

Zoos and Wildlife ... Making the News

Sri Lanka's Second National Zoo

Director General of Sri Lanka Zoological Gardens, Bhashwara Senanka Gunarathna recently announced that the first phase of Sri Lanka's second "National Zoo" would be open by April 2012. We met Sri Gunarathna and his attractive wife at the conference of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA). It was our first time meeting him and his first WAZA conference. Gunarathna has many qualities which will be very useful to build up the zoo community in Sri Lanka. He is not a biologist or zooman but he is quickly becoming both while he uses his skills in business management and economics to push the National Zoological Gardens Department into the 21st Century.

The new zoo has been pending for some time. It is conveniently sited nearby the Pinnawela Elephant Orphanage which means that tourists and local visitors both can make a day or a weekend out of their visit and see the two famous attractions. The first stage of the Pinnawela zoo under construction is a 60 million rupee project in a 48-acre land and it will feature only endemic fauna of Sri Lanka and include a special open section displaying the free-roaming Sri Lankan leopard. Only in the second phase of the project will foreign species will be introduced in their own section. The entire facility will occupy 100 acres at a projected 250 million rupees and combined with the Pinnawela Elephant Orphanage it will provide employment to many people living in the area. http://www.colombopage.com/archive_11B/Oct03_1317616681KA.php

MCBT announces Research Fund

In its 35th year of operation, Madras Crocodile Bank Trust/ Centre For Herpetology is proud to announce the initiation of an annual Herpetological Conservation Research Fund of Rs. 25,00,000. Details of the grant program are available at <http://www.madrascrocodilebank.org/cms/mcbtcfh-grant/> Application deadline is 31st October 2011. We look forward to receiving proposals from all over India. Ravi Chellam, Director (Research & Conservation) Madras Crocodile Bank Trust/Centre For Herpetology

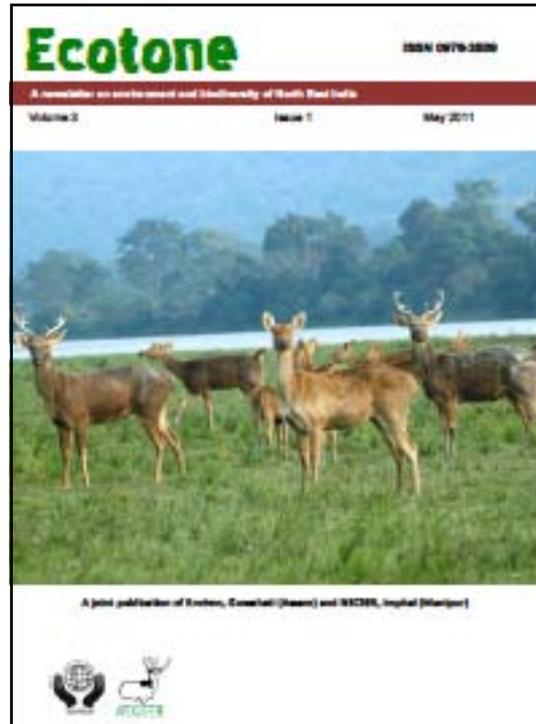
Batting for the bat in Hindu Young World

Archana Subramanian has written a nice article for kids in the Young World of Hindu newspaper published on October 11, 2011. She suggests some "Do's" for kids (big and small) can do to "go to bat for bats" as she says "these nocturnal creatures are much needed not only to sustain our ecosystem but also to ensure that pollination takes place". What you can do (a few suggestions)

- Save forests
- Do not disturb trees, caves, buildings that have bats
- Do not cut trees that have roosts
- Identify bat colonies in your school and observe without disturbing them.
- Observe bats in temples and other sacred places and talk to your friends and relatives appreciating their usefulness.
- Start bat clubs in your school
- Avoid using chemicals in your gardens. Some insecticides may harm bats that naturally get rid of pests, insects that trouble us.

This is the International Year of the Bat, and it is appropriate to get to know these nocturnal creatures. Did

you know that without bats you would have less food on your plate? This is because, bats spread seeds far and wide, resulting in more food and shade. Bats also eat harmful insects and rats thereby reducing vectors that spread these diseases. The Madras Crocodile Bank Trust in Chennai recently organised a bat walk. Wildlife enthusiasts also got to see other reptiles, trees and birds in a 30-minute walk to a village that hosts a banyan tree housing a colony of bats. The walk, undertaken at dusk enabled one to see bats as they were setting out for their hunt. <http://www.thehindu.com/life-and-style/kids/article2292852.ece>



Ecotone - two years old and counting

Ecotone magazine celebrated its 3rd upcoming year recently. If you have not seen this publication please have a look and the staff have done a very good job of collecting articles about wildlife and environment. See contents of current issue below. You may please contact: Kripaljyoti Mazumdar, Editor-in-chief or Khuraijam Jibankumar Singh, Mg Editor - email: ecotone.editor@mail.com

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