

# ZOOREACH – BOSCH WETLAND RESTORATION PROJECT - PHASE 1



Rece site visit by the Zooreach team. © Trisa Bhattacharjee.

Freshwater systems are among the most threatened ecosystems in the world and wetlands in close proximity to urban areas are in dire need of attention. The Nallusamy check dam and Sambrani Kuttai are connected waterbodies in close proximity to the BOSCH office at

Keeranatham in Coimbatore. As with most waterbodies in India, they face many threats such as pollution, garbage dumping, and invasive species taking over native ones. To address these challenges Zoo Outreach Organisation has started a project in 2023 with support from BOSCH.

## OUR PROGRESS SO FAR

### BIODIVERSITY ASSESSMENTS

- Before changing the landscape we must first have a thorough understanding of the current status of the wetland. For this reason, conducting rapid biodiversity assessments over different seasons to understand the species assemblage in the site was needed. It is important because species are the true indicators of the health of the ecosystem.
- Experts specific to each taxon were called to do the surveys. We have completed our summer surveys for invertebrates, herpetofauna, birds, and plants. Approximately, 120 species of plants, 30 species of birds, 15+ species of herpetofauna and 100+ species of invertebrates were found at the Nallusamy check dam.



Common Moorhen documented during bird diversity summer assessment. © H. Byju.

### PERCEPTION STUDIES

- Any conservation project can succeed only if there is involvement from the community. Understanding the local stakeholders' perspective on the wetland and what they perceive as threats and their willingness to participate in the restoration activity is of paramount importance in curating outreach material for them. Studies have been done on the perceptions that the villagers from Sambrani kuttai and the apartment dwellers & shop keepers near the Nallusamy checkdam have towards the wetland. The results of the same are being analysed.

### MEETING WITH NGO PARTNERS

- As we started working in the study area, we realised that there are a few other NGOs working in the same area. A meeting was organised by Zooreach with the other NGO partners and



Huntsman spider documented during invertebrate assessment. © Usha Ravindra.



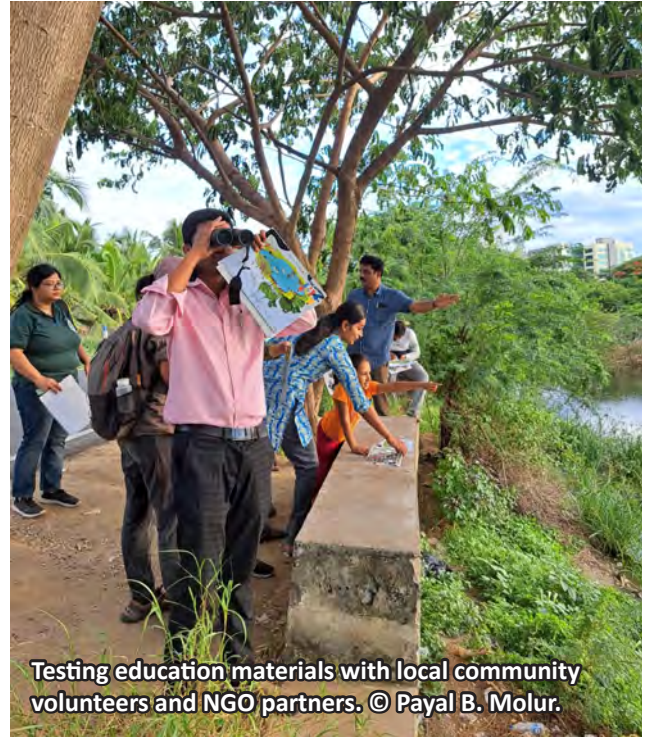
Perception study with local shop owners.  
© V. Sreenivasan.

the biodiversity at Nallusamy check dam. This activity was checked for effectiveness using the NGO partners and local community. The response was positive and the materials will soon be made available for a wider audience in Tamil.

ways to be mutually beneficial were discussed.

#### **EDUCATION AND OUTREACH MATERIALS**

- Education material specifically designed to ignite interest and create discussion points was designed and made for the program.
- A beta version of one activity was made specifically to get people to notice



Testing education materials with local community volunteers and NGO partners. © Payal B. Molur.



NBNP visit with Boschlers. © B. Ravichandran.

## **VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT**

- 7 online talks on the various biodiversity around us, their importance in our lives, and the impact we have on them were given by Dr. Sanjay Molur, reaching approximately 500 people from BOSCH. Additionally, around 85 people from BOSCH were taken on a field trip to Nilgiri Biosphere Nature Park (NBNP) where they explored the concepts of native and invasive species and their effects on the ecosystem.

## **THE WAY FORWARD**

- Monsoon rapid biodiversity assessments for the invertebrates is ongoing. The assessments for the other taxa will happen in the upcoming month. Two more rapid biodiversity assessments will be done in the respective seasons.
- Identify local champions interested in the restoration of the site and with the potential for further training to ensure sustainability.

- Develop education materials relevant to the schools and community nearby.
- Conduct outreach programs with the stakeholders through workshops, online talks, and informal interactions.
- Develop a master plan for the restoration based on the information on species and stakeholder interaction to formulate the next steps for phase 2.

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**Boschlers with Zooreach team at NBNP. © B. Ravichandran.**

