search? We are certain that for caecilians, as has been suggested for frogs\textsuperscript{1}, the cause is a lack of study, both in the field and the laboratory. The adults of all Indian caecilians are apparently predominantly burrowers in the soil, and special digging effort is usually required to sample them\textsuperscript{3}. At least half of the eight new (an increase of 57\%) species described after 1998 are known to occur in gardens and/or plantations, but nonetheless they had gone unnoticed by science. Even less work has been carried out to sample caecilians in their presumably native forest habitats. There is no evidence that the recently discovered caecilian species are the product of splitting or of changes in methodology or philosophy, and we predict there are many more species to be discovered.

Caecilian taxonomy worldwide is unstable\textsuperscript{2}. The intrinsic biology of caecilians makes their study challenging, and little effort has been applied. For Indian caecilians and systematists, the challenge has been compounded by extrinsic factors, most notably a deficit of arrangements for international loans and exchanges between Indian and Western collections and scientists. We hope that this practical difficulty proves to be temporary.

Species discovery curves can be influenced by many factors and must be judged on a case-by-case basis. However, it should be possible to test the general hypothesis that the diversity of many Western Ghats organisms is not as well known as previously thought, by comparative study of discovery curves for a wide range of taxa. Comparisons with other regions should also be informative. For example, between 1978 and 2002, the number of recognized amphibian species in Europe rose by 65\%, largely through the application of new techniques and also as a result of greater study and knowledge of amphibian natural history\textsuperscript{3}. It might be noted that the proposed increase in Western Ghats amphibians is based thus far on mostly traditional taxonomic data, and that the impact of molecular techniques remains to be seen.


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**MEETINGS/SYMPOSIA/SEMINARS**

**DST Short term training programme on Mathematical Model of Groundwater Flow and Mass Transport**

Date: 9–12 November 2004
Place: New Delhi

This training programme is meant for young lecturers and research scholars belonging to Earth system sciences.

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**Workshop on Analytical Instrumentation in Pharmaceutical Sciences**

Date: 26–30 October 2004
Place: Ahmedabad

This workshop focuses on theoretical as well as hands-on training to modern equipment like UV-VIS spectrophotometer and fluorimeter, IR spectroscopy, HPLC, GC, HPTLC, etc.

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