

Zoo Outreach Organization's Animal Welfare Fortnightly 2015 programmes

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During AWF 2015, ZOO organised three animal welfare awareness programmes targeting school children and tribal communities. The first one was held on 21 January at Government Higher Secondary School, Chennanur for forty students of age 14-15 years. On 28 January, second programme was arranged for the tribal people of Marakadu village in which 30 people participated. The last one was conducted at Tribal Residential High School, Mavuthampathi on 30 Jan. in which 40 students of class VIII and IX participated.

The theme of the school programme was "Conservation Welfare" and for the tribal "Human Elephant Coexistence". At the school programmes the students were first told about Animal Welfare Board of India and its functions. Later, they were explained about animal welfare, conservation welfare, five freedoms of animal welfare, the daily mistakes that they will do for wildlife species. Further few of the tips of do's and don'ts for daily life wildlife and how to safeguard the wildlife species, welfare and individual responsibility were given by Dr. K. Asokan, Veterinary Assistant Surgeon talked to the students about domestic animal welfare.

Subsequently, ZOO's animal welfare education kits were given to them and they were asked to explore the materials of conservation welfare brochure, cross word puzzle on animal welfare, play a bear game card and book marks carrying animal welfare messages. The information on the brochure explained to them such as what is conservation welfare-the securing of welfare or well-being for wildlife either *in-situ* or *ex-situ* while undertaking conservation of species and their habitats.

Case studies on sloth bear salvation which deals about dancing bears and its rehabilitation and Kufri musk deer breeding centre which deals about



Chennanur School students reading the Conservation Welfare brochure



AWF Bookmarks with Animal Welfare message - Chennanur GHSS



Marakadu tribal woman tying elephant rakhi



Mavuthampathi GHS students playing 'Play Bears' game

not making wild animals as pet, the big beasts in peril-elephant and rhino poached for its tusk and horns respectively, how to mind our manners with problem monkeys, daily life mistakes kill or shoo away the animals which are beneficial to us were also told in detail.

They were asked to fill up crossword puzzle and most of them competent to do it, they related the answers with one other. Instructions for playing bear game was given. The students divided into groups and played the game and really enjoyed. Last we used the bookmarks, the students made a pledge by reading whatever written on their cards.

At the Marakadu tribal programme, they were taught about, elephant facts, threats to the elephants, elephant conservation welfare issues, reasons behind human elephant conflicts and its consequences, traditional and modern mitigation methods and its successes & failures and the need for human elephant coexistence. More focus was given to the do's and don'ts since these people are living in the human elephant conflict areas. They shared their experiences on elephants and revered them and never call the elephants name instead they say they are God. Especially the tribal people have the tolerance to the problem elephant but they never retaliate by any means. Then ZOO's elekit packets were given to them. They really enjoyed tying rakhi with each other, headband and putting on masks. Later they took an oath by holding the placard by saying save the elephants and not harm them.

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