Ladakh district, J & K). I have carried out intensive field studies in Kedarnath Musk Deer Sanctuary, Chamoli District and Hemis National Park, Ladakh. The field studies primarily aimed at identifying system-wide patterns (such as the location of diversity peaks, species range-abundance patterns, similarity between sites, etc.) that are crucial aids in reserve selection. Patterns of diversity across macroecological gradients and their conservation implications are the focus of my research interest.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

- **Oommen, M.A.** (*in press*) Treeshrews of south Asia. In: *Mammals of South Asia* (Eds. A.J.T Johnsingh and N. Manjrekar). Universities Press & Orient Longman.
- **Oommen, M.A.** and K. Shanker. 2008. Ecology and behaviour of an endemic treeshrew (*Tupaia nicobarica* Zelebor, 1869) on Great Nicobar Island, India. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 105(1):55-63.
- **ATREE.** 2007. National Capacity Self-Assessment Thematic Assessment Report on Biodiversity. Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment, Bangalore. Final Report (Revised Draft). Core Team Member.
- **Oommen, M.A.** 2006. Biodiversity Conservation in the Himalaya and Trans-Himalaya in Uttaranchal, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir. National Capacity Self-Assessment, Biodiversity Component. Independent Consultant Report. Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment, Bangalore.
- **Oommen, M.A.** and K. Shanker. 2006. Detecting the impact of climate change on woody plants in the Indian Western Himalaya: The role of biogeographic groups. pp. 98 -99. Extended Abstracts of 'Macroecological Tools for Global Change Research', Potsdam, 21 - 23 August 2006. Organised by the Virtual Institute for Macroecology, <http://www.macroecology.org>
- **Oommen, M.A.** and Shanker, K. 2005. Regional species richness patterns emerge from multiple local scale mechanisms in Himalayan plants. *Ecology* 86:3039–3047.
- Tripathy, B., **M. A. Oommen**, B. Pandav and K. Shanker. 2005. A bibliography of sea turtles in Orissa, India. *Indian Ocean Turtle Newsletter* 1: 28-36.
- Shanker, K. and **M.A Oommen** (2002). Nesting of a small hawksbill turtle at Indira Point, Great Nicobar Island. *Kachhapa* No. 7: 21.
- **Oommen, M.A.** (2001). A preliminary report on the status, ecology, distribution and behaviour of the Nicobar Treeshrew (*Tupaia nicobarica*) in Galathea National Park, Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve. Centre for Herpetology, Madras Crocodile Bank Trust, Tamil Nadu.

- **Oommen, M.A.** (2000). Vegetation studies in the Western Himalaya. Report submitted to the project, 'Identify Potential Areas for Conservation of Biodiversity in the Indian Himalaya' of USFWS and WII, Dehradun.
- **Oommen, M.A.** (1996) Biodiversity and sustainability of the Upper Beas Basin, Kullu District, Himachal Pradesh – M.A Dissertation submitted to the Department of Geography, Delhi School of Economics, Delhi University.
- **Oommen, M.A.** (*in preparation*) Species diversity modifications in the Western Ghats hotspot: Insights from habitat changes with special reference to existing policies and land management strategies.
- **Oommen, M. A.** and K. Shanker. (*in preparation*) Strange bedfellows: Context dependant foraging associations between treeshrews, greater racket-tailed drongos and sparrowhawks on Great Nicobar Island.

### **SEMINARS**

- Woody plant richness across five nested spatial scales in the Western Himalaya: Patterns and implications. 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, Society for Conservation Biology. 30<sup>th</sup> July to 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2004, Columbia University, New York. Student Award.
- A comparison of biological traits of a subset of plant species with differing range sizes in the Western Himalaya – Annual Research Seminar 2000, WII, Dehradun.
- Patterns of woody plant diversity, rarity and regeneration along an altitude gradient (1800-3500m) in Kedarnath Musk Deer Sanctuary, Western Himalaya – Annual Research Seminar 1999, WII, Dehradun.
- Patterns of plant species diversity in the Western Himalaya – Presentation at the midterm evaluation of WII-US Fish and Wildlife Projects 1998, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi.
- Spatial patterns of vegetation communities at the landscape level in the Western Himalaya and their relevance to biodiversity conservation – Annual Research Seminar 1996, WII, Dehradun.

### **POPULAR ARTICLES**

- 'Nicobars – The edge of the world', Sanctuary. 2003. Karitk Shanker and Meera Anna Oommen
- 'Biosphere Reserves' – Geographers' Magazine, Madras, Tamil Nadu

### **SOFTWARE**

Most word processing and DTP software, spreadsheets, Power Point, Adobe Photoshop, Statistics Software (SPLUS, SPSS and others), other specialised biology packages, basic understanding of GIS software.

### **LANGUAGES**

Malayalam (mother tongue, fluent), English (fluent), Hindi and other south Indian languages (working knowledge)