

## COUNT DOWN 2010-Save Biodiversity Reports

Countdown 2010 is an independent alliance. It is governed by the will of its partners through its Advisory Board and Partners' Assembly. The Countdown 2010 Secretariat is based at the office of IUCN - The World Conservation Union in Belgium. Countdown 2010 is a way of reaching out and linking to partners all over the world and uniting them in the common goal of saving biodiversity.

The Overarching goal of the initiative is that all governments and members of civil society, at every level, have taken the necessary actions to halt or significantly reduce the loss of biodiversity by 2010. The Objectives are to :

- . Encourage and support the full implementation of all the existing binding international commitments and necessary actions to save biodiversity;
- . Demonstrate clearly what progress countries are making in meeting the 2010 biodiversity target;
- Gain maximum public attention for the challenge of saving biodiversity by 2010.

It is open to all organisations and institutions, city municipalities, state governments, etc. see the Countdown 2010 website [www.countdown2010.net](http://www.countdown2010.net) and read how your organisation can make a commitment to save or significantly reduce biodiversity loss by 2010.

Zoo Outreach Organisation made a declaration to Countdown 2010 last year and has joined up most of its partner organisations and networks with a commitment to do something, even a small thing, which would move in the direction of saving or reducing biodiversity loss for just one species, if not more. We also made two two-year calendars with Hoolock Gibbon and Amphibian themes. Countdown 2010 Secretariat was charmed by these projects and featured Zoo Outreach Organisation in an on line article. It is reproduced below :

Focus on: Zoo Outreach Organisation (Z.O.O.) ZOO, an Indian NGO was founded to provide educational, technical and moral support to zoos in India (and later South Asia), directing them more towards more effective conservation activities and better animal welfare. ZOO added its ngo sister, WILD and initiated regional networks for "neglected taxa", Invertebrates, Amphibians, Reptiles, Bats, Rodents, and Primates to bring together and support their field biologists and to link these taxa to zoos. ZOO/WILD also initiated thematic regional networks for IUCN SSC CBSG (Conservation Breeding) (CBSG, South Asia), RSG (Reintroduction), and for the International Zoo Educators Association as well as a



South Asian Zoo Association, SAZARC. ZOO/WILD use the tools of IUCN SSC CBSG to integrate taxon and thematic networks in conservation workshops, such as CAMPs (red listing exercises), PHVAs (conservation direction), and training in education, field techniques, taxonomy, etc. Over 1000 academics are members of these networks.

Because each of the networks is distinct, when ZOO and WILD signed the Declaration Countdown 2010, they decided to declare each network and its own commitment for biodiversity. ZOO is focusing on modest but "do-able" commitments. ZOO has developed attractive calendars for 2009-2010 each for the Amphibian crisis and for the highly threatened Western Hoolock Gibbon, a primate of North East India, Bangladesh and Myanmar. ZOO also brings CD 2010 into all of its educational material which has a very wide audience throughout South Asia. At the annual zoo association conference, a special session is planned on CD 2010. Each taxon network has committed to reduce biodiversity loss in one species by end of 2010.

Because of our commitment to Countdown 2010, we were particularly amazed and impressed by Ms. Jessie Jayakaran who conducted five education programmes based on the theme of Countdown 2010. Her reports are below :

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*SAN-IZE member Ms. Jessie Jayakaran conducted five programmes on "CountDown 2010-Save Biodiversity" using ZOO education materials in Erode, Chennai and Madurai in February and March 09. These programmes were conducted for Green Corps students at CSI Girls HS, Erode, school and college students, National Service Programme (NSS) officers who work in the colleges and polytechnics, teacher training and nursing students.*

### COUNTDOWN 2010-Reports

1. It is important to halt or significantly reduce the current rate of biodiversity loss by 2010; it is a commitment of the CBD. Countdown 2010 was promoted at C.S.I. Girls H.S.S., Erode, Tamil Nadu on 3 Feb, 09 to Green Corps students. Materials from Zoo Outreach Organisation about amphibians were used to



illustrate CD 2010. The programme was introduced to the entire school in the morning assembly. An interactive session was there to know more about the Biodiversity and its loss and students recognized the importance of frog in food chain, ecosystem etc. Other activities -- tying *rakhi*, wearing mask and sticker were part of the pro-gramme. Sponsors -- ANSA, ZOO/WILD, SAZARC, CHESTER, IZE, AARK etc. were introduced along with the calendar sheet. More information from the amphibian booklet was given on the decline of this groups of animals. Students came to know the various types of programme to be carried out to spread about the importance of the role of the amphibians in the lives of the human and the ecosystem.

2. During the refresher course of the twenty five NSS Program Officers from Colleges/Polytechnics in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry, Countdown – 2010 Save Biodiversity was conducted on 25 February 09 at the School of Social Work, Chennai. Though the college students have carried out the camps in rural areas, this seems to be a new and urgent area, where immediate steps have to be taken to save the Biodiversity. Officers were divided into two groups according to the geographical situation and inputs. They were supplied with Frogs and Hoolock Gibbon education packets supplied by the Zoo Outreach Organisation along with the Countdown – 2010 calendar. Six technical sessions with the *rakhi*, placard, mask, stickers and the booklet on Frogs were dealt with. The A.V. session on India's Environment especially on Biodiversity had taken participants to know the essence of Biodiversity. They requested for C.D. on the information booklet for the follow up especially on Hoolock Gibbon as they are located only in few places.

3. Amidst the tight schedule of the regular school work, about 60 students from standard 8th of Satya Matric HSS.

Purasaiyakkam, Chennai attended a day's program on Countdown 2010 save bio-diversity on 4 March 09. The first session was of explaining and recapitulation of the environmental crisis – what they have learnt, witnessed and experienced. The audio visual session on India's environmental action program, highlighted on the



Indian resources, richness of our bio-diversity and conservation of eco-system. This was more informative and made the students aware of the richness of India.

After the session three students recapitulated the points they have learnt. They planned their future monthly programs as reaching the unreached, water management and tree plantation. The day's program ended with happy faces of the students who really had great fun and enjoyment amidst gaining great awareness and vital knowledge in this area. The day's program was published in Anna Nagar Times – Hindu.

4. Twenty eight first year zoology students of Lady Doak College,

Madurai underwent training on Biodiversity. The days program was divided into two major divisions namely on Gain & Goal i.e., Think Globally Act Locally –



Know your Environment/Step Down – Countdown. The environmental crisis prevailing around the globe, country and region was dealt with special emphasis on biodiversity. The richness of our resources under present conditions resulted in biodiversity loss were clearly explained. In a different angle the endangered



primates like loris, langur, macaque and hoolock gibbon were discussed. As they have already studied, they found it very easy to know more about the hoolock

gibbon. The students enacted a roll play on hoolock gibbon. Group discussions based on the local situations helped the students to know more about the apes. As step down and count down they have planned the following activities for the next academic year. To establish a nursery corner within the college campus; distribution of the sapling to the general public; Preparing a chart for raising the nurseries and its maintenance; distribution of sapling through forest department to hilly area; learning the names of the monkey in the near by hillocks with the help of the charts provided by Zoo; special guest lecture by the veterinary and



forest department; Prof. S. Nisha will coordinate the program; the day's program was published on Hindu on 16th March 09.

5. Countdown 2010 was conducted for twenty five NSS students of CSI Jeyaraj Annapakiam College of Nursing, Pasumalai, Madurai and fifty nine B.Ed. students of five different colleges at CSI College of Education, Pasumalai, Madurai with the able leadership of Mr. Edwin, Professor and NSS Program Officer and Mr. Victor, Coordinator respectively. Being the first year NSS students in the college of Nursing, knowing about the loss of biodiversity, its impact on human beings and the duty to save it, seems to be an interesting and thrilling experience to them. Though treating the patients suffering from water borne disease seems to be their prime duty, knowing about the declining number of frogs too has a role to keep a watch on it. Their excitement went aloft while receiving, reading and gaining knowledge about frog and hoolock gibbon. The formation of global guardian angels since the establishment of UNEP, the various global units under conservation program, the

sponsoring international agencies especially about ZOO have kindled their mind about their role as nightingale to save biodiversity. As the college is situated on the Pasumalai hill slopes they are witnessing the primates' movements under all conditions. For the sake of in-depth knowledge various sections like observation, mimicry, role-play etc were carried out. In order to spread the matter more copies of these educational packets are displayed on the notice boards/library/village health care unit. The NSS program officer acknowledged the successful program as he has already underwent training during the refresher course at Chennai last month. The B.Ed students of five different districts received inputs about Countdown 2010 on frog. Book marks and car stickers were distributed. Topics like know your environment, endangered species and amphibian ark were dealt with. Recording of the conditions of frogs in various places (both urban and rural) was allotted as vocational work which will be a stepping stone for the next academic year. **Submitted by: Jessie Jayakaran, Retd. Teacher & Volunteer Conservation Educationist, Chennai 600 092, Tamil Nadu. Email: jessiejey@rediffmail.com**

