

## International behavioural ecologist presents Centenary lecture

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*Prof Raghavendra Gadagkar gave an animated presentation on the social life of wasps*

International behavioural ecologist and sociobiologist Prof Raghavendra Gadagkar of the Centre for Ecological Studies at the Indian Institute of Science in Bagalore, India, presented a Centenary lecture at the University on 15 July 2008.

The internationally acclaimed scientist is fascinated by the origin and evolution of cooperation in social insects and presented aspects of his research on the social structure of the species *Ropalidia marginata* (wasps).

Gadagkar presented his subject, entitled: "Interrogating an insect society", by way of a series of questions: "Why are ants, bees and wasps social?" and "What are the evolutionary advantages of social life over solitary life?" His answers were formulated in response to the questions: "How are they social?" and "What are the mechanisms of social organization, communication, division of labour, etc?"

His fascinating presentation explained the dominance hierarchy in the insect colonies, the behaviour of the queen and the phenomenon of a potential queen, or heir designate.

[For a short video clip of his lecture click here](#)

Prof Gadagkar is Professor and JC Bose National Fellow at the Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science and Chairman of the Centre for Contemporary Studies at the Institute. He is also Honorary Professor at the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research and Non-Resident Permanent Fellow of the Wissenschaftskolleg (Institute for Advanced Study) in Berlin.

He is an elected fellow of the Indian Academy of Sciences, the Indian National Science Academy, the National Academy of Sciences, India, the Academy of Sciences for the Developing World and Foreign Associate of the National Academy of Sciences, USA.

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