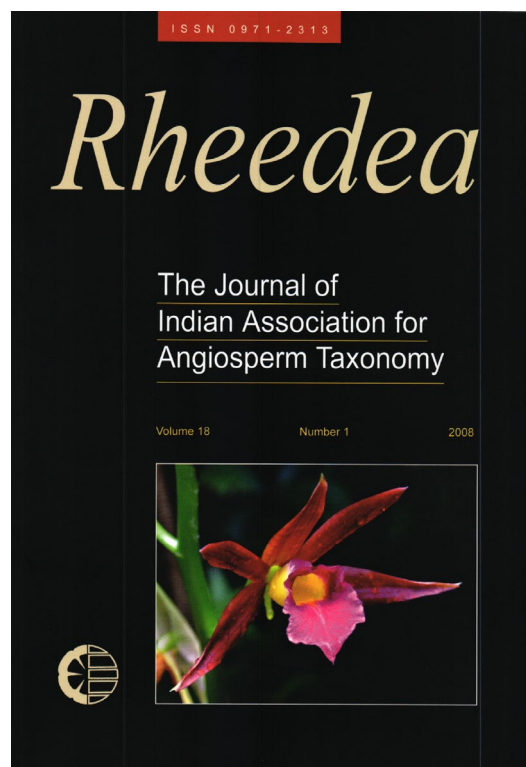




Book Review: Vegetation Types of the Southern Eastern Ghats - A Remote Sensing Perspective

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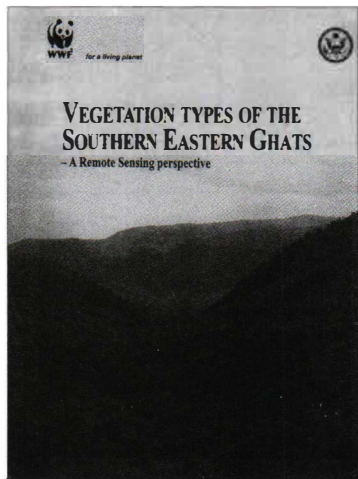
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Book Review

G Areendran and Prakash Rao 2006

Vegetation Types of the Southern Eastern Ghats – A Remote Sensing Perspective, Indira Gandhi Conservation Monitoring Centre, WWF India, 172-B, Lodi Estate, New Delhi 110 003. 91pp, multicolour. ISBN 81-904053-0-6, no price given.



Vegetation and land cover information are the basis for planning and managing a region. They also support the habitat inventories. Application of tools like Remote Sensing and Geographic Information System (GIS) has always been helpful to have a

clear definition of management priorities. Vegetation can be better managed if habitats are classified and regularly monitored.

The Eastern Ghats, ranging from Orissa, Andhra Pradesh to Karnataka and Tamil Nadu spreading over an area of about 75,000 km² through a chain of disjunct hill ranges, constitute an important biogeographic zone in the Indian region. These Ghats are little discussed when compared to the more widely known and studied Western Ghats. A work of this nature gains relevance mainly in this context.

This well produced book which covers Seshachalam-Chittoor hill ranges and Palamaner forest division in Andhra Pradesh and Tiruvannamalai, Vellore, Villupuram, Salem (Yercaud) hill ranges and parts of Dharmapuri and Nilgiri districts in Tamil Nadu, where the Eastern Ghats converge with the Western Ghats, brings out a study on the land cover/land use of 1,53,934 km² area by preparing thematic maps and mapping of the existing vegetation through the application of Remote Sensing and GIS.

The vegetation structure of these hill ranges comprises tropical dry deciduous, mixed dry deciduous, dry evergreen, scrub, riverine and patches of evergreen forests. The data analysis included assessment of the forest cover and land use pattern across 17 different thematic elements relevant to the landscape.

The Eastern Ghats harbour a precious biodiversity with several rare and endangered floristic and faunistic elements. This book has brilliantly displayed the salient features of the forest types and their distribution, besides the overall land use pattern through 19 excellent maps, 16 photographs and seven tables, all in colour. WWF - India has done a good job as this work is of immense use to scientists, managers, policy makers, Government agencies and NGOs, obviously for different reasons.

One will be tempted to think, as did the authors and their team, to have a more detailed assessment and analysis of more parts of the Eastern Ghats, especially the fragile ecosystems under the threat of economic and developmental activities, at a higher scale (presently 1 cm = 40 km) for future conservation efforts. I hope that the same team can manage to do it and look forward to have the next volume published as *the heard melodies are sweet*.

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