

## Education: Full Reports and Photos July 2008

### **Proceedings-WTB celebrates World Environment Day 2008-Save Hoolock Gibbon, Protect Forest, Conserve Biodiversity Hoolock Gibbon Conservation Education Programme at Dhaka Zoo June 6, 2008**

**Background:** Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh (WTB) in collaboration with the Dhaka Zoo organized a day-long programme to create awareness among the school children and general public in the Dhaka Zoo, on June 6, 2008. WTB arranged such programmes every year to celebrate the World Environment Day. World Environment Day is an opportunity to raise awareness and promote actions on all environmental issues. The programme is designed especially for the students who are the future builders of the country.

The programme also aims to spark the enthusiasm of the participants to inspire others especially the zoo visitors to get involved in threatened species conservation.

**Participants:** About 20 students from different Schools of Dhaka city attended the programme and about 80 other participants.

**Inauguration (9.30 am - 10.00 am):** The children produced a poster on the theme of the World Environment Day 2008 titled ***Kick the habit – towards a low carbon economy and lifestyle***. All the children, parents, organizers and other participants signed it. WTB Chairman Mr. Enayetullah Khan, Chief Executive Professor Md. Anwarul Islam, WTB member and former director general of Livestock Department Mr Abdur Razzaque and Curator of the Dhaka Zoo Mr. Md. Aminur Rahman were there to inspire the participants.

**Introduction of the programme theme (10.00 am - 10.10 am):** The theme and events of the programme were explained to the audience by Gawsia Wahidunnessa Chowdhury, a member of the WTB.

**Pre-evaluation - Questionnaire and Concept Map (10.10 am - 10.25 am):** Questionnaire produced by Ms. Corrin LaCombe of Oxford Brookes University and WTB were distributed to the participants to fill in. The students were also requested to contribute to the concept map. This was to assess their attitude, enthusiasm and knowledge on environment and the hoolocks before the programme starts. Ms. LaCombe and Ms. Rina Akter coordinated the programme.

**Tree plantation, tree censusing and identification: Rally inside the Zoo (10.25 am - 11.25 am):** Students were requested to take part in a rally from the auditorium of Zoo to the Hoolock cage. On the way they planted tree saplings, and observed the tree species around them and tried to identify as many as possible. Three of the participants did very well. Aslam could identify 36 plant species on the way while Moury and Epa identified 24 and 20



plant species. On the way the students were briefed on the values of plants. They were shown leaves of seven plant species pasted on a board. Most of the participants could identify them. Zoo personnel, Ms. Corrin and WTB team coordinated the event.

**A short break (11.25 am - 11.35 am):** Participants came back to the audience and had snacks.

**Act like hoolocks ... feel for hoolocks (11.35 am - 11.45 am):** Demonstration of hoolock behaviour and biology helped the participants to know about the species. This is an activity to make the participants understand hoolock adaptations and behaviour. This was done through a series of fun exercises where participants learnt about hoolock habit, call, movement, brachiation, colouration, etc. This event was coordinated by Mr. Mayeen Uddin, Mr. Suprio Chakma and Ms Gawsia Wahidunnessa Chowdhury of WTB.

**Trash clean up (11.45 am - 11.55 am):** Litter in the schoolyard and other public areas creates an unhealthy situation for humans and animals. To conduct this activity children were asked to collect litter from the room. Trash receptacles were there where 'Keep your room clean...Keep the earth clean' was inscribed. Ms. Corrin LaCombe and WTB crew coordinated the event.

**Hoolock-Hoolock...what man! - Zoo Play (11.55 am - 12.05 pm):** The instructor drew a 'cage' on the ground to represent a hoolock cage. Ten volunteers from the participants were requested to play the game. Three volunteers were requested to stay inside the cage and to wear the hoolock masks, to imitate hoolocks, and act like hoolocks in the zoo. The seven volunteers stood outside the cage and behaved like 'bad zoo visitors by teasing, stone throwing, making noise, poke the hoolock inside the cage with sticks, and so on. The hoolock inside the cage reacted to the visitors.



At the end of the game children who played hoolocks were asked to express how they felt being trapped in a cage and harassed by other children. Ms. Chowdhury of WTB coordinated the event.

**Lunch (12.05 pm - 1.45 pm):** All the participants attended the lunch.

**Gibbon story: Legend of Ulluk Song... (1.45 pm - 2.15 pm):** The students were requested to sit in a circle, while the facilitator read the story, *Legend of Ulluk song*, designed by Ms. Corrin LaCombe and WTB. After the story was told a small discussion was held on how the students felt. Ms. Corrin LaCombe and Ms. Chowdhury coordinated the event.

**Hoolock Song (2.15pm - 2.20 pm):** All the participants were requested to sing the hoolock song developed by WTB.

**Post-evaluation: Questionnaire + Concept map (2.20 pm - 2.35 pm)**

Evaluation questionnaire was distributed to the participants for comments after the programme was over. The students were also asked to contribute to the concept map. This was to assess their attitude, enthusiasm, and knowledge on environment and the hoolocks after they have attended the programme. Ms. LaCombe and Ms. Akter coordinated the programme.



**Valedictory - Pledge through ringing a bell (1.45 pm - 2.00 pm):** All the students got a clay bell. To make the pledge the students were requested to ring the bell and to raise awareness to save the hoolocks, thus the environment. Prof. Md. Anwarul Islam, CEO, WTB, thanked everyone for coming and for giving WTB such an opportunity to organise such a programme. **Submitted by: Gawsia W.Chowdhury, WTB, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Email: gawsia@gmail.com**

## WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY CELEBRATIONS AT THE RAJIV GANDHI ZOOLOGICAL PARK

June 5<sup>th</sup> 2008 would have been an ordinary day the zoo, if it not for the educational material received from Zoo Outreach Organization. A bookmark cum sticker received from Z.O.O. was distributed amongst the children



visitors of the zoo. Mr Kaushik Kashikar, Head Animal Keeper, donned the Frog T-shirt and the frog mask and went along with a frog in his hand to educate zoo visitors about the importance of amphibians in a natural life-cycle. Mr Rajan Shirke (Manager, Reptile section) and Mr Ganesh Tole, (Zoo keeper) also distributed the bookmarks to other children and explained to them the need not to kill frogs. Hence around 100 such bookmarks were distributed to the zoo visitors. The zoo staff and our tiny visitors had a lot of fun petting the



frog and learning their ecological role in the environment. Tree planting on a large scale was carried out by the garden staff marking it a green letter day in our calendar. **Submitted by: Director, Rajiv Gandhi Zoological Park, Pune, Maharashtra. Email: punezoo@vsnl.net**

## REPORT ON OBSERVATION OF WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2008

The World Environment Day (WED) is observed annually on 5<sup>th</sup> June as an opportunity to raise awareness and promote action on environmental issues. APOWA (Action for Protection of Wild Animals), through its various programmes reaches out to students, youths and people in general and

creates awareness on environmental issues. The event includes competitions for children, Drama, Games, film shows, distribution of awards etc. These programmes are also the principal way of spreading the message of World Environment Day on June 5. The World Environment Day is one of the significant environmental days observed by APOWA to spread awareness about the environment.

We are thankful to Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore for supply us educational materials, which makes our programme more colorful. The games & materials structured / developed by ZOO is wonderful. While we play we act dynamically and we feel the process of nature. Every participant understands the concept & strongly advocate for environmental conservation. Student must be the ambassador of environmental issues, for the environment student and environment is inseparable. Each student can contribute significantly to protect its environment. They will act as local environment saver. Actually saying the materials help students to understand their environment and wildlife. Events were very small but interesting. We invited resource persons for each event for observation and evaluation of World Environment Day programme. APOWA has been observing World Environment Day since its inception in 1999.

#### **PROGRAMMES**

The programme was started with an introductory talk on World Environment Day by Shri Bijaya Ku Kabi, Director, APOWA and member of the South Asian Network of the International Zoo Educators Association. The programme was inaugurated by Shri Bijaya Kumar Rout, President, APOWA.

#### **Event-1: Rakhi Tying:**

The Rakhi tying activity was started in the beginning of the programme. The programme leader Shri Nihar Ranjan Mohanty asked all the participants to take out the rakhi enclosed from their packet and tie it on the wrist each other. All the participants pledge to animal welfare, conserve wildlife, being kind to bats, protect to environment etc.

#### **Event- 2: Monkey Manners:**

This programme was started with a talk by Shri Manamohan Kundu, education officer, APOWA on Monkey manners and what are Monkey problems and their cause and as a student, what you can do.

#### **Primate Theme Based Games and Drama**

##### **Game-1: Monkey say, monkey do**

A group of students were performed and others enjoy it. Before that the educator Shri Manamohan Kundu narrated the concept of the game to participants.

##### **Game-2: Opposable thumb**

This activity was a new experience for participants and they understand the importance of opposable thumb. The educator explained that only primates have opposable thumbs.

#### **DRAMA:**

Drama is a superb method for teaching all ages of people to understand issues. We are trying to aware people and students on environmental and wildlife issues through the uses of ZOO educational material.

##### **Drama -1: Saving Primates from Poachers**

The drama was performed by Karuna club members. The audiences were appreciated the theme of the drama.

##### **Drama-2: No good food here**

The educator explained the theme of the drama to performers before they play the drama in front of audiences. The resource persons were evaluated all the dramas played by different groups.

##### **Drama-3: Village Head solve the problems of Monkeys**

All the performers wear the entire monkey mask and played the drama. The all the monkeys go to the village head and tell their problem. The village head solve the problem of monkeys through the help of villagers.

#### **PAINTING COMPETITION**

The theme of painting competition was related to Monkey Manners. There were 22 students participated in it.

#### **Event-3: ADVANCING BAT CONSERVATION**

Shri Manamohan Kundu gave a talk about the Bat conservation to participants in the beginning of the event.

##### **Bat theme based Games and Drama:**

##### **Drama 1: Bat threatened by their environment:**

A group of students performed the game on the theme of bat conservation. Before the drama the educator explained about the theme to performers.

##### **Drama 2: Creating a Bat Site:**

The above drama was played by the students of Karuna club members of USAK High school, Arua Kadaliban. This play was guided by Shri Pravat Ku Nayak of APOWA.

##### **Painting Competition: South Asian Bats Colouring Book**

There were 15 children of age 6-12 years participated in this activity. This colouring book was intended to create interest among children about Bats. In the beginning of the event the educator Shri Manamohan Kundu explained about the objective of the event to participants.

#### **Event 4: Education on Frogs Rock (Amphibian Ark)**

As 2008 Year of the Frog, Shri Bijaya Kumar Kabi, Director, APOWA and member of the South Asian Network of the International Zoo Educators Association was describe the importance of amphibians to our own quality of life and survival and the extinction crisis they face to participants.

#### **Event 5: FILM SHOW ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

Shri Rashmi Ranjan Kabi deliberated to the participants on aspects of climate change & steps of environmental conservation. The participants enjoyed an environmental film show at the end of the class.

## **EVENT 6: Prize Distribution and Speech by Resource Persons:**

The resource persons were deliberated their valuable suggestions, techniques for conservation of environment. They asked all the students to come forward & save the environment from destruction.

All the resource persons appreciated the educational materials of Zoo Outreach Organisation. The resource persons were also presents their evaluation report on the events performed by the groups and participants in the morning session of the programme. This was found satisfactory. The programme came to end with the distribution of prizes to winners. **Report By: Shri Bijaya Kumar Kabi, Director, Action for Protection of Wild Animals (APOWA) At-Hatapatana, Po-Kadaliban, Dist- Kendrapara, Orissa, Pin-754222, E mail: apowa1999@yahoo.co.in**

## **SPROUTS & Tiger Watch's-Wildlife Conservation Course**

SPROUTS and Tiger Watch (TW) teamed up to organise their first five-day Wildlife Conservation Course near the Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, Sawai Madhopur (Rajasthan) from April 26-30, 2008. This short duration course intended to acquaint its participants with the varied dimensions and methods used to bring about wildlife conservation and to create a team of volunteers who are serious about conservation.



Twenty-five participants from all over India and one participant from the US, with varied academic and professional backgrounds, attended this course. The course was envisioned by Dr. Dharmendra Khandal (Conservation Biologist, TW) and Anand Pendharkar (Director, SPROUTS) and further designed with inputs from Mr. Fateh Singh Rathore (Vice-Chairman, TW). They formed the core faculty of the course along with Mr. John Singh (Chairman, TW), Dr. Govardhan Singh Rathore (Founder, Prakritik Society), Ms. Madhu Bhatnagar (Head, Env't. Programme of 3 Shriram Schools, Delhi), Mr. Jay Mazoomdaar (Film-maker & Journalist) and Ms. Padmini Rathore (Advocate), who shared their vast experiences in the field of wildlife conservation with the participants. Ushma Shukla (Asst. Field Biologist, TW), Pranad Patil (Asst. Trainer, SPROUTS), Ovee Thorat (Intern, SPROUTS), Mayuresh

Gangal (Volunteer, TW) and Mr. Aditya Singh (Photographer & Hotelier) also presented lectures during this course, facilitated by Sunny Patil (Volunteer, TW). A unique field session to learn about tracks and signs was organised with Kesra Moghiya (a recently rehabilitated Tiger poacher).

The participants received a course kit, which included a jute bag enclosing the Course Book (sponsored by Mr. Bharat Vakharia, Product Promotions), which had the SOPs of participants, write-ups on the work of Tiger Watch, Prakritik Society, introduction to the Ranthambore Tiger Reserve and course faculty members, besides extra reading material about course topics; brochure of SPROUTS, Gharial Bachao Poster, Case Study of Khem Villas Eco-Resort, a writing book & pen. Majority of the indoor sessions of the course were conducted in the conference hall of the Tiger Moon Resort (Sherpur-Khiljipur Village).

The course schedule was hectic and the curriculum packed with presentations, field visits, discussions and films. The course covered topics such as community development, Tiger Profiling, role of youth in conservation, media and conservation, anti-poaching training, conservation outside protected areas, use of the Wildlife (Protection) Act and RTI, urban biodiversity, religion & conservation, problems of conservation in & around Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, networking between NGOs & Government (Forest/Police) Departments, besides group presentation by participants. Three films, viz. 'Curbing the Crisis', 'The Hunted' and 'Forced to Kill' were also screened. Incidentally, 'Forced to Kill', a film about problems created by displaced animals, was 'premiered' during this course.

Nearly 50% of the course was covered in the form of field trips to schools, hospitals, villages, tribal settlements, forests, rivers, ravines and the local landscape, besides a safari ride inside the Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, to understand the various means to achieve wildlife conservation. During



field visits, participants interacted with local students, farmers, displaced villagers and kids of former poachers. They distributed solar lights to Moghiya (secretive hunting tribe) women, who Tiger Watch is training to develop handicrafts. A special visit to Kailashpuri Village (named after the great tiger conservationist Kailash Sankhala)– a

conglomerate of 6 displaced villages, was organised to witness the pitiable conditions faced by the villagers even after 32yrs of displacement and the problems of living close to a protected forest. The highlight of the course was a 120-km all-night patrol around the periphery of the Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, touching Sawai Mansingh Sanctuary and Kailadevi WLS. The participants witnessed a lot of wildlife during these trips, including owls, hyenas, fox, gazelles, jackals, hedgehogs, jungle cats, and tiger, nearly 60species of birds, snakes, spiders and scorpions.

As a finale to the course, the participants were divided into groups and given conservation related topics to give short presentations, so as to generate discussions and extend their thinking. Lot of reference material from various organisations (Zoo Outreach Organization, WWF-India, Tarun Bharat Sangh, Supreme Court Verdicts, JFM, FES, CERE, Ranthambore Foundation, et. al) was provided to the participants. Zoo-based and conservation via captive breeding generated the maximum discussion and a lot of convincing seemed necessary.

The valedictory function involved a public debate with Mr. Fateh Singh Rathore, Mr. John Singh, Ms. Madhu Bhatnagar, Dr. Govardhan Singh Rathore and Jay Mazoomdaar, moderated by the course director, Dr. Dharmendra Khandal and course co-ordinator, Anand Pendharkar. The participants received their certificates from Mr. John Singh.

The feedback from the participants was encouraging and the alumni have already planned a few action projects and surveys together. It just goes to show that, sometimes even a short duration course intended at non-science graduates can generate a powerful thrust, necessary to catapult more people into the field of conservation, along with building networks amongst organisations and like-minded people. **Report by - Pranad Patil, Asst. Trainer (SPROUTS), Mumbai, Maharashtra. Email: pranadpatil@yahoo.co.in**

### **Frogs Matter....Jump In-Amphibian Aark – South Asia Summer Alert Programme in Hyderabad**

Hyderabad was buzzing with celebrations on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2008 the World Environment Day. Major civic bodies of Hyderabad took to utilizing this important day to welcome and to address some serious environmental issues that are plaguing this earth and affecting the very existence of mankind. The onus was on the hot topic global warming and its effects on the biota of this earth. Suggestions were being invited through media and heads of the civic bodies to mitigate these effects. Students were the most enthusiastic lot giving forth numerous suggestions on improving the quality of the environment and of the lives of humans living in it.

In the recent past one as come to witness considerable development in the attitude of the

citizens of Hyderabad towards the environment, in their becoming conscious of rampant tree-felling activities for all round development of the city and to ease traffic woes. We have managed to obtain a stay order to further tree-felling activities.



With this background in mind the Commissioner, Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) has vowed to conduct tree planting to a scale of planting one lakh trees in a span of three months.



The Commissioner then commenced to begin this activity on the Osmania University Campus with the help of the Vice-Chancellor of the Osmania University on the World Environment Day.

The GHMC had commissioned the Buddha Purnima Project Authority (BPPA) to develop the Hussain Sagar environs in the heart of the city. They have been successful in developing the area into a major tourist attraction with three major gardens, eateries, and other spots, in general a haven for the people of Hyderabad.

The BPPA joined hands with Centre for Environment Education, Hyderabad (CEE) to conduct a one-day awareness programme, complete with discussions, to various competitions to extract as many ideas from the children, on the World Environment Day – June 5, 2008 highlighting the ill-effects of the poisonous gases emitted from various sources especially vehicular



pollution, global warming and invited suggestions to mitigate this process. Students of different schools participated in this programme.

To this programme we were invited to deliver a talk on amphibians. The day began with unveiling a poster on the birds documented in and around Hussain Sagar by the Vice-Chairman, BPPA. Later, hour long deliberations about the hot topic that is being discussed in every forum, global warming and its ill-effects and steps to mitigate its effects proceeded to an interesting dialogue between the



participants and the organizers. After the conclusion of which, the kids participated in painting competition with the theme 'global warming - how to save Hyderabad'. Each one expressed their views in a myriad of colours, judging which might have been an arduous task for the organizers. They then proceeded to the food court to quench their voracious appetite of hunger and many ideas that dwell in their minds.

The Amphibian Ark programme commenced after the lunch session. A small talk on amphibians, their kinds, their numbers world-wide and in India and how various factors like disease, over exploitation, pollution, climate change are affecting their populations world over and how many species are being driven to extinction, to an audience of 20-25 children of different age-groups was delivered. We highlighted the point that we need to take a cue from the effects of these factors on amphibians, take it as a wake up call and put in efforts to better our environment and



not to degrade it further. The education packets and Amphibian Ark t-shirts were distributed to the participants. The participants were given 20 minute time to read through the education material and then the second half of the programme was commenced. It began with tying of the friendship band to each other and taking of oath to know more and change their attitude towards amphibians. Donned with the amphibian masks participants were educated with the effects of habitat fragmentation and habitat loss through education game. We then conducted the frog-hop activity wherein the kids were asked to croak and hop like frogs and to kiss a stuffed toy frog. The participants and their parents sure had loads of fun and were thrilled to get these education material. The Amphibian Ark programme ended with the distribution of the bookmark and sticker to the participants.

We thank ZOO and ANSA, Coimbatore for encouragements and supply of education packets and t-shirts, Dr. C. Srinivasulu, Assistant Professor, Osmania University for guidance and presentation and CEE, Hyderabad Chapter and BPPA, Hyderabad for collaboration in conducting this programme.

**Submitted by: Bhargavi Srinivasulu, M. Seetha Ramaraju & C. Aditya Srinivasulu, Biodiversity Research and Conservation Society (BRaConS), G4, MRK Towers, Swarnadhama Nagar, Near Military Dairy Farm, Old Bowenpally Secunderabad, Andhra Pradesh - 500 007. Email: hyd2masawa@gmail.com**

### **Amphibian Ark - a diiferent approach**

WildGoa, an NGO which focuses on the wildlife of Goa, has rocked the frog world with its campaign to eradicate killing of frogs for food - human food. This is not so much of a problem in India, where frogs are not a flavour of the week, except in five star restaurants and in very remote and fauna impoverished areas. It could be a problem in other parts of the world, but many countries whose denizens find frogs something good to eat have sustainable ways of providing them, such as frog farming, etc. This is not the case in Goa where there is a high non-Indian population patronizing local restaurants and a healthy (unhealthy for frogs) demand for frogs on the menu.

The WildGoa amphibian campaign began in April of this year with informal meetings to discuss amphibian decline. Apparently one of the reasons for decline in the Goa area was thought to be capture for food. The leaders of the groups Clinton Vaz and Aaron pereira began compiling the names of restaurants which serve frog meat and soon had a list of 14 restaurants in Goa. They met with the Forest Department officials who were cooperative and said they would take action on the issue of restaurants illegally catching, killing and serving frogs. WildGoa made it easier by writing an official letter listing the 14 restaurants and requesting action. The also requested the Forest Department to educate people by distributing poster and newspaper ads and form frog rescue squads during early monsoon when

hunting is heavy. In Goa, since the law protecting amphibians came out (1985) there has been no conviction for catching frogs.

That situation changed almost over night after WildGoa and policy joined forces. As of a couple of days ago 9 people have been convicted and a few more convictions are expected. Local newspaper as well as *Times of India* carried reports of this campaign working, that people were being arrested. The consequences of catching an endangered species are dire ...if convicted for catching, killing, serving or eating frogs, a person could be fined Rs. 25,000 and imprisonment up to 3 years.

WildGoa is also strengthening awareness activities so that the public will know to join in the campaign against frogs as food. They write articles about frogs and run awareness campaigns in local media, particularly on WED. ZOO has provided some materials to use as prizes for these local competitions. Soon WildGoa will have stopped the practice of serving endangered species of frogs in restaurants. Next we hope they will take up a long term project of habitat restoration and habitat protection. Over all habitat destruction is one of the primary causes of amphibian decline and extinction. There's a lifetime project for all the dedicated folks in WildGoa.

For more information about WildGoa you can contact: Clinton Vaz, WildGoa Moderator, Videnda Sao Paulo, Opp: Kala Academy, Campal, Panjim, Goa. Email: [klintvaz@gmail.com](mailto:klintvaz@gmail.com). **Submitted by S. Walker, Editor, taken from emails from Clinton Vaz**

### **World Environment Day 2008 and South Asian Amphibian Ark Summer Alert Programme**

ZOO and the Coimbatore Municipal Corporation celebrated the World Environment Day 2008 at V.O.C. Mini Zoo, Coimbatore that was planned in combination with South Asian Amphibian Ark (SA Ark) summer Alert programme. The two hour programme was attended by selected 19 students of age 13-14, two teachers from the Corporation High School, Anupparpalayam and a volunteer. The objective of the programme was to inform the students about the importance of June 5<sup>th</sup> and to teach them about the need for species conservation keeping amphibians as example.

The students on reaching the venue were allowed to make a free visit to the zoo. The entire two hour programme was

planned as an open air session with an intention that interested zoo visitors can also listen to the content of the programme. To begin with, the Zoo Director gave an



introduction about World Environment Day and the objectives of the programme. He also introduced the organisations involved in this programme namely, ZOO, Coimbatore Municipal Corporation and the Amphibian Ark. After the introduction and welcome the first author gave an overview about the World Environment Day celebration. During his talk he narrated the history of the WED and how it is celebrated worldwide. He introduced the WED slogan for this year '**Kick the Habit! Towards a low carbon economy**'. He pointed out that World Environment Day this year would highlight resources and initiatives that promote low carbon economies and life-styles, such as improved energy efficiency, alternative energy sources, forest conservation and eco-friendly consumption. They were informed about United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) twelve steps to help kick the Carbon dioxide habit and 80 ways to celebrate (WED Alphabet). The list starts with 'Adopt a green way of life' and ends in 'Zero emissions'. Environment Education in schools, plant a tree, never litter, rainwater harvesting, Youth-led activities are some of those mentioned in the 80 ways that can be carried out by students. It was ensured that the day's programme is in line with UNEP's way.



ZOO had developed amphibian bookmark as part of the activity of AArk summer alert. With an effort to



introduce amphibians to the students a book mark containing illustrated amphibian information was distributed to all the students. The colourful book mark with a sticker attached to it helped the students to learn about three major groups of amphibians know to human. Through discussion we understood that the students were aware of frogs and toads but not much about salamanders, caecilians and the associated amphibian crisis that they are facing. Then they were asked to go over through the book mark by reading the text "Learn about Amphibians" and the drawings. Two students



were asked to read the text loudly and other students listened. Through this they understood some facts about amphibians and it led to the next programme using "Frogs Rock" on the Amphibian Ark education packets.

In continuation with the basic information about amphibians, each student was issued an education packet. They explored the contents of the packet and expressed happiness to see the items such as booklet on amphibians, a poster, a mask, a placard, a sticker and *rakhi*. The third author took his turn to do activities with the "Frogs Matter" packet. He explained how all the life forms are interlinked in this functioning of the ecosystem and what will happen if this chain is broken. He explained to them through a Tamil Folk song. He explained that amphibians are one of the species that is facing a problem. A story was also narrated to make them understand what will happen if the environment is altered intentionally.



Then the students were asked to go through the illustrations and the text given in the book booklet. The three groups of amphibians: frogs and toads, newts & salamander and caecilians (limbless amphibians) were explained to them. They identified the group using the illustrations given in the booklet. They also learned about different kinds of Amphibians that exist in South Asia. They were told that South Asia is the home for 350 kinds



of amphibians. They also learned to use the words 'endemic' and 'non-endemic'. It was well understood that 285 species occur in South Asia and they are "endemic" to South Asia while 65 are found in countries other than South Asia as well and so they are 'non-endemic'. Then the present status of these 350 amphibians was explained.

There was nothing much to contribute by the students when they were asked why do frogs matter so much? We gave the entire good things amphibians do and why should we worry about frogs. Aspects on evolutionary history of amphibians, and the present threats faced by amphibians such as habitat loss, increases in UV radiation, climate change were explained to them.

The news about frogs being killed due to the fungal disease 'Chytrid' was a new information for the students. They were made clear that chytrid has not been discovered in South Asia, but that does not mean it can not occur in this region in the future.

To be realistic, as a student, contributing to amphibian conservation needs proper guidance. They were explained that the best contribution at this age for species conservation is to learn more about wildlife, conservation issues and problems and to spread the message what they learned out of this programme to their family members, friends at the school and with the neighbourhoods.

As a traditional practice, for any zoo education programme we ask the participants to do some commitments and to contribute to wildlife conservation by doing some action. It is usually done by tying Rakhi (friendship band), wearing a mask and holding the placard. The volunteer T. Sumita led the group to do a pledge and to help amphibians survive. The pledge taken by the students was witnessed by a large gathering of zoo visitors.

Then a game "Snakes and Frogs" was planned which is a modification of the game "Hawk and Pigeon". The students were divided into five groups. Each group had a snake, one mum frog, dad frog and baby frog. The three frogs joined hands and made a circle and the mum and dad frog had to save the child frog from the snake. Spreading the message what they learned is the immediate task of the students. To practice this, the students were given a chance to go around the zoo carrying the placard and meet the visitors and to talk to them about the amphibian crisis. This gave them good confidence

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for them to teach others about amphibians. The entire group signed on the amphibian petition along with their teachers.

We would like to thank the Corporation Education Officer for permitting the students to attend this programme, and the accompanied school teachers, T. Sumitha who volunteered her time and the zoo staff for arranging refreshment after the programme. **Submitted by R. Marimuthu, S. Thirukumaran and B.A. Daniel. Email: marimuthu@zooreach.org and badaniel@zooreach.org**

### **WORLD ENVIRONMENTAL DAY CELEBRATIONS AT INDIRA GANDHI ZOOLOGICAL PARK, VISAKHAPATNAM**

On the eve of World Environment Day, about 40 school children of primary and secondary grade were invited to Indira Gandhi Zoological Park, Visakhapatnam. After distributing the educational kits provided by Zoo Outreach Organization on "Learn about Amphibians" theme, a rakhi tying ceremony followed by a small rally was organized in the zoo park. Students displayed placards and raised slogans saying, "We love amphibians", "Save our frogs". Later, the students were taught basic facts about amphibians, their status, threats and the importance of protecting our amphibians by the zoo biologist. A quiz program was organized to know what they have learnt out of the awareness programme. T-shirts were given as prizes to the winners.



Petition forms to save frogs were distributed to the students, teachers and the public and they were encouraged to gather signatures for amphibian conservation. Doubts raised by the students regarding amphibians in general were clarified by the resource persons from local University (Andhra University) and the programme ended successfully. We wish to express out heartfelt gratitude to ZOO, Coimbatore amphibian ark and all other international conservation agencies for providing us very informative educational kits and attractive T-shirts to organize the event. **Submitted by: Rahul Pandey, IFS, Curator, Indira Gandhi Zoological Park, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. Email: rahulp1974@yahoo.co.in**

### **'SPROUTS goes 'Green' on Railway Stations on WED 2008**

SPROUTS has designated 2008 to focus on Urban Biodiversity and their this year's WED celebrations too correlated that with UN's 2008 theme 'Kick the Habit! Towards a Low Carbon Economy'. Along with

the Amphibians Ark and ANSA-ZOO Signature Campaign to protect frogs and other amphibians all over the world, SPROUTS started two other signature campaigns - 'Put the Trees back on the Streets' and 'Save the Vultures' to enrich the environment of the city.

On the occasion of the World Environment Day 2008, SPROUTS

wished over 5-6000 railway commuters a 'Happy World Environment Day' at Byculla, Andheri and Borivali stations.



Twenty-four volunteers aged between 3-50yrs displayed colourful printed and hand-painted posters to spread awareness about Mumbai's wildlife diversity and the changing environment and to suggest citizens' ways to reduce their carbon emissions. The pictorial posters attracted the attention of the rushing Mumbaites and it was really surprising that a lot of educated people too were unaware of the purpose of the day. Since our railway stations see a high influx between 7-9am, the team unanimously decided on a mass interaction with the thousands of office-goers, in that time slot. The signature campaigns were a little slow at the outset, but eventually caught up speed, with volunteers getting around 300 signatures on the ANSA/ZOO and SPROUTS' forms from convinced railway police staff, porters, vegetable vendors, white collars and collegiates.

All the three railway stations (Borivali, Andheri and Byculla) were abuzz with our energetic volunteers (including a few play or pre-school kids) running around pleading, requesting and urging the already over rushed crowd for signatures, besides simply wishing them, explaining the posters and sharing information on bats/rats, snakes, birds, butterflies, marine life and fish life found within Mumbai city.

The information on regeneration of vultures and indigenous flora of Mumbai and other creatures created immense curiosity and response among commuters. While some enthusiastically came forward to sign, some were simply complacent and a few totally ignorant, turning a deaf ear, to their own survival needs. **Submitted by: Pranad Patil, Asst. Trainer, SPROUTS, 68/4 Tarun Bharat Society, Chakala, Sahar Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai - 400 099, Maharashtra. Email: pranadpatil@yahoo.co.in**

