

Education Reports

Zoo Outreach Organization facilitated CITES inaugural World Wildlife Day

United Nations proclaimed 3rd March as World Wildlife Day and requested CITES to facilitate implementation of the "Day" with relevant organizations of UN. The objective of World Wildlife Day is to raise awareness of the world's fauna and flora and its many problems. To mark the inaugural day celebration, Zoo Outreach Organisation hosted a special awareness programme at Devarayapuram Government High School in Coimbatore district. Fifty eco club students aged 11-15 and two teachers attended the programme. They were introduced to biodiversity and its varieties, value, biological diversity, richness statistics of India, wildlife areas of India and Tamil Nadu in particular, major threats to biodiversity loss, laws associated to saving biodiversity and *exsitu* and *insitu* wildlife conservation and their responsibility in saving biodiversity conservation.

Utilising Zoo Outreach packets,



e.g., Western Ghats Freshwater Biodiversity in Tamil packet sponsored by CEPF they learned about freshwater and its biodiversity, importance, facts about Western Ghats, freshwater systems, freshwater species facts, status and threats such as dragonflies and damsel flies, mollusc, fish and aquatic plants.

Then we shared results and recommendations of WG freshwater biodiversity assessment. The students also came to know about the wildlife and water laws of India when they went through the card. They enjoyed tying a friendship band to commit to save wildlife. They donned masks of fish, mollusk, leaf and dragonfly. A student read placard information aloud and others followed which says the services provided by freshwater ecosystem.



Pledge during the Freshwater biodiversity programme

Students observed the posters of Western Ghats Freshwater fishes and odonates, South Asian amphibians, bat and Lion-tailed macaque to understand species diversity. Mr. Thiyagarajan, Project Officer, Tulsi Trust coordinated the programme. Thanks to Mr. Rajagopal, Art teacher and Ms. Safira Begum, Eco-club teacher for arranging this programme.

World Wildlife Day: Farmers sensitized about HECx at Parameswaran Palayam

On 03 March 2014, ZOO Education Officer was invited to give a special talk to 40 farmers on human elephant coexistence as most of them come from human elephant conflict areas. The programme was held at Parameswarampalayam village in Thondamuthur Block of Coimbatore District. At first, they were given some general elephant facts as well as behaviour information to understand the species. Followed on, what is human elephant conflict, the reasons are habitat loss and fragmentation, mitigating methods using by people and government in range countries and how it works were told.

There is no permanent solution for HEC but for the sake of elephants as well human beings we have to take responsibility for our own life and try methods to coexist with them.

By using ZOO's manual the tips on do's and don't's in elephant areas were explained in detail. They said that it is very useful for them.

During question session they asked about musth elephants, alternative



crops and other mitigation methods followed by elephant range countries. They also shared conflict experiences with other animals such as wild boar and peacock. They also shared an incident; a man in Semmedu village cut the wild elephant's trunk when it tries to enter in his home.

They were amazed at the elephants need for about 150kg of food and 225 litres of water per day and 20 hours of its foraging behaviour. Other aspects of elephants were body weight, walking and running speed, sense of smell, matriarch family

structure, their communication techniques and its long lasting memory.

The participants understood the elephant behaviour well. Even though they may be confronted with elephants now and then, there were no complaints about elephant at all demonstrating tolerance towards elephants. As a whole the participants found the programme useful and felt this kind of awareness is very much needed at this point of time. Thanks to Mr. Thiyagarajan, Project Officer, Tulsi Trust for his interminable support.



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