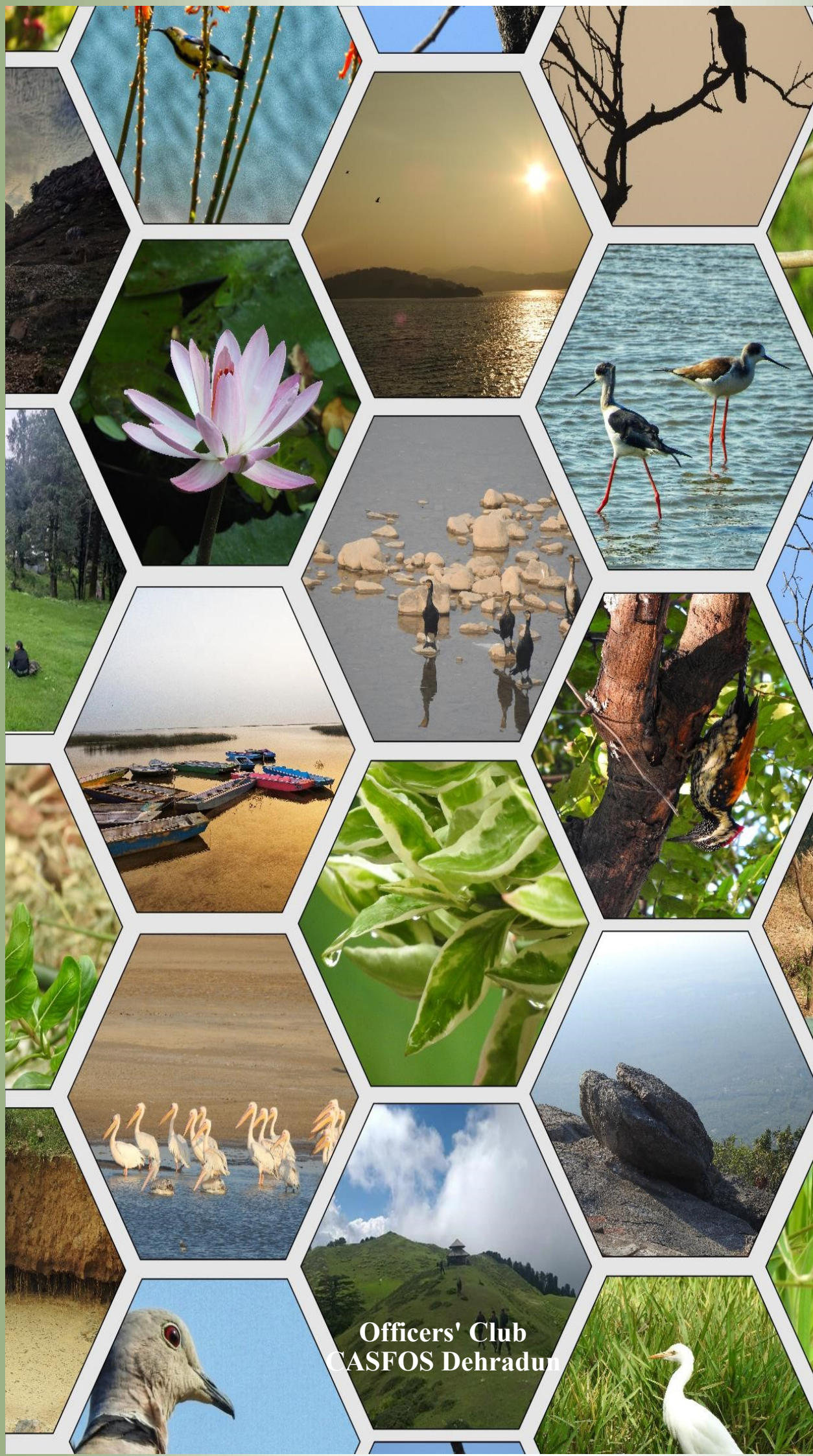




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# PRAKRITI

Quest for nature



Officers' Club  
CASFOS Dehradun





# FLORA OF THE WEEK

## *Gloriosa superba*

### Flame Lily

#### Identification:

This species is a perennial herb growing from a fleshy rhizome. It is scandent, climbing using modified leaf-tip tendrils, the stem reaching 4 m long. The leaves are mainly alternately arranged, but they may be opposite, as well. They are somewhat lance-shaped and tipped with tendrils, and they are up to 13 to 20 cm long. The showy flower has six tepals each up to 5 to 7.6 cm long. They are generally bright red. The margins may be quite wavy. The six stamens also are long, up to 4 cm, and each bears a large anther at the tip that drops large amounts of yellow pollen. The style may be more than 6 cm long. The fruit is a fleshy capsule up to 6 to 12 cm long, containing red seeds.



**Other Common Names:** Climbing Lily, Creeping Lily, Glory Lily, Gloriosa Lily, Tiger Claw, and Fire Lily.

#### Ecology:

The plant likely is pollinated by butterflies and sunbirds. It grows in many types of habitat, including tropical jungles, forests, thickets, woodlands, grasslands, and sand dunes. It can grow in nutrient-poor soils. It can be found at as high as 2,500 m in elevation.

#### Synonyms:

*Eugone superba*  
*Gloriosa rothschildiana*  
*Gloriosa simplex*  
*Gloriosa virescens*  
*Gloriosa abyssinica*  
*Gloriosa carsonii*  
*Gloriosa lutea*

Kingdom	Plantae
Clade	Tracheophytes
Clade	Angiosperms
Clade	Monocots
Order	Liliales
Family	Colchicaceae
Genus	<i>Gloriosa</i>
Species	<i>superba</i>

**Used in:** Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, Sowa Rigpa

**Habit:** Climber

**Distribution:** A Paleotropic species found in Africa, Madagascar, India to Indo-China and Malesia. It is found throughout tropical India. This species is globally distributed in the Paleotropics. Within India, it is found throughout the tropical region common in the moist deciduous forests.

#### Medicinal Use:

The alkaloid-rich plant has long been used as a traditional medicine in many cultures. It has been used in the treatment of gout, infertility, open wounds, snakebite, ulcers, arthritis, cholera, colic, kidney problems, typhus, itching, leprosy, bruises, sprains, hemorrhoids, cancer, impotence, nocturnal emission, smallpox, sexually transmitted diseases, and many types of internal parasites. It is an anthelmintic. It has been used as a laxative and an alexiteric. The sap is used to treat acne and head lice. In a pregnant woman, it may cause abortion. In parts of India, extracts of the rhizome are applied topically during childbirth to reduce labor pain.



# FAUNA OF THE WEEK

## *Sus scrofa*

### *Wild Boar*



Central Academy for State Forest Service  
Dehradun

The Wild Boar is a medium-sized mammal with a large head and front end, that leads into a smaller hind. They have a thick and coarse double coat of fur, that consists of a harder, bristly top layer, with a softer undercoat beneath it. The hair that runs along the ridge of the Wild Boar's back is also longer than the rest. The colour of wild boar depends on location and varies from brown, to black, to dark red, to dark grey. The Wild Boar has incredibly poor eyesight due to its very small-sized eyes but they also have a long, straight snout which enables them to have an acute sense of smell.

#### Reproduction and Development

**Gestation period-** 114-140 days

**Litter size-** 4 to 6 Normal  
10-12 Maximum

**Sexual maturity-** 4 to 5 Months

**Lifespan-** 10 to 14 years in wild  
and up to 20 years in captivity



#### AMAZING FACTS:

- ✚ **WILD BOAR ARE NOCTURNAL**
- ✚ **WILD BOAR IS AN OMNIVORE**
- ✚ **SNOUT THAT IS USED FOR DIGGING OF UNDERGROUND ROOTS AND BULBS**
- ✚ **TUSKS IN MALES ARE LONGER AND CURVED. MALES POSSESS EXTRA TUSK ON THE UPPER LIP WHICH IS USED FOR SHARPENING OF THE LOWER TUSK**
- ✚ **MALES USE THEIR TUSKS FOR THE FIGHTS DURING THE MATING SEASON**
- ✚ **WILD BOARS LIVE IN GROUPS CALLED SOUNDERS OF SIZE 6-30**
- ✚ **PIGLETS HAVE BROWN FUR, COVERED WITH CREAMY STRIPES SO THEY CAN CAMOUFLAGE IN DENSE VEGETATION**

WPA, 1972: Schedule III IUCN Status: Least concern

Kingdom	Animalia
Phylum	Chordata
Class	Mammalia
Order	Artiodactyla
Family	Suidae
Genus	<i>Sus</i>



**ECOLOGY AND BEHAVIOUR:** Female Wild Boars are relatively sociable animals, inhabiting loose territories in groups known as sounders which can contain between 6 and 30 individuals. Sounders consist of breeding females and their young and can often be found in the same area as other groups, although the two tend not to mix. Males however, are solitary for the majority of the year, with the exception of during the breeding season when they can be found in close proximity of both the sounders, and indeed other males. Male Wild Boar competes with one another by fighting for the chance to mate with a female. Wild Boar are nocturnal animals that only come out at night to forage for food. They spend 12 hours sleeping in dense nest of leaves in day time.

Wild Pig, native to the forests of Europe, north-west Africa and it is also found throughout Asia. Wild Boar subspecies are ranging from 4 to 25. Naturally, it is hard to classify them all as they can easily interbreed.

The Wild Boar is the most widely distributed land mammal on Earth as its native range extends from Western Europe, right across to Japan to the east, and down to the rainforests of Indonesia in the south.

The Wild Boar is an omnivorous animal that primarily feeds on plants. Plant matter comprises around 90% of the Wild Boar's diet as they feed on young leaves, berries, grasses and fruits, and unearth roots and bulbs from the ground with their hard snouts. They will however, eat almost anything that will fit into their mouths, and supplement their diet by eating eggs, Mice, Lizards, Worms and even Snakes.

Large felines such as Leopards, Lynx's and Tigers are amongst the most common predators of the Wild Boar, along with other large carnivores like Wolves and Bears, and also Humans.

**HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION:** They live in a variety of habitat but prefer grassy savanna areas, wooded forests, agricultural areas, shrub lands and marshy swamplands. Overall, Wild boars live in areas with a constant source of water and dense vegetative cover to serve them as refuge from predators.





# BIRD OF THE WEEK

## *Argya striata*

### Jungle Babbler



Central Academy for State Forest Service  
Dehradun

#### Identification:

This familiar ash-brown coloured babbler has a yellow bill and a dark brow in front of the eye that contrasts with its pale eye giving it a perpetual “angry” look. It has vague streaking on the upperparts, diffuse mottling on its throat, and barring on its tail. They are often seen in noisy flocks hopping on the ground and flicking litter in search of food.

#### Reproduction:

Lifespan (in captivity): 16.5 years  
Breeding Season: Throughout the year.  
Age at sexual maturity: 3 years  
Clutch: 3 to 4 eggs

In northern India, birds breeding during July–September tend to be parasitized by the pied crested cuckoo and sometimes by the common hawk-cuckoo. Helpers assist the parents in feeding the young. Post fledging survival is very high.



**IUCN Status:** Least Concern



#### Fun Facts:

Jungle babblers (*Argya striata*) are gregarious birds that forage in small groups of six to ten birds, a habit that has given them the popular name of "Seven Sisters" in urban Northern India, and Saath bhai (**seven brothers**) in Bengali with cognates in other regional languages which also mean "seven brothers".

Kingdom	Animalia
Phylum	Chordata
Class	Aves
Order	Passeriformes
Family	Leiothrichidae
Genus	<i>Argya</i>
Species	<i>striata</i>

#### Behavior and Ecology:

These birds are gregarious and very social. They feed mainly on insects, but also eats grains, nectar and berries. The groups maintain territories and will defend it against neighbors but will sometimes tolerate them.

They breed throughout the year; with peak breeding in northern India being noted between March–April and July–September. Birds reach sexual maturity after their third year. The nest is built halfway in a tree, concealed in dense masses of foliage. The normal clutch is three or four deep greenish blue eggs.

Birds within a group often indulge in allopreening, play chases and mock fights. When threatened by predators, they have been said to sometimes feign death.

#### Distribution:

The jungle babbler is a common resident breeding bird in most parts of the Indian subcontinent and is often seen in gardens within large cities as well as in forested areas. In the past, the orange-billed babbler, *Turdoides rufescens*, of Sri Lanka was considered to be a subspecies of jungle babbler, but has now been elevated to a species.



#### Synonyms:

*Turdoides striatus*  
*Malacocercus terricolor*  
*Cossyphus striatus*  
*Crateropus canorus*  
*Turdoides striata*



#### Distribution

