A world-renowned herpetologist, and Director of a Sindhudurg-based NGO called ‘Nature’, Dr. Varad B. Giri has contributed enormously to our knowledge and understanding of Indian reptiles and amphibians. In 2011, in honour of his immense contribution, a newly-discovered snake species *Dendrelaphis girii* was named after him.

Two new species of snake, Giri’s bronzeback and Castoe’s coral snake have also been listed! These treasures aside, many interesting butterfly species have also been reported from Amboli, which is truly a biodiversity wonderland.

**AMBOLI’S TRAILS**

Most new species and other interesting herpetofauna are reported from a 10 sq. km forest area surrounding Amboli, and can be sighted on the three main forest trails that cut through this pristine forest.

The trail to Parikshit Point starts from a small and recently-developed recreational tourist site called Forest Park, and is ideal for sighting the Malabar gliding frog, a beautiful specimen that is drawn by the presence of four man-made freshwater tanks and the many trees they use for breeding. The Parikshit Point trail runs through a comparatively undisturbed patch of semi-evergreen forest and ends on a small rocky plateau. I have explored this trail in all seasons and encountered seasonal variation in its faunal diversity.

During the monsoon, the trail is ‘flooded’ with leeches and interesting herps like the bicoloured frog *Clinotarsus curtipes*, a species endemic to the Western Ghats for which Amboli appears to be the northernmost distribution limit. An interesting gecko of the genus *Cnemaspis*, displaying unique morphological characteristics, seems to me to be an undescribed species, and is largely encountered along this trail.

Walking this route I have also spotted other endemic herps of the Western Ghats like the Malabar pit viper, *Tr安排*.

"Take your rain gear," advised local nature enthusiasts, Kaka alias Malade Bhise, Rohan Korgaonkar and Hemant Ogale, who have been my constant companions and expert consultants on all my visits to Amboli over the last decade. Our plan that rainy evening was a night trail on Chowkul road. The trip was fruitful, as expected during the monsoon, when amphibians and reptiles are at their most active.

My rendezvous with Amboli and its many amphibians and reptiles, some of which are endemic to the region, began in 1999. With its picturesque landscapes and breathtaking waterfalls, Amboli is located in Sindhudurg district, close to the Maharashtra-Gujarat tri-state border in the Western Ghas. The forest is predominantly semi-evergreen, interspersed with lateritic plateaus. Though the Reserved Forest is relatively well protected, nearby forest patches remain degraded thanks to human use.

In the last decade, Amboli has undergone tremendous metamorphosis in terms of public awareness. People have discovered that this is a fast-rising biodiversity- destination, rich in amphibian and reptilian life. Explorations and studies have resulted in new discoveries, new locality reports and range extensions. Notable among these are the discovery of a new genus *Xanthophryne*, (in the form of the endemic Amboli toad *Xanthophryne tigerinus*) and two new species of frogs: Amboli bush frog *Pseudophilautus amboli* and Daniel’s night frog *Nyctibatrachus danieli*.
An Amboli - a natural paradise

Walking through the Amboli undergrowth, it is impossible not to develop a fascination for the frogs, toads and snakes that live on the places easier than others. At night, the common Indian tree-trunks, or even tods, are covered with the skin of small seasonal stream, which runs near the village. You start at an open patch of grassland with degraded forest, a popular breeding ground for cricket frogs, Indian bull frogs, burrowing frogs, ornate narrow-mouthed frogs and skittering frogs Xelostyla 8. The trail then takes you to a pristine patch of semi-evergreen forest, where, after sunset, comes alive with calls of night frogs Nyctibatrachus 8. One of the perennial streams we frequently visit here is Manoholkot abob, frequented by large numbers by endemic species like the Bombay night frog and bronzed frog. Further along, you come to a large barren plateau which, like all others, appears barren during the dry season but transforms into a breeding site for various cricket frogs and an endemic Amboli toad during the monsoons. We have also reported one interesting find: a Salamandra sp. On this plateau.

The Amboli bush frog, as the name suggests, is commonly seen among bushes throughout the region, and has a wider distribution in other parts of the Western Ghats. The large and beautiful Prashad’s gecko is only known from Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra. Another endemic species to the Western Ghats, the rare olive forest frog, as the name suggests, is commonly seen among bushes throughout the region, and has a wider distribution in other parts of the Western Ghats. The large and beautiful Prashad’s gecko is only known from Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra. Another endemic species to the Western Ghats, the rare olive forest frog, as the name suggests, is commonly seen among bushes throughout the region, and has a wider distribution in other parts of the Western Ghats. The large and beautiful Prashad’s gecko is only known from Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra. Another endemic species to the Western Ghats, the rare olive forest frog, as the name suggests, is commonly seen among bushes throughout the region, and has a wider distribution in other parts of the Western Ghats. The large and beautiful Prashad’s gecko is only known from Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra. Another endemic species to the Western Ghats, the rare olive forest frog, as the name suggests, is commonly seen among bushes throughout the region, and has a wider distribution in other parts of the Western Ghats. The large and beautiful Prashad’s gecko is only known from Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra. Another endemic species to the Western Ghats, the rare olive forest frog, as the name suggests, is commonly seen among bushes throughout the region, and has a wider distribution in other parts of the Western Ghats. The large and beautiful Prashad’s gecko is only known from Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra. Another endemic species to the Western Ghats, the rare olive forest frog, as the name suggests, is commonly seen among bushes throughout the region, and has a wider distribution in other parts of the Western Ghats. The large and beautiful Prashad’s gecko is only known from Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra. Another endemic species to the Western Ghats, the rare olive forest frog, as the name suggests, is commonly seen among bushes throughout the region, and has a wider distribution in other parts of the Western Ghats. The large and beautiful Prashad’s gecko is only known from Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra. Another endemic species to the Western Ghats, the rare olive forest frog, as the name suggests, is commonly seen among bushes throughout the region, and has a wider distribution in other parts of the Western Ghats. The large and beautiful Prashad’s gecko is only known from Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra. Another endemic species to the Western Ghats, the rare olive forest frog, as the name suggests, is commonly seen among bushes throughout the region, and has a wider distribution in other parts of the Western Ghats. The large and beautiful Prashad’s gecko is only known from Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra. Another endemic species to the Western Ghats, the rare olive forest frog, as the name suggests, is commonly seen among bushes throughout the region, and has a wider distribution in other parts of the Western Ghats. The large and beautiful Prashad’s gecko is only known from Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra. Another endemic species to the Western Ghats, the rare olive forest frog, as the name suggests, is commonly seen among bushes throughout the region, and has a wider distribution in other parts of the Western Ghats. The large and beautiful Prashad’s gecko is only known from Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra. Another endemic species to the Western Ghats, the rare olive forest frog, as the name suggests, is commonly seen among bushes throughout the region, and has a wider distribution in other parts of the Western Ghats. The large and beautiful Prashad’s gecko is only known from Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra. Another endemic species to the Western Ghats, the rare olive forest frog, as the name suggests, is commonly seen among bushes throughout the region, and has a wider distribution in other parts of the Western Ghats. The large and beautiful Prashad’s gecko is only known from Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra. Another endemic species to the Western Ghats, the rare olive forest frog, as the name suggests, is commonly seen among bushes throughout the region, and has a wider distribution in other parts of the Western Ghats. The large and beautiful Prashad’s gecko is only known from Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra. Another endemic species to the Western Ghats, the rare olive forest frog, as the name suggests, is commonly seen among bushes throughout the region, and has a wider distribution in other parts of the Western Ghats. The large and beautiful Prashad’s gecko is only known from Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra. Another endemic species to the Western Ghats, the rare olive forest frog, as the name suggests, is commonly seen among bushes throughout the region, and has a wider distribution in other parts of the Western Ghats. The large and beautiful Prashad’s gecko is only known from Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra. Another endemic species to the Western Ghats, the rare olive forest frog, as the name suggests, is commonly seen among bushes throughout the region, and has a wider distribution in other parts of the Western Ghats. The large and beautiful Prashad’s gecko is only known from Karnataka, Go...