

The State Wildlife Advisory Board, West Bengal in its XXIII meeting accepted the recommendations of above Expert Committee and the Chief Wildlife Warden, West Bengal asked the Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park, Darjeeling to develop water areas for conversion into congenial surrounding for Himalayan Newt breeding, and take suitable action in this regard.

Accordingly the water areas in the Zoological Park were developed by lining the ponds with plastic sheets and cement. The adjoining areas were planted with shrubs/herbs etc. and loose rocks/stones and logs were placed for creating hibernating areas. A request was made to the wildlife wing of the forest Department on January 2, 2001 for supply of some live Salamanders from different natural habitats to release into these areas. Accordingly nine individuals were collected from Maneybhanjang area and released in the ponds in the months of June, 2001.

It was observed during rainy months of 2002 that six of the animals actually returned to the ponds for breeding and at least 3 young were observed in the ponds. On seeing the initial success six more specimens from Sonada water body were released in the ponds during June/July, 2002 with the same objective.

Sadly these animals were kept for the purpose of display only. Thus the original stock of 9 animals

did not show any increase, partly because not much was done for enhancing their breeding. These were kept in a small covered pond, which was not conducive for breeding as there was no mechanism to control the temperature and feeding.

In 2003-04 one glass enclosure was constructed of the size 10m x 4m with a pebbled floor. Some large stones were kept in the watered floor for their hiding purpose. In 2005, on observing no increase in population, the zoo changed the habitat. A highland area was created, with the help of large stone, soil, and flora. Further changes were done in 2006. Water level was kept constant at five centimetres and water was changed weekly. External food given was meat pieces of small size and earthworms. In addition a large bulb was kept on during the evening which attracted insects, which are main food base of the animals. The bulb also helped in maintaining temperature in the enclosure. Sand with pebbles was added in the base of the enclosure. These changes seemed to bring the desired objective of breeding.

On 24th August 2006 six tadpoles were observed. This was the first success in breeding these threatened amphibians. They could be observed until the end of October, when they went for hibernation. Further progress shall be known only after March 2007.

VACANCY FOR A CONSERVATION AWARENESS OFFICER WITH SAMRAKSHAN TRUST

Samrakshan Trust is a Delhi based conservation organisation with operations in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya and Mizoram. Our work fosters sustainable nature conservation in conjunction with local communities and other stakeholders at sites of conservation importance in these states. An integral part of our conservation strategy at each intervention site is to improve appreciation of natural values among various stakeholders. For this purpose Samrakshan is seeking to recruit a Conservation Awareness Officer based at its head office in Delhi. The job profile for this position includes the following tasks:

- i. Assisting Samrakshan field teams in MP, Meghalaya and Mizoram develop conservation awareness strategies and action plans conducive to local conditions;
- ii. Capacity enhancement of Samrakshan field teams for executing such action plans;
- iii. Monitoring the impact of such conservation awareness activities and making necessary corrections;
- iv. Helping the organisation communicate its work to a larger audience.

This position will require extensive travel to Samrakshan field offices and the devotion of several months at a stretch at these locations. The candidate should have demonstrable experience in conservation awareness work and an ability to work under extremely difficult physical conditions.

Candidates are welcome to learn more about Samrakshan's work at <www.samrakshan.org> Applications will be accepted till the position is filled. Please submit a CV and a 2-3 page note expressing your interest in this position and contact details of 2 referees to:

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