

World Wildlife Day celebration at Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve

On 20 December 2013, United Nations General Assembly in its sixty-eighth session decided to proclaim March 3 as a World Wildlife Day to mark the day of the adoption of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 1973 which plays an significant role in safeguarding that international trade does not threaten the species' survival. The CITES secretariat with the collaboration of United Nations Organization facilitates the event every year.

The overall objective of the day is to raise awareness on the importance of protecting wild flora and fauna. These have an intrinsic value and contributes ecological, genetic, social, economic, scientific, educational, cultural, recreational and aesthetic aspects of human well-being and sustainable development and the urgent need to take action to fight against wildlife crime and



C.H.Padma IFS giving welcome address. Anand, IFS, Arunlal IFS and Madhivanan WCCB on the dias



Madhivanan WCCB explaining about sample wildlife artefacts which are in trade

reduce the human impacts on wild species.

This day is celebrated under a theme every year and this year's theme was ***“Big cats: predators under threat”***.

Big cats are facing many and varied threats such as habitat loss, poaching,

illegal trade, loss of prey and human animal conflicts. The day gives us the opportunity to raise awareness about their plight and to galvanize people's support.

In line with the objectives, Wildlife Crime Control Bureau in association with



Marimuthu talks about big cats and its threats

Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve and with the support of Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore honoured the day at Sathyamangalam. About 60 forest personnel including forest rangers, foresters, guards, and watchers participated. C.H. Padma, IFS, District Forest Officer/Deputy Director, STR, Hasanur inaugurated the event by welcoming the gathering and gave a brief overview about the day's importance. S. Anand, IFS, District Forest Officer, Erode continued with giving more information on the importance of the day and CITES role in saving endangered species trade. P.G. Arunlal, IFS, District Forest Officer/Deputy Director, STR,

Sathyamangalam and C. Sakthivel, Biologist, STR were also present.

As part of the programme, R. Marimuthu from Zoo Outreach Organization gave a detailed presentation on big cats. The big cats includes lion (*Panthera leo*), tiger (*Panthera tigris*), leopard (*Panthera pardus*) and jaguar (*Panthera onca*) that can roar but also cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*), snow leopard (*Panthera uncia*), puma (*Puma concolor*) and clouded leopard (*Neofelis nebulosa & Neofelis diardi*) that are found in Africa, Asia, North America, South America. He gave information about each cat's etymology, taxonomy and subspecies, characteristics, current

distribution and habitat and historical distribution, behaviour, IUCN Red List status, the major threats and conservation actions.

At the end more emphasis was given to tiger conservation in India by sharing details about Project Tiger history and its objectives, National Tiger Conservation Authority started following Tiger Task Force recommendation constituted by then Prime Minister of India in 2005, current tiger reserves in India which spread out in 18 states, all India tiger estimation and current population status and the modern technologies used for counting tigers.

Mr. Madhivanan, Wildlife Inspector, Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, Kochi gave a presentation on "Wildlife Crime Scenario in India and Role of WCCB" and "Real or Fake' how to identifying the wildlife articles. He started with functions of WCCB under Wildlife Protection Act 1972 Section 38 Z, the organogram, its various field offices and publications. Further he



The forest officers administering an oath to save big cats

added why wildlife crime must be prevented, the wildlife offence happens due to food, sports and trade. The various commodities in trade, value of the trade, the levels of the trade, Wildlife Protection Act 1972 and its definitions on animals, the importance collection points of wildlife in India, the animals which are in trade both lives in terrestrial and marine habitats, the community involves in tiger poaching and the kinds of weapons they used for and also trade of medicinal and ornamental plants. In the second part he exchanged knowledge

on how to identifying the wildlife objects fake or real. He explained with good photographs about how to identify tiger and leopard skins, ivory identification tips, elephant tail hairs, how to identify the products which made up of snake, monitor lizard and crocodile skins, also identification of mongoose hair, bird's feather, musk, pangolin scales, turtle plastron and corals. The forest personnel were very keen in learning new things. Then the participants wore tiger masks and carrying a placard supplied by ZOO and took a pledge to save

the big cats from threats. The forest department at the end felicitated the resource persons.



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