

## Amphibian education programmes during and after Wildlife Week

### AArk programme introduced at Durrell ABC Training, South Asia

The sixth day agenda of the Durrell Amphibian Biodiversity Course South Asia held at Periyar Tiger Reserve, Kerala from 10-16 December 07 included a talk entitled 'Raising awareness about Amphibian life... where do we go from here'. The course was attended by 25 amphibian experts from India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and Holland. This ABC South Asia course is one of the emergency responses to 'Amphibian extinction crisis', trying to build up the 'amphibian army' to effectively



challenge the global amphibian decline.

One of the objectives of this course is to foster cross disciplinary and cross border

collaboration for more effective and efficient conservation action in this region. Cross disciplinary collaboration should also direct towards educating the public about 'Amphibian extinction crisis'. In the talk the author briefed about the need for the researchers to extend their helping hands to educate the public and to create awareness about amphibian crisis and the need to conserve them. He emphasized that the public should be motivated to make positive contribution to conservation through activities in their daily lives. This can be achieved by the scientists since they are familiar with facts about amphibians. It is a fact that many common people do not know that amphibians are in crisis. The involvement of field biologists will bring in value for education. Realising the fact about amphibian crisis and the need to

preserve them, few interested organizations around the world like CBSG and WAZA has declared 2008 as the Year of the Frog (YOTF). Highlighting one of the goals of YOTF he pointed out that public can make positive contributions to conservation through activities in their daily lives. While justifying the reasons to involve in this global initiative he pointed out that many people do not know that amphibians are declining and how threatened they are. Also the amphibian extinction crisis provides an opportunity for the researchers to engage with local community. The best way to reach the local community is through their children. He explained that active learning has been proved to be a successful approach for similar issues. He showed some success stories using ZOO materials. He explained about the Amphibian packets (Frogs ... matters to India) materials and opportunities of the researchers to do education programme in the field involving children to reach the community. Simple steps to organise programme were also told.



After the presentation all the participants took some time to read the booklet. The ways to use the booklet was explained. The participants were requested to wear the masks and on request they made 27 different kinds of frog calls. Rakhi was tied and they took oath to do something in their place to educate their public. **Submitted by B.A. Daniel, Scientist, ZOO**



### Report of the workshop on wildlife and frogs

As part of the wildlife week celebration a one-day workshop was organized by SAVE (Society of Activists and Volunteers for Environment) and Science Teachers' Forum, Cachar on 13th November, 2007 at B.N.N.P. Higher Secondary School, Dholai in Cachar District, Silchar Assam.

The workshop, attended by 30 participants, started with an inaugural session and the objective, the target, the thrust area of the workshop and the helping hand extended from the Zoo Outreach Organisation by providing material inputs required for the workshop were highlighted. At the end everybody present the gathering pledged for the cause of protection of nature, wildlife and environment.

In the technical Session the Concept Mapping activity on "Wildlife of Barak Valley with special reference to amphibians" was carried out. 'Sound off' game was played to know each other. After this, concept of interdependence of species and species and ecological balance were demonstrated and learnt using thread and index-linking. Carrying capacity and effect of habitat degradation were also playfully demonstrated to the participants. Participants enjoyed much in those activities. The session continued with a serious discussion on the health of wildlife scenarios of Barak Valley with due emphasis on amphibians. It emerged out that till 1950 Gharial, till 1960 wild buffalo, till 1967 rhinoceros, till 1970 swamp deer, till 1990 elephants were found in the Barak Valley. Frogs also lessened in the meantime. The reasons for the decline of species were also discussed.

Frogs matter...to India' was distributed and activities related to frogs were carried out as per guidelines supplied by Zoo Outreach Organisation. In the course of the activities, Dr. N. Saha, retired Principal of Agricultural Science Centre, Akbarpur, Assam and President of SAVE inscribed a clear picture of frogs as friends of farmers. Th. Pawlen Singha, a SAVE member presented the Bengali names and features of 15 species of local frogs. He also pointed out the necessity to conserve them and ways of protecting them. Nilam Basumatari, a SAVE member and a Zoology & Fishery Science Lecturer interacted with the participants and explained to the participants about difference between the gills of fish and frogs, fins of fish and tadpoles etc. Towards the end of the workshop, each participant, once again drew concept map on the same subject as done before. It showed significant difference about the knowledge gained by the participants. The participants expressed their personal experience of day's proceedings and committed to involve in wildlife protection activities of SAVE and other similar groups. Participants signed the papers for frog protection & intended to co-operate and participate in all such activities of ZOO programmes in future. Pijush Kanti Das, the Secretary, SAVE thanked all for making the workshop a success. Dr. Parthankar Choudhury, the Secretary General, SAVE expresses profound happiness and gratitude to Zoo Outreach Organisation, Science Teachers' Forum and B.N.N.P. H.S. School authority for all the help SAVE received in materializing the workshop. **P. Choudhury, Silchar, Assam. Email: parthankar@yahoo.co.in**

#### **Wildlife Week with amphibian awareness campaign at Nandankanan Zoo**

School children were targeted for this special awareness campaign and all 2000 given free entry to the Zoo. The Zoo in collaboration with Chandaka Wildlife Division, Nature and Wildlife Conservation Society, Orissa, WWF Orissa and CEE – Eastern Regional Cell, Orissa celebrated the event in a grand manner. More than 5,000 visitors and School Children participated. The education

material received from the ZOO was judiciously used to make the event meaningful and joyous for the participating students. The customized education programme was organized using the ZOO education materials involving the five schools students from standard VII to Standard X. Professor S.K.Dutta renowned herpetologist from the N Orissa University gave an exciting slide talk on the need for conservation of Amphibians with particular reference their role in the ecosystem. He also discussed threats to the amphibians. This was followed by a quiz competition on frog conservation. The quizzers from the five schools in form of five team participated in the quiz competition. The quiz master A.K.Pattnaik from National Aluminum Company, Bhubaneswar organized the competition in a professional manner assisted by Professor S.K. Dutta and A.K. Mishra, Assistant Director Nandankanan Zoological Park. The quizzers were encouraged by Principal Chief Conservator of Forest and Chief Wildlife Warden, Orissa, S.C.Mohanty and a number of senior forest officers and the retd wildlife wardens and visitors. Dr.P. Roy conducted the education programme On Amphibian using ZOO kit while volunteers from the Nature and Wildlife Conservation Society of Orissa (NWCSO), WWF Orissa office, CEE Eastern region office led by Dr. P. Roy, Scientist, Regional Natural History Museum, Bhubaneswar organized a customised education programme on Amphibians. The special kit procured from the Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore was used. Venue was . The location was so chosen to draw the attention of the visitors. To set the stage Dr. Roy explained the education kit on Amphibians and about AArk and ZOO. Then they tied the Rakhi and introduced themselves. The students wearing T Shirts with amphibian message pledged to conserve Amphibians waving small placards witnessed by the public. Dr. Roy then helped students to play games making use of the guidelines and the mask provided in the kit. Then the participants signed the pledge card and ended the programme. **Submitted by Ajit Pathak, Nandankanan Zoo.**

#### **Amphibian Ark programme held in Assam**

A programme on amphibians was conducted by Megamix Nature Club on 11th October 2007 for their club members. One of the nature's most friendly and innocent animal 'Amphibians' are in big trouble because of the anti-environmental lifestyle



of modern human beings. With this objective, to conduct a series of 'Amphibian Studies and Conservation Program' in the districts around, targeting the general public, teachers and students, 'Megamix' members were invited to this training on the 'Amphibian Ark' programme. Twenty two persons participated and provided with Amphibian Ark packets and club executives which carrying the mission provided with "T-shirt. Contents of the training were: How the amphibians are helping the farmers and rendering some services to resolves epidemics, what they indicate by showing intolerance to the environment today and the frogs in the myths of Assam. Further a few introductions were made how to study amphibians. Club President Mr. Likhan Gohain was in Chair, where Debojit Phukan, Dr. Amal Dutta and Mr. Narendra Nath Dutta were the trainers of this in-house training. **Submitted by Mr. Debojit Phukan, Co-ordinator, Megamix Nature Club, Dhakuakhana, Assam.**

#### **Amphibian awareness programme at Thrissur Zoo on Wildlife Week 2007**

Two programmes were organised on "conservation of amphibians". Thirty students from Holy Family Higher Secondary School, Thrissur attended the first programme. First, informations were given on the need to conserve amphibians after that a skit was presented by the students. They had shown placards showing different messages for the need of conservation of wild animals, especially

amphibians. It was very interesting and attracted crowd of visitors. It was more appreciated by the students and teachers. Kits received from ZOO was distributed to the students.

Second programme was conducted at Manpad U.P.School for 45 students. It was an outreach programme. We were invited to the school by the management and we presented the topic. The skit was played by VIIth standard students. It was also very interesting.



The other programmes were conducted such as presentations on biodiversity conservation and conservation of snakes, quiz, essay writing, painting and story telling for school and college students. **Submitted by: Gangadharan, Educational Officer, Thrissur Zoo, Kerala. Email: gangi123@rediffmail.com**