

Nandankanan Zoo - they've been busy !

Sally Walker

Recently I had the pleasure of hosting Manoj Mahapatra, A.C.F., Nandankanan Zoo at a tiger themed teacher training / conservation educator workshop in New Delhi. Manoj kindly brought a set of the zoo's publications for ZOO's library. A number of these publications fill gaps in our South Asian zoo management literature and others provide very nice models for others to emulate.



The model publications I particularly like is their taxon group guides or booklets. There is one on mammals of Nandankanan Zoo and one on reptiles, entitled "Reptile Park". The latter publication on reptiles is organised exactly like the public would want, and perhaps requires, that is according to poisonous snakes and non-poisonous snakes first and then a section on crocodiles, lizards and turtles and tortoises. The booklet is only 16 pages but packed with information and illustrations. It has been printed in two colours which is not expensive yet looks very attractive.

The Guide to Mammals has a colour cover but is black and white inside which works fine. The mammal book has nice drawings by the Nandankan artist and a few photos. Animals are grouped according to order with about one page per species. There are pithy aphorisms on pages with a little space left about animals which adds variety and convey a message to readers. Such as :

Man shows his superiority inside; animals outside. - A Russian proverb.

The bee is more honoured than other animals, not because she labours but because she labours for others. - St. John Chrysostom

The guide gives much information in one page about each mammal in Nandankanan.

Zoo School

Nandankanan Zoo has always been big on education and the Zoo School captured the imagination of Mr. S.K. Patnaik many years ago. Now, Nandankanan Zoo School seems quite well established. Interested students may join NZS by contacting their principal or coordinator teacher at their own school. They have set up the activities so that students can participate at their own convenience. A Newsletter is part of this and a website for this is under construction. Students of the Zoo School can also participate through specially designed programmes of Awareness and Education which are interactive, innovative, easy to learn and enjoyable.

In the newsletter, cleverly named "Panchtantra: A Newsletter of Nandankanan Zoo School" there are short articles or quotes explaining "What is a Zoo", "Why a Zoo", Nandankanan - our Zoo, Biodiversity of Nandankanan, Breeding Success, Heronry, Comfort movement of animals, Conservation Reports, Special Days for special activities, How Nandankanan tries to stay "green" in all that they do. One particularly nice bit in the Newsletter is copied below :

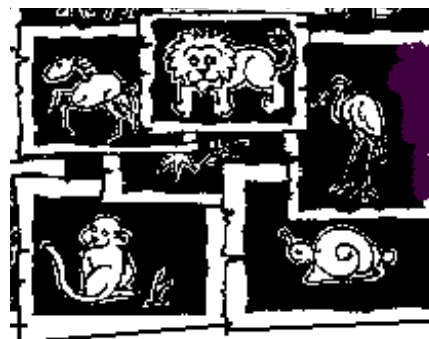
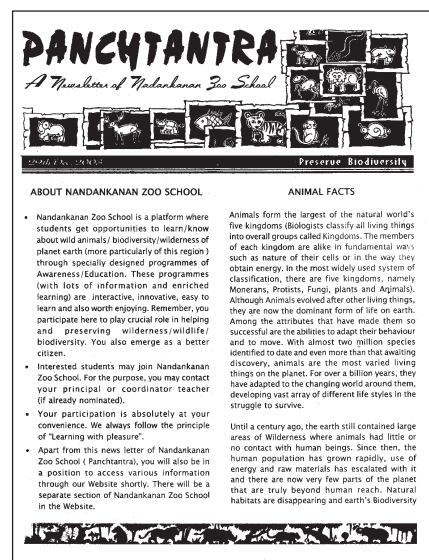
SAVE FOREST TO SAVE MANKIND

Forest provides

- F - Food
- O - Oxygen
- R - Rain
- E - Ecology
- S - Soil
- T - Timber

More than 1285 students below 15 years visited the zoo free during wildlife week 2003. Education / awareness

programmes hosted 528 students from 23 schools for special programmes. About 268 students from different states in town for a junior Red Cross meeting visited the zoo. During World Disabled Day and Zoo Week 556 physically challenged students of 9 residential schools visited the zoo and had an interactive awareness visit. (Incidentally, Nandankanan is one of the only zoos to celebrate Zoo Week - this is thanks to S.K. Patnaik again! who was charmed with the idea at an All-India Zoo Directors' meeting many years back in Junagadh where it was suggested and a resolution passed. The government didn't make Zoo Week official but a few zoos remember and celebrate, Nandankanan being the frontrunner.)



But it is in the area of zoo management that Nandankanan has published their most impressive works in the form of a Zoo Keepers Notebook and a pioneering volume (for India) on Zoo Emergency.