

International Vulture Awareness Day celebrated to keep the Skylords soaring high



IVAD celebration in schools of Ambedkar Nagar, Uttar Pradesh

International Vulture Awareness Day was celebrated on 1 September 2018 in various districts of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Indian Biodiversity Conservation Society (IBCS) organized the event by involving various NGOs (Manav Organization from Lalitpur, Sarthak Pragati Prayaash Society from Jhansi, Wild Geo Excursion from Tikamgarh, Paryavaran Jeev Seva Sansthan from Gonda and Society for Scientific Research from Barabanki) and school teachers (Tikamgarh, Jhansi, Gonda, Ambedkarnagar, Gwalior). The objective was to engross the people and particularly the students that are fortunate to live in close proximity of natural habitats of vultures. The awareness material was developed and mailed to the interested organizers in advance so that they could manage the event in their areas. Manav Organisation celebrated IVAD in Nehru Post Graduate College, Lalitpur so that the youth become responsive towards the vulture population in Lalitpur. Lalitpur has a number of natural breeding colonies of vulture species (*Gyps indicus*, *Gyps bengalensis*, *Sarcogyps calvus* and *Neophron percnopterus*). As a result, the graduate and postgraduate students could participate in the future vulture census and monitoring programmes.

The students that are already indulged in the vulture conservation initiatives in Orchha, Tikamgarh have been felicitated with the scholarships from September onwards to encourage them to continue the much-needed actions. Various nature lovers those are

associated with Indian Biodiversity Conservation Society (IBCS) since last three years have provided these scholarships. The students are lead by IBCS in making observations, collecting and graphing data, drawing meaningful conclusions, and sharing their work.

The awareness boards in Orchha that provide information about the status of vultures were also renewed. These have played an important role in dissipating the knowledge about IUCN status and Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 with reference to vultures. The boards have message both in Hindi and English since Orchha is a tourist place and attracts tourists both from India and overseas. The 'Giddh Mitras' (Friends of vultures) monitor the vulture populations not only on specific days but also all round the year.

The teachers organized the painting and colouring activities for the students. The colouring sheets had a slogan on vultures, written in Hindi and a picture of vulture. The slogans stated that vultures consume the dead carcasses and keep the environment clean so we should be thankful to them. Another slogan acknowledged that we should learn to serve the society like

vultures and should be interested in their conservation.

The motive was to let the students know about the scavengers and their importance.

They also distributed the flyers on vultures prepared in Hindi to the students.

The flyers had

information about the role of vultures in environment, the causes of their decline and steps to conserve them. With the help of A3 size posters, students were introduced to 9 vulture species of India. The students also participated in the plantation that was undertaken to promote the importance of nesting material utilized by the breeding pairs to construct the massive nest. The local press media also helped in dispersing the message and the importance of this day.



The colouring sheets with slogans on vultures

Submitted by: Sonika Kushwaha and Akhilesh Kumar, Indian Biodiversity Conservation Society, Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh. Email: ibcsforall@gmail.com