

ZOO Conservation Education Activities in India

Report of Bat lecture in SPROUTS' Environment Awareness Camp for Tribal and Municipal School Children and Teachers of Thane District, Maharashtra

Sprouts conducted a 5-day workshop on Environmental Awareness for 30 children and 10 teachers from Tribal and Municipal Schools of Thane District, Maharashtra from December 13-17, 2003.

A special lecture was conducted in the workshop on the importance of Bats and their role in maintaining ecological balance. Students and teachers discussed problems relating to bat conservation and went through the bat packets which were distributed to them after the lecture. Students also tied rakhis to each other and vowed to save bats in their vicinity and work towards increasing awareness about Bat conservation and their role in our day-to-day survival. *Submitted by Anand Pendharkar, SPROUTS, Mumbai.*

Report of "Bat Club of Megamix"

We officially hosted the Bat Club of Megamix on the 2nd Feb 2004 at 12 noon. As a keen activist for biodiversity, I took the opportunity to set up the Bat Club as a group of enthusiasts from a range. We selected the group of active persons having long experience in environmental activities. Their activities will be meaningful for the conservation of bats and their habitat. The Megamix Branch of CCINSA Bat Clubs is not a children's club but a group of people from 10-65 years.

Activities Feb 2004

The first activity took place on 2 February 2004 at the Conference Hall of Megamix Nature Club in Dhakuakhana with 34 participants between the age of 12-20 years. Mr. Debojit Phukan, Mr. Narendranath Dutta, Lecturer, Dept. of Zoology DHK College and Dr. Amal Dutta, Ethnobotanist, and Secretary of the Megamix Nature Club were trainers.

Classroom topics included - "What is Biodiversity", "Biodiversity and the Bats" and "What to do as a young Bat-naturalist". Outdoor activities included a) Match the pieces of the sheets of find out the hidden mammal and (b) a game about habitat loss. Participants were given Packets entitled 'Just bat! About bats!' and 'Bats are gooooooood animals' along with a Certificate of participation

Another programme entitled 'Introduction to and Conservation of Bats' was conducted on 19 February at the Campus of the Forest Range Office in Jonai for 19 participants between 10-16 years. Mr. V.K. Singha, Forest Range Officer, Jonai gave an inaugural speech. Trainers were Debojit Phukan and Ram Prasad Upadhyay, State Resource Person, National Green Corps, Assam. The programme functioned under a large tree by arranging chairs, black board and tables.

Classroom teaching included "Know about our forest", "Biodiversity and Bats" and "What we can do to protect Bats and other animals and their habitat". Outdoor activities included 'What is my name among the mammals?' and the 'Web of Life' game. Packets of 'Just Bats about Bats' and a

Certificate of attendance was given to the participants.

*Submitted by Debojit Phukan, CCINSA - Bat Club, Megamix Branch. Dhakuakhana, 787 055, Lakhimpur, Assam
E-mail: debojitphukan@indiatimes.com*

Animal Welfare Fortnightly – 2004 Celebrated at J.N.S. School, Phulbari, West Garo Hills, Megalaya, with an Awareness Programme for Conservation of Bats.

In connection with 'Animal Welfare Fortnightly – 2004', Bat Assessment Troop (BAT), Chiroptera Conservation Special Group of the Society "Biodiversity Assessment Troop (BAT)", which has been recently (October, 2003) selected as a CCINSA (Chiroptera Conservation and Information Network of the South Asia) Bat Club from Northeastern India, has organised an awareness programme for Conservation of Bats on 21.01.2004 at Jawaharlal Nehru Secondary School, Phulbari, West Garo Hills District of the State Megalaya. It was the first ever awareness programme on bat fauna in the State.

As a first part of the programme, the very significance and need for celebrating Animal Welfare Fortnightly, which has direct impacts on the welfare of mankind also, was explained to the participants by Md. Azad Ali, Secretary General, BAT. Mr. Ali, who is also the In-Charge of the special group "Bat Assessment Troop (BAT)" gave his main lecture on bats for the fulfillment of the programme theme. The lecture contents were general information about bats, worldwide diversity, bat habitat, ecological & economical importance of bats like, pest control, pollination, seed dispersal which have direct relationship for the balance of nature and indirectly saves human race from extinction. He also spoke on certain burning issues of northeastern India (NEI) responsible for the decrease in the chiropteran diversity from the region such as habitat loss. He said that due to destruction of hills and hillocks for gravel, stones, and land fill, lots of natural bat caves are being lost while deforestation through jhum cultivation, timber smuggling, felling big tall trees for agricultural and house construction purposes in the plains is resulting in the loss of fruit bat roosting sites. Mr. Ali also pointed out that another reason for decline in the bat population was due to lack of awareness, lack of research and assumed medicinal use of bat flesh to cure certain diseases such as 'Asthma' in NEI. At the end of the lecture Mr. Ali took commitments from the participants to care for bats and to help the Troop in future in conserving the bat community of the region.

After the lecture, Troop members were given the handout published by the society. Mr. Ali displayed all the specially designed bat education materials prepared by Zoo Outreach Organisation (Z.O.O.), Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India, for the occasion. Information of the participants was gathered and finally a bat game entitled "Foraging at Dusk" was played with the young school children wearing bat masks, as it is the most common scene they will come across after the programme in the evening.

The programme was attended by 48 school children invited from five different schools of that locality including the host school, along with teachers from the host school and the

chief guest, Mr. Aziul Hoque, Headmaster, J.N.S. School, local public & media persons.

BAT members who conducted the programme were Md. Azad Ali, Mr. Abdul Hakim Choudhry, Mr. Mohidul Hussain and Mr. Kandakhar Abbas. As a last part of the programme Mr. Abdul Hakim Choudhury, Organising Secretary of BAT, gave a brief lecture on the necessity of bat conservation and concluded the awareness programme with his vote of thanks.

**Submitted by Md. Azad Ali, Bat Assessment Troop (BAT)
1 Bat House, B.N. College Road (W), P.O., Bidyapara
Dhubri 783 324, Assam**

Animal Welfare Fortnightly at National Model Higher Secondary School, Coimbatore – a report

Zoo Outreach Organisation celebrated Animal Welfare Fortnightly at National Model Higher Secondary School, Peelamedu, Coimbatore on 19 January 2004. The theme of the programme was "Primates in Peril" and 98 students of VII standard (12 years old) participated in the programme.

The programme started with an introduction about Animals and their welfare with special emphasis on Primates. The children were given primate "Langur, Macaque, Loris and Gibbon" masks and rakhis and were divided into four groups based on those with similar masks. Then the children played "monkey says do this" game to become active. The children were then asked to enact a short skit on "Primates in zoos". Few enthusiastic students were selected and divided into two groups. One group was asked to behave like monkeys in cages while the other group was made visitors to the zoo. The children enacted well and learnt about the problems caused by visitors to primates in zoos. There was a slide show on primates and their threats. Five freedoms of animal welfare were explained to them and a game "oh Deer" was played on the importance of food, shelter and water to animals. To teach the importance of space or habitat "How many will fit the t-shirt" game was played. Then each group was given a jigsaw puzzle called "make your animal". The animals given were Ladybug, frog, snake and owl. After the children completed the puzzle, they were asked to give a presentation about the animal and its role in the ecosystem. The children were very quick in solving the puzzle and interacted well. In an other activity the children were asked to untie their shoelaces and try to tie them back without using their opposable thumb. This exercise was to teach them the importance of the thumb. To evaluate their knowledge on primates each group was given a "magic bag" containing few items that can be related to Primates. The children in each group were asked to relate each item to primates and make a presentation. Some of the items given were comb, twig, leaf, rope, gun, beetle, picture of a louse etc. All groups did very well. Finally all the kids received Primate packets and certificates.

Submitted by A.R. Binu Priya and B.A. Daniel, Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore 4, TN

Trolley Drivers Orientation Programme at NZP, New Delhi

An Orientation Programme was organized for the trolley drivers of the park on 23.9.2003. Similar programme has

been organized in the past and this was considered as an opportunity to train the new drivers as well as refresh the memories of the old ones. The terms of contract of National Zoological Park with the trolley contractor were also explained. The programme provided a forum for discussion between trolley drivers and zoo authorities. Mr. B.S. Bonal, Director, National Zoological Park inaugurated the programme and in his welcome address made the trolley drivers understand the context of the programme.

Dr. A.K. Malhotra, Curator (Ed.) then gave a talk on the importance of communication skills for all those involved in public relations giving specific attention to the role played by trolley drivers in National Zoological Park.

Ms. Shikha Nalin, Ed. Asstt. then apprised the trolley drivers with changes in the existing routes. All trolley drivers were given a map of National Zoological Park in which they marked the new route and stands. Other problems faced by the trolley drivers /contractors were also discussed.

Mr. R.A. Khan, Ed. Asstt. and Ms. Shikha Nalin then took the trolley drivers around the park via the new route and explained about the animals enroute and the way trolley drivers could manage their fellow passengers. The session ended with a vote of thanks by the trolley drivers to the faculty. **Submitted by B.S. Bonal, Director, National Zoological Park, New Delhi**

Teacher's Orientation Programme at NZP

As a part of the scheduled activity of the Park, an Orientation programme was organized on 26th Aug 2003 for the teachers of various schools in Delhi. The aim was to create a link between Zoo Authorities and the Teachers. The Teacher's Orientation Programme is becoming extremely popular in Delhi and it was seen on a couple of occasions in the past that teachers come to attend the programme without prior registration. This poses several problems for the organizers as individual attention cannot be given and also due to limitations of space and resources. This time NZP sought only a letter of intent from schools and then invited certain number of teachers. This worked well and we were able to control events in the programme. Mr. Ganga Singh, IFS Joint Director, National Zoological Park inaugurated the programme and in his inaugural address highlighted *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation strategies.

In the tea break, an Ice-breaker game was played with the theme that curiosity is the basis of acquiring knowledge. After tea break, logic of the game was explained by Ms. Shikha Nalin. The teachers were then taken around of the Park by Mr. R.A. Khan and Ms. Shikha Nalin. The main focus of *in situ* lecture was how to disseminate knowledge and inculcate appropriate behaviour in children while in zoo. Ms. Shikha Nalin, then gave teachers a lecture on 'how to plan a visit to a Zoo'. The whole scheme was divided into three parts. Previsit preparations, the visit and follow up activities. Teachers were made to appreciate various games and activities that explained the complex scientific principles. Services offered by National Zoological Park were also explained. **Submitted by B.S. Bonal, Director, National Zoological Park, New Delhi**

Wildlife Week at Kadayam Range, Tirunelveli

The Forest Range Office at Kadayam Range ordered the packets from Zoo Outreach Organisation, themed 'Dare To Care for Bears', 'Just Bats about Bats', and 'Tiger Toolkit'. We celebrated Wildlife Week in our Range area among educators and school children.

Rakhi-tying ceremony with participants was very much appreciated. Then a drama using masks also was another interesting item very much welcomed by school children. We conducted drawing and essays competitions and sent samples of these to ZOO. We distributed prizes to the students from first to fourth standard. By these activities awareness of wild animals and their importance was enhanced in this area

We really appreciate ZOO for making educational packets and other materials available. We used the materials to teach students and children who are dependent on the KMTR area. If any other programme or materials are available we wish to use them.

Submitted by A. Francis Aloysius, B.B.A., Forest Range Officer, Kadayam Range, Sivasailam P.O. , Alwarkurichi (Via), Tirunelveli. Dist

Teachers for Tigers at Thiruvananthapuram for Wildlife Week

Wildlife Week 2003 was celebrated during this year as in the previous years, with an array of educational programmes and competitions at the Department of Museums and Zoos, Thiruvananthapuram, October 2003. Two days training 'Teachers for Tigers', was organised as part of it.

Celebrations were inaugurated by Sri T. M. Jacob, Honourable Minister for Water Resources and Museums and Zoos, Kerala State. Three open enclosures for primates were also inaugurated in the same function. Sri. V.S. Sivakumar (Member of Parliament), Sri. B. Vijayakumar (M.L.A.), Sri. K. Mohan Kumar (M.L.A.) were the other guests.

Various competitions like quiz, essay writing, elocution, story telling, skit playing, etc. were held during this period. A large number of students participated in the competitions. Prizes and certificates to the winners were issued on 8th October by Honourable Minister Sri. T.M. Jacob.

Teachers for Tigers training was jointly organised by the Trivandrum Zoo and ZOOWATCH on 4th and 5th October 2003. The participants were teachers, selected from the schools in Thiruvananthapuram District and from among the volunteers of zoo, about 30 participants were present for the programme. The resource persons were Sri K. Gangadharan, Educational Officer, Museums and Zoos, Thiruvananthapuram and Sri Rajkaran Aravind from ZOOWATCH. Both of them had participated in the 'Teachers for Tigers' training programme held for zoo educators at Chennai organised by Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, and Wildlife Conservation Society, New York.

Some units were selected from the 'Tiger Manual' and given to participants. The Tiger tool kit sent by Zoo Outreach Organization, Coimbatore were distributed to the participants. Writing materials were also given. All the

materials provided in a plastic folder bag.

On the first day the 30 participants were registered and given educational materials. Sri. B. C. Choudhury, Wildlife Institute of India was Chief Guest. Sri. C. S. Yalacki, Director of Trivandrum Zoo welcomed guests to the two days programmes. After inaugural function and tea break the first part of the programme began with the preparation of a concept map. Then assignment and design of posters about the tiger timeline was completed and posters displayed chronologically. Important topics from 'How nature works' were also included for workshop as per agenda. Many other activities were completed and the first day ended with the Zoo visit and exercise on adaptation.

The second days programme started with a special lecture by Sri. C.S. Yalacki, IFS, the Director of Trivandrum Zoo. In his talk he mentioned the need of wildlife conservation and the role of zoos in wildlife conservation. Smt. Avanti Mallapur, Research Scholar, working on captive animals gave some interesting plays and puzzles related to wildlife to the participants, which is applicable for children in schools. All the topics were completed and the two days workshop finished with the preparation of the second concept map. Before closing the function each and every participant came to the stage and spoke about what they can do to save the "World's Greatest Cat," before closing the function.

Certificates were distributed to the participants by Sri. T. M. Jacob, Honourable Minister for Water resources and Museums and Zoos, Kerala on 8th October in the valedictory function of the Wildlife week celebrations 2003.

Submitted by Education Officer, Department of Museums and Zoos, Government of Kerala

Animal Welfare Fortnight Celebrations -2004 In Periyar Tiger Reserve

The period between January 14th -30th is celebrated as Animal Welfare Fortnightly (AWF) throughout the world. Many animals are being tortured, ill-treated and poached all over the world. Day by day lots of living creatures are getting endangered and becoming extinct due to man's interventions in nature. This situation may in turn affect the very existence of humanity on earth. Awareness campaigns conducted in different parts of the world in connection with environmentally important occasions such as Wildlife week and AWF are of immense conservation value at least to sensitize some fraction of the younger generations and to create an innate passion towards our fellow creatures. Zoo Outreach Organisation based at Coimbatore is taking a lead role in co-ordinating AWF celebrations in India by providing necessary education materials and other assistance. Animal Welfare Fortnightly celebrations have been initiated in Periyar Tiger Reserve from last year (2003) onwards. Couple of teacher training workshops and a student training programme were the highlights of last year. It has been celebrated this year with immense enthusiasm and activities in Periyar Tiger Reserve. The theme of this year's celebration was 'Tiger Conservation.' The celebrations focused more on youngsters who live near the fringes of the Tiger Reserve. Eventually the 3 training workshops conducted in AWF period was named as 'Youngsters for Tigers' in the current

year. These workshops were conducted according to a unique method adopted in the **'Teachers for Tigers'** workshop held between 23rd to 25th June 2003 at Periyar Tiger Reserve in association with Zoo Outreach Organization and Wildlife Conservation Society, New York for selected educators of this region. The education materials (Tiger Toolkit) including a booklet having information about tigers, stickers, rakhi, placard, tiger masks etc were supplied by Zoo Outreach Organization.

Youngsters for Tigers

AWF celebrations -2004 was inaugurated on 14th January 2004 in Periyar Tiger Reserve with the beginning of the first 'Youngsters for Tigers' workshop held for 37 youngsters from Yuvasakthi Arts and Sports club, Chellarkovil, Kumali at Vanasree forest dormitory, Thekkady. All the participants were males within the age group of 18 - 25 years. Tiger Toolkits were given to all registered for the programme. The inaugural meeting was presided over by the Extension Education Officer and Sri. C.A. Basheer, Ecotourism Officer, Periyar Tiger Reserve inaugurated the 'Youngsters for Tigers' workshop in connection with AWF celebrations. Sri. P. A. Majeed, Forester welcomed and Sri. S. Biju, Secretary of the Arts and Sports Club thanked the gathering.

Immediately after the very brief inaugural session, the participants were divided into five groups and 'rakshabandhan' ceremony was followed. The shield preparation activity for self introduction was then briefed to the participants. In their self introduction each one explained about their favorite animal and the reason why they preferred that animal. It was followed by an evaluation exercise called 'Concept Map'. In the evening at 7 p.m. a slide show was organized for the participants regarding the Periyar Tiger Reserve and its cultural, aesthetic, biodiversity values and the need for biodiversity conservation in particular.

January 15th was packed with a variety of activities such as nature walk through the forest early in the morning, mini dramas, global perspectives role play, Nagarhole citizens debate, field demonstration of different behavioral patterns of tiger etc. In the group activities, there were lots of fun, talent and knowledge sharing. The participants also enjoyed a 2-hour boat ride through Periyar Lake. The day ended with a panel discussion led by Sri. S. Sivadas, Assistant Field Director and Sri. C. A. Basheer, Ecotourism Officer, Periyar Tiger Reserve on tiger and the need of its conservation and water conservation issues.

January 16th started with an early walk through the jungle in different groups for bird watching. On reaching back to the camp, each group presented what they had seen during the trek. After breakfast, the tiger counting methods were demonstrated and explained to the participants by the Education Officer. It was followed by an outdoor plastic cleaning drive along the premises of the dormitory and the roadsides for half an hour. After tea break each group sat for 15 minutes to think what they can do for conserving tigers. Each group came out with brilliant ideas. Once again the participants were asked to prepare the concept map on tigers and the difference was marvelous. The perception of the majority of youngsters towards tiger as a cruel animal in the beginning later changed to a mighty creature and the different ways with which it could be conserved. It was followed by feedback and valedictory

sessions. Couple of persons from each group came forward and shared their 3-day experience. Many were emotional, enthusiastic and declared their commitment in biodiversity conservation. One group prepared a common pledge and every one took the same ensuring at least doing a single good thing every day to conserve the tiger. The exciting workshop came to an end after a valedictory session and working lunch.

Youngsters for Tigers continues..

The second 'Youngsters for Tigers' workshop was conducted for 35 selected members representing 16 nature clubs in Thekkady region between 17-18th January 2004 at the Bamboo Grove in Thekkady. The participants were 12 to 20 years old and almost balanced with boys and girls. All of them got Tiger toolkits, brochures, writing pad and pen. The workshop was inaugurated by Sri. C.A. Abdul Basheer, Ecotourism Officer and it was presided over by the Education officer. Mrs Suganthi, Forest guard welcomed the gathering and Ms Mini extended vote of thanks.

Activities on January 16th began with a small nature walk through the jungle in different groups. Each group leader presented their experiences about their trek with the number of animals and birds sighted, their vision about forest and its conservation etc. There were lots of good discussions regarding the tiger and its existence in the forest. Nagarhole Citizens Debate was followed after breakfast. After lunch and rest, each group presented their innovative ideas and future plans to save the Tiger. The concept map was redrawn once again. There were plenty of additions and interconnections. In the feedback session at least one member from each group came forward and shared their mind and thanked the organizers. Participant certificates were awarded to all in the brief valedictory session.

The Final Workshop during AWF

The third and final workshop in connection with AWF was conducted for a group of 29 youngsters from 3 nature clubs (Kurisumala I, Kollampattada I and Vanitha) in Thekkady region between 24-25th January at the Bamboo Grove, Thekkady. Activities were almost same as the former workshop. Education materials were given to all the participants. Rakshabandhan ceremony, shield preparation for self introduction, mini dramas, role play, demonstration on various activities of tigers, pugmark demonstration, trekking were most interesting to the young participants and participation certificates were awarded to all. The different sessions of the workshop was led by Extension Education Officer and Ms Suchintha, the interim trainee of the Teachers for Tigers workshop.

Acknowledgments

The AWF celebrations in Periyar were so successful because of the moral and logistical and academic support provided by Sri S. Gopalakrishnan IFS, Deputy Director, Sri Pramod G. Krishnan IFS, Ecotourism Officer, Sri s. Sivadas, Assistant Field Director and Sri. C.A. Basheer, Ecotourism Officer, Periyar Tiger Reserve. Immense thanks are also due to Ms Sally Walker and Zoo Outreach Organisation for providing education materials for all the participants. I am thankful to Mr Tom Naiman and Ms Nalini Mohan from Wildlife Conservation Society, New York for giving me training to organize such workshops effectively and providing the Teachers for Tigers manual.

Submitted by Gigi K. Joseph, Extension Education Officer, Periyar Tiger Reserve