

Zoo and Wildlife Education Activities in India

Maitri Baag Zoo Education Programme during Wildlife Week on Primate Primer

During a visitors' survey in Maitri Baag Zoo, it was found that young children and students were very attracted towards primates and wanted to know about them.

Maitri Baag Zoo has different varieties of primate population. One among them is an endangered species of Macaque known as the Lion-tailed Macaque (LTM). LTM is found in the tropical evergreen forests of the Western Ghats of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The main threat for this species is hunting for flesh and habitat destruction.

This is one of few zoos in which the LTM has bred well. So, we conducted a programme on "Primate Primer" for students of different schools on 7th October 2003 with Bhilai Jeevan Vidhya Samiti, Bhilai. In this programme 31 students of different age groups participated.

During this programme we discussed various aspects of Lion-tailed Macaque i.e. habit & habitat, feeding behaviour, breeding, status of the species in wild and captivity, threats, how this species breeds in zoos etc.

Children visited the zoo and gathered information on Zoo animals and their habits. Explanation on monkey tales, differentiation of monkeys, their conservation, Indian species of monkeys and their distribution, rearing of infants etc. were given. They were told that monkeys got sufficient scientific balanced diet according to their requirement in the zoo and outside food may be harmful to the health of monkeys and other animals in the Zoo. Protection and conservation of monkeys were also discussed.

The children were taken around the Zoo wearing masks of monkeys and holding placards and stickers. They were provided with "Primate Primer" packets provided by Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore containing a book, monkey tales, mask, certificate rakhi, stickers etc.

The children then took an oath that "they will help in the conservation and protection of monkeys & other wild animals and will never involve in any wildlife trade" by tying a rakhi to one another. All were provided with a participant's certificate.

The programme was organized by G.K. Dubey, N.K. Jain and T. Kalaichelvan of the zoo education unit, B.S.P. along with Bhilai Jeevan Vidhya Samiti, Bhilai. *Submitted by Ganesh Dubey, and T. Kalaichelvan, Maitri Baag Zoo, Sector 8, Bhilai 490 008, Chhattisgarh*

Forty-ninth Vanya Prani Saptah Celebrations at Visak Zoo

The 49th Vanya Prani Saptah Celebrations was conducted during the 1st week of October 2003 at the Indira Gandhi Zoological Park. Invitations were issued to schools and colleges for participation in (a) painting - 3 categories, (b) essay writing (Telugu & English) - 2 categories, (c) quiz - 3

categories & (d) elocution (Telugu & English) - 2 categories. 357 students from 51 schools and colleges participated of which 42 students were selected as winners. During Wildlife Week Celebrations, various educational programmes and rallies were conducted in Indira Gandhi Zoological Park, Visakhapatnam with the help of Dolphin Nature Conservation Society, Visakha Society to Prevent Cruelty of Animals and Green Mercy, Visakhapatnam. A large number of students from various schools and colleges participated in the rally wearing masks of animals and placards enlisting the importance of conservation of fauna. Education kits supplied by Zoo Outreach Organization, Coimbatore were fully utilized during the Wildlife Week Celebration. The Tiger and Bat kits were supplied to the students of VI to X standard to explain the importance of fauna and its role in the eco-system. Most of the students felt that since bats were important in the eco-system as seed dispersers and pest controllers they should be delisted from Sch. V, or "Vermin" category of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. The students were also told that out of the 103 Indian Bat species, 32 were threatened and their habitat has to be protected to prevent their extinction.

Final Day Celebrations were conducted on 8 October 2003 in the Zoo premises. Dr. S.A. Rahman, Chairman VUDA was invited as the Chief Guest. Prizes were distributed to students who stood in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place in various competitions.

Further, during the Wildlife Week Celebrations children below 12 years were given free entry into the zoo. About 3,600 children availed the facility. *Submitted by B. Vijayakumar, S.F.S., Curator, Indira Gandhi Zoological Park, Visakhapatnam 530 001, A.P.*

Report of the Wildlife Week Celebration – 2003 Organised by N.S.S. College, Pandalam

The Department of Zoology, NSS College, Pandalam, Kerala celebrated wildlife week, 2003 during October 2-4, with a variety of programmes, supported by Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore. A quiz competition on wildlife was organized for the entire college, in which 12 teams participated. Syam Shankar of Final BA English and Vishnu Pradeep of II B.Sc. Physics won the first prize and second prize was awarded to the team represented by Deepa M. and Reghukumar P.R. of II M.Sc. Zoology. Dr. A. Biju Kumar of Department of Zoology conducted the quiz competition.

A seminar on wildlife management in Kerala was organized on October 3, 2003. Prof. A.G. Vijayakumar, Principal, NSS College, Pandalam inaugurated the seminar, which was presided over by Prof. S. Padmini Devi, Head, Dept. of Zoology. Shri. K.G.Mohanan Pillai, Director, Forestry Information Bureau, Kerala Forest Department presented a slide talk on wildlife management in Kerala. He elaborated the initiatives of Kerala Forest Department, in biodiversity conservation. He said : "The Kerala Forest Department, and other scientific organizations in the state are carrying out exhaustive survey on the biotic wealth of Western Ghats for the conservation programmes. It may be realized that

even in developed countries conservation attempts failed to bring positive results due to the neglect of two important factors: (1) lack of proper understanding of the ecosystems in which a rare or endangered species exists and (2) lack of awareness among the local community in and around the protected areas, on the need for conservation of biodiversity. It is high time to undertake, apart from *in situ* studies, (1) in depth and long-term population biology studies of the endangered, endemic and rare species of Western Ghats and (2) to create awareness among the local people, school children, college students, researchers, teachers and educationists through meaningful programmes on biodiversity education and extension. Conservation of our rich biodiversity cannot be achieved singularly by any individual, Government or organization. It needs the active co-operation and undaunted support of all target groups."

A debate was also organized on the topic "Human-Wildlife Conflicts: Whom to Blame". Shri. K.G. Mohanan Pillai presented certificates, book and T-Shirts to the winners of quiz and debate competitions.

The postgraduate zoology students of the college coordinated the games on wildlife and made presentations on the theme topics – 'primates in peril' and 'go bats for bats'. About 100 students participated in the activities.
Submitted by Dr. A. Biju Kumar, P.G. & Research, Department of Zoology, N.S.S. College, Pandalam 689 501, Kerala

Animal Welfare Fortnightly at Kamla Nehru Zoo, Ahmedabad

This year we celebrated Animal Welfare Fortnightly & allowed children free entry to the zoo from 14th-30th January 2004. 3661 children enjoyed the facility. We also organized a painting competition for handicapped children & distributed prizes. Zoo Outreach Organisation education materials were also distributed to children which was very popular. Even more schools have asked for this type of materials. We are thankful to ZOO for providing these materials. **Submitted by R.K. Sahu, Zoo Superintendent, Kamla Nehru Zoological Garden, Kankaria, Ahmedabad 380 008**

Animal Welfare Fortnightly 2004 by WORLD

The Wing of Research in Local Development (WORLD) organized various programmes to observe Animal Welfare Fortnightly from 14-28 January 2004. The Animal Welfare Fortnightly celebrations started with the formal inauguration by our patron Shri M.L. Mehta, I.A.S. former Chief Secretary, Govt. of Rajasthan who also addressed the workshop organized for volunteers and staff.

WORLD organized an interschool painting competition in Jaipur Zoological Park on 16 January 2004. Dr. Moban Singh, Zoo Veterinarian gave an educational address to the students about Primates. Justice Ranveer Sabay Verma, Former Judge, Rajasthan High Court and students paid homage to the most adoreable zoo member "Radha" the Chimpanzee.

We organized the "one minute activity" on 21 January 2004 in Jaipur Zoological Park. Shri Manoj Parashar, Assistant Conservator Forest addressed the students about the conservation of bears which was followed by an open discussion among eco members and zoo officials. Eco members were happy to know about the real life experience and facts provided by the officials.

We organized an "Essay competition" on "Importance of conservation in the present Scenario" on 23 January 2004 in Jaipur Zoological Park. Shri. Y.K. Sahu, Deputy Chief Wildlife Warden addressed the students about conservation of tigers and shared his experiences at "Ranthombore Tiger Sanctuary" with the students.

We organized a quiz competition in two schools, Greengate English School and B.N. Public School on 27 January 2004. Shri Shaheed Khan, Wildlife Warden and Hanuman Jajoria, Project officer organized the educational programme for the conservation of bats.

The closing ceremony was on 28 January 2004. Justice Rajendra Saxena, Former judge, Rajasthan High Court presided over the open discussion organized for eco members, students, teachers, parents and media people on "role of media and public for the betterment of zoos". Capt. Manish Saxena gave an informative lecture on the status of South Asian Primates and Bats. Justice Rajendra Saxena in his closing address asked for the cooperation of every individual for the noble cause and to organize more activities to highlight the importance of wildlife. **Submitted by Manish Saxena, Wing of Research in local Development, 1-GA-12, Jawahar Nagar, Jaipur, Rajasthan**

Where are our photos !!!

Our education programme organisers mostly have sent very nice photographs to document their excellent programmes.

Because the quality of our printing set-up is simply not reliable we have taken a decision to eliminate photos in the printed version of ZOOS' PRINT but to put more photos on the web version of ZOOS' PRINT.

Check it out at <http://www.zoosprint.org>



Wildlife Week at National Zoo

Bear Day at NZP

Wildlife Week was celebrated from 1-7 October 2003 at the National Zoological Park. The week was formally inaugurated by holding a small ceremony near the main entrance of the Park. Joint Director (P), Mr. Ganga Singh and the oldest Keeper, due to retire lit the lamp. A group of underprivileged students from a school run by Katha, a Non Governmental Organisation and the whole staff of National Zoological Park took part in the ceremony. The students performed a Nukkad (skit) that left everyone spell bound. Joint Director (P) also spoke on the government's efforts to protect wildlife. The programme received wide publicity with many children being interviewed by various media.

We celebrated 2nd October as Bear Day with a group of deprived children from a N.G.O. Casplan who were told about general problems of wildlife in India especially bears. They gave enrichment material to bears and saw how good the sense of smell bears have. The children also played several games using materials from Zoo Outreach Organisation featuring bears. **Submitted by B.S. Bonal, IFS, Government of India, National Zoological Park, Mathura Road, New Delhi 110 003**

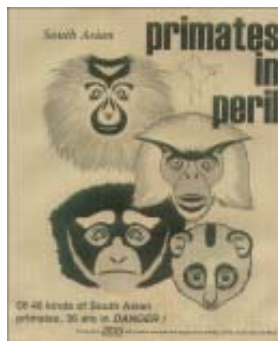


Primates in Peril at NZP

The Programme "Primates in Peril" was organized for zoo club children of National Zoological Park. A group of 38 students of 13-14 years of age group came from Apeejay School, Pitampura, New Delhi.

The students were first taken to the primate aviary where they were told about the Order "Primate". The students observed features of macaques, langurs and gibbon. Then children were taken to the Education Centre where points of similarities and difference among primates were further discussed.

Ms. Shikha Nalin, Education Asstt. of the Park explained the IUCN criteria for categorising animals under various categories. The children were then given numbers for threatened species of primates and asked to guess reasons for the present status of the animals. The children came up with three main reason viz. habitat destruction, natural catastrophe and over kill. To further understand these points, a game was played to make them understand how habitat destruction and fragmentation caused the extinction of species. Then, the children were told a story to impress upon them the results of overkilling of a species and to highlight the idea that still there are certain things that human beings are not aware of and the solution could be with the animals. So, we should not kill them.



The students then tied Rakhis to one another and took a pledge to protect the animals and their habitat in a best way they can. This kind of interaction will help us to build a better tomorrow where man and animals would live together sustainably on the earth. **Submitted by Ganga Singh, National Zoological Park, Mathura Road, New Delhi 110 003**

Primate Primer

National Zoological Park organised a programme on conservation focusing on primates on 15th December 2003. Apeejay School from Sheikh Sarai, New Delhi was invited. 50 students and two teachers participated in the programme.

Shikha first took the children to the primate enclosures where the children saw various types of primates that are found in India. The children learnt to recognise macaques, langurs and gibbons. The students were then taken to the education centre where Avanti taught them the basic differences between macaques, langurs and gibbons. Issues related to status of primates and their conservation was also discussed.

The children then played the game 'survival of the fittest' to learn more about nature and its rules. Then a game on habitat fragmentation was coordinated by Shikha. After the game the children were asked to express their feelings as monkeys. In their answer children highlighted all problems of habitat destruction and fragmentation. The children were then told how they can help in conserving the precious habitat for these animals.

Information on how to conduct these games as well as to use the "Primate Primer" packets supplied to the zoo by Zoo Outreach Organisation (ZOO), Coimbatore were distributed among the students. Finally, the students wore their masks, that was included in their "Primate Primer" packets. They were also taught how to use all the items supplied to them in the packet. All the students were issued a certificate for attending the primate conservation workshop. **Submitted by Shikha Nalin, Education Assistant, National Zoo, New Delhi**



NZP is "Just Bats About Bats"

Bats are some of the most misunderstood of animal taxa. Very few people are sensitive to the problems they face in the wild today. Hence, the education department at the National Zoological Park was very keen to conduct a programme on bats for school students. The programme was designed using information and "Bats about Bats" packets sent to the zoo by Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore. The programme was organised on 18th December, 2003 by inviting 44 children from Apeejay School, Sheikh Sarai. Ms. Avanti Mallapur, a volunteer from the Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI), helped in

conducting the programme along with staff of the education Department. The information on bats was sent to the students in advance. Since the zoo does not house bats, it was decided to conduct a craft workshop wherein children would make a model of bat using their imagination and concepts learnt at the zoo. For this workshop, the zoo provided some material and asked the students to bring some items that they might need.

Mr. Riaz Khan first took the students around the zoo. After that, Avanti by using masks and photographs showed the children various types of bats and discussed various issues such as levels of human tolerance of bats and the need to conserve them. After the discussion, Ms. Shikha Nalin explained the various materials that the students received in educational packets and asked the students to work in groups of four to design bats of their own. They were supplied with cardboard, black-paper, beads, fevicol, balloons and newspaper and were free to use the material

like colours, scissors and old socks that they had brought with themselves.

The children were then asked to complete a jumble work puzzle on bats but because of scarcity of time could not complete it at the zoo. The children took it to school and the teacher was asked to reward the student who finished the puzzle with maximum number of correct entries in less time.

The teacher in her feedback appreciated the programme and emphasised the need of more curriculum oriented program at the zoo. **Submitted by Ganga Singh, National Zoo, New Delhi**



India Habitat Centre (IHC) Goes Wild at NZP

A week to celebrate wildlife and spread the word of conservation – Go Wild Workshops with the help of the Primate and Tiger packets provided by Zoo Outreach Organization brought the natural world to the India Habitat Centre kids at New Delhi. As it was wildlife week we decided to have two special sessions one on the Primate and the other on the Tiger.

The workshop began with the very basics of the natural world - The children were divided into working groups and given habitats as themes – Desert, rainforest, wetland, ocean and mountain. Using colours and thematic games the concept of food, shelter, and space that make up a habitat were learned. The children played a game of musical forest chairs – this further emphasized the lack of space for animals. The XXL T-Shirt of how many monkeys can fit in a tree was tried on and torn apart with great enthusiasm and laughter. At the end of the day the primate packets were distributed to each participant. They were given the task of completing the various activities provided in the booklet at home and bring it back the next day with one new fact that they could find out about any species of Primate living in India. Zee News covered the workshop and showed a news clip the following day.

On the third day the workshop began with the children giving a brief description of their discoveries. This method was effective as it served to educate without spoon-feeding the information and the kids felt like the young explorer naturalists who were out on an adventure of learning. Nafeesah Ahmed, Go Wild Educator, initiated a discussion based on 'what's wrong with this picture' from the booklet provided in the primate packet. The children debated vociferously about the pros and cons of performing animals and the people who handled them. At the end of the discussion the children came to the conclusion that everything was wrong in the picture after which we showed a short 5-minute film produced by Miditech Pvt Ltd. on Langurs living in the wild and on the streets of Jodhpur. On the last day of the workshop the children visited the National Zoological Park at New Delhi. Mr Khan, education

officer, addressed the kids telling them about the importance of zoos as centers of conservation, education, research and rehabilitation. The kids were taken for a short 45 minute round of the Zoo where they saw and had their queries answered about the Nilgai, Emus, Alligator, Hoolock Gibbon, Baboon, White Tiger, Jaguar, Lion, Goral, Giraffe, Bears, Pelicans, Painted Storks, Cormorants and other water birds. At the Tiger enclosure Payal Bhojwani, Go Wild Educator, distributed the tiger packets and explained the importance of this royal beast. The children played the red light green light game (Teachers for Tigers manual) understanding the concept of predator and prey as they played. They tied a friendship rakhi and took an oath to help save primates and tigers and to spread the word of conservation by telling one person everyday what they had learnt over the past few days. A few visitors to the Zoo were later seen asking the children about their rakhi's.

As a special concession Mr. Khan also took the children through the newly renovated snake house and with a qualified handler brought a sand boa out to show the children its immense beauty and grace. A few kids touched the animal and were amazed to find that it was not the slimy wet creature they thought it to be. This interaction helped dispel many preconceived notions that the children had about snakes.

Go Wild workshops for wildlife week ended with the distribution of the participation certificates by Mr Khan to the children. Nafeesah Ahmed on behalf of Go Wild Workshops thanked Mr Khan and the Zoo for their time and effort. She also thanked Zoo Outreach Organization for their support and the provision of the educational material, which was greatly appreciated by us the educators and by the children and parents. **Submitted by Payal Bhojwani Molur, Educator, Go Wild Workshops, 64, Bharathi Colony, Peelamedu, Coimbatore 641004, Tamil Nadu**