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Inviting colleges and universities to document biodiversity on their campuses

A pan-India initiative by Nature Conservation Foundation welcomes institutions to create a Campus Biodiversity Register, and make it to iNaturalist, eBird and Season Watch

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The sylvan MCC campus in Chennai

The backyard of certain college campuses hardly resemble backyards as we usually understand them: a poky little space, lacklustre, hardly hoofed by human feet. In these colleges, the backyard is an expansive space, supporting an incredible population of furs and feathers; and they pull in human feet given to exploration and documentation of biodiversity.

Classic examples include IIT Madras in Guindy and Madras Christian College in Tambaram. There are also others such as Women's Christian College in Nungambakkam and Stella Maris College in Gopalapuram that lend themselves to making of biodiversity checklists.

against this green backdrop, Campus Biodiversity Register (CBS) is hugely relevant to Chennai. CBS invites colleges and universities to discover and document the biodiversity on their campuses and build a lasting record of it.

An initiative of the Nature on Campus team of the Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF) together with the National Biodiversity Authority, Government of India, the nationwide year-long initiative seeks that students and faculty document biodiversity on their campuses using three citizen science platforms — iNaturalist, eBird and SeasonWatch.

WCC, Stella Maris and MCC have documented the flora, avifauna and fauna on their campuses in the past and brought books on them. From some colleges, the books have also opened their pages to insects. Students of the BSc in Environmental Science and Sustainability and teachers at Azim Premji University in Bengaluru brought out a Campus Biodiversity Register 2024-25 that can be accessed online.

CBR expects these institutions to document their biodiversity with conservation in mind, sustaining endangered species.

Besides gaining hands-on experience observing, identifying and documenting species, the participating institutions would be contributing to a global database with their inputs. According to a note on campusbiodiversity.in, by participating one is contributing valuable biodiversity information to global databases as envisioned by the Convention on Biological Diversity while complementing the efforts of the People's Biodiversity Register. The project encourages institutions with just standalone buildings to also sign up for the exercise as biodiversity can be found in the most unexpected places.

There is no fee to participate in this project. Registrations are open till November 2026.

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