

Conservation Himalayas organises programmes for Wildlife Awareness

Santosh Kumar Sahoo*

Wildlife Week Celebrations: 2003

"Conservation Himalayas" organised four Wildlife Awareness Camps at Shimla. These programmes were conducted in St. Stressa High School, at Chakker, and Jhathia Devi, Shimla; St. Marry School at Chakker, Shimla, Govt. Senior Secondary School at Ghannati, Shimla during the month of October, 2003. Students from 4 to 12th standard participated with their enthusiastic mood in these programmes. Open field class room 'Lesson Study' on basic information on Bats, Asian Bear, South Asian Primates and Tiger, were given by Dr. Santosh Kumar Sahoo. Wildlife Image Poster Exhibition and Educational Games were the other activities conducted during the camps.

Through our wildlife image poster exhibition the students were made familiar with pictures of some of the endangered / threatened species of bats, Asian bears South Asian primate species. During the lesson study the activity involved teaching about these animal species through action and audio-visual display of the related information like, habitat types, threats, feeding ecology, and conservation issues of Bats, Asian Bears, South Asian Primates and Tiger. Besides this information, special emphasis was given to the importance of bats in the ecology and the conservation significance of this mammalian species in our environment. Along with the oral presentation of the bat lesson, special power point slide shows through the LCD projector were organised.

In each programme, the lesson study was followed by the game activities. Both the boys and girls in each institution enjoyed playing games. Find Your Mate and Bat Rescue, Raskha bandhan, How many primates can fit in a tree, monkey act, primate rescue, find your rakhi partner and complete the bear in his habitat in case of the Asian bear as per the ZOO guidelines provided in the booklets for different species of wildlife.

It was altogether a new experience for the participating students and they showed their interest to learn more about bats, Asian bears, primates and other wild animals as well. At the same time they pledged that they would do the best they could not only to educate others about these wild animals but also to be involved actively to save the wildlife habitats in and around their living place. Wildlife T-shirts were given as prizes to students for their successful participation in the wildlife games. Certificate of participation was given to the participating students along with wild animal educational kits. Conservation Himalayas is endeavouring to bring the wildlife education to the community members in its future outreach programmes in the Himachal region. Formation of Bat Club (involving school children and teachers) in collaboration with the Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, is in process.

We gratefully acknowledge Zoo Outreach Organisation for its full support to make these programmes in HP a success, and we look forward to having innovative partnership with ZOO crew for our forthcoming wildlife conservation education programmes in Himachal Pradesh.

Animal Welfare Fortnight-2004:

All categories of animals living both in captive and natural habitat conditions are equally precious like human beings and have rights for a better living in terms of the qualitative spatial living inside the zoo and free ranging natural environments, supply of the required food resources, and non-interference from any odd sources mainly teasing and human-induced habitat destruction. The question of why we should talk about or make serious efforts about the welfare of the animals arises when we find some elements creating unpleasant conditions in the living habitats of the animals both in their captive and natural living environments. It is with this mission two programmes on Animal Welfare fortnight-2004 were organised by the Conservation Himalayas-one in the Himalayan Nature Park (HNP) at Kufri in Shimla on 15th of January 2004 in collaboration with the Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, and the second at Saraswati Vidya Mandir School (SVMS) at Gehrwin village in Bilaspur, Himachal Pradesh.

Himalayan Nature Park, Shimla - 15th January 2004

On 15th January 2004, Conservation Himalayas organised one exciting AWF 2004 programme inside the Himalayan Nature Park at Kufri, Shimla. The main focus of this programme was to teach and train the zoo visitors about how to care for the wild animals particularly the animals living in the captive conditions inside the zoo. The programme was carried out from 10 am till 4 pm, and during this period the schedule of the programme was specific for each individual or group of visitors and in this process we were able to conduct both teaching and training to five groups of visitors (nearly 50 Indians plus five foreigners) and the visitors came in separate groups at different times during the programme hours. Since the black bear is the main attraction inside the HNP, our primary focus was on providing Asian bear awareness education to the passing-by zoo visitors along with information about the conservation importance for the threatened big cats, primates and other wildlife in India.

There was a signature campaign through which the visitors signed on special chart sheet and gave their suggestive remarks on a separately-placed note book on what should be done for the welfare of the zoo animals. Our signature campaign drew attention of a number of zoo visitors who appreciated our strategy of zoo animal welfare training programme. Most of them suggested that such campaign be encouraged not only among the zoo visitors but also among the youngsters at the school level. Each group of the visitors also pledged together by repeating our Wildlife Protection Pledge (WPP) message as spoken by Dr. Santosh Kumar Sahoo. This was another event that was much applauded not only by the zoo officials participating in this AWF 2004, but also by each zoo visitor. Two groups of

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visitors from Kerala were taken near the black bear cage and were given basic information about their population, ecology, and living status both in captive and natural conditions, threats, and conservation status. These visitors pledged that they would certainly teach their friends, family members and children in their neighbourhood not to tease the animals living under captive environment in any zoo they visit. All the participating zoo visitors were given wildlife educational kit packets of the Zoo Outreach Organisation. We had a close interaction with the forest officials and discussed relevant issues pertaining to the welfare of the zoo animals and the strategy for effective dissemination of right information about zoo ethics, and zoo animals inside the zoo. The Area Range Officer, Mr. R.P. Dogra gave a short message about what the state government has been doing in order to attract more visitors to the zoo. The programme ended with open ground thanks by Dr. Santosh Kumar Sahoo to the State forest department officials and to the zoo visitors.

Saraswati Vidya Mandir School, Gehrwin

The AWF 2004 programme was conducted for the school children of the Saraswati Vidya Mandir School at Gehrwin village in Bilaspur district of Himachal Pradesh. All the children (from II grade to 12th grade) participated in this programme which highlighted about the WILDLIFE IN GENERAL AND ITS VALUE IN OUR ECOSYSTEM. Dr. Santosh Kumar Sahoo alone conducted the whole open-stage teaching and playing session with the participating students. Through action play, the students were made familiar with certain wild animals like primates, Asian bears, big cats and Bats. Each action play was followed by a short question answer phase in which the student giving correct answers were given educational kit as a token of gift. After the teaching session as many as 30 students participated in three different games: Rescue bats, Love for Zoo animals (script prepared by then Conservation Himalayas) and Dancing Bears. The zoo organisation's guidelines were followed for the first and the third game category.

The participating students took keen interest in each game wearing masks of different wild animals, understood the hidden story behind each game and finally pledged before the audience that they would take the wild matters seriously in future and do their best to love the wild animals, fight for the protection of their living habitat and educate their friends, family members and neighbours about the importance of bats, big cats, bears, primates and other wildlife in natural ecosystem. In the end the school principal distributed the Zoo educational materials to each student and encouraged us to conduct similar programmes in future. Two students of this school voluntarily joined the Shimla Bat Club.



Wildlife Friends made during Wildlife Week at Chittorgarh

R.S. Shekhawat*

The Wildlife Division of Chittorgarh received education materials to conduct Wildlife Week, 2003. The Wildlife Week was organised from 1-7 October. School children were called from different schools from Chittorgarh City. Drawing, painting, essay, quiz, wildlife identification competitions were conducted. Along with these competitions, education programmes on primates, tigers and zoo behaviour were also conducted. Children took keen interest in these programmes. Every child was made a "wildlife friend" by tying 'Rakhi' supplied by Zoo Outreach Organisation.

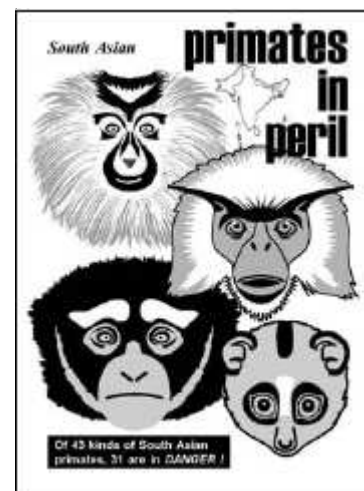
The materials supplied by ZOO were very useful. The Wildlife Division conveys sincere thanks and gratitude to the Zoo Outreach Organisation.

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School Children learn about Primates in Arunachal Pradesh

Umesh Kumar

Primate packets from Zoo Outreach Organisation made for a fascinating programme during Wildlife Week 2003. A detailed Awareness Campaign among school children of V.K.V., Seijosa and Govt. H.S. School, Seijosa was organised by the Divisional Forest Officer, Pakke Wildlife Sanctuary Division, Seijosa, Arunachal Pradesh. . During this programme the educational materials was distributed among school children.



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See good illustrations of these programmes on our website www.zoosprint.org