

# VARUN KHER

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Aspiring wildlife biologist with keen academic interest in quantitative ecology, community ecology, evolutionary biology and natural history.

## EDUCATION

**JUNE 2017 – ONGOING**

**M.SC WILDLIFE SCIENCE** - WILDLIFE INSTITUTE OF INDIA, DEHRADUN

**Ongoing.** Percentage until second semester – 79.98%

First rank in both semesters.

Completing in June 2019.

**JUNE 2014 - JUNE 2017**

**B.SC ZOOLOGY** - FERGUSSON COLLEGE, PUNE

**Completed** with First Class and Distinction

Overall percentage – 77.21 %

(Major subject – Zoology; Minor subjects – Botany, Geology and English)

Zoology percentage – 80.50 %

## ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

**MARCH 2019**

**GATE 2019 – ECOLOGY AND EVOLUTION (EY)**

**Qualified** with 79.33 marks out of 100.

**All India Rank - 01**

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

**APRIL 2019 – JUNE 2019**

**SUMMER RESEARCH FELLOW / SUMMER INTERN**, IISER THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Selected in DST-Inspire Summer Research Fellowship Program.

Assisted a PhD student with his project titled “Evolution of anti-predatory coloration in fossorial Shieldtail snakes”

Responsibilities: Setting up experiments on field, preparation of experiment apparatus – color calibrated snake models, data entry, and recording spectral signatures of collected samples.

Field component: 20 days fieldwork in Kalakkad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve, Tamil Nadu.

**OCTOBER 2014 – OCTOBER 2016**

**PROJECT STUDENT / PROJECT ASSISTANT**, MES ABASAHEB GARWARE COLLEGE,  
PUNE AND MAHARASHTRA FOREST DEPARTMENT

Worked on a project titled **“Diversity and threat assessment of amphibians in the semi-arid landscape of Pune Forest Division”** under the guidance of Dr. A.D Padhye, MES Abasaheb Garware College, Pune in collaboration with Maharashtra Forest Department.

Responsibilities: Field surveys for amphibians, recording and analyzing acoustic data, identification and curation of specimens, sampling amphibians for chytrid fungus infection.

Field component: The overall fieldwork would sum up to around 4 months in the two years period. Fieldwork in the semi-arid landscape of Pune forest division with focus on Mayureshwar Wildlife Sanctuary, Rehekuri Wildlife Sanctuary and Karmala Bustard Sanctuary.

**JUNE 2016 – SEPTEMBER 2016**

**PROJECT INTERN**, MES ABASAHEB GARWARE COLLEGE, PUNE AND MAHARASHTRA FOREST DEPARTMENT

Assisted a Research Fellow with his project titled **“Distribution and status survey of threatened Genus Xanthophryne across the lateritic plateaus of Maharashtra’s Northern Western Ghats”** under guidance of Dr. A.D Padhye, MES Abasaheb Garware College, Pune.

Responsibilities: Extensive surveys for amphibians, audio-visual data recording, data entry.

Field component: Fieldwork of 1 months in Sahyadri Tiger Reserve and other areas of western ghats.

**NOVEMBER 2015 – JANUARY 2016**

**VOLUNTEER / INTERN**, NCBS BANGALORE

Assisted an M.Sc student and PhD student in part of a project titled “Occupancy and abundance of small mammals in logged and unlogged forests of Pakke Tiger Reserve”

Responsibilities: Rodent sampling, camera trapping, data entry.

Field component: Fieldwork of 2 months in Pakke Tiger Reserve.

**JANUARY 2016 – JUNE 2016**

**VOLUNTEER**, WILDLIFE INSTITUTE OF INDIA

Volunteered in fieldwork for a project student on a project titled **“Preliminary survey to assess status of Indian Grey Wolf in Maharashtra”**

Responsibilities: Vehicle and acoustic surveys for wolf occupancy.

Field component: Fieldwork of 1 months in grasslands of Pune Forest Division.

**JUNE 2014 – SEPTEMBER 2015**

**PROJECT STUDENT**, MES ABASAHEB GARWARE COLLEGE, PUNE

Assisted an M.Sc student on his dissertation project titled **“Natural history and breeding behavior of endangered toad species Xanthophryne koynayensis”** under the guidance of Dr. A.D Padhye, MES Abasaheb Garware College, Pune.

Responsibilities: Nocturnal behavioral observation of the study species, recording and analysis of acoustic data, data entry, data analysis.

Field component: Fieldwork of 3 months in Koyna WLS, Sahyadri Tiger Reserve.

## **INFORMAL WORK-EXPERIENCE**

**APRIL 2019**

Voluntarily assisted the Wildlife Institute of India team led by Dr Sutirtha Dutta that carried out **Great Indian Bustard tagging** operation in Desert National Park, Jaisalmer.

## DECEMBER 2018

Voluntarily assisted the Wildlife Institute of India team led by Dr Bilal Habib that carried out **Indian Grey Wolf collaring** operation in Nannaj WLS, Solapur.

## GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

- 2017 Wildlife Institute of India Fellowship for M.Sc in Wildlife Science: 5,32,000 INR
- 2016 DST-INSPIRE Summer Research Fellowship: 10,000 INR
- 2014 Pune Municipal Corporation Meritorious student scholarship: 15,000 INR

## AWARDS AND HONOURS

- 2019 All India Top rank in GATE Ecology and Evolution (EY)
- 2012 Best Outgoing Student – Modern High school, Pune

## SKILLS

- Ability to think rationally and numerically
- Natural history knowledge of multiple taxa
- Well acquainted with R, QGIS, ArcGIS, Distance, Mark, Presence, Excel and other softwares
- Theoretical understanding of key concepts
- Knowledge of using commonly used research equipments
- Well versed with commonly used wildlife research techniques

## ACTIVITIES

### SCIENTIFIC TALKS

- 2016 Seminar talk on “Amphibian diversity of Pune’s semi-arid landscape” at Kirloskar Vasundhara Film Festival

### PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- 2018 Popular talk on “The science of conserving Wildlife” at Sri Sri Ravishankar Vidya Mandir, Pune.
- 2018 Popular talk on “The science of conserving Wildlife” at Insearch Outdoors, Pune.
- 2017 Conducted biodiversity walk for district level National Service Scheme Camp at Panshet, Pune.
- 2016 Popular talk on “Amphibian diversity of Northern Western Ghats” in NCL Junior College, Pune.
- 2016 Provided inputs as a resource person to students of Modern Highschool, Pune during their school Nature education camps in Kali Tiger Reserve and Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary

### HOBBIES

- Bird-watching
- Wildlife Photography
- Listening to Classical Music
- Reading
- Sports – Cricket, Football, Badminton

## **REFERENCES**

Shri. Qamar Qureshi  
Scientist-G and Senior Professor,  
Wildlife Institute of India,  
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Dr Gopi GV  
Scientist-E and Course Director (M.Sc. Program),  
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Dr Sutirtha Dutta  
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