

## World Pangolin Day celebration by Zoo Outreach Organization

### R. Marimuthu\*

World Pangolin Day is observed on every third Saturday of February and this is its third year of existence. Zoo Outreach Organization celebrated the World Pangolin Day on 15 February at Vadivelampalayam Government Middle School, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. Our objectives were to create awareness about pangolins, the threats to pangolin primarily in wildlife trade and conservation. The Vadivelampalayam School is located under the foothills of Western Ghats; one of the global biodiversity hotspots and Indian Pangolin, *Manis crassicaudata* is found in this area.

Fifty students studying 7th and 8th class (aged 12-13) attended the programme. They learned about the kinds of pangolins, its taxonomy, distribution & habitat, diet, behaviour, threats and conservation status. Photographs of pangolins were displayed and a documentary film 'Meet the Pangolin' was shown. Though the inhabitants live near the mountain areas nobody had seen pangolin in this area. However, there is a story about Pangolin in their textbook called 'The Anteater and the Dassie' in which the pangoline is portrayed as a good animal. Thus the programme was linked with the curriculum also.

Students enjoyed this programme very much and learned much information about pangolins, that they had not known previously. They could not believe it when they were told that people eat its meat, use the scales in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and harvest the skin for leather handbags, belts and wallets. The students pledged not to use animal body parts for any purpose. At the end, they were asked them to report to ZOO if they or their parents observed the animal or poaching in their area. The writer conducted the programme. Mr. N. Thiagarajan, PO Tulsi Trust & the Headmistress Mrs. D.R. Revathi coordinated the programme.



**Marimuthu, Education Officer at Zoo Outreach Organization begins the programme by introducing Pangolin and its problems.**



**Above: Students watch a video on Pangolins.**



**Left: Students display the printed material provided about Pangolin.**

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