

A few remaining reports from the 50th Annual Wildlife Week, India

A Report on the Wildlife Week 2004 Celebration in the Himalayan Zoological Park, Sikkim

Wildlife Week 2004 has been celebrated in befitting manner in the Himalayan Zoological Park at Bulbulay, Gangtok. The programme was conducted for 2 days on 6th and 7th October 2004 in collaboration with the Fambong Lho Wildlife Sanctuary, East Sikkim. The Wildlife Week programme was a success with the enthusiastic participation of the Honourable Minister of Forests, Environment & Wildlife Management Department, Sri S.B. Subedi as the chief guest, PCCF & Secretary, Forests Sri T.R. Sharma, other senior officers of the Department, local public, panchayat members, media persons, teachers and students of class IV, V and VI from 10 different schools of Gangtok. The Honourable Minister, in his address to the gathering urged the local gentry and the students of preserve and protect wildlife. He said that protecting the forests will help save the animals and in turn will help man to survive. It is the food chain that we will have to maintain otherwise humanity will also go extinct some day. Similarly, PCCF & Secretary, Forests in his address spoke that 33% of the total lands mass of Sikkim are under wildlife protected area network and the effort showed that Sikkim is concerned about conserving the forests and wildlife for the future generation.

The second day programme was presided over by Smt. R. Ongmu, Ex- Minister and party advisor to HCM as the chief guest. The day long programme included zoo visit by the participants on both days followed by addresses by the chief guests and the departmental officers. The chief guest urged all gatherings to protect forests wealth to the fullest amount to keep up the already earned name in greenery by the state.

The Wildlife Week programmes were also supported by Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, which provided educational materials for students on the request of the State Forest Department. The educational materials were distributed among the school children and activities were conducted based on the materials provided. The students were also made to draw paintings on animals they saw and liked most in the Zoological Park. Wildlife films such as the "Ladakh - the Forbidden Land" made by Sri Rajesh Bedi was also shown during the occasion, paintings on animals, birds and flowers by Sri Rajen Pradhan were also put on display.

The State Forest, Environment & Wildlife Management Department, Government of Sikkim expresses its gratitude to all for their participation in the programmes organized on the occasion and also to the Zoo Outreach Organization, Coimbatore for their support with educational materials of free of cost for the school children which also helped us to make the celebration a meaningful. **Submitted by Gut Lepcha, Joint Director of Forests, National Parks & Zoo Forests, Environment & Wildlife Management Department, Government of Sikkim, Deorali 737 102 Sikkim**

Wildlife Week - 2004 at Kanpur Zoological Park

Every year Wildlife Week is celebrated from 1-7 October in Kanpur Zoo. The idea is to inculcate a feeling of affection and care towards wild animals in young children. This year about 34 schools participated in the programme.

Day one — The inauguration of the week was done by Sri Sanjay Ji Dhande, Director, I.I.T., Kanpur. Sports activities like frog race, sack race, were organized on this day in which 74 students of 25 schools participated. In addition a Group discussion was also organized. Fifteen children won prizes in these competitions.

Day two — A drawing and Rangoli competition was organized on the second day. The topics for both the competitions included monkey, dancing bear, dinosaur, peacock, and swamp deer. About 23 schools participated enthusiastically, with a total of 150 participants. Fifteen children won prizes.

Day three — A debate was organized this day. 25 students of 13 schools took part. The topics were Bear and Wildlife Conservation and Role of Zoos in 21st Century. A total of 7 children won prizes in both categories.

Day four — An essay writing competition was organized in which 88 students from 15 schools participated. The topics were Zoological Park, India's Pride – The Bear, Zoos in 21st Century. About 12 students won prizes in various categories.

Day five — A Wildlife Quiz competition was organized. A total of 29 teams (58 participants) took part. 18 children were prize-winners in different categories.

Day six — This day was the cultural day for the wildlife week. About 224 students of 15 schools participated in the various programmes like group song / dance and Mono acting. All themes were on wildlife and no movie songs were played. About 27 students won prizes in various categories.

Day seven — Prize distribution was done by Shri R.R. Januar, IFS. Conservator of Forests, U.P., Kanpur. About 111 prizes were given in various categories to institutions and children below 12 years of age. About 19,498 people enjoyed the free entry facility to the zoo. The prizes were sponsored by Pepsi India & Kores (India) Ltd. Printed materials were supplied by Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore. We sincerely hope that children have benefited from the above activities. **Submitted by R. Hemanth Kumar, Director, Kanpur Zoological Park, Kanpur 2, Uttar Pradesh, Email: hravivarapu@yahoo.com**

Wildlife Week 2005 for Government Tribal Residential High School by Coimbatore Zoo

The theme of the Wildlife week celebrations of Coimbatore Zoological Park Society was biodiversity conservation: endemic, endangered plants and animals and the need for conservation. A total of 150 Students from 9th and 10th class and 10 teachers took part in the event organized on

the eve of wildlife week celebration at the GTR High School, Anaikatty, Coimbatore.

Event 1. Lecture and interactive session with students about biodiversity conservation, especially endemic and endangered plants and animals was organised. Using the booklets provided by Zoo Outreach Organization we highlighted the endemic LTM and endangered tiger, and its present problem in the forest. We explained how the NGO's and other organizations are taking steps to safeguard these animals from extinction.

Event 2. Games help students to understand the link between animals in the ecosystem, eg. what happens when one species gets disturbed in the food chain?. Games like Web of life, prey predator relationship were played that helped them to understand the concept. Other game how many can fit in to a T shirt (a game explaining the carrying capacity of forest was explained to the students) were played. These concepts are in the school syllabus but a practical experience in the form of a game helped children to understand the concept more clearly. These activities were highly appreciated by the teachers and the students.

Event 3. A quiz programme was organized for 5 selected teams. Of the five teams based on the points first three prizes were given (includes T shirts, certificate and small gift).

Mr. S. Chelladurai, Head Master, GTR High School, distributed prizes to the winners. Overall the programme ended with great joy of learning about biodiversity conservation. The materials provided by Zoo Outreach Organization were helpful to enlighten students' knowledge about the wildlife conservation. **Submitted by: B. Rathinasabapathy & R. Manickam, Coimbatore Zoological Park Society, Pioneer House, Peelamedu, Coimbatore - 641 004, Tamil Nadu, India.**

Half-century of Wildlife Week at Kannur, Kerala

In connection with the 50th Wildlife Week-2004, Chrysalis Nature Club of Pazhassi Raja N S S College, Mattanur, in association with Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, conducted a painting and poster making competition. This was for L.P. and U.P. school students of various schools under Mattanur Educational Sub District on October 2, 2004, the Gandhi Jayanthi Day.

The programme was inaugurated by the Principal-in-charge Dr. T.P. Raveendran, in the presence of Nature Club advisor Dr. Maheshkumar Madathil and C.Padmanabhan, Lecturer in English. 189 students from about 19 schools participated in the programme. Competitions for L.P. and U.P. sections were conducted separately and the topic for painting was "Nature" and for poster making was "Deforestation". Sri. P.K. Ramachandran, Environmentalist, then interacted with the participants with stories and poems to make them aware of conservation of Nature. By this time Judges declared the results of the competitions and Dr. Vidya Pradeep, Lecturer in Economics distributed the prizes. The gifts include the educational materials obtained from Z.O.O. and trophies and shields sponsored by other agencies. After the prize distribution all participants and

parents were served with "Payasam", prepared by the club members. Next day, on October 4th, an Exhibition of Posters and Paintings done by the school children was organized by the club in the college Auditorium for all other students of our college who were not present day before as Gandhi Jayanthi is a holiday. **Submitted by Dr. Mahesh Kumar Madathil, Lecturer in Zoology, P R N S S College, Mattanur, Kannur 670 702, Kerala**

Wildlife Week Celebration at Krishnagiri – A Report

Hosur Forest Division conducted a special programme on Wildlife Week at Krishnagiri on 14th October 2004. Shri Mangath Ram Sharma, IAS, Krishnagiri District Collector presided the function. In his presidential address he said, it is the responsibility of each and every citizen to preserve and protect the wildlife. Shri M. Govindaraj, MLA, Krishnagiri delivered special address. Dr. S. Paulraj, IFS, District Forest Officer, Hosur spoken on the need for creating awareness among younger generation especially students.

Various competitions such as essay, education, drawing and drama were conducted for the students. The winners were awarded prizes and certificates by Hosur Forest Division. The following school and college students were participated in programme. Government Girls HSS, Krishnagiri, Bharathi Matriculation HSS, Krishnagiri, Don Bosco Matric Higher Secondary School, Krishnagiri, Gambridge Matric High School, Krishnagiri, Annai Fathima SS, Krishnagiri, Government Boys HSS, , Krishnagiri, Municipal Boys High School, Pazhayapettai, Swami Vivekananda Matric School, Krishnagiri, Annai Velangkanni Matric School, Krishnagiri, Concord Matirc School, rishnagiri, St. Annes Matirc School, Krishnagiri, Government Arts College, Krishnagiri, Government Girls Arts and Science College, Krishnagiri.

A special programme on primate conservation for various Schools were also organized. Thiru K. Sasikumar, Wildlife Biologist. Hosur division organized quiz programme for the participants and distributed reading materials on Primates supplied by the Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore.

The education materials and gifts contributed by the Zoo Outreach Organisation was distributed by Dr. S. Paulraj, I.F.S., District Forest Officer, Hosur. At the end students' cultural programme was conducted. **Submitted by Dr. S. Paulraj, District Forest Officer, Hosur, Forest Division, Mathigiri Cattle Farm 635 110, Hosur, Krishnagiri Dt., T.N., Email: dfhohosur@yahoo.com**

Wildlife Week with the apostles of Kaziranga

Even in the throes of my career change to wildlife rehabilitation medicine, I am at seventh heaven on shifting base to Kaziranga national park – the famed rhino land of India. It is a perfect setting to celebrate the wildlife week and I chose two groups to be my target audience for the purpose. There were a lot of goodies (courtesy Z.O.O) to be handed out and I hit it off with this land and its people with a idea whose time came in the first week of October.

Keeping the faith: My first group was a team of animal keepers at the Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation (CWRC). Started by Wildlife Trust of India and its partner the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW)

in 2002, the centre is run as a joint-venture with the department of environment and forests, Government of Assam, and supported by the Animal Welfare division of the Government of India. Many wildlife species are undergoing rehabilitation at CWRC including the one-horned rhino (*Rhinoceros unicornis*), Asian elephant (*Elephas maximus*), Common Leopard (*Panthera pardus*), Asiatic Wild Buffalo (*Bubalus arnee*), and Hoolock Gibbon (*Hoolock hoolock hoolock*) – all these five are schedule I species of India's Wildlife Protection Act (1972). Tarun is built like a soccer player and can handle anything from oyster to elephant with aplomb. Lakhi is especially good with elephant calves and takes them out for walks into the forest each morning. Driver Mahadeo is a man of few words and skillful with the wheel – he drives around the vicinity of Kaziranga on CWRC's ambulance while attending rescue cases with vets. Murali is a vet by profession who opted for wildlife medicine after a stint in equine stud medicine. Dilip is 'grass-man' at the centre and does a fine job of collecting choicest fodder for the animal inmates. Prashanta is good at hand-raising orphan animals and doubles up as a dresser wherever needed. Bhadreswar is a night-duty man and feeds the animals at night times without much ado about the frequent power cuts! The keepers function as a interface between rehabilitators, vets, managers and the animal inmates. As this is a 'no-visitors' facility, the keepers are aware of gravity of the situation and try and avoid imprinting the animals that are meant to put back into the wild. This job becomes doubly difficult if any of their wards are on the sick list. On such occasions, their nursing skills come to the fore, and this sort of work gets a new meaning.

Celebrating wildlife week in such highly charged work places serves as a 'tension-release' mechanism and blunts the monotony and grumpiness of their working lives. Coincidentally, they were celebrating some 'puja' or the other (Assamese celebrate just about anything and everything) and were out of their uniforms that day. They even brought out the elephant and rhino feeding bottles to be anointed by sacred water while propitiating the gods! I handed out the Z.O.O education packets and got them tie animal rakhis on each other. There was banter and howls of laughter when they opened their XXX-L tee shirts which they happily sported and turned up for photo ops. The red panda tees were good despite being made like sherwanis! The participants played some games given in the packets and partook in a special lunch (courtesy WTI) organized for the day at CWRC. The function concluded with 'paet puja' after 'thought puja'.

Catch them young: My second group was school kids at Bokakhat – a highway town in Kaziranga. It is a wonder that a small town can hold as many as six schools. As I pondered over the logistics of approaching so many kids, all at the same time, I met Rithesh Sharma. He is a young hotelier with a missionary zeal – a useful combination in this sort of work. Rithesh rallied around me with his outfit called Nav Yuva Sangha (NYS), and he had the brainwave of holding a essay competition in English, Assamese and Hindi as a qualifier and help separate the wheat from the chaff! Accordingly, the competition was held on 4th October, 2004 on topics concerning Kaziranga/Rhino/and wildlife conservation. Of the 175 student participants, 13 were short listed as invitees to a special interactive session and prize

distribution function (Courtesy: NYS). It is such a pleasure and education to mingle with kids and listen to their inner voices on grim issues concerning wildlife. They were clued up on the past and present of Kaziranga national park, but were unsure about how they could plan for a career in the wildlife sciences. It made me write a presentation titled 'career options in wildlife sciences' – but this does not come under the scope of this article.

At such impressionable age, children can be worked upon to drive home the wildlife dilemmas in a subtle yet engaging way. They all loved their wildlife packets and had lots of questions about what is being done to prevent their precious wildlife collapsing like black holes. I spread the tee shirts around as far as I could, but the demand-supply curve was greatly skewed! But Rithesh's NYS came to my rescue and chipped in with attractive gifts for the prize winners. So much for networking, Z.O.O style. **Submitted by Dr. Murali Pai, Regional Manager, Wildlife Trust of India, Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation (CWRC), Kaziranga, Borjuri, Bokakhat 785 612, Assam Email: <muralipai@rediffmail.com>, cwrc@sancharnet.in**

Program Report utilising Z.O.O. Material

The objective was to involve as many young children in awareness drive enlightening them about our animals, conservation and preservation for future generations. We wanted to let children yet a first hand view of zoo animals and then make them realise and understand the importance and role of Zoo and the wildlife education. To ensure this we invited over 300 school children and after a visit to the zoo, a small talk was delivered at Sayaji Gardens. This was followed by a painting competition where the children were allowed to draw & paint animals environment/ nature and given an opportunity to create a work. The response was so heavy that we had to simultaneously conduct a quiz for children who were unable to participate in the painting competition. The entries were judged by a panel of teachers from the famous Faculty of Fine Arts, M.S. University. The total participation was over 300 from 15 schools of Baroda city. Next year we intend to do it on an ever-bigger scale involving 500 children. **Submitted by Sandip Diwan, Secretary, Baroda Nature Lovers Association, 302, Chandralok, Karelibaug, Baroda 390 018, Gujarat, Email: wanderlostbaroda@yahoo.co.in**

