

Education reports

Wildlife week celebration in Bunelkhand Region, India

Wildlife week (1-7 October) was first started in the year 1952 by Indian Board for Wildlife with the great vision of saving the life of the Indian animals by taking some critical steps. It involves planning to save extinction of any animal species of India and to create awareness as well as the consciousness of people towards the wildlife protection. Every year several conferences, awareness programmes, public meetings, workshops are held to celebrate this mega event.

Schools and institutions create wildlife awareness for their students through the wildlife related movie screening, essay and painting competitions, debate and many more. But these get confined to urban regions and people more close to natural biodiversity are left unaware. The focus of Indian Biodiversity



Students being updated about State Bird of Uttar Pradesh-Sarus Crane

Conservation Society (IBCS) are the rural regions that are more close to wildlife. The schools in rural region were involved in wildlife week celebration. The school with no facility of electricity and projectors were shown wildlife clips in groups of 15 students during the entire week. The children learnt a lot and had a wonderful experience of wildlife around them. Simple art competitions were organized for them with the motive to make them ponder and reflect on the vast diversity around them. The topics were selected according to class groups and they wrote short poems and painted on their favourite tree, flower or



A student drawing and writing poem on her favourite bird



Volunteer distributing awareness material to students

animal. The students planted native flowering plants in their school campus. Plantation in every event is the motto of IBCS. As a token of appreciation books on State Animals of India, State Birds of India, State Flowers of India and State Trees of India were given. The IBCS team gave them important information about the State Symbols (flower, tree, bird, animal and fish) of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Principal and teachers (Shri Virendra Sharma, Jyoti Kushwaha, Devendra Kumar, Anamika, Gulzari Kushwaha, Sumita Kamal, Sachin K Maheshwari, Sahib Singh, Ram Kishan Ahirwar, Rohit Yadav, Neha Shukla and Priyadarshani) of various schools agreed to become a part of *Prakriti Rakshak* Programme (Nature Custodian Programme) started by Indian Biodiversity Conservation Society during the wildlife week 2016. The programme involves all year round activities for the students of schools and colleges to play their role in nature conservation. Volunteers (Saleem, Abhishek, Shivam, Daya Sagar, Aman, Ayush, Asif) interacted with the students and explained them the contents of flyers and pamphlets. Besides this the press media co-operated and helped in spreading the message to wider audience.

Submitted by Sonika Kushwaha, Indian Biodiversity Conservation Society. Email: ibcsforall@gmail.com

Workshop on International Vulture Awareness Day at Kota, Rajasthan

A one-day workshop was held on 3 September 2016 in order to observe IVAD and it was organised by Society for Conservation of Historical and Environmental Resources (SCHER) in collaboration with MB PG College and Zoo Outreach Organization, Coimbatore. The workshop divided into two sessions viz., classroom and field visit. The classroom session was held at the college and for field visit the students were taken to Gaperath Valley for vulture sightings to highlight them about vulture conservation and awareness among youngsters.

Head of the Department, Department of Botany, inaugurated the event and Chandra Mohan Nagar welcomed the participants. Kiran Choudhary spoke about vulture conservation. Kiran said that once vultures were very common in our area but now the



Long-billed vulture sighting

population of vulture has declined due to habitat loss, usage of veterinary medicine diclofenac and its effect and environmental pressure etc.

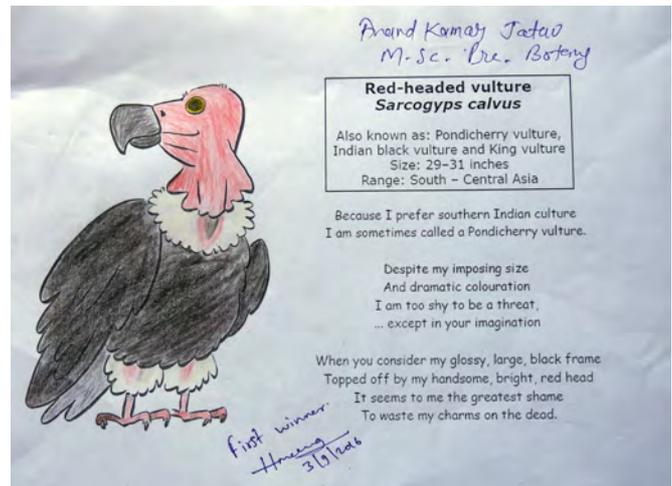
The second author gave more information related to vultures. He said that vultures provide a range of ecological, economic and cultural services. Vultures are the only documented obligate scavengers and they are uniquely adapted to a scavenging lifestyle. Vultures are the major scavenger in India; they play an important role in keeping the environment clean by scavenging on animal carcasses, municipal dumps and thus checking the outbreaks of endemic diseases. Vultures are classified in two groups as Old World and New World vultures. All over the world there are 23 species of vultures, of these nine species are found in India. Out of nine vulture species, six has been facing problem of existence and therefore declared as Threatened. Of these, three species are endemic to south Asia viz., the White-backed vulture, Long-billed vulture and Slender-billed vulture are at high risk of global extinction and are listed as Critically Endangered because of rapid population decline in the Subcontinent. Slender-billed Vulture is the most Critically Endangered vulture in the world. In Rajasthan seven species of vultures are found viz. Long-billed vulture, White-backed vulture, Red headed vulture/ King Vulture, Egyptian vulture, Himalayan griffon, Eurasian griffon and Cinereous vulture.



Drawing competition

The first author, the organiser of the programme talked about vulture distribution in Rajasthan, seven species found in Kota district. He also shared his vulture research in Kota, district. He described main factors responsible for the vulture population decline such as poisoning, habitat loss, pesticide intoxication, calcium deficiency, infectious disease or a viral disease. Finally he made the students to understand that if vultures extinct from the world then many diseases affect human health. The Chambal valley consider as largest breeding colony of Long-billed vulture of South-East Asia. So organisers chosen Chambal valley for field visit. During the field visit total 19 vulture were sighted at Gapernath valley, out of which 17 were Long-billed and 2 vulture were Egyptian.

The students were explained about Zoo Outreach Organisation's vulture education kits. Then drawing competition was conducted. Fifty-six students of UG and PG and three staff of college and five members of SCHER, Kota participated in the lecture and field session. So overall 64 people involved in this awareness workshop. Organisers select from ZOO's



Winner of the drawing competition

vulture flash cards the seven species of vultures are found in Kota were photocopied and given to the students for colouring. The drawing made by students was very beautiful and three best drawings were chosen and winners awarded with prizes.

A short open Quiz was conducted by the organisers after the drawing competition in the field. In the open Quiz basic questions were asked to participants. Thanks a lot for Zoo Outreach Organization, Coimbatore for providing vulture education kit soft copies and MB PG College for support. **Submitted by Hari Mohan Meena, Krishnendra Singh Nama and Kiran Choudhary. Email: hari.arcw@gmail.com**