

55th Wildlife Week & Other Reports

Observation of 55th Wildlife Week by APOWA

Like every year, during 1 to 7 October, Action for Protection of Wild Animals (APOWA) celebrated Wildlife Week with different activities through a weeklong programme. This year the focus was on rural villages and schools. Students, teachers and community actively participated throughout the week. Following is a brief outline of the 55 Wildlife Week Celebrations, 2009.



1 October --The inauguration programme was started with a drawing competition for 28 children from Hatapatana village on this day. Three prizes were awarded for the best paintings. The children were given the Daily life Wildlife conservation & Welfare packets provided by Zoo Outreach Organisation. An exclusive programme on 'All frogs are amphibians, but all amphibians are not frogs!' was organised for 31 students in the afternoon session. The neglected amphibians play an important role to maintain the eco-system. Students were given information on amphibian conservation and how to protect them. We gave them frog masks, stickers, placards, and textual materials.

2 October-- On the second day of wildlife week observation, APOWA was organized a cycle rally campaign for wildlife conservation. More than 300 children and teachers from various schools were participated and covered 15 villages in a daylong programme. Posters and leaflets were distributed to the community.

3 October-- Third day celebration was the wildlife education programme for the students of Venkateswar English medium school, Pattamundai. Mr .Manamohan Kudu, Education Officer, APOWA delivered educational lecturer to the students on conservation of bats. BATCOUNT (material provided by ZOO) contest was organised for students. Students were given an orientation about the type

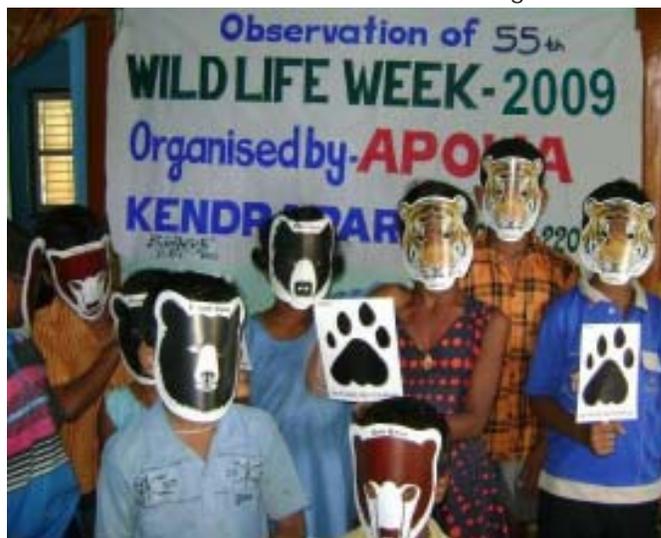
of forests and its importance for different floral and faunal diversity. There were total of 62 students participated in the programme.

4 October-- A quiz contest was held for high school students. A total of 48 students representing 8 different schools participated. The participants were given a questionnaire to answer. The questions were based on the wildlife. The top three scorers were awarded with prizes and certificates. The daylong programme ended with a film show.

5 October-- A poster exhibition was organized with the educational materials provided by Zoo Outreach Organisation. More than four hundred children and peoples of the nearby schools and villages were visited the exhibition. The exhibition was open to the general public and children from nearby schools were invited to participate in this programme.

6 October-- A total of 34 children were invited from various schools to conduct the educational activities using the various materials of ZOO. *Rakhi* -tying ceremony with participants was very much appreciated. Then a drama using masks also was another interesting item welcomed by participants. By these activities awareness of wildlife and their importance for ecosystem was enhanced.

7 October --Climate Change and YOU! The 'Living with Climate change' packet of booklet, games, and masks were used in programme with children. The activity was organized for 25 students from different schools. This activity helped participants to understand of Climate Change and the need for attitudinal and behavioral change. The programme ended with a film show on climate change.



Acknowledgements: This Wildlife Week observation was so successful and colorful because of the various educational materials provided by Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore. We used

the materials to teach students and community. Immense thanks are also to participated schools, institutes. We are thankful to our volunteers, members and staff. **Submitted by: Bijaya Kumar Kabi, APOWA, Orissa. Email: mail@apowa.org**

Climate Change programme -Wildlife Week 2009

The Conservation of Nature Society and the Dolphin Protection Committee, Kozhikode organised the Wildlife week from 2 - 8 October in the city and Wayanad area in a vast manner.

The Society Secretary Sri. Ashok Putiyan inaugurated the weeks programme with handing over the Amphibian Poster to the Vice-President of the society Sri. Suresh in the Society's office on 2nd October 2009.

On the 3 October the Monkey manners programme was held in the Thamarassery Ghats (Wayanad). The shocking scene of a white monkey being killed was photographed by us during wildlife week.



The participants reminded Francis (Asisi) the day when this day was started in the year of 1931 as the World Animal day (04.10.2009).

A Field programme was held on 4 October on AMPHIBIANS being the International Animal Day and Elephant programme being the day was celebrated as Elephant Day 2009. The participants re-called the day as the most torturing taking place to the captive elephants as the festival season had started in the state and Karnataka.

On 5 & 6 October programme was held 'Living with Climate Change' for school students & teachers as per the guidelines. 20 students were interviewed in the school.

On 7 October a programme was held on the threat faced by wild animals due to over speeding of vehicles in the highway 212 in Bandipur Tiger Reserve area.

The participants informed full support to the decisions to close the highway in the night time. Nearly 200 wild animals had died recently there as per records alone.

They also welcomed the decision to close the roads in the Mudumalai Sanctuary. A demand also came that the roads in the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary also should be closed in the night for the safety of the wild animals roaming on the road. The

Conservation of Nature Society had earlier demanded the same.

In all the programmes the participants appreciated the society's role in the feast (photo attached) stoppage of the Monkey feeding during Onam in the Tamarassery Ghats. The materials of the Zoo of the 'Monkey Manners' did a great contribution opinioned many especially the Leaflets.

Some of the students also requested an enquiry into the recent death of a Giraffe & the serious injury to a Leopard into the leading zoo in the state in the capital city. Such incidents are condemnable opinioned many. Participants also said that the decision to take action in a Seoul zoo where an Elephant pelted stoned at a vision was also a matter of condemnable. They have approached the World Wild Fund for Nature (International) WWF. On this issue and have requested us to interfere on this matter.

Many zoo's at international level still have to improve a lot said some participants and the Seoul Zoo incidents is an example on cruelties in Zoo's where the authorities were enquiring into a doubt about an Elephant pelting stones against a visitor.

The participants also suggested the help of NGO's at International level for the protection of Gorillas and Orangutan. They produced the photo of a Orangutanus of Indonesia. Attempts would be made by some participants to donate some money to buy specialist medicine for Orangutans through International animal rescue. Due to the unexpected heavy rains the out door programmes had to be shifted to indoor programmes especially the Amphibian programme on the 2nd October. The participants told the society of the AMPHIBIANS are now missing even in the heaviest rains now in the villages. We had to construct an artificial image for awareness.

Also on the 5 October 2009 a programme was held on turtles, the turtles being the habitants on Earth millions of years ago itself. Many nesting areas of turtles have been destroyed recently and their eggs are been destroyed by the people, dogs and crows in many a places opinioned some especially in places like Payyoli beach in Calicut Dist (Kottakkal).

The Climate change materials were used for the Panniyankara (model) high School students in Calicut as per guidelines.

The programme was used on 8-10-2009 also the day were we had arranged some wildlife programme. The effect the climate change had on wildlife especially Elephant & Amphibians were discussed.

The story had a good effect on the students. They were English speaking. Many students had heard

the word 'CLIMATE CHANGE' but not many who after the programme understood some teachers had also participated in the programme.

Surprisingly the students were more anxious about the story 'climate change' and they understood the same and asked many questions than the teachers. Some girls students gave full right answers to the questionnaire after the survey.

The boys were more interested in mobile phones, Luxury cars and bikes and not bothered about climate change but the girl students opinioned they want to prevent and do something towards the climate change. The survey-study relieved such an interesting factor.

Some students opinioned that, the felling of trees effect the 'Climate' very much many times by the authorities itself. The participants thanked ZOO, WILD & all the sponsors for the materials. The Kerala Forest Department during the Wildlife week informed that due to the continuous awareness conducted by the society with Zoo materials they are planning to put up huge boards in the Thamarassery Ghats as to stop feeding of monkeys. **Submitted by Mr. Vinod Kumar Damodar, Joint Secretary, Conservation of Nature Society, Calicut, Kerala.**

Madras Crocodile Bank celebrates Wildlife Week Madras Crocodile Bank Trust celebrated wildlife week from 1 to 7 October, 2009. In line with the philosophy that children will act as the torch bearers for the cause of conservation and preservation, children below 10 years of age were given free entry to Croc bank during this week. Half day camps, drawing competition and craft competitions were held.



The Amphibian packets designed and produced by *Zoo Outreach Organization* were used for the activities during the program. The amphibian packet included a mask, Rakhi, placard, sticker and an informative booklet. Amphibian bumper stickers with conservation messages were given to the participants. The

Amphibian coloring books and South Asian bats coloring books were given as prizes for drawing and craft from waste competition.

The children were given a talk about the concept of biodiversity and interdependence. They were then given a talk about different types of amphibians, their importance and threats. A discussion about the threats and how everyone can contribute towards amphibian conservation was done.

As part of the packet activity everyone pledged to save amphibians and to spread the word of protecting all animals. They wore the amphibian mask and a small rakhi tying ceremony was held to symbolize the solidarity of the participants to the cause.

The children were taken on a guided tour and given information about all the reptiles housed at Croc bank.

In December 2007, there was mass die-off of Gharial at the Chambal due to some toxin. The Gharial is now listed as 'Critically endangered' in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. To create awareness about the Gharial crisis, a talk was given to the participants.



Factors like deforestation, urbanization, water pollution, sand mining & climate change and how they are affecting flora and fauna were touched upon during the walk.

To conclude the program the children were allowed to interact with a baby tortoise and a baby turtle, the species ambassadors representing the 2,000 odd animals housed at croc bank. **Submitted by: Akanksha Mukherjee, Education Officer, Madras Crocodile Bank Trust, Madras Email: education.mcbt@gmail.com**

Wildlife Week celebrations by Tamil Nadu Forest Department in Udthagamandalam

Wildlife week was celebrated in Udthagaimandalam on 11th of October 2009. The celebrations started with the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden and Field Director of Mudumalai Tiger Reserve flagging off a rally. The aim of the rally was to create awareness amongst the students and general public about Nilgiris and the importance in protecting the environment. Many students and staff from schools around Nilgiri district participated in the rally carrying slogans highlighting importance of protecting the environment and wildlife. Some students with tiger masks provided by Zoo Outreach Organisation,



uniformed forest guards carrying pro environment placards participated in the rally. A vehicle with photographs of nature, also carrying stuffed animals was a great focus of attention in the rally. Prizes were given to the students who won in competitions held throughout Tamil Nadu. **Submitted by: Dr.V. Dakshinamurthy, WWF-India, W. Ghats Landscape Off. Email: vdakshinamurthy@wwfindia.net**

Pehal Society Wildlife Week programmes in Kerala and Uttar Pradesh

On the first week of October the Pehal Society conducted two Wildlife Week functions; the first took place on the 2 October in Kerala and the second on the 6 October, in Uttar Pradesh. Both were welcomed by local administration and children alike, and were carried out without any problems.

Bulandsher Wildlife Week Function: The children started to arrive at Om Saraswati Vidya Mandir School at around 7.00am, excited about the change to the regular schedule and the new foreign visitor Ms. Laura Slade. Principle Jasma Singh accompanied the children as well as the founder trustee of the Nirbhaya Foundation, Dr Mahendra Singh. The children were also joined by Mr B. P Singh, President of the Pehal Society; local village leaders came to see what it was all about and show their support Jasma Singh as well as many curious local adults and children.

Posters had previously been displayed advertising TIGER awareness and WILDLIFE CONSERVATION and to start the day the children were handed butterfly masks to wear; they all were very happy with their new look and ran around very excited. The children were asked to draw a picture to do with any wildlife that they liked or knew about. A prize of colouring

pens and sweets were given to the best drawings. Pictures varied from tigers and trees to birds and peacocks creatively drawn using the outline of the children's hands as a template. Even the teachers joined in!

The children then performed a play that they had been practising about the circle of life and how all species; flora and fauna alike, including humans, all rely on each other in order to survive. Some very well disguised children dressed up as trees and others as tigers and monkeys. Then there was the evil man in the shape of a pirate who chopped down the trees and everyone suffered.

After the play a few children took it in turn to read out poetry on wildlife. Then followed a small discussion on wildlife in general where the children were given the opportunity to tell us what they knew and ask questions. The reward ceremony came afterwards, where the performing children as well as the competition winners received their prizes. Then all the children were told the importance of not using plastic bags and where possible, use a re-usable bag and were presented with sweets and drinks as well as an Eco-friendly bag to store them in.

Everyone looked very happy with their gifts but more importantly they looked interested. Principle Jasma Singh was very happy with the day and was heard to say to the creators, "When will you be returning?"



Laura Slade, the international volunteer, explained "working with these children has been an inspiration, their enthusiasm for life as well as learning new things is amazing; British children could learn a thing or two from them. I very much hope to continue to be a part of this project".

The project believes that reaching children at a very early age is very important in getting them to understand the importance wildlife conservation and therefore intends to spread the word of wildlife conservation and highlight the impacts of wildlife crime to neighbouring villages and schools and with the

continued help of donators and supporters this remains a very strong possibility.

The children were attentive and very well behaved all day and certainly seemed to enjoy learning about wildlife. All in all, a great success all round!



The event was conducted by Pehal Society in collaboration with Tiger Awareness, UK, Conservation Research Group, Kerala, Tiger Initiative India, Zoo Outreach Organization and Nirbhaya Foundation.

Kerala Wildlife Week Function: Pehal Society had organised second wildlife week function in Pallakk Kerala. The function was preceded over by local administration officers from Department of agriculture, Kerala and Lions Club president.

Despite the heavy rain more than 50 students participated in the function. The event started with the lighting of lamp by Lion's club president and Pehal Society State coordinator.

A presentation was given on different wildlife species found in India which was followed by interaction session with the students. A painting competition was also organised where students were able to express their ideas about wildlife. Prizes were distributed to the winners.

"Students were very enthusiastic about the wildlife, i hope hope next year we shall be able to reach to more people" said P. K. Jayakrishnan, Director, Awareness and Rescue Programme. **Submitted by: Pehal Society, Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh. Email: pehalsociety@gmail.com**

Amphibian programme Arivu Nature School

Arivu -an Education and Culture trust, Mysore, runs a nature school of the same name, on the outskirts of Mysore. 'Arivu', in Kannada mean-learning, realisation. This school is one of the unique schools, for the maximum emphasis is learning in and about nature. The school itself is in a farm.

There were 13 children on 29 August, all aged between 5 to 10 years. The day began with a nature song on the national bird, Peacock. The children were brought outdoors, under the

pagoda, and the session began. They were asked what they saw around them and the list was never ending, the mentioned the trees, the birds, the flowers and the frogs. When asked if they had caught the frogs/toads, everyone said 'yes', but nobody had killed any. They described the skin, colour and the legs of the common toad, they even said, that if you catch a frog its urinates and sometime they let it go. They were told about amphibians, the difference between toad and the frog. Were told how important it is to maintain clean and healthy environment, for frog's food is dependent of healthy flies. The children were given the Amphibian colouring books. The children were told how to use the book, the amphibians and the prey on the facing page. They were given the Amphibian bumper stickers as well. The students, were thrilled and promised to stick it on the bump of their school van. The students, went about colouring the book and at the end of the programme, children caught a toad, and they were encouraged to a look at the toad's legs, the digits on the fore and the hind legs, the colour and the warts on its body. The children were told how the toad breaths through its skin and the importance of the keeping clean water. The children after having a look at the toad let go of it and promised not to harm any amphibian and help them in what ever way possible.



Thanks are due for the Arivu team, the teachers and the children of Arivu, Mysore and of course, the Zoo Outreach organisation, Coimbatore, for the interesting materials. **Submitted by: Tanuja DH, Mysore. Email: tanujadh@gamil.com, tanudh@yahoo.co.in**

Monkey Manners, Human-Elephant Coexistence and Amphibian education programmes

The Rani Meyyammai Girls Higher Secondary School, Chennai: The Rani Meyyammai Girls Higher Secondary School, Chennai has encouraged the students and did the following work of the Bat Conservation programme. They have conducted the drawing competitions on Bat and converted the

charts into placards to be carried out for public awareness. The Eco Task Force students created the public awareness by distributing handmade paper bogs and small cups made from paper pulp. Each student has maintained a separate note book to record their activities. It was so surprised to look into the things they have made to create awareness on environment and biodiversity conservation.



After a gap of 2 months in the month of September one day programme was conducted to Eco task Force children. The educational packets on Know your Monkey Manners were distributed first. On seeing the cover page itself they puffed out with various incidences during which they struggled hard to escape from the monkey. The students observed silently on the pictures of the colour page. It was so interesting to know that few students have experienced the monkeys' chase and the bike also. Pair of students were entrusted to tie up the rakhie, mask, placard and came to understand that they should not feed monkey. From the sticker they came to a conclusion that they must afforest rate certain areas for the monkey's shelter. They identified the trees in the campus were monkey visit regularly. As the school is situated near Adayar Poonga they were able identify easily the types of Langur and Macaque. The students were thrilled to note the terminology as least concern, vulnerable and endangered on the basis of IUCN status. They decided to spread the news to the members of staff during the lunch interval time with the materials supplied by the Zoo and to the entire school in the following days by displaying the

material on the notice board. The do's and don'ts attracted the students very much. They did a role play too.



Elephant etiquette packets were distributed to the rest of the students. Students were motivated by asking simple questions. During the childhood few students were carried on the back of the elephant with the parents and blessed by the elephant. One of the student coined that the disturbance created by herds elephants on the road and in the villages near the hill slope. As they are seeing this in newspaper ad T.V. they showed much interest on

this topic. The booklets in the packets was most informative and useful.

Points to Ponder while visiting zoo or circus, encountering elephant in the city traffic and visiting a temple was very useful. 2 role plays were



enacted on give up your rights ad keep a distance. The teachers encouraged the students and instructed them to participate in the quiz during the Wildlife Week 2009 on this 2 topics.

C.S.I. Rehabilitation Centre, Kodaikannal,

15.09.09: Though the students of C.S.I. Rehabilitation Centre Kodaikanal have seen monkeys and elephants in their places they have not instructed how to behave when the menace comes. On seeing the resource person they recollected the Amphibian Ark training programme which was conducted last year. Recaputulatory questions were asked and they were very much interested in sharing the follow up. Mr. Bobby, the Programme Manager – development welcome the participants. Mr. Kumar, the student representative released the educational packets supplied by Zoo Outreach Organisation. They were very much interested in knowing the appropriate behaviour with the elephants, avoiding confrontations retraining them, annoying them, from tempting them etc., The mask, rakhie and placard they enacted the role play. Miss Malarkodi, the in-charge teacher explained everything in action to the deaf and dump students. The visually impaired students were able to recollect the shape of the elephant what they have prepared with paper pulp last year. As most o the students native places are from near by villages and hillside, they started pouring points regarding the behaviourism near captive elephants. The educational booklet was dealt with page after page and they imitated the various actions of elephants.

Know your Monkey Manners packets were also distributed. As part of eco-club activities last year many of the students have come across the behaviourism of monkeys, but this educational packets guided them indepths how to tackle the situation when monkey attacks and the differences

between the least concern, vulnerable and endangered. The do's and don'ts were enacted by the students.

The next day being the World Ozone Day, the importance of ozone was explained with the chart provided by Ministry of Environment and Forest, Govt. of India. The students have planned to display the material near the campus for public awareness.

C.S.I. Middle Town School, Kodaikanal, 16.09.09

Being the World Ozone Day the training programme was conducted to 10 teachers of C.S.I. Middle Town School, Kodaikanal. As many of them are new to the teaching profession inputs were given on Biodiversity and environment.



Materials supplied by the Zoo Outreach on elephant etiquette, Monkey manner and Amphibian Ark were distributed.

Instructions were given about each packets. Activities

session like sharing, exchange of ideas and role play were carried out on each theme. Each teacher was entrusted with one animal with one activity like recording, observation and sharing who in turn will teach the students in the classes in the next term of this academic year. The drawing books on Amphibian Ark, the Monkey manners and the South Asian Monkey attracted them every much. As they provided information too. The Headmistress Mrs. Miniheka Charles explained about the future plan and proposed vote of thanks. **Submitted by Ms. Jessie Jayakaran, Virugambakkam, Chennai.**

COUNTDOWN 2010 – Save Biodiversity and Human Animal Co-existence

Bell school, Palayamkottai, Tamil Nadu: The 2 days programme on Count Down 2010 – Save Bio Diversity and Human Animal Co-existence was conducted to 80 students and 11 staff members of 5 different schools of Tirunelveli on 5th & 6th of October 2009 at Bell Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Palayamkottai. Prior to this the institution has taken immense steps. The school has formed Eco Task Force by selecting one representative from sections and initiated them to undertake a project on Know your Environment. By this the students were very much aware of the surrounding areas of the school i.e., industry, river, bus stand and the roads. They also prepared a Pie Diagram highlighting such dimensions of the school – play ground, green area and waste land. They tabulated the green area and found out the number of trees, shrubs, herbs and ornamental plants. They surveyed the sources of water and basic amenities in the school campus. They studied the strength of the school from Pre K.G to Std XII and found out that the school consists of 2659 students and 128 staff members. The management also highlighted the CD 2010 in the first term

newsletter of the school in page 1 and 4 making the society to be aware of this programme before a month's time.

The campaign was inaugurated by Mrs. K. Sasikala, the Chief Educational Officer, Tirunelveli. She spoke about the importance of Biodiversity and man's role in disturbing the ecological cycle. With substantial quotes from newspapers she spoke about the disappearance of forest, the global warming and the shortage of natural resources. She also added the endanger species in India and encourage the children to plant more trees and care the earth and its inhabitants. Mrs. Jessie Jayakaran, the Resource person of the 2 days programme gave a brief note on International and National Eco-carring organization like U.N, UNESCO, GNEP, IUCN, IZE, WILD, ZOO etc., besides the ministry and the department which is allocated for environmental protection. C.D 2010 Save Biodiversity and Human Animal Co-existence were highlighted. The sponsoring agencies of respective educational packets on frog, bat, monkey manners and elephant etiquette were briefed by her. The Chief Educational Officer released the same and distributed to all the participants after distributing to Mrs. Hannah Cecil, the Principal, Mr. Vasiharan the students activities Director Mrs. Kalaivani, the Vice-President and Mrs. Abirami the Biology Teacher.

Each student representative gave a short talk about the address. They were recognized by receiving the picture card printed by ZOO. C.



Chandru of Jeyandra Matriculation Higher Secondary School grab Amphibian Ark T-shirt by answering the questions spontaneously. The song sung by the school chair on save the Environment was excellent. Ten Neem tree saplings were planted by the students and teachers of different schools besides C.E.O., Principal, Resource Person, Student activity director and members of Bell School.

Session I: The Video clipping of India's Environmental Action Programmes and Biodiversity were shown. The participants learnt more about Ecological profile, Natural Resources, Wildlife Conservation, Water Management, Energy, Forest



Wealth and Environmental Awareness and Action programmes in curricular and co-curricular activities.

Session II - Amphibian Ark/Frog: The students occupied different places along with the teachers and received the free educational packets on frog. The 10 steps were followed starting with the tying up of Rakhie. Students studied about the expansion of ZOO and WILD, IZE, WAZA etc. They learnt the uses of frog, the groups the present condition for the disappearance and what is the solution to save them are dealt in depth. They did cultural programme and a role play.

Session III – Know your Monkey Manner: After a brief introduction of the sponsors like ZOO, WILD, IZE, AWELY and People Apenheul Primate Park the participants smiled at the contents of the packet because they have noticed monkeys in the camps, on the road and in their homes.



The students gave more points about the behaviourism, the habitat etc. They were thrilled after reading the do's and don'ts. The students and the teachers did group activity showing what to do at the time of monkey's menance. Few students were able to identify the monkeys by looking at the picture chart in the packet.

Session IV – Role Play: With the provided drama kit, representative of different school joint together for the role play on frog and monkey manner. Corrections given by the students, audience were carried out.

Session V - Elephant Etiquette: As the students have seen in T.V and Newspapers about the elephants and their destroying nature they were pebbling with the incidents that had happened in Tamil Nadu and in other states of India. Being the third technical session they automatically started tying the rakhie, finger puppet, the mask etc. Getting along with Elephants stickers attracted them very much. Leaving the perfume and sweet smelling ointments off besides dull colour dresses were new to them. With this introduction they silently went through the pages from 1 to 8 of the booklet. They were reminded with the points to ponder when approaching the elephants at Zoo, Circus, temple and on the roads. What to do?... For the welfare of the animal as well as of the human being – Give up your rights!!! Students were very much interested and volunteered themselves to prepare the mask of an elephant face.

Session VI -Competitions/Drawing: Student's representative from selected schools received

AMPHIBIAN An Ark Art and coloured Malabar Ramanella.

Day – II – 6 October 2009

Session I – Bat Conservation

Students were interacted on the topic Bats. They have seen bats in the campus. Few students explained about the hanging position besides the feeding habits elucidating more points about the bat the booklets were distributed. They liked to repeat the slogan 'Take Care of bats.... They are our friends'. With the rakhie, mask and placard they



flew like bats from place to place. They came to know there are 2 types of bats namely fruit eating and insect eating bats. They identify the threads to insect bats and fruit bats. They drew bat pictures by connecting the dots. The book mark was very useful to share the facts about the bats. Out of the experienced gained on the first day they were able to follow this session successfully.



Session II – Public Awareness by Human Chain

At 10 O' clock nearly 200 students from Bell Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Oasis Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Jeyendara Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Valliammai Matriculation Higher Secondary School and Adaikalamatha Matriculation Higher Secondary School along with the materials received marched out of the campus for human chain with the banner in the front. The self explanatory posters, the mask, the placard the elephant face mask prepared by the students attracted the general public.

Session III – Drawing competition & role play
Students participated in the drawing competition on bat. There were 4 roleplay sections based on the materials supplied.

Session IV – Cultural Programme

The students of the best school gave 2 cultural programmes highlighting Biodiversity.

Session V – Future Plan

After the discussion between the teachers and students of the respective school they planned the following things for October & November 09.

October 09: 1.Sharing the experience to the entire school in the school assembly. 2.Getting the signature from the students and parents regarding the frog protection. 3.Displaying the materials and the newspaper cuttings on eco-bulletin board.

November-09: 1.Establishing eco-garden. 30'X30'. 2.Observing the call of frog at night. 3.Submitting the signature campaign sheets to the Govt. Officials through Bell School

Session VI – Sharing by the participants

One student representative from each school shares the experience. Prizes were distributed to the winners. The six newspaper cuttings were displayed on the board. The newspaper cuttings collected by one student attracted others.

The 2 days programmes came to an end by the vote of thanks proposed by Mrs. Hannah Cecil, the Principal of Bell school and the acknowledgement by the resource person Mrs. Jessie Jayakaran. The Wildlife Week'09 was not an end, but it is a beginning for students of Tirunelveli to Count Down the endangered species and to share the message Human Animal Co-existence to the community for the welfare of the animal as well as the human being. The programme was published in Hindu, Indian Express, Dhinathanthi, Dhinakaran.

Submitted by Mrs. Jessie Jayakaran, Virugambakkam, Chennai. Email: jessiejey@rediffmail.com



Samrakshan Trust-Meghalaya monthly activities

Matcha Nokpante Community Conserved Pitcher Plant Reserve (MNCCPPR): The state of Meghalaya in northeast India is very rich in biodiversity and natural beauty. But undoubtedly the jewel in the state's crown is the Pitcher Plant (*Nepenthes Khasiana*) - an insectivorous (insect eating) plant endemic to this region.

Within Meghalaya, the South Garo Hills, especially the Baghmara area is particularly abundant in pitcher plants. However, over the time these plants have declined because of road construction, agriculture and mining eating into their habitat.

Realizing this some residents of Baghmara Aking got together to conserve a forest patch in their Aking that has a high density of pitcher plants. The area designated by the community, known as *Matcha Nokpante*, which in Garo translates to 'Bachelor hut of Tigers', has traditionally been rich in wildlife with Tigers being seen in the area. The community requested Samrakshan's assistance in designating the area as a reserve, set up an institutional mechanism to manage it, formulate rules for its upkeep. Accordingly, an area of approximately 1.5 sq.km has been designated as a reserve proceeded by several meetings and discussions with the hamlets that are located in the vicinity of the reserve. Such meetings were necessary to garner support from the residents of the area. The reserve is located at a distance of 7 km from Baghmara town and is distinct from the pre existing Baghmara Pitcher Plant Sanctuary. Samrakshan's team surveyed and mapped the area and has initiated a biodiversity survey of the reserve. The local community has designated a management committee that is being supported and capacitated by Samrakshan to manage the area.

Activities undertaken in September 2009

Continuing Campaign against Illegal Private Mining
As a follow up to the workshop conducted in August for NGOs across the state towards building a state level movement against illegal private mining, a follow up workshop was organized in Tura on 12 September 2009. Nine NGOs from the Garo Hills gathered in Tura to discuss progress of planned activities and shared the activities that they had undertaken in their areas. Based on the experience so far a detailed action plan was prepared during this meeting for continuing actions to mobilize public opinion against illegal private mining (mainly for coal and limestone) that is rampant in Meghalaya. The next review meeting was scheduled to be held in Baghmara, on 24th October and will be hosted by Garo Students' Union, Southern Zonal Office.

Securing Elephant Corridors: Continuing our work to secure elephant habitats and crucial corridors within the Balpakram Baghmara landscape, over the course of September, we have been working in Kosi village of Rewak aking. Elephants have long used the area that is occupied by Kosi village to cross the

Simsang River into the Rewak Reserve Forest. However with progressive expansion of Kosi village the space available for elephants to move has been shrinking. Even though a part of Kosi village has been "Reserved" by the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council with a view to safeguard this corridor, the corridor continues to be used by people and encroached upon. In our course of work we were able to deconstruct the problem areas. We had several meetings with the villagers to enhance their understanding and awareness about the importance of preserving the elephant corridor for their own benefit in terms of minimizing conflict with the animals. We have been able to generate support among some of the households and village opinion makers and as a result it has been possible to exert influence over the encroachers to vacate the corridor. While initial breakthroughs have been achieved and it appears that for the moment the corridor is safe, the learning from this experience is that a onetime declaration of "Reserve" is not an adequate measure for long term conservation. A much more prolonged capacity and awareness building programme is necessary to ensure sustainable community driven conservation of lands.

To avoid similar problems in future, the villages have decided to demarcate the boundary of the corridor properly, set up a management committee to frame rules & regulations of the corridor and to monitor that no encroachment/settlement takes place inside the corridor.

Non Timber Forest Product (NTFP) enhancement initiatives:

As reported in the August issue of our newsletter, one of the tools that we are using to bring about conservation of wild lands in community owned and managed forest areas is to create economic incentives for conservation. Enhancing incomes from NTFP is a pilot programme that we are currently running in partnership with Keystone Foundation and the people of Panda Aking. On 6th September a Forest Produce Value addition centre started operation in Wagekona village under Panda aking.

Based on the seasonality, value addition to Bamboo and Cane has been initiated in September. A group of 8 persons from Wagekona has been trained in various value addition processes like drying, mixing, packing and labeling. During this month different bamboo pickles, bamboo vinegar, handicrafts from bamboo and cane have been produced. Interestingly even in the training period the centre is producing finished products that are marketable. In the initial stages Samrakshan has taken the responsibility for marketing these products. For this purpose we have collaborated with some retail shops in Baghmara town and are also selling these products in the weekly village markets in different parts of the landscape. So far we have had good response and sufficient demand for our products from the local consumers.

Apart from adding value to NTFP, we are also working on regenerating forest patches, particularly focusing

on those plant species that are in decline due to over harvesting. In order to do this we are working with the people of Bulakawe village to develop a nursery that has a diverse mix of plant species found in this region which are in decline. During September such a nursery has been raised in Bulakawe after considerable ground work had been done with the community on preparing them for the regeneration effort as well as harvesting practices that cause least damage to forests. For looking after the forest mix nursery the community has selected a particular family within the village and the family members are responsible for raising the nursery bed, collection of seeds and materials, irrigation, weeding and other maintenance.

Monitoring Elephant movement & Conflict: In the month of September our team members recorded 20 instances of elephant visits in their areas, 4 of which resulted in some sort of conflict. In most of the conflicts cases elephant herds comprising of 5-8 eight adults had raided jhum fields of the villagers and destroyed those. In this season the frequency of human elephant conflict is quite low because there it is not the harvest season and there are hardly any crops in the jhum fields to attract elephants.

Nature Based Tourism Initiatives at Siju & Gongrot Continuing our efforts to create economic incentives for conservation, community driven nature based tourism programmes have been initiated in Gongrot and Siju Aking.

Gongrot has immense forest cover and known for its spectacular diversity of birds. The Aking also shares its boundary with Balpakram National Park. Siju, on the other hand, is situated on the banks of the Simsang River, the largest river of Garo hills and shares its boundary with the Siju Wildlife Sanctuary and harbors the famous Siju caves, well known for the Wroughton's free-tailed bat. Both these sites have considerable potential to support tourism and use this as a lever for conservation.

Samrakshan has entered into MoUs with entrepreneurs from both akings as part of which we are supporting infrastructure as well as capacity building of the teams that will operate the tourism enterprise. It is expected that these projects will be operational by this winter and will cater primarily to the existing local tourists who visit these areas in large numbers. The projects will initially focus on this existing demand and eventually diversify to other "outside" tourists as well.

Supporting local NGOs for Conservation: As part of a planned process of diversifying the pool of people and groups concerned about wildlife and forests in the Garo Hills, a strategy that Samrakshan has been adopting is to capacitate local NGOs to take up conservation issues and activities. This would create conservation stewards from among the local community and fore ground them as part of the conservation effort, eventually taking it over and

making Samrakshan dispensable. Accordingly a partnership has been established with an organization called "Echo" based in the village of Rongara. As part of this partnership Echo members will protect the Rongdi River, an important constituent of the ecology of the Balpakram Baghmara Landscape by conserving forests in the catchment areas of this river and its tributaries. This will involve the designation of three Community Conservation Reserves (CCR) in Chimitap Aking. Samrakshan will support Echo through technical assistance, capacity building and financial support.

Setting up Community Conservation Reserves (CCR): To protect the remaining forests & wildlife habitats in community owned lands, Samrakshan has been following a strategy of promoting Community Conservation Reserves (CCR) – these are either forests that local community members have been conserving on their own or those that require such conservation action on account of their ecological importance. We have developed a sequential process that involves not just a onetime designation of an area as a reserve but a variety of other inputs that are necessary for imparting sustainability to the conservation effort – intensive community awareness over a prolonged period, a suitable institution for the management of the reserve, capacity building of this institution, formulation of rules and regulations for the management of the reserve and finally intensive conservation education among the community members.

Over the month of September, Samrakshan team members have been active in Chenggni aking to enable the establishment of CCRs in their area. Chenggni is a large Aking that borders the Balpakram National park and continues to retain old growth forests. The people of Donala Nokat and Gulpani Nokat (two villages under Chenggni aking) realizing the deteriorating availability of water in their respective villages have initiated the establishment of community conservation reserves along streams that supply water to their village with Samrakshan's support. In case of Donala Nokat we have mobilized resources from the Social Forestry Department and through the Joint Forest Management Scheme; regeneration of forests is being carried out. In both the villages General Meeting of the village, selection of reserve committee members, Nokma's concurrence for the activity, formulation of rules and passing of a village resolution have been completed. Over the course of the next month, two CCRs in the above mentioned aking will be formalized by registering them with the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council. **Submitted by: Basabjit Chakraborty, Samrakshan Trust, Baghmara, Meghalaya. Email: basab.samrakshan@gmail.com**