

The launch of 10CEAN, the marine programme, by Zooreach



I, Dr. Monta Ray, the official mascot of 10CEAN, inspired from the elegant, sleek, powerful and versatile manta ray, have just returned from the first conference-cum-workshop on ocean literacy for teachers in India hosted by Zoo Outreach Organisation. I must say, it was quite an eventful and successful day!

Dr. Monta Ray.

the Zooreach team from preparing a mini activity book and booklet related to the ocean, collecting workshop supplies, setting up presentation materials, and inviting marine experts to designing the venue. And, after many days of anticipation the day finally arrived on 26 May 2023.

Six schools from Coimbatore participated with 20 teachers all geared up to attend the conference-cum-workshop. They trickled in one by one, eager to learn and

10CEAN (Ocean Conservation Education Action Network), the marine program launched by Zooreach works on sustainable fishing, reducing bycatch, understanding shark and ray hunting, marine conservation, and ocean education. I witnessed firsthand the hard work put up by



Experts sharing their knowledge and expertise with the audience.

engage with the educators and experts. The teachers were a diverse group, teaching multidisciplinary subjects and represented from international to state boards who brought their unique experiences and perspectives to the table.

To kickstart the event, Dr. Sanjay Molur, Executive Director, Zooreach introduced the program and said, "Each one of us is being influenced by the ocean be it weather, agriculture or drinking water. This knowledge is best communicated by teachers to their students as not a co-curricular activity but as a core curricular activity". This was followed by an ice breaker session. A fun game called 'Swim like a fish and find



Introduction to IOCEAN.



The teachers met Dr. Monta Ray's friends.



Looking at the glow bottles.

your friend to talk to' was played for the ice breaker session by wildlife educators Payal Molur and Tandrili Baruah. This got everyone mingling and excited for what was to come.

The Zooreach team along with the marine experts invited for the talk took turns leading each session, sharing their knowledge and expertise on the subject matter. We covered various topics ranging from a talk by Dr. A. Biju Kumar, head, Department of Aquatic Biology, University of Kerala, who gave an introduction to the mesmerizing world of ocean. The crowd was astonished by the number of species inhabiting the marine ecosystem.

Dr. S.R. Ganesh, director of research, Kalinga Centre for Rainforest Ecology, took the teachers into the world of marine reptiles and their conservation. One of the key learnings from his presentation that amazed the crowd was that true sea snakes don't lay eggs at all. They give birth to live young ones, and cannot travel on land except for sea kraits. Mr Parveen Rozario, a young researcher from a

traditional fishing community spoke about fishing in his family, his ongoing study on sharks and his inspiration to work in the marine field to save them.

One of the highlights of the conference-cum-workshop was that the teachers were about to meet not only me but also touch and see my friends like crabs, starfishes, molluscs & their egg cases, shrimps, shark scales, shark tooth, and sea urchins. The teachers were skeptical about what they would see because of the smell. However, the skepticism turned into intrigue and finally to surprise as they looked at the diverse array of my marine friends before them.



Rakhri tying ceremony with the participants.



Ocean solution game discussion.



Marine specimens seen under the microscope.

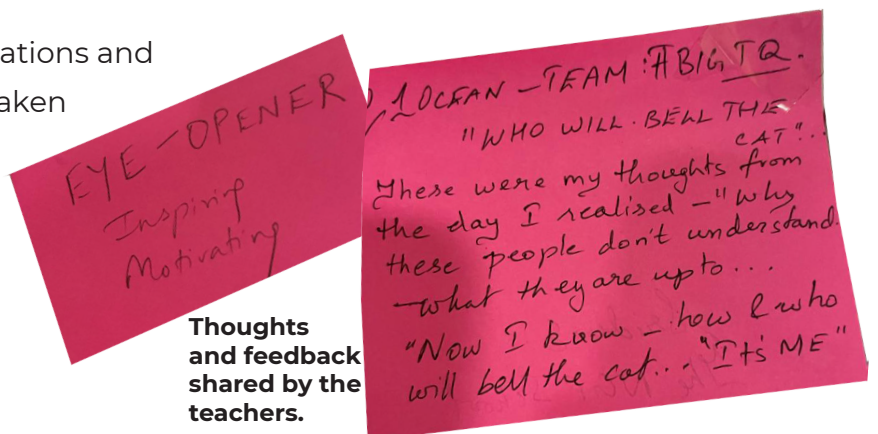


One ocean, one passion, one incredible group of people.

The last session was conducted by our team's very own marine researchers Priyanka Iyer and Usha Ravindra whose marine work profile varies from working with sharks and rays, sea cucumbers to working with fishing communities. They spoke in length about bycatch. Each presentation was informative, interactive, and well-executed and the discussions that followed each presentation were insightful and thought-provoking, spurring even more ideas and solutions

networking among the attendees and at the same time provided knowledge about the ocean. The games and activities showcased how the information could be multi-disciplinary and used across different curricula in schools. One such activity was the marine species hunt assessment, where each teacher was given a marine species card and was asked to place the cards in different depths of the ocean that was displayed on the wall.

Peppered between the presentations and workshops, the teachers were taken through some fun activities and games by wildlife educators Tandrili and Payal. This helped to create a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere that fostered collaboration and



At the end of the session the game was redone so as to assess whether there had been any change in their knowledge base of where animals lived in the ocean. The last game of the day was to drive home the threats that our ocean is facing and more importantly how human actions can change the negative implications. Actions that every child can easily incorporate into their lives. The teachers brainstormed ideas and gave some extremely valuable suggestions to improve the health of my home, the ocean.

The event ended with the 'create your own June 8th program' where everyone got the chance to design their own program on World Ocean Day. Lastly, glow bottles were given out and everyone had the chance to have a look at the bottles and write down their thoughts about the whole event. The educators wrote down their feelings in the sticky notes.

Overall, the conference-cum-workshop was a great success. It was truly a team effort that yielded great results and we hope to continue this collaboration in the coming months through various activities, programs, and events related to the ocean. This event also opened the discussion to co-create an ocean literacy manual with the educators that is multidisciplinary and easily adapted to the school curriculum. So, if you want to learn more about our conference-cum-workshop experience or about IOCEAN, be sure to contact us on <http://iocean.zooreach.org/>. Stay tuned!

A big thank you to the conference audience, Rucha Vinod Pendke Avachat, Ravi V, Sriuma V, Aswathi A, Nachiketh Ashok from CS Academy, M. Leelarani, Lidwin Esther P, Sruthi M. from Global Pathways Matriculation School, Gomathy from KSIRS, Sridevi E, Sushmitha Kumar from The NGP School, Nivetha, Brintha. M, Shilpa. S, Priya Kartik, Jayasheela G from Vivekalaya Matriculation Higher Secondary School, and Soundharya R, Swarnalatha R, Manju R. from Vivekalaya's Prakriya International School for enthusiastically participating in the event.

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