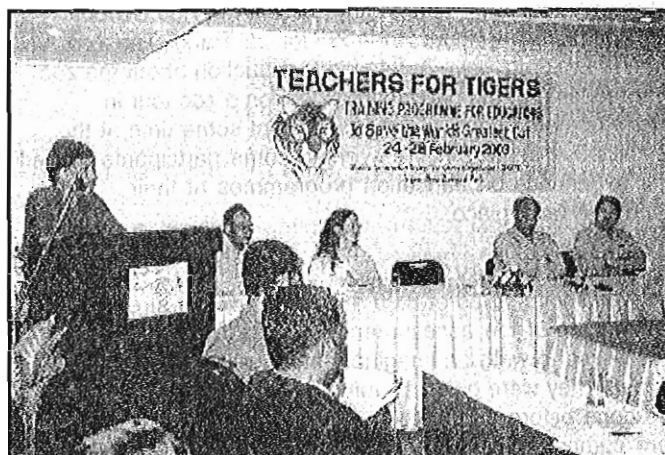
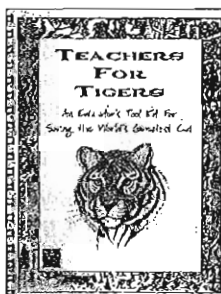


Teachers for Tigers: Report of the Zoo Educators Workshop Chennai 24-28th February 2003

B.A. Daniel* and A.R. Binu Priya**

A five-day zoo educators workshop with tigers as the theme was organised at Hotel Royal Southern, Maraimalai Nagar, Chennai from 24-28 February 2003. This is the second of a series of such workshops that has been planned in India. Zoo Outreach Organisation in collaboration with the Arignar Anna Zoological Park, Vandalur, Chennai coordinated the entire workshop while experts from Wildlife Conservation Society, Bronx, New York - Mr. Tom Naiman, Director, Curriculum Development and International Education and Ms. Nalini Mohan, International Trainer - conducted the workshop. Managers from tiger range areas were invited to deliver special lectures during the workshop. Totally 33 participants, 21 from various zoos and non-governmental organizations in India and one from the Central Zoo, Nepal took part in the training.

All participants were provided with a set of education materials for use in the programme. The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), Bronx Zoo brought out a manual for teaching called *TEACHERS FOR TIGERS* designed primarily for educators which is easy-to-use, and includes attractive graphics for teachers to create exciting, informative and interactive teaching modules about tigers. The theme was designed in such a way that the subject could be taught anywhere, with any audience: students, community groups, literate or non-literate persons and to all age groups from children to adults. WCS also supplied a book entitled *How Nature Works*. In addition to this the trainees also received a set of 7 masks which included a tiger, tiger cub, prey species and a leopard, 8 flash cards using illustrations produced by WCS, Tiger pledge card along with Zoo Outreach Organisation materials such as a t-shirt, a notepad, a pen, two educational packets, ARNIZE newsletter and ZOOS' PRINT magazine and journal.



Inaugural

charismatic tigers as models to teach about wildlife. Ms. Karuna Priya, IFS., Deputy Director, Arignar Anna Zoological Park gave the vote of thanks.

Ice-Breaker

Nalini Mohan asked the participants to draw an animal that they identify with on one half of the paper and on the other half she asked them to represent pictorially the main theme of their education programmes. The participants were then asked to introduce themselves and explain their drawing. They were also asked to say a few words about their expectations of the workshop.

Workshop Themes, Schedule and Evaluation

Mr. Naiman introduced the purpose and the contents of the workshop. He also briefly explained various modules in the manual 'Teachers for Tigers'. While introducing the theme of the workshop he mentioned that as communication was the main focus of education strategy, the best way to communicate is not to talk but to experience through activities.

Assessment activities were designed to get a feedback on the effectiveness of education programmes and also to determine if the objectives of the programme was achieved. These exercises, done before and after the work, help to understand the change in the knowledge, attitude and action of the target group.

Concept map is a form of assessment. The objective is to illustrate the main concept of a particular subject and relate the concepts with one another. As an example, Mr. Naiman demonstrated what he knew about Tamil Nadu. Later he asked the participants to make a concept map with Tiger as the main concept. A time limit (10 minutes) was given to make the concept map and at the end of it, all illustrations

Day 1: 24th February 2003

The training workshop was inaugurated by the Chief Guest Dr. Sukh Dev, IFS., Chief Wildlife Warden, Tamil Nadu Forest Department. The workshop was honoured by the presence of Dr. Baruah, Director Guindy National Park, and Dr. P.C. Tyagi, IFS., Director, Arignar Anna Zoological Park. Mr. Tom Naiman, and Ms. Sally Walker, Zoo Outreach Organisation were also among the dignitaries. Dr. Tyagi welcomed the gathering. Dr. Sukh Dev, in his Presidential address said that conservation education must be given mainly to the four target groups i.e., the education department, forest department, postal department and non governmental organisations. He also said that networking is essential among educators as information has to be shared. Mr. Tom Naiman in his special address said that he was looking forward to a good workshop. In coordinator's address Ms. Sally Walker said that "Teachers for Tigers" workshop is not about teaching only tigers but is a workshop that uses the

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were collected with their name and date so as to compare the maps at the end of the workshop to make a qualitative assessment. This method can also be used with a non-literate audience by asking them to make a pictorial representation.

In the afternoon the trainees gathered at the Zoo School auditorium of the Arignar Anna Zoological Park. The Zoo Director Dr. Tyagi gave a detailed introduction about the zoo. After the lecture, the participants went on a zoo tour in battery-operated vans. The group spent some time at the rehabilitation centre. In the evening some participants shared their experience on education programmes at their respective work place.

Day 2: 25th February 2003

The workshop started at 8.00 a.m. with a 'Tiger stretch'. In continuation of the assessment methods the participants were asked to write an imaginary story with tiger as the theme. They were given 15 minutes to complete it. This was done before and after the programme and the stories were compared.

Attitude assessment

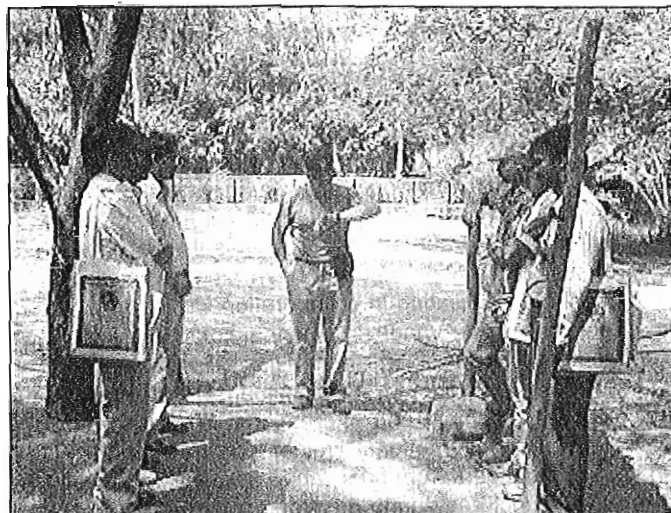
This assessment can also work well with non-literate group of audience. Ms. Mohan explained how the exercise could be done in a number of different ways. The participants were asked to write the numbers from 1-12 in their notepad, and while the questions given in the manual were called out by Nalini they were asked to write the correct answer as A or B or C against the respective question number.

Activities at the Zoo

The rest of the activities were conducted in the Zoo. After Ms. Mohan gave a brief introduction to these activities the participants left for the zoo at 8.45a.m. Mr. Nalman conducted an activity called "what is the change?" To explain it he requested six participants to stand in two rows of three each facing one another. He gave all six of them 30 seconds to observe all minute details (like standing posture, style, etc) of the person standing opposite to him/her. Then he made them turn around and asked the players to change or alter something on themselves. The player on the opposite side had to identify the change. This exercise helps the participants to develop keen observation. Animals are adapted according to environment, food habits, and the way they live. The participants filled in the Adaptation Match activity sheet from "How Nature Works" as they observed the birds in the aviary as an exercise to understand the value of animal adaptations. The same exercise was repeated with the Hippo as the object of observation.

All biotic and abiotic factors are required for animals to live. This concept was demonstrated by a game known as web of life by Ms. Binu Priya and Mr. Gowri Shankar. The group returned to the hotel after the game.

In the afternoon Dr. B.A. Daniel, gave a lecture on biodiversity. He gave examples of different animal habitats, statistics on life on earth and classification, threats to biodiversity, man and depletion of fauna and flora and role of educators in biodiversity conservation. In his talk he mentioned the former and present range areas of threatened animals



Tom conducting a game on observation and behaviour

including that of tigers.

One of the very interesting activities of the workshop was mini-dramas. The participants were divided into four groups and each group was given a theme to enact. The themes given were Courtship, Hunting, Parental care and Poaching. This method evaluates the level of understanding of the concepts of tiger biology, behaviour and threats faced by tigers in the wild. The groups went through their respective stories in the Tiger manual to select the characters of their story within their group and took about 45 minutes to practice their skit. They utilized masks, and other stationery items to enhance their performance. They also designed accessories such as bird heads, tiger tail, tree etc., required for their play. Everyone enjoyed the session as there was lot of creativity and action in every group.

In another activity called tiger range maps, the trainees were divided into groups consisting of 8 members. They were given a set of 12 maps. Out of the 12 maps, 3 sets of 4 maps were to be attached as a puzzle to get current tiger range areas, major tiger habitats of Asia and historic tiger ranges. Once the puzzle was solved, the participants were asked to jot down the list of countries in which tigers were found 100 years ago, the different tiger habitats in Asia and the past and present distribution of subspecies. This simple exercise conveyed a lot of information on past, present and future trends in tiger habitats, subspecies distribution and historic ranges.

In the subsequent session, Ms. Binu Priya and Dr. Daniel went through the tiger packets that were given to the participants. They reviewed the utility of the packets in educating children of different age groups in education programmes. The participants came up with useful suggestions. The evening presentation by the participants lasted for about an hour.

Day 3: 26th February 2003

The third day of the workshop started in the zoo at 8.30am. The participants assembled at the Zoo School to begin their activities. The first activity of the day was tiger timeline. Tom assigned each participant a year to design a poster on an event that took place in that year which is of relevance to

tigers. After completing the poster each person stuck his/her poster on the wall in chronological order. The host zoo participants were asked to prepare a poster based on a tiger incident in their zoo. At the end of it the group discussed the trend of the tigers in the last few centuries.

From Little Cats to Big Cats was an interesting unit. Ms. Mohan divided the participants into 10 groups and each group was assigned lessons on body size and weight, jumping, hunting, climbing, camouflage, eating, tail, speed, territoriality and communication. Each group had to teach the lesson assigned to them in an appropriate manner as given in the tiger manual in front of the tiger exhibit. The tiger in the exhibit had a good impact on the exercise.

Tigers in Mythology and Art

The participants were divided into 4 groups. Each group was asked to read a story from the tiger manual and answer the questions given in the manual on how the tiger was depicted in each story. After the exercise, the participants were again divided into 7 groups and each group was asked to go through one tiger art from the tiger manual. The groups were given 10 minutes to observe and study the picture and then asked to answer the questions in the tiger manual.

In the invited guest lecture, Dr. A. Manimozhi, gave a presentation on the various education activities of Arignar Anna Zoo. He spoke on interactive-interpretive signboards in the zoo, and the programmes that they have conducted with children and teachers in the zoo.

In many tiger range countries, parts of the tiger are used in medicines. To identify the parts of tiger used in medicine, a photo copy of the drawing depicting only the parts of tiger was given to the participants and each participant had to fill in the appropriate medicinal value that they thought was taken from each part. The answers were compared with the actual usage of parts for medicine. Tiger trade in various tiger range countries for medicines were discussed. The participants also discussed on the applicability of this exercise with different audience. Some participants mentioned that as educators they have to discuss about the trade issue while others felt that the information should not

be passed because it will go to the wrong hands and might encourage poaching.

In the activity called 'role play' the trainees were divided into 8 groups. They were asked to take up the following roles:

advertising executives, architects, artists, biologists, farmers, newspaper reporters, politicians, songwriters. Each group had to work on tigers in their respective roles, develop a poster and give a report. In the evening presentations Ms. Walker gave a talk on the activities of ZOO.

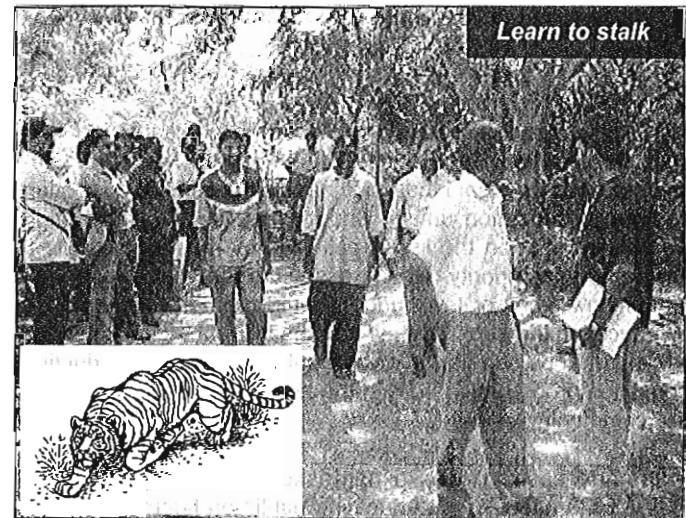
Day 4: 27 February 2003

The trainees started the morning by preparing a poster as a group on teaching people about the myths of medicines taken from tigers. After completion, one representative from each group came forward to present the poster.

In another activity to understand the feeding ecology the participants photocopied pictures of prey animals and cut off

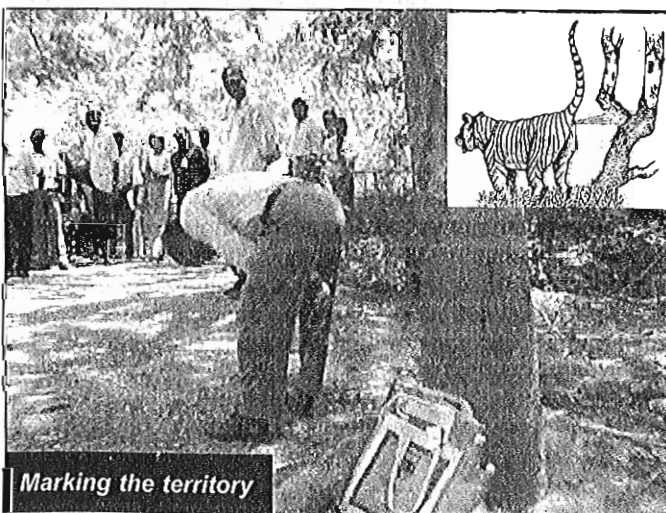


Mini Drama: Hunting, Parental care



the tails of each animal. They stuck the tail-less animals on the board and asked the audience to stick the appropriate tail on the tail-less animal. This way one can learn about tiger prey through fun. This game is similar to pinning the tail of the donkey that is played commonly in parties.

Dr. R. Annamalai, IFS, Field Director and Conservator of Forests, Kalakkad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve (KMTR), in his guest lecture gave a talk on the eco-development project and tiger conservation activities in KMTR. He gave an up to date statistics on the status of tigers in India with special reference to KMTR.



From Awareness to Action

In the activity awareness to action, the participants were divided into 3 groups and were given topics on counting and tracking tigers. Group 1 was given Pug marks. They explained the method in detail as a technique to survey tigers. They also discussed the advantages and disadvantages of this technique. Group 2 had to explain Camera trap method: the group used the masks and enacted this technique. Group 3 also did a skit on their topic Radio telemetry and discussed the technique in detail.

To understand the importance of human factors in modern conservation practices, the participants were divided into groups representing Conservationists, Human Rights Advocates, Forest Department Officials and Park Rangers, Poachers and Forest Resource Traders, Villagers and Government Officials. They were asked to read the proposals given in the Manual and to appoint a spokesperson each to present their case to the government officials. Each group had to convince the government officials who were the deciding authority to pass their proposal.

In the evening Dr. Tyagi in the invited lecture highlighted pollution as one of the threats to biodiversity. He said that educators play a major role in making people aware of the disastrous effects of pollution. He also pointed out that Indian legislation was the strongest in terms of wildlife and environment but on the implementation side it was the weakest.

Day Five: 28th February 2003

Ms. Walker gave a lecture on "Zoos and Conservation with special reference to education". She briefly spoke on the evolution of zoos. She said that zoos have evolved from recreation centres to education units. She pointed out that education was always last on the list of activities by most zoos while it should be a top priority. She stressed the fact that any zoo, no matter how small or low budget, could promote conservation by educating the public, if they had the will. She discussed the ways that zoos can improve their public image by conducting education programmes both in the zoo and by reaching out to the community.

In the next session, Mr. Naiman asked the participants about their for the future about educating public on tigers.

What you can do with the Placard?

Ms. Walker then made the participants take the placards out of their bag and demonstrated how effectively a placard can be used in education programmes. She asked the trainees to hold the placards up and asked them to march across the hall shouting a slogan "Save Tigers!" Then she asked them to stand at one point and asked them to make a short pledge to protect tigers.

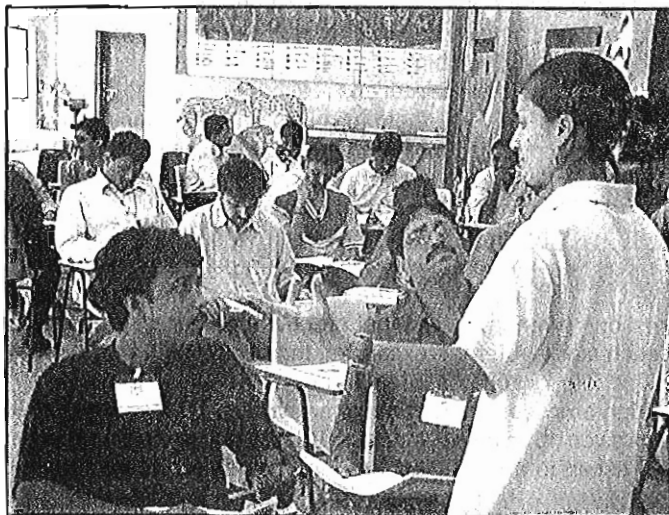
Pledge

Ms. Mohan conducted a session on taking a pledge from the participants on tiger conservation. She asked the participants to take the pledge cards from their bags and asked them to

write a pledge. After filling the pledge card each trainee stood up and made his / her pledge in front of others.

Evaluation Activities

Ms. Mohan and Mr. Naiman asked the participants to make a concept map on tigers as they had done on the first day. After



Nalini Mohan with participants

every individual had finished, they gave each participants the concept maps that he/she had done on the first day and asked them to compare it with the one that they had just made to see the difference in their knowledge on tigers before and after attending the workshop. The participants found it to be a very good form of evaluation.

Evaluation Form

The participants were given an evaluation form to evaluate the entire workshop. An order form was also attached for them to fill in and order the tiger packets. Mr. Naiman circulated the book entitled 'The Way of the Tiger' by Ullas Karanth and promised to provide the book to those who organise and send a detailed report of an education programme on tigers.

Valedictory

The valedictory was presided over by Mr. Tom Naiman and Ms. Nalini Mohan. Mr. Naiman distributed the certificates to all the participants and requested them to plan a programme at the earliest possible time and get back to ZOO with a report. Mr. Naiman and Ms. Mohan spoke very favourably on their experience of working with Zoo Outreach Organisation.

Ms. Walker thanked the Arignar Anna Zoo, the Zoo Director and Zoo staff for all their co-operation. She also thanked Starr Foundation and WCS for all their efforts. Dr. Manimozhi delivered the Vote of Thanks. He thanked the Zoo Director, his colleagues, WCS, Zoo Outreach Organisation for organising the programme and all the participants for making the workshop a grand success.