Education Reports

International Vulture Awareness Day celebration, Udhagamandalam Arts College, TN
On 5 Sep. 2015, International Vulture Awareness Day was celebrated at Government Arts College, Udhagamandalam, highlighting the need for vulture conservation. Mr. Malliga, Principal (IC), inaugurated the event followed by Dr. B. Ramakrishnan with welcome address. A movie "The Vanishing Vultures" was screened to create interest among the students to understand the present conservation issues on vulture conservation. This was followed by series of lectures by the department staff. Dr. J. Ebinasar, Professor and Head of the Department delivered a lecture on "vultures and the ecosystem". He said that the vulture are the largest scavenging birds in the world, it is doing sanitary work in the forest ecosystem and without vulture the ecosystem would be incomplete and collapse.

Dr. A. Veeramani talked about the "Distribution of vultures in Indian sub-continent". He told that a total of 22 vulture species are found throughout the world, they are classified into two big groups based on after and before the continental drift viz Old world vultures (7 species) New world vultures (15 species). India has 9 species of vultures which are generally found in the north India than other parts of India.

Dr. B. Ramakrishnan gave a slide show on "Vultures and Diclofenac (NSAID)". He said that in 1980 and 1990 vultures are the largest scavenging birds that were present in high density in India compared to other countries. After 1990, a sudden decline of vulture population was reported. Diclofenac (NSAID) is a widely used veterinary drug (Painkiller) treated for sick and injured livestock, has a crucial role in the declining of the vulture population. Ninety percent of vulture population was wiped out because of the Diclofenac drug and White-rumped vulture, Long-billed vulture and Slender-billed vulture population was severely affected by this drug. For this reason Government of India banned the Diclofenac drug in veterinary use in 2006. Now the vulture conservation is moving up to captive breeding programme initiated by BNHS.

Dr. P. Kannan delivered a lecture on "Vultures and Captive breeding programme". He said that vulture captive breeding programme was initiated to improve and increase the vulture population and to reintroduce them back to the wild. Bombay Natural History Society with support of few other international agencies and Govt. of India, initially started captive breeding programmes and it is successfully going on. Few Indian zoos also initiated vulture-breeding programmes. In captive breeding programme, vultures are kept in a spacious enclosure with all the necessary enrichment with proper healthy diet. During breeding season the eggs are collected from the nest and kept in incubator for hatching with utmost care.

Mr. A. Samson, Research Scholar delivered a talk on "Status, distribution and conservation problems of vultures in Tamil Nadu part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, Western Ghats, and Southern India". He said that a total of four species of vultures are
present in the Tamil Nadu part of the NBR of which White-rumped vulture, Long-billed vulture, Red-headed vulture and migratory Egyptian vulture. The vulture population spreads out in Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, Nilgiri North Forest Division and Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve. The nesting habitat was recorded in the Segur plateau region for White-rumped and Long-billed vulture. Lots of issues are threatening the vulture population in this region and they are deliberate poisoning, habitat loss, pilgrim’s movement, local people threat, and Diclofenac (NSAID). He made the students to realize that if vultures are extinct from the world then many diseases would affect human health and proper vulture conservation programmes are needed to ensure their future.

At the end, Dr. H. Moghanakrishnan gave Vote of thanks. Then a vulture drawing competition was conducted. Forty students of B.Sc, M.Sc and Research Scholars participated. The drawing made by the students was very colorful and nine best drawings were chosen and winners were awarded with prizes. Submitted by: Arockianathan & Ramakrishnan, Government Arts College, Udhagamandalam. Email: kingvulture1786@gmail.com

Wildlife Conservation Awareness Week celebrated at Tata Steel Zoological Park
The Celebration commenced on 10 November, 2015 at the Tata Steel Zoological Park after the formal inauguration by Chief Guest S.N. Keolyar, I.F.S. – Regional Chief Conservator of Forests, Singhbhum, in the presence of Guest of Honour Rishad M Chinoy – Secretary, Tata Steel Zoological Society. The Chief Guest, presented the Best Eco Club Teacher Award 2014-15 to the Winner Shibani Singh from Motial Nehru Public School, Jamshedpur. The Runners-Up award went to Mrs. Soma Banerjee from JUSCO School South Park and the Special Recommendation Award went to Mr. Sheo Nath Choudhary from NTTF RD Tata Technical Education Centre.

On the second day, a workshop was organized for differently-abled children of Special School of Joy and under privileged children of a local NGO “Sanskriti’. The workshop involved children, their teachers and guardians making different kinds of articles using soil, such as, flowerpots, diyas etc. Mrs. Ruchi Bansal, founder of Unnati Art & Craft taught the children to make these easy items, which the children enjoyed. A total of 30 students from Special School
of Joy and 5 students from local NGO "Sanskrit" participated in the workshop.

On the third day, the Debate Competitions in Hindi and in English were organized during which Harshita Singh from RVS Academy emerged Winner in the Hindi Category and Swayam Prodipto Banerjee from Loyola School was the Winner in the English Category. The event was sponsored by Inner Wheel Club of Jamshedpur, ZEST and the prizes were presented by Chief Guest Aruna Taneja - District Chairman, Inner Wheel Club, Sweta Agarwal Debuka - President, Inner Wheel Club of Jamshedpur ZEST and Bipul Chakrabarty- Director, Tata Steel Zoological Park.

The topics of the debate in which the students had to speak either for or against in Hindi and English were “खेती के परंपरागत तरीकों की तुलना में आधुनिक तकनीक व अनुपजाऊपन को बढ़ाने का प्रभाव” and “Modern technology leads to infertility and degradation of soil as compared to traditional methods of cultivation” respectively. A total of 36 students participated in the competition and the judges for the competition were Mr. Swaroop Chakravorty and Ms. Ritu Shukla. On the penultimate day, a Fancy Dress Competition for children was organized. Shreyasi Bakhla was declared the winner in the Junior Category (Nursery & Lower KG) and Ayesha Khatoon was the winner in the Senior Category (Upper KG & Std 1). Both are students from RVS Academy. Lions Club of Jamshedpur Steel City sponsored the event. The Chief Guest for the programme was Mr. Rajnish Kumar, First Vice District Governor, Lions Club International.

On the final day, an On-The-Spot Painting Competition was organized in association with Off The Wall Art Gallery. A total of 182 students from 27 schools participated in the competition, which was followed by the Closing Ceremony during which Chief Guest Saba Alam Ansari - Divisional Forest Officer, Jamshedpur presented awards to the winners of the On The Spot Painting Competition.

The winners in these categories were Shubham Kumar Rai of AIWC Academy Baridih (Primary Category), Medha Bharati of DAV NIT Campus, Adityapur (Junior Category), Trisha Mukherjee of St. Mary’s English High School (Middle Category) and Riya Kumari of SDSM School for Excellence (Senior Category).

A total number of 365 students across 31 institutions participated in these competitions. Submitted by: Ms. Seema Rani, Biologist cum Education Officer. Email: cmrarani00@rediffmail.com

Wildlife Week Celebration at Basinger Garden Matric School, Madurai
Wildlife Week was celebrated at Basinger Garden Matric School, Madurai. Shyla Immanuel, the Administrative Director welcomed the students and introduced the Chief Guest Jesse Jeyakaran. Introductory questions were asked about the wild animals. Some of the students enacted the behaviour of the animals and described the size and shape. The first session was on seeing and hearing the sound in the campus. The participants were divided into 3 groups namely K.G, Std I to V, and Std VI to IX. After observing and identifying the animal
pictures painted on the wall a C.D on wild animals by the Ministry of Environment and Forest, Govt. Of India was played, which was followed by the study of the wild animals alone in their habit. A musical C.D “Give Back our Home” pinned by Jessie Jeyakaran was played and the K.G Students performed a short cultural programme. The second group selected the following 5 animals from the power point presentation mainly elephant, monkey, giraffe, tiger, and bear. The description about each animal given by the students was of great use. The students of this group identify the wild animals in small groups and shared their behaviour. The third group traced the footprints of the selected 5 students. This was followed by a small demonstration with T-shirts bearing the footprints of wild animals by Ms. Childa Ebenezer. Finally the students with the masks of wild animals lying on the ground helped a lot to all the students and teachers to know more about the animals. Ms. Sheeba Charles the Principal in Charge proposed vote of thanks. The entire programme was witnessed by the Seth, Dani Raj. Kj. Submitted by: Sheeba Charles, Email: basingergardens@gmail.com

Nehru Vidhyasalai Hr. Sec. School, Kosakulam, Madurai, TN
On 08 Oct, Wildlife Week was celebrated at Nehru Vidhyasalai Hr. Sec. School. Mrs. Jessie Jeyakaran, Member, ZOO Educators Network and Zoo Climate Change Network, South India, presented an inspiring speech related to wildlife and its conservation. She created awareness on wildlife using placards and stickers. Few children were made to stand on the stage with mask. Monkey Manners – Dos and don’ts and how to behave with elephants were taught. Fifty Eco-club children underwent the training on human animal co-existence. The members of Eco-club read the message to 1925 students and 70 staff members. This was also shared on the next day for all school students. She distributed the translated materials on Do’s and Don’ts with problem monkeys and elephants. The students were given assignment collection of newspaper clippings on wildlife related news. All the drawings sheets were displayed on the notice board. Ms. Jessie Jeyakaran’s programme was very useful to the students and she adopted novel methods to create awareness among our students. Thanks to her and Zoo Outreach Organisation for this valuable programme. Submitted by: Henry Basinger, Correspondent; Kala Henry, Academic Administrator & R. Shalini, Headmistress. Email: nehruidhyasalaihssnarimedu@gmail.com