

Curriculum vitae

Tharaka Wijerathna, Ph.D.

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PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

2020 – To date	Temporary Senior Lecturer Gr. II University of Kelaniya, Ragama, Sri Lanka
2018 – 2020	Temporary Demonstrator University of Kelaniya, Ragama, Sri Lanka
2016 – 2018	Research Assistant University of Kelaniya, Ragama, Sri Lanka
2016	Temporary Demonstrator University of Colombo, Colombo 07, Sri Lanka

ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

2016 - 2020	Ph.D. in Medical Entomology (effective from 12 th June 2020) University of Kelaniya, Ragama, Sri Lanka.
2012- 2016	B.Sc. (Honors) in Zoology (effective from 01 st April 2016) University of Colombo, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

SKILLS & EXPERTISE

- Sampling and identification of arthropods, PCR, Bacteria culturing, Spectroscopy.
- Species distribution modeling, Time series modeling, inferential statistics and basic bioinformatics.
- Proficiency in R, Python, SPSS, MEGA X, ArcGIS, MS office package, Windows OS, Mac OS.
- Languages: English (Fluent), Sinhala (Fluent), Hindi (Proficient)

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Main projects

2021 – To date	<u>Co-investigator:</u> “Identification of sand fly species in leishmaniasis high risk localities in Kegalle district & effect of commercially available IRS insecticides on the sand fly population” Other investigators: Prof. Nayana Gunathilaka, Dr. P.K. Wickramasinghe, T.K.C Wickramasinghe, Dr. Sujeewa Bandara
2020-To date	<u>Co-investigator:</u> “Community-based Leishmaniasis research in Sri Lanka” Other investigators: Dr. Asha Wijegunawardana, Dr. Chathuranga Bamunuarachchige, Prof. Nayana Gunathilaka, Dr. Ajith Rathnayaka, Dr. Dinum Perera, Dr. Prasad Jayasooriya, Dr. Lahiru Udayanga, Ms. Prabuddhika Kandegedara, Mr. Ishara Jayamanna, Mr. Geethanjana Perera, and Mr. Udaya Wimalasiri

2016 – 2020	Ph.D. student: “Bionomics and systematics of leishmaniasis vector sand flies (Diptera: Psychodidae) and incidence of leishmaniasis in Kurunegala District, Sri Lanka” Supervisors: Prof. Nayana Gunathilaka, Prof. Kithsiri Gunawardena, Dr Wasana Rodrigo
2015	Undergraduate: “An investigation of the variations in morphometry and the web architecture of the giant wood spider (<i>Nephila pilipes</i>) in forest and non-forest habitats in the wet zone of Sri Lanka” Supervisors: Prof. Mayuri Wijesinghe, Prof. Inoka Perera

Assisted/Collaborated projects

2020-2021	Screening for filarial parasites among dog communities in selected disease endemic and non-endemic areas in Sri Lanka using microscopy and molecular methods: a potential public health risk Investigators: Prof. Nilmini Chandrasena, Prof. Nayana Gunathilaka, Dr. Sameera Rathnayake <i>Contribution: Molecular identification of filarial worms in dog blood samples</i>
2019-To date	Molecular detection of insecticide resistance in <i>Anopheles stephensi</i> mosquitoes Investigators: Prof. Nayana Gunathilaka, <i>Contribution: Optimization of PCR for newly designed primers</i>
2019	Detection of filarial larvae from wild caught mosquitoes in Western Province Sri Lanka Investigators: Prof. Nilmini Chandrasena, Prof. Nayana Gunathilaka, Dr Harendra Mallawarachchi <i>Contribution: Molecular identification of filarial worms from mosquitoes</i>
2018	Estimation of the prevalence of cutaneous leishmaniasis among military personnel in two post conflict districts of northern Sri Lanka Investigators: Prof. Nayana Gunathilaka, Dr Nuwani Manamperi, Prof. Deepika Fernando <i>Contribution: Molecular diagnosis of biological samples obtained from patients</i>
2016	Diversity and morphometry of orb weaver spiders in rainforests in Sri Lanka Investigators: Prof. Mayuri Wijesinghe Undergraduate: Ms. Dilini Tharanga <i>Contribution: Morphological identification of spider specimens</i>
2014	Diversity and distribution aspects of tiger beetles (Carabidae: Cicindelinae) of Sri Lanka Supervisors: Dr. Chandima Dangalle, Prof. Nirmalie Pallewatte, Prof. Erandathi Lokupitiya, Mr. Agasthya Thotagamuwa <i>Contribution: Assistance during field visits and sample collection</i>

MEMBERSHIPS

President	Base for Enthusiasts of Environmental Science and Zoology, Faculty of Science, University of Colombo (2015-2016)
Member	Society for Vector Ecology (2020-Present), International Society for Arachnology (2016-Present), International Society for Infectious Diseases (2019-Present), Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science (SLAAS) (2017- Present), Field Ornithology Group of Sri Lanka (2013-2018), Butterfly Conservation Society Sri Lanka (2016), Young Zoologists Association (2014-2015).

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

2019	<u>Administrator/Editor</u> – Checklist of spiders of Sri Lanka (Online database)
2018	<u>Resource Person/Organizing support</u> – I GO Green 2018 Environment sustainability exhibition
2016	<u>Member of the organizing committee</u> – World Environment Day 2016 at University of Colombo
2016	<u>Co-Creator</u> – A mini documentary on "Wildlife trade in Sri Lanka" prepared for the World Environment Day 2016
2015	<u>Member of the organizing committee</u> – World Environment Day 2015 at University of Colombo
2014-Present	<u>Freelance writer</u> – "Vidusara" Sinhala language science newspaper/magazine

MENTORING/SUPERVISING EXPERIENCE

2021- To date Co-supervisor- M.Sc. candidate Mrs. Supipi Nisansala (Open University of Sri Lanka)

Topic: Sero-prevalence of toxoplasmosis among antenatal mothers of the clinic in Teaching Hospital Kuliyapitiya and associated risk factors of acquiring the infection.

2021-To date Co-supervisor (with Prof. Nayana Gunathilaka) - Honors degree candidate Ms. Pamoda Sewwandi (Rajarata University of Sri Lanka)

Topic: Optimization of a multiplex polymerase chain reaction (PCR) assay for the diagnosis of common soil transmitted helminth infections.

2020-To date Mentor- M.Phil. candidate Mr. Udaya Wimalasiri (University of Kelaniya)

Topic: Determination of the feasibility of paratransgenesis technique as a tool for leishmaniasis control in Sri Lanka

2020 Trainer - Undergraduate intern, Ms. Pamoda Sewwandi (Rajarata University of Sri Lanka) at the Department of Parasitology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

2019 Trainer - Undergraduate Volunteering Research Assistant, Ms. Chinthani Jayasekara (Management & Science University, Malaysia) at the Department of Parasitology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

2019	<u>Mentor</u> – Honors degree candidate Ms. Yashoda Wijebandara Topic: Mosquito larvicidal effect of <i>Garcinia mangostana</i> (mangosteen) pericarp crude extract by interruption of protein mediated cholesterol absorption in <i>Aedes aegypti</i> .
2019	<u>Trainer</u> - Undergraduate intern, Ms. Yashoda Wijebandara (Faculty of Science, University of Kelaniya) at the Department of Parasitology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka
2019	<u>Trainer</u> - Undergraduate intern, Ms. Fathima Zaithun (Faculty of Science, University of Kelaniya) at the Department of Parasitology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

2020	University of Kelaniya Senate honors and cash prize for conducting high quality research and publishing in international indexed journals
2018	University of Kelaniya Senate honors and cash prize for conducting high quality research and publishing in international indexed journals
2017	University Senate honors for conducting high quality research and publishing in international indexed journals

NON-RELATED REFEREES

Prof. Nayana Gunathilaka

Head/Professor in Parasitology,
University of Kelaniya, Ragama, Sri Lanka.
Email: n.gunathilaka@kln.ac.lk
+94718733816

Prof. Mayuri Wijesinghe

Professor in Zoology,
University of Colombo, Colombo 07, Sri Lanka.
Email: mayuri@sci.cmb.ac.lk
+94112158394

Dr. Wasana Rodrigo

Senior Research Scientist,
Industrial Technology Institute, Colombo 07, Sri Lanka
Email: wwprodrigo@yahoo.com
+94773760237

Hereby, I confirm that all the information mentioned above are correct to the best of my knowledge.

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Dr. Tharaka Wijerathna