

## “Plants for life” in World Environment Day in Coimbatore

### VOC Park Mini Zoo celebrates WED

The World Environment day (WED) 2005 was celebrated on June 5th at V.O.C. Park Mini Zoo, Coimbatore in a half day ceremony with a theme “Plants for life: role of plants to the animals, man as well as to the environment.” V.O.C. Park Mini Zoo organized the programme with the support of Zoo Outreach Organisation and Coimbatore Zoological Park and Conservation Centre.

Thirukumaran, Director and Veterinary Officer, V.O.C.Park Mini Zoo, R. Marimuthu, Education Officer, Zoo Outreach Organisation, B. A. Daniel, Scientist, Zoo Outreach Organisation, B. Rathinasabapathy, Biologist, Coimbatore Zoological Park & Conservation Centre, J. Sheela and Kumar of Zoo Outreach Organisation and VOC Park Staff were the key players of the programme.

Forty-one girl students aged 13-15 years and three teachers had attended the programme. (Corporation High School, Anupparpalayam: 7 students and 1 teacher; Corporation Girls Higher Secondary School, Ranganathapuram, Ramnagar: 18 students and 1 teacher and; Corporation Girls High School, Siddhapudur: 16 students and 1 teacher).

As scheduled the programme started at 10.30am on Sunday. Dr. Thirukumaran gave an introduction to the programme and welcomed all students, teachers, media as well as resource persons. He briefed participants on the history of zoos. He then invited the ZOO team to proceed with the days programme. Marimuthu in continuation of the introductory talk emphasized on the role of modern zoos describing it as a center for conservation of endangered species, research, education and entertainment. He highlighted that education is one of the primary roles of zoos and explained how teachers and students could utilize the zoo to teach and study animals and plants when they visit the zoo. While relating the programme with the WED he explained the history of World Environment Day, when, where and who established it and its previous themes. He also informed the gathering that Sanfrancisco, USA is hosting this year's WED and the theme for 2005 is *Green Cities - Plan for the Planet*. He also stressed that WED can be celebrated in many ways, including street rallies, bicycle parades, green concerts, essay and poster competitions in schools, tree planting, recycling efforts, clean-up campaigns and much more. In many countries, this annual event is used to enhance political attention and action. He introduced the theme “Plants for life” and also Botanical Gardens Conservation International, BGCI, the organization that developed the concept. He informed them briefly the different uses of plants to man, animals and to the environment. Informed them about the sponsors of this packet that is Chester Zoo and Botanical Gardens Conservation International, U.K

In the next session, Daniel briefed the day's programme and distributed the plants packets to the students, teachers and the media. Students were asked to explore the materials in the packets. Daniel explained about the item in

the educational packets and introduced how each material is going to be used in the programme. To start with students were asked to wear the masks. The media representatives, after seeing children with masks requested the organizers to give them a chance to take photographs for their use. So a short photographic session was organized.

After a short tea break, Students learned about trees of VOC Park Zoo. Rathinasabapathy gave an introduction about trees and oriented them to observe and learn more about plants. He took them round the zoo and explained different plant species. He also explained some of the common and scientific names, their importance and interaction with man and animals. For example, zoo has a big Ficus tree, *Ficus religiosa*, one of roosting trees for bats found at the zoo. The interactions between the tree and bats, the cultural value of the tree were explained to the students. The same was followed to all other trees.

After the zoo round students assembled again in the same place for some activities. Daniel asked four volunteer students to come up to the front to do “Tree Dialogue”. Four volunteers were wrapped up by the tree posters of pine, coconut, rattan and cactus and also wore masks and tied rakhis. Then they discussed importance of each tree to the mankind and animals. Daniel asked the students to find their “Rakhi partner” (ie to find a person having the same rakhi) and tie it to the partner. They all took a pledge to save plants. He asked the students to read the booklet given to them and try organic farming in their kitchen garden or in their school premises. Teachers received guidelines about it.

He also made a request to students and teachers to disseminate this message of conserving plants to their colleagues, friends and family members and what ever they learned from this programme.

To encourage the students some of the students were identified through their responses during the programme and as a token of appreciation presented gifts like plant t-shirts and animals greeting cards.

Dr. Thirukumaran and Marimuthu presented the certificates to all the participants. The duration of the programme was just 10.30am -1.00pm but a wealth of information was communicated. The entire session was interactive rather than just lecturing. The students as well as teachers were very attentive at all times. Activities were fun, so that students will remember much more of the programme. The programme attracted much publicity through the media and was published in two local dailies.

The organizers would like to thank the Corporation Commissioner for granting permission and CEO for sending the students and teachers. Also many thanks are due to Julia Willison and Sarah Kneebone of the Botanical Gardens Conservation International for the posters sent from England and to Stephen McGowen and Maggie Essen, Education Officers at Chester Zoo for funding for packets, t-

shirts and other items. The zoo director thanked Sally Walker for bringing the programme to the city. **Submitted by R. Marimuthu, Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore**

### **Coimbatore Zoological Park Society CZPS celebrates 'Plants for Life' with a tribal school with help from ZOO and BGCI**

A total of 46 Students from 10<sup>th</sup> class and 4 teachers of the Government Tribal Residential High School, Anaikatty, took part in the "Plants for Life" Celebration organized by the CZPS on 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2005.

In the first event, which lasted about thirty minutes, a talk about plants diversity using the booklet provided by Zoo Outreach Organisation was given with emphasis on the plants mentioned in the booklet. Tree bark posters, mask and rakhie were utilized as resource materials. Common plants, which are in and around the school campus were used as case study and its importance in our daily life, such as carbon sequestration and consumption of fruits by birds and other animals. How urbanization and tree felling in the forest are affecting the ecosystem was also highlighted as well as the possible ways to conserve plants.

The second event was a "hands-on" experience with plants. "Plants for Life", particularly ethno botanical, folk-lore inventories of plants used as food, medicine, in housing, crafts, religious ceremonies, crop festivals, and rituals were highlighted to illustrate how much plants are entwined with our human life and knowledge.

Students were much impressed to learn how plants are used in our daily lives in different forms. Some of the locally available economically important plant species such as *Calophyllum inophyllum* which is used as a mosquito repellent, *Mentha piperitia* used to extract menthol oil and other plants were introduced to the students.

In another activity the BGCI posters were tied around poles. The poster depicting rattan looked similar to Bamboo that flourishes in this area. Students related flowering of bamboo in Attapady and Anaikatty. Bamboo is an important economic plant that gives livelihood for many tribals in Anaikatty. The uses of bamboo, its association with human and its ecology were explained to the students.

Subsequently a game and a quiz programme were conducted. Based on their score in the quiz programme prizes were given to students who topped in it. Mrs. K.A. Shanthy, Head Mistress, GTR High School, distributed the prizes and gave participation certificates to all student participants. She also appreciated the programme and requested to plan such programmes in the future. The programme came to an end with a oath by the students.

Our sincere thanks goes to Zoo Outreach Organization, Botanical Gardens Conservation International and Chester Zoological and Botanical Gardens for providing such a valuable resource materials. We also thank National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI) for moral and technical support. Hopefully we will continue the same event for other

two schools, which are located in Thadagam, Anaikatty. **Report submitted by: B. Rathinasabapathy & R. Manickam, Coimbatore Zoological Park Society.**

*Note : The Coimbatore Zoological Park Society has been planning a zoological park in Anaikatty for the past several years. The first and most difficult step was to mark the areas which will represent the different forest types of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve and begin growing indigenous, endemic and threatened plants from the reserve area. These were collected from various forest divisions through the biosphere reserve and propagated in a nursery, The zoo is still far from its goal of so many thousands of plants, but in the meantime it was realised (pointed out by Mark Richardson from Botanic Gardens Conservation International) itself that the plant collection raised for the zoo site was among the best in the country. The zoo will begin its public activities with a botanic garden right in the centre portion of the zoo land and permit visiting public from that time. Already various school groups are visiting for special programmes. While the zoo is being constructed (some time from now), visitors to the botanic garden will be able to see and learn how such a complex project is undertaken and observe the fascinating process of re-constructing different forest types. Editors.*

### **Kanpur Zoo celebrates World Environment Day and Vanmahotsav**

Many thanks to Zoo Outreach Organisation for providing highly informative and educative material written in simple language. These materials elicited a great response among the participant students, who participated in various education programmes organized by the Kanpur Zoo on the eve of World Environment Day on 5th June 2005. On 5th June, the Zoo, in association with Kanpur Social Forest Division, organized a rally in which 300 students, teachers and environmentally spirited public participated. The rally started from Chandrasekhar Azad Agricultural University, Kanpur, passed through the Nawab Ganj area and finally entered the Zoo after covering about three kilometers.

In the Zoological Park, we organized painting and essay writing competitions, and the Zoo has decided to distribute prizes to the winning students on the eve of *Vanmahotsava* (first week of July 2005). Students from 13 schools and 12 schools participated in the drawing and writing competition respectively. The organizers organized a seminar on the eve of World Environment Day in which 25 people from different walks of life like bankers, educationists, wildlife photographers, industrialists, teachers etc. participated. This session was chaired by retired Chief Conservator of Forests, Shri. Ashok Garg. **Submitted by R. Hemanth Kumar, Director, Kanpur, Zoological Gardens, Kanpur, U.P. Email: hravivarapu@yahoo.com**

## Animal Welfare Fortnight 2005

### Special programme during AWF for mentally retarded

The programme was held on 7th of January. It is for the first time we have organized a programme for the mentally retarded children. The children were moderately, mildly and severely affected and so we had to work hard to make the programme enjoyable. We invited other normal children also to participate so that target children could imitate them. After this common programme class wise programme was also conducted. Some of the children enjoyed. They try to draw pictures, some of them used the masks as flags and made a procession in the campus. Some of them tried to make colourful painting. As our children are very low in grade the teachers used the education materials to teach the children to match the articles i.e., "matching" and "identifying". They all enjoyed the programme. **Contributed by Sr. Pushpam, C.S.S. Principal, Snehadeepthy Special School, P.O. Mannuthy Thrissur 680 651, Kerala**

### WORLD celebrates AWF

WORLD organized Animal Welfare Fortnight 2005 from 14-28 Jan 2005 in collaboration with Department of Animal Husbandry, Government of Rajasthan with an objective to create healthy atmosphere in society for animal to live in. WORLD Organization organized animal welfare educational activity in schools of Jaipur with the help of educational material provided by Department of Animal Husbandry and Zoo Outreach Organization, Coimbatore. On 14th Jan 2005, the inauguration of Animal Welfare Fortnight 2005 was marked with the starting of "Operation Free Sky", a special drive run by WORLD to provide immediate medical relief to the injured birds on the kite flying festival of "Makar Sankranti". Our team volunteers on two wheelers covered the complete city and provided medical aid to the birds. In the evening seminar was organized on the topic "Significance of People Participation for Animal Welfare" for the volunteers and honorary members of the Organization. Manish Saxena, Director WORLD briefed them about the awareness and educational Programme planned during Animal Welfare Fortnight 2005.

On 15th Jan 2005, Shri U.K. Thanvi, Director, Animal Husbandry Board released the poster on kindness towards animal and asked citizens to work for the animal welfare. World Animal Welfare Educational activity was organized in the Greengate English School. Then about 550 students participated in the painting competition. Students were given an hour to draw and paint on a topic on welfare of animals.

On 16th Jan 2005, WORLD has organized the animal welfare educational programme in St. Paul's School, C-Scheme and St. Paul's School, Durgapur with a story recitation session for students. Two groups of 25 students each was formed in both the schools. Each group had Tiger tool kit informative literature provided by Zoo Outreach Organisation. Our teams made then understand the literature & then it was time for rapid quizzing, students were asked informative question as well as situation based action oriented questions. Answers were judged and prizes were awarded by Ms. Aparna Sahay, Executive Director,

Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation (R.T.D.C.). About 300 students participated in the Inter School Painting Competition. Principal Mrs. A. Lobo asked students to be kind to the animals and to have equal share on the earth as of humans and to treat them with love and compassion. She appreciated the highly informative literature provided by Zoo Outreach Organization.

On 17th Jan 2005, the interschool painting competition was organized in the St. Anslem Pink City School.

On 18th Jan 2005 Sunday, WORLD volunteers went to main Mandi of Jaipur Like Sabzi Mandi (Vegetable Market), Anaj Mandi (Food grains Market) Chandpole, and Loha Mandi etc in the city. Our volunteers educated the cart owners about the proper treatment of the animal and regular medical check up. They also educated not to overload their carts. **Submitted by Capt. Manish Saxena, WORLD, 1-GA-12, Jawahar Nagar, Jaipur 302 004, Rajasthan, Email: world\_in@rediffmail.com**

### Zoological Survey of India, Gangetic Plains Regional Station organises Animal Welfare Fortnight – 2005

A two day (10th & 11th February 2005), "Animal Welfare Fortnight – 2005" was organized by ZSI, Gangetic Plains Regional Station, Patna. Printed material and masks were provided by the Zoo outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, an organization working for the animal welfare in the country. Dr. Gopal Sharma, Scientist "B" and Officer-in-charge of the ZSI in his presidential address told about animal welfare particularly about Bats, and Rats among the participants. He also gave a talk on the status of primates in nature. He explained that IUCN has created a way for scientist to find out which species of animals are more in trouble. Species very very in danger are called "Critically Endangered"; very much in danger are called "Endangered"; much in danger as Vulnerable. He also spoke about Gangetic Dolphin which is found in the Ganges river and its tributaries in India. Dr. Kriteswar Prasad, University Professor of Geology, Patna University, Patna, Chief Guest, inaugurated the function & delivered a lecture on the earth and life science. Mr. Binod Kumar, Convenor, Zoological Survey of India, Patna explained the importance of wildlife. He also narrated the problems of forest degradation and cruelty to wildlife by human. Distinguished guest Dr. Y.P. Sinha, Retd. Scientist of ZSI, Patna talked on a topic "Know your wildlife". He delivered a useful lecture on Bats and Rats. Mr. M.P. Jain, State Officer, UNICEF, Bihar State is one of the Judges for the Painting competition.

The following schools participated in the painting and debate competitions – Kiddy Convent High School, Bairiya, St. Marx Academy, Chiraiyatar, Patna, St. Mary's High School, Patna, Bal Pustakalaya, Patna, Delhi Central School, Patna, Vidya Niketan High School, Patna. & Government (+2) High School, Patna city. Mr. Binod Kumar, Convenor, Zoological Survey of India, Patna proposed the "Vote of Thanks". **Submitted by Dr. Gopal Sharma, OC, ZSI, Gangetic Plains Regional Station, Patna, Bihar.**