

Other Education Reports

MCBT celebrates World Wetlands Day with PSB School Students, Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Madras Crocodile Bank/Centre for Herpetology conducted an awareness programme for around 250 kids of class 4 and 5 of PSBB on 2 Feb, 2013 - World Wetlands Day. Students were given a brief introduction and a history on Ramsar World Wetlands Day which is celebrated worldwide to commemorate the first wetlands convention held in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971. The programme started with a short video from Ramsar, titled 'Wetlands: keeping our planet alive and well' which explains the importance of wetlands and the threats they face. A powerpoint presentation, with the following information was done: What is a Wetland; Types of Wetlands- Coastal, Inland and Man-made; Wetlands around you; Why wetlands are important and Threats.

Wetlands form a link between land and water and are some of the most productive ecosystems in the world. They provide resting places and habitats for an astounding variety of species. They play a role in transforming runoff water, that could otherwise be an environmental hazard into a productive part of the ecosystem, and helping to protect clean water to mention a few. Wetlands are therefore a crucial part of the ecological chain.

Then, the students spent time on the nature trail and at an artificially created pond at MCBT that acts as an aquatic ecosystem. Some native species of aquatic plants were introduced and over a period this has become a suitable habitat for invertebrates like dragonflies, butterflies, insects & spiders. Fishes and frogs also use this pond as their spawning site. This helped illustrate that even in an artificial setting a wetland can be of tremendous value in the surrounds and brought forth the importance of looking around us and protecting small waterbodies as well as large and well known wetland habitats.

After the visit outdoors, an activity "To make a self-contained closed aquatic ecosystem" was done. The students enthusiastically took part in this activity and were proud to take these newly made aquatic ecosystems with them. This presentation and activity was repeated four times with different classes. Posters like 'Wetlands Take



A talk on wetlands and its conservation given by MCBT staff



Students working in a group activity 'making an aquatic ecosystem' i

Care of Water' by Ramsar and a poster on Aquatic Birds and food chain was presented to the teachers to display in the school.

Sincere gratitude to the teachers and staff of PSBB school, and members of the PTA (Parent-Teacher Association) for their assistance. A big thanks to the docents and volunteers of Madras Crocodile Bank Trust for their enthusiasm, help and support.
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Conservation awareness programmes in Samariah St. John's HSS, Kulasekaranvilai, Tirunelveli, TN

Our school conducted three awareness programmes in January and February

2013. The themes of the programmes were human-elephant coexistence, tiger and pollinators and using the Zoo Outreach Organization education kits. On 28 January 2013, the Headmaster gave the facts about elephants. Then he asked the students how they would react when suddenly encountered with elephants? Students interacted well. On 04 February 2013 the students read about 'TIGER COUNT' "TIGER CENSUS" carried out in Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve in the dailies. They were interested to know much more about tigers. The zoology teacher described various sub species of tigers and its behaviours from the tiger packet. Joel Revingston, Headmaster explained about the need to save tigers which is in the top of the trophic level in a forest and what the students could do to save them? Then students held the placard, wore armbands and pledged



Children with Pollinators placards



Teachers and students with ZOO's pollinator education kits



"Be Kind to Daily Life Wildlife" headband worn by a student

Headmaster started the programme with a motivating question : from where do you get your food, vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds, grains? Being a postgraduate in Botany he explained about what is pollination, types of pollination such as hydrophily, anemophily, zoophily, under zoophily-entomophily, chiropterophily, myrmecophily, ornithophily, malacophily and its importance. He also told about 1500 vertebrate and 40,000 invertebrate pollinators. Pollinators need a healthy environment in order for them to sustain healthy ecosystem for us all.

Muthuraj. R (XI-D) informed the bad news that hundreds of vertebrate pollinator species are on the verge of extinction and its consequences. Students wore the headband and held placards and shouted the slogans such as create pollinator habitats; grow native plants, say no to chemical pesticides; better not lose pollinators; what would we do without you-pollinators!; Keep your environment clean; dispose garbage properly; plant plenty of flowering trees; save forests-create forests; dispose paper cups carefully.

Then, Sivapriya (XII -C) read the pledge and others followed. They took an oath: I will know about the Pollinators; I will plant more flowering trees and take care of them; I will keep my house, surrounding, my street and my school clean; I will segregate the garbage and dispose; I will not hurt butterflies, snails, beetles, bats, birds, garden lizard, moths, spiders; I will spread this message to my friends, relatives and neighbourhood people.

We got the following feedback from the students. "I never thought that monkeys, bats, garden lizards are involved in pollination!!" Esakkiraja L. (VIII-B). "I used to throw stones at the garden lizards and bats. It saves my life?? Wonderful!!! I'll not harm it any more" Senthil Kumar E. (IX-B). "I will not throw the tea / coffee paper cups everywhere; it affects the pollinators. I'll pass this message to my chithappa (uncle), who owns a tea shop." Sethuraman S. (XI-D).

Our District Educational Officer Mrs. A. Padma appreciated our programmes. It was arranged and conducted by: Mr. W. Joel Revingston, Head Master, Dr. J.J.P. Rajan, Correspondent and Ms. Vijay Margret, Zoology Asst., **Submitted by: Mr. W. Joel Revingston. Email: samariahstjohnshss@gmail.com.**

to join in tiger conservation.

The National Green Corps students along with the Junior Red Cross, Consumer Club, Red Ribbon Club and Health & Hygiene Club celebrated conservation of biodiversity on 11 February 2013 on the theme "Nature's Pollinators, plant and you - save pollinators". The