

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

Three monthly report – II  
Period November 2007 – January 2008

In the second quarter the monthly monitoring continues in 4 sites, Appankaapu, Velleri Combei, Semenarai and Sithukunni. The monthly visits bring much information and insights besides the data. It was during one of the visits that Saneesh chanced to see



*Pic.1- Harvested male cones*

350kgs of male cones harvested ready for sale. The local forest officer made an enquiry and seized the material and took action against the local harvester and the buyer.

Rajendran who does the monthly monitoring in Semenarai and Velleri Combei has one of the toughest terrains to cross to get to his plants and the individuals show no signs of growth or reproduction. He was very excited though, after his December visit since there was a fire in the area and there was some change to be recorded!

The posters for the Museum have been printed and we are waiting for some weather proof framing so that the posters can be put up in the balcony. In a few more weeks perhaps! Sumin and Samraj are helping Anita with this.

The permits for surveys in Kerala were cleared in December. This gave Vandana the chance to visit Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary and Silent Valley National Park to assess Cycas populations there. Saneesh accompanied her on the Silent Valley visit. There are records of more populations along the Kerala forests and more visits will be required.

In January Vandana and Anita were able to take part in the Cycad Biology conference organized in Panama. The visit was a huge learning and we have much to think over and incorporate in our work in Cycads for the future. Much of the talks focused on the research in Cycads and the methodologies. A lot remains to be done in India in terms of research and action towards conservation of species in the wild. It was a pleasure to meet all the legends in the Cycad world. We would also like to place on record our thanks to TCS for the gift which helped trigger the journey to Panama.

In the coming months we hope to undertake a few more surveys to wild populations, we also expect seeds in March to add to our nursery. As of now the nursery in Nilambur, Kotagiri and Sigur have Cycas plants growing.