

## From the Editor's Desk.....

It is our immense pleasure to announce that on the occasion of celebration of United Nations “2011-2020-United Nations Decade on Biodiversity”, “2011-International Year of Forests” and “NMNH & ICOM-NATHIST- Festivals of Museums and Intangible Natural Heritage Programme” the National Museum of Natural History in collaboration with Zoological Survey of India is organizing one day “National Seminar on Biodiversity and Intangible Natural Heritage” on 28<sup>th</sup> September, 2011 and “Exhibition on Biodiversity of Western India” from 28<sup>th</sup> September to 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2011 to be held at Desert Regional Centre, Zoological Survey of India, Jodhpur. This programme is part of the series of programmes organized in connection with the Global launch of the World Environment Day 2011 in India by the UNEP and MoEF. During the Seminar the expert speakers will be emphasizing on the issues of biodiversity conservation & its management strategies and Intangible Natural Heritage studies in this forum. The UN Decade on Biodiversity serves to support and promote implementation of the objectives of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, with the goal of significantly reducing biodiversity loss. The biodiversity we see today is the fruit of billions of years of evolution, shaped by natural processes and, increasingly, by the influence of humans. It forms the web of life of which we are an integral part and upon which we so fully depend. India is recognized as one of the twelve mega diversity countries of the world with two biodiversity hot spots- the Eastern Himalaya and the Western Ghats. There are about 1.7 million living species described from all over the world and another 15 million species are waiting to be discovered. In India till date nearly 91,797 species (ZSI) of animals have been described, but a large number of species are expected to be discovered especially from the lower invertebrate groups occurring in various ecosystems. The year 2011 was declared by UN the “International Year of Forests” to raise awareness and strengthen the sustainable forest management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests for the benefit of current and future generations. Forests are an integral part of global sustainable development. According to World Bank estimates, more than 1.6 billion people depend on forests for their livelihoods with some 300 million live in them. The forest product industry is a source of economic growth and employment, with global forest products traded internationally is estimated at \$327 billion. The *UNESCO representative list of India intangible cultural heritage of humanity* includes Kalbelia- folk songs and dances of

Rajasthan; Chhau Dance- a tradition from eastern India; Mudi yettu- a ritual theatre of Kerala; Kutiyattam- Sanskrit Theatre; The Tradition of Vedic Chanting; Ramlila- the Traditional Performance of the Ramayana and Ramman- religious festival and ritual theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas. The scientists throughout the world are working in the studies of Biodiversity & Natural History and a lot of scientific activities are being conducted under different banners to address this issue. This is an attempt to bring our academicians, scientists and researchers under one umbrella and discuss the various issues related with the topic.

We are deeply grateful to all the contributors of this National Seminar for ready response. We express our grateful thanks to Prof. A. S. Faroda, Former Chairman, ARSB (ICAR), New Delhi to accept our invitation and agreeing to be the Chief Guest of the function. The helps rendered by the Director, NMNH, New Delhi; Director, AFRI, Jodhpur; Officer-in-Charge, BSI, Jodhpur; Director, ISRO, Jodhpur; Director, CAZRI, Jodhpur; Director, Defence Laboratory, Jodhpur and the Officers and Staff of Zoological Survey of India are also gratefully acknowledged.

We are thankful to M/s. Evergreen Printers, Jodhpur for precise and accurate printing of the material and extending his continuous cooperation to us.

**23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2011**

**The Editors**