

Conservation of the endemic overexploited cycad, *Cycas circinalis* L., in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, South India

Three monthly report – I
Period August 2007 – October 2007

The project got off to a good start in August when the first Cycad T-shirts were printed and distributed to all the field and office staff at Keystone. The T-shirts are also sold through the Green Shops located at Kotagiri, Coonoor and Ooty.



Moorthy-Staff at Keystone testing the waters with his new Cycas T-shirt!



Monthly monitoring of 5 *Cycas circinalis* trees in 3 sites, Appankaapu (Nilambur, Kerala), Kudukemedu (Semenarai, Kotagiri) and Velleri combei (Kotagiri) takes place. The plants are tagged, phenological and

morphological details are recorded every month. A population on the slopes of Pillur, Sithukunni village has been included for monitoring.

Vandana Krishnamoorthy has taken up the work of monitoring the populations along the Western Ghats in Kerala, Karnataka and Maharashtra. In Karnataka she met Mr. Manu of the Mysore Amateur Naturalist group who took her to populations in and around Melkote. Manu has promised to visit our office in Kotagiri. In Pune, Maharashtra the university library was a good source of information. People who have worked on the species in Pune report that all populations have been wiped out. Reports from Sirsi in Karnataka also report on populations in the wild being wiped out. Vandana was also able to visit the populations in the Annamalai Wildlife Sanctuary in Tamil Nadu. We are now waiting for clearance of our permits to explore the populations in Kerala.

The cycas nursery in Nilambur is coming up. Seeds were purchased and have been buried in the mother bed for germination. We have sent some seeds from the Nilgiris to a Women's Seed Co-operative in Sirsi and asked them to raise the plants in their nursery.

An article was prepared on 'Mutualistic relationships in *Cycas circinalis*', we look forward to it being published in the TCS newsletter. Interesting information and observations keep coming in from Nilambur on other dependants. We have also put together information posters and displays for the Cycas gallery at the Bee museum in Ooty. The material should be ready and displayed by end of November.