

International Vulture Awareness Day 2018 celebrated in Uttar Pradesh

Birds of Prey Programme, South Africa and Hawk Conservancy Trust, England run the International Vulture Awareness Day. It is celebrated each year on the first Saturday of September and dedicated to vulture conservation. Biodiversity and Wildlife Conservation Lab, Department of Zoology and Institute for Wildlife Sciences, ONGC, Centre for Advanced Studies, University of Lucknow in collaboration with Uttar Pradesh State Biodiversity Board Centre for Biodiversity and Wildlife Research and Conservation, Lucknow observed the day from 1-4 September 2018 by organizing several awareness programmes.

On 1 September 2018, like previous years celebrated this day with activities among school students of Lucknow as well as in Behraich, Etawah and Gonda. In Lucknow, 150 students from 15 schools enthusiastically involved in different events like painting on flying vultures, oral presentations and quiz competitions based on vultures. Prof. Padma Saxena, Prof. Madhu Tripathi and Prof. Amita Kanaujia gave vulture books as prizes for the winners.



Participants with their Vulture poster

A mass awareness drive was held in Lucknow city in which volunteers, local people and research scholars were involved. They distributed the fliers, pamphlets and sensitized the local people and students about vultures, their ecological value and importance in nature. They performed street play, played interactive games and gave talks on vultures.

From 2-4 September field visits were made to the vulture sites in Unao, Kanpur, Lucknow and Raibareilly with the students and volunteer where students explored the vulture habitats, roosting and feeding behaviour and vultures association with other animals such as crows, dogs, black kites and cattle egret.

Another vulture workshop was arranged at Behraich in collaboration with Prakriti Parivar Global Green Group (3G) held at Primary school of Dhaplipurwa. Rajeev Chauhan, Society for Conservation of Nature gave a talk on diclofenac which is a painkiller given to ruminants impacts on vulture population decline. Further he explained about the vulture *insitu* breeding programmes.

At Etawah, in association with Environment and Wildlife Conservation and OCEAN we arranged a vulture awareness programmes at Narayan College of Science and Arts. Around 80 undergraduate students participated.

In Gonda district, with the support of Nature Club Foundation organized a talk at Genius Inter College to make students aware about importance of vultures and how we can



Prof. Amita Kanaujia delivering a lecture on vultures

conserve them. The college is nearby the waste dumpsite of Gonda City where Egyptian Vultures are found in a good number but due to destruction of their habitat, closing down of bone factory, less availability of food, use of diclofenac drug in cattles and many other issues, their number is falling very rapidly. Villagers from

the area told us in a visit that Indian Vultures were also found here in a good number but all of them disappeared in last decade. So, through the programme we requested the students, to protect their nests, trees where they make nest or roost and make sure that the veterinarian visiting to treat your animals, is not prescribing Diclofenac to them. Many of them shared us the vulture nesting sites which builds on trees and electric towers.

Moreover, the members of Nature Club Foundation discussed with Municipal Corporation of Gonda City to construct a closed fencing area near waste dumpsite and dispose bodies of dead animals there that they pick from roads so that vultures can get food to survive in the area. Abhishek Dubey, Rushi Das Dubey and Ajay Verma of Nature Club were present in the outreach.

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