

## Education at Lahore Zoo Pakistan

### International Vulture Awareness Day

Now, 5th September, 2009 is International Vulture Awareness Day. Lahore Zoo Education Department celebrated this event because Vultures are an ecologically vital bird group that faces a wide range of threats in many areas where they are naturally occurring. Pakistan is one of several countries facing alarming decline in vultures. There were nine types of vultures native to South Asia and eight of these were found in Pakistan. Pakistan has seen major declines in the population of White-backed vulture and the Long-billed vulture with 95% decline and both listed as "Critically Endangered". This means there is no way to prevent the extinction of the species unless serious conservation efforts are undertaken.

The decline in the vulture population has been blamed on the extensive use of the Diclofenac Sodium a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) which is commonly used in livestock in the Indian-subcontinent for the treatment of lameness, fever etc. It is cheap and widely available. Diclofenac Sodium accumulates in the kidneys of vultures when they feed on carcasses and eventually leads to their death. It has been banned in vet practice.



Lahore Zoo is one of the oldest zoos of the world and its major aim is educating visitors on environmental and conservation issues. In this era of depletion and destruction of natural habitat for wildlife it is duty of zoos to spread the message of animal welfare. Lahore Zoo celebrated IVAD 5th September, 2009. A small group of visitors from different walks of life gathered at Jungle Café near the Indian python enclosure. Syed Zafar-ul-Hasan, Director Lahore Zoo delivered welcome lecture on importance of vulture and added that Lahore Zoo management planned to house the vulture for their captive breeding after completing its Master Plan in bird aviary. Then visitors and young students the conservationist of tomorrow will have the chance to see this bird and will make positive efforts to save

it. Bushra Khan, Education Officer spoke on the ecological role of vultures and showed pictures of vultures suffering in Pakistan. Mr. Anwar Man Deputy Director, added that these birds are biological indicators and help to clean the environment. Vulture posters provided by WWF-Pakistan were distributed to the audience and assured they are with Lahore Zoo for conservation of this important bird.

### Lahore Zoo celebrating 62nd Anniversary of Independence Day of Pakistan

The Education Department arranged a wildlife painting and sculpture competition on 18 Sept 09. Pakistan has a large diversity of wildlife, much of which is of international interest, facing a large number of threats and declines. There were three categories of competition with total 40 participants participated in all above categories. Ch. Abdul Gahfoor, Minister Prison & Industry was the honourable Chief Guest as well as Dr. Md Jhangir Ghauri Director General, Wildlife & Parks Punjab. Ch. Abdul Gahfoor, Minister Prison & Industry admired the zoo administration and staff for their work and dedication to animals. Visitors showed keen interest in the exhibition.

A Wildlife Painting Exhibition in collaboration with NAQSH School of Arts, Lahore was held from 13- 16 September 2009. Lahore Zoo's intention was to create awareness in the general public about the importance of wildlife. Secy Forest, Fisheries & WL Babar Hassan Bharwana was Hon. Chief Guest who praised the effort and work of students and teachers of NAQSH School of Arts, Lahore especially thanking Mr. M.H. Rumi Principal. A total of 142 paintings and 24 sculptures of magnificent wildlife made by 45 students were displayed at the exhibition. The attending public enjoyed and showed keen interest in this exhibition. Secretary Forest, Fisheries and Wildlife Mr. Babar Hassan Bharwana related his desire that Lahore Zoo should establish a Zoo Education centre comprising of gallery, museum, lecture theater and library.



*Judging and admiring the exhibition.*

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