

SANIZE - Educational Activities Report - Animal Welfare Fortnight 2008

Report on Animal Welfare Fortnight celebration January, 2008-Samrakshan Trust, Meghalaya

Since 2004, Samrakshan Trust is working under Rongara Community Development Block of South Garo Hills towards livelihood enhancement activities besides organizing events such as World Environment Day and Wildlife Week with a view to raise environmental consciousness in the minds of local communities.

Programme proceedings: A total of 217 people took part in this programme. The programme started at 10:30am with a brief introduction and the purpose of the programme, the organization's goal with emphasis on how three teams- Livelihood, Environment Education and Wildlife Monitoring of the organization work together towards developing conservation friendly livelihood activities. Then one of the teachers was invited to give an introductory talk, where in he called upon the participants to make the best use of that opportunity and to actively participate in the programme.

Colouring Activity: One of Samrakshan's team members shared the objective of the activity. Both the elders and the children participated in this activity but majority of the participants were children. Outline drawings of various wildlife species were distributed to the participants along with crayons to colour. The



group enjoyed the activity with fun and discussions. Some elders assisted their children in colouring the animal drawings. After completion they were requested to hold up their colourful pictures for taking photograph. Each child who participated in the activity received one packet of crayons as a token of appreciation from the organization for their active participation. The energizer game "Hawk and Pigeon" was played.

Mapping Range of Hoolock Gibbons: The mapping range activity was primarily meant to give information on the distribution of Hoolock Gibbons in Asia and to discuss about the threats. The mapping exercise was divided into two parts - mapping the 1. historical range and 2. current range. The range area was divided into four parts and each part was printed on A3 size paper. The participants were required to cut the borders of each part of the map and join those four sheets of paper to get a full map of Asia. Participants formed ten groups, each group having at least five members. The process of activity to be followed was explained to the participants by one of us before they set to work.

Once the maps were put together the participants were asked to list out the names of countries where Hoolock Gibbons could be found fifty years ago. The number of countries being six, some groups listed five, and yet others seven and some correctly listed out six. Then they were given another set of cut pieces with the present range marked on the map. Participants following the same process, joined different pieces of the Asia map into a full figure map and checked the differences of distribution as shown in the map. This time, most of them found only four countries where Hoolock Gibbons are still found. It was discovered that Hoolock Gibbons have become extinct in two countries of Asia - Laos and Thailand within the last 50 years.

We then spoke of the fast declining number of Hoolock Gibbons within the last fifty years. It was said that before fifty years, the population of Hoolock Gibbons in the world was estimated at 140,000 but at present it was estimated at only about 3000, which means 137,000 Hoolock Gibbons have disappeared within 50 years. The participants were then questioned as to what would be the population of Hoolock Gibbons in the next 50 years. Everyone said that there will be no more Hoolock Gibbons left after the next fifty years.

Multiple Choices on Hoolock Gibbon: The questions were taken and modified from the manual *Helping Hoolock Gibbons Hang On* produced by Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, India. Fourteen questions, all about Hoolock Gibbons with pictures were distributed to the participants who were required to put tick marks against the box given for each picture. Around 120 individual participants took part in this exercise using the pencils provided to them. Questions related to Hoolock Gibbons such as their habitat, foods and threats were selected for this exercise. After sometime they were told to stop and we read out the answers for the questions one by one. On the whole the exercise helped participants learn a little more about this threatened



species which is also found in Garo Hills. Later "Who am I" game was played.

Gittim Nokma was invited to speak on behalf of the participants about the programme. In his speech, he appreciated various activities conducted as a part of the programme and said that such activities were of great use and are a need at this time. He concluded his speech by thanking Samrakshan Trust for bringing such opportunities to the people. Finally, Erickstone Momin, one of the team members, gave vote of thanks.

Later, a film show - Monsoon Forest (Land of the tiger series) was screened. Before screening the film, we briefed the audience making it easier for them to understand the issue that the film projected.

Acknowledgements: United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Zoo Outreach Organisation and People from Chenggni. **Submitted by: Nova Sangma, Samrakshan Trust, Meghalaya Field office, Borsalgre, Baghmara, South Garo Hills, Meghalaya. Email: nova.sangma@rediffmail.com**

Frogs Rock...at DPIRS, Mysore, Karnataka

The wildlife is in distress in the whole world. Besides facing threats from natural calamities, animals are facing additional threats from human activities too. Having 'Frogs' as the theme, a programme was conducted at DPIRS, Mysore in March 2008 - Year Of The Frog - 2008.



The objectives of the programmes were: to understand the meaning of term wildlife; to understand 'why should we worry about Frogs?'; to provide hands on experience on the pond ecosystem and to motivate them to join South Asia campaign of Amphibian Ark.

A total number of 22 students aged 13-14 years took part in the programme. School pond area was the venue. Amphibian education packets provided by Zoo Outreach Organisation was used. Food web game was played to understand the importance of frogs. With the help of booklet pupil understood all about frogs matter. Participants took pledge and went around the school campus having placards in their hand to spread the conservation message.

Learning became fun when pupil asked to observe the pond ecosystem and they completed a

worksheet by observing lentic fresh water ecosystem. Finally, participants formed different groups to collect signatures



on the Amphibian petition and stick the bumper sticker - FROGS ROCK on the vehicles. I whole heartedly thank Zoo Outreach Organisation, ANSA, IZE, and UFAW for providing material on free of cost. **Submitted by: Ms. S. Mamatha, Faculty, DPRIS, Mysore, Karnataka. Email: mamtha_57@yahoo.com**

Nature Camps conducted using ZOO's educational kits

The first nature camp was conducted at Thengumaradha & Hasanur from 2-3 February, 2008. Twenty eight students of 9th and 10th standard from Subbiah Matriculation School, Tirupur were taken. This camp was organized with the help of Mr. Krishnakumar, an avid wildlifer who runs a resort in Hasanur and conducts many nature camps for school students at his establishment.

Thengumaradha is famous for the Moyar River and the reserve forests are home to the endangered black buck. First day of the camp was a visit to the Moyar River, herds of black buck and spotted deer were seen on the way. The highlight of the journey was discovering the pugmarks of two tigers, one of which was exceptionally large. After lunch the students played the 'web of life' game and the role of forests in providing clean water was discussed. On the return journey elephants, gaur and more spotted deer were seen. The second day started early with a trek. The two hour trek uphill was through a beautiful vista of grasslands and shola forests. Here, the role of these forests in absorbing rain and providing water to the plains was explained to the group. We stopped atop of a mountain near a small pool to have breakfast. Students were given the bat kits of Zoo Outreach Organisation; friends exchanged bat *rakhis* and happily donned their bat masks. Some facts about bats were read from the booklet and their role in forests as seed dispersers were discussed. After lunch, games from the bat guide were played enthusiastically by the students. All students were given the frog kit. Again masks were donned, *rakhis* exchanged and facts about frogs were read and



discussed. The camp ended with this session and students voting for more such camps.

The second nature camp was held at Parambikulam Wildlife Sanctuary coordinated with the Kerala forest department for 35 students (classes 6-9) from Sri Vidyalaya School, Gobichettipalayam on 9-10 February, 2008. We were accompanied by two well informed tribal guides. The group was first taken to the dams, Thunakadavu and Parambikulam situated in the sanctuary. Lunch was followed by a visit to the Parambikulam tunnel. On the way to the tunnel the group saw an array of birds and animals: a tree full of fairy blue birds, sambar deer, herds of chital resting by a stream and Nilgiri langur. The day's sightseeing ended with a visit to Kannimara, the largest teak tree in Asia. In the evening "Web of life" game and other games were conducted. The forest department had a slide show and tiger movie for the students.

The next day, the group was taken for the morning eco-meditation experience, held on a rocky clearing in the middle of the forest one kilometer away from the dormitory. After the calming meditation, the guides pointed out to birds fluttering around the trees. Breakfast was followed by a trek through the forest. Students enjoyed splashing around in the stream on the trek route. Guides pointed out some tiger scat on a rocky outcrop which caused a bit of excitement.



ZOO's Monkey Manners kit was distributed after lunch and reading through the information made some students indulge in some monkeying around of their own.

The forest department organized a certificate distribution with a rakhi tying ceremony, monkey rakhis and department rakhis were exchanged. A



group of students tied a huge rakhi onto a rose wood tree to symbolize the students love for trees. The camp ended with the students taking a pledge to protect the environment and nature. **Submitted by: Ms. Kundhavi Perumal, Jambai House, Salem Main Road, Komarapalayam - 638183, Namakkal Dist. Email: kundax@gmail.com**

Samrakshan Trust's Adharshila celebrates *Balmela* with environment theme

Adharshila is an education initiative of Samrakshan Trust in the tribal (*Sahariyas*) villages of Sheopur district of Madhya Pradesh. Here we celebrate, each year, our annual function called *Balmela*. This day is basically an opportunity for the children to enjoy



and interact with others and for us to showcase our work. Every year we select a theme for *Balmela* and this year it was "environment and conservation". Environment education is a crucial part of Adharshila's activities throughout the year. Selecting environment as the theme was much easier than actually designing and organizing activities around it. Mr. Nimesh Ved, Samrakshan's in-house EE guide was available for a fortnight and we made full use of his time.

Activities and games were discussed and planned meticulously and each teacher or a group was assigned one of them. It was decided that this year's *Balmela* will be a combination of fun games and other activities all directed at EE and conservation. It was also decided that like the previous year the *mela* will be open to the general public and in addition children from nearby schools will be invited to participate in activities and games.

Balmela began with a prayer. Teachers had specially prepared a song for the occasion. Immediately after prayer, students up to the primary level were gathered for colouring and painting activity. All the students were given papers and crayons and they were asked to draw and colour animals that they find in the surrounding villages and forest. Needless to say that all the children did their best and once the activity was over all the drawings were put up for display on selected spots at the venue.



Moving one step ahead of our own tradition, this year we had formally invited students from other schools too to participate in selected activities. In the week prior to the *Balmela*, Adharshila teachers spent time with the nearby government school students introducing them to the activities and giving them some practice. No wonder our own students were beaten at the quiz by participants from government high school, Agraa. And then there was relay race where a participant was supposed to run and return with a slip matching with the one given to her at the start. Names and characteristics of wild animals were used on all the slips. "Who am I?" was played which was the biggest hit.

The last of these activities was 'painting and colouring' for post primary students. This too was open for children from other schools. We are especially grateful to the Zoo Outreach Organization who provided us the bat colouring book that was used in this activity. A bat's characteristics are not a very common subject of conversation. Colouring big sized bats therefore was novel and enjoyable for the children. To make it easier the colouring instructions were translated in Hindi and superimposed over the originals. We believe that the children will remember for a long time the bat they coloured and its characteristics that they learnt while doing so. At the end of the day, the film "Land of the Tiger III" produced by the BBC was screened. This year's *Balmela* was totally plastic free.

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Animal Welfare Fortnight celebration at Thrissur Zoo

Animal Welfare Fortnight 2008 celebration was conducted at Thrissur Zoo, Kerala. The participants were employees of Guruvayur temple and their family members including mahouts of elephants. Educational study materials of bats and rodents were distributed and visits to the various animals enclosures were also done.

Dr. M. Muralidharan, a senior Veterinary doctor of Guruvayur Devaswom conducted classes of the importance of conservation of small mammals.

Wildlife scientist of Kerala Forest Research Institute, P. Padmanabhan conducted classes on Animal behaviour studies. The problem of death of captive elephants in Thrissur district was discussed in detail and measures for the management and welfare of the captive elephants were suggested. **Submitted by: P. Padmanabhan, Scientist, Wildlife Discipline, Kerala Forest Research Institute, Peechi-680653, Thrissur, Kerala.**

Animal Welfare Fortnight celebrations in Uttarakhand by Conservation Himalayas

Conservation Himalayas celebrated the Animal Welfare Fortnight-08 on 12 February 2008 two days prior to AWF 08, by organizing a special programme on the issue of human-monkey conflict for the villagers at Chharbent, near Danya in Almora district of Uttarakhand. Nearly 60 villagers from the nearby villages participated in this programme along with the local forest range officer. Dr. Santosh Kumar Sahoo, Ms. Aruna Kumari Negi, Mr. Ranjeet Singh and Mr. Sanjeev Negi from the Conservation Himalayas conducted this programme. We talked about the need of empowering the grassroots communities to mobilize a community-based Human-monkey conflict mitigation campaign in the monkey affected villages. We emphasized on the ecological significance of the primate population and encouraged the villagers to develop positive attitude towards the rhesus and langurs. Although the villagers were out rightly showing their anger towards the growing monkey menace at the programme site, they appreciated the animal welfare message of reconciliation.

In the second part of the programme, Dr. Sahoo talked on the topic of Animal Welfare in the context of the present day threat to the animal habitat. He showed special primate poster developed by Zoo outreach organisation and explained about the primate diversity in India and about the major threats to primate species in different parts of the country. The issue of Human-monkey conflict was discussed with the participants in the light of the monkey menace in the local villages. The villagers interacted well regarding a sustainable management of the human-monkey conflict problem. ZOO kits on





"Monkey Manners (*Hindi Version*)" was distributed to all the participants. The kits on "Mind Your Monkey Manners" with booklet entitled *Monkey Manners Misplaced Monkey Mischief - How to handle* were well appreciated by the villagers particularly youths who not only made us feel that they have reverence for the monkeys but also they willingly accepted our appeal not to feed or tease monkeys.

On this occasion, the local forest range officer apprised the villagers of the root

causes of monkey population growth in the village crop land areas and attributed it to the rapid depredation of the potential natural habitats suitable to the survival of the primates under the natural condition.

Another programme was held on 17 February 2008 for the students at Govt. Senior School at Naugaon, Kanarichhina, Almora. SAVE FROGS was the theme of the programme. The programme started with a short interactive session on the "*Need for Wildlife Conservation in the Himalayan region*". This session was followed by a short talk about the need for Frog Conservation in India. This was also an interactive session as the students participated in the question-answer session on frogs and frog habitats. After this session, the science teacher of the school was invited to receive a special Zoo kit on Frogs and to give a short talk about the need for frog conservation. This session was followed by one SAVE FROG game activity. Four students who volunteered to play the role of frogs wearing frog masks of the Zoo Outreach Organisation. *Caring for the Frogs* was the theme of the game activity. The participants formed a frog chain and leaped together showing their survival needs for the ecological balance.

The principal of the school gave a talk on the significance of the frog conservation both in the forest and in village ecosystem. He emphasized on the need for a positive mindset of the people towards the frogs. He further stressed on the fact that there must be serious effort to protect the frog habitats if we have to save frogs from the brink



of extinction. Finally the participating students, teachers and forest staff took a joint pledge that they will not only try to learn about the frogs but also make all efforts to protect frogs in their local habitats.

The programme was well appreciated by the forest officials who encouraged Conservation Himalayas to organize similar type of the programmes for the students in the remotest part of the country side in Uttarakhand where frogs face considerable threats due to forest fire, forest loss and community apathy towards frogs and other wildlife.

Our AWF-08 programme was a success because of the fact that the all the participants of the AWF-08 programmes in Uttarakhand were impressed by the educational materials of the Zoo Outreach Organisation and took lots of interest in their animal welfare concepts.

Acknowledgements

Conservation Himalayas thankful to Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, for supplying us very attractive and useful educational materials on frogs and monkey manners. We are also thankful to DFO and Mr. B.S. Sahi, SDO, Almora forest Division.

Submitted by: Dr. Santosh Kumar Sahoo, Chairman, Conservation Himalayas, # 977, Sector 41-A, Chandigarh. <chimalayas@yahoo.com>

Teens Fair – an exhibition of Teens for Planet Earth projects at Dhaka, Bangladesh

Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh (WTB) arranged a day long 'Teens Fair – an exhibition of the environmental



service learning projects' at Birshrestha Munshi Abdur Rouf Rifles College, Dhaka, on 28 February, 2008. The fair was attended by students, 13 adult advisers with 14 environmental service learning projects. The objective of the exhibition was to appreciate the teens' enthusiasm and to celebrate the commitment of the adult advisers about their environmental service learning projects.

In June 2007, Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh introduced "Teens for Planet Earth" in Bangladesh, a global teen's project of Wildlife Conservation Society, New York, USA. The objective of the programme was to introduce the teens about environmental service learning project.

At the end of the Teens Fair the participants and the audience/visitors were able to: know more about environmental service learning; get a better understanding about the Teens for Planet Earth programme; get an opportunity to form more Teens for Planet Earth teams; to get an idea how to implement the knowledge in their own areas of interest; and to understand how to spark enthusiasm in teens and to maintain the level of enthusiasm.

The inauguration started with a famous country song sung by TPE adult adviser Mr. Ashraf Ahmed and his daughter Noboni. The song says: rich in biodiversity the mother earth has a country called Bangladesh which is the best of the best... Then Professor Md. Anwarul Islam, Chief Executive of the WTB, introduced the objectives of the fair and welcomed the audience. Mr. Enayetullah Khan, Chairman of the Trust welcomed the participants and inaugurated the workshop. Ms Gawsia Wahidunnessa Chowdhury, Coordinator, Teens for Planet Earth, Bangladesh, thanked the adult advisers and the teens for keeping their commitment and for participating in the Fair. WTB Chief Executive read out the letter of appreciation from Dr. Judy Unis of the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), the global coordinator, Teens for Planet Earth programme.

The teenagers, who worked on the projects for about a year under the guidance of their adult advisers/teachers, exhibited their projects. All the activities could be considered as practical lessons that has been narrated in their textbooks. This gives the teens an opportunity to understand the lessons what they are reading as theoretical texts. And the projects displayed were: mushroom - a source of protein and a source of medicine, plants for the planet earth, love for the green globe,



environmental education through art – known, unknown Sundarbans, hydroponics - the future plan for agriculture and fisheries, composite culture - a solution for sustainable development, song birds, plantation-to make the campus greener and economic importance of tree, visitors' behaviour in Zoo, conservation of endangered species, the role

of birds in environment conservation, pond ecosystem and pisciculture in pond, medical waste management and sericulture.

The projects were evaluated by a team of experts. The evaluation criteria were links of the project with textbooks, objectives, target groups of the project, communication with the adult advisers, visit to the



webpage www.teens4planetearth.com, record keeping, exhibition/display and teamwork, sustainability and the benefit to the community members.

Of the 14 projects, three were evaluated as best by the judges. These are 'mushrooms-a source of protein and a source of medicine' of St Joseph Higher Secondary School; 'composite culture' of Birshrestha Noor Mohammad Rifles Public School & College; and 'environmental education through art-known - unknown Sundarbans' of Birshrestha Munshi Abdur Rouf Rifles College.

At the end of the programme all the 56 teens of the 14 projects got 'Teens for Planet Earth certificate of Merit' for their achievements and in recognition of their extraordinary participation in this global initiative. **Submitted by: Gawsia W. Chowdhury, Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh. <gawsia@gmail.com>**

Teens for Planet Earth: A project by Madurai school students on *Passer domesticus*

As an initiative of 'Teens for Planet Earth' a project named 'Chittu Kuruvi' was registered by the students of Rotary Laharry Matriculation Hr. Sec. School, Madurai, Tamil Nadu, S. India. The objective of the project was to find out the population trend of *Passer domesticus* in and around Madurai, to look in to the causes of decline, to explore into the remedies to increase the population, to reach out public through media and to create awareness among kids, public and policy makers to promote conservation of this species.

The House Sparrow, *Passer domesticus* was very common in Madurai city some 15 to 30 years ago. This bird, in the recent times, is not common as it used to be. Occasional observations indicate that the population is declining particularly in urban areas. Alarming urban development, predators like cats are claimed to be some threats for the population decline of this species but the real cause has not been identified.

As part of this project a questionnaire survey was conducted at different parts of Madurai at different directions moving away from the heart of Madurai City towards City limit. The questionnaire was designed to understand the prevalence of *Passer domesticus* and to know the cause of decline of the species. The survey shows that local people have noticed the decline in the species number since it is not to be seen very commonly within the city limits. Less number of trees and want of space for nesting were reported to be the reasons for the absence of this species. An awareness was creating among farmers and villagers about conservation of this species. Remedial measures and large scale awareness programme will be conducted as a continuation of this project.

The students thankful to the Correspondent, Rotary Laharry Matriculation Hr. Sec. School, Mr. Anand, faculty for their assistance throughout this project. We are thankful to Jeanine Silversmith, WCS for her constant encouragement. **Submitted by: S. Prasanna Aarthi, R. Madhu Sweta, K. Krishna, K. Nagarajan, S. Bargavi and B.A. Daniel*, Rotary Laharry Matriculation Hr. Sec. School, Madurai *ZOO <badaniel@zooreach.org>; <prasanna_arthi@yahoo.co.in>**

Megamix Nature Club, Assam education programme on frogs and other activities

Amphibian Ark Programme: Megamix Nature Club conducted education programmes for its club members, students and community. As a part of it on 1 January 2008 the Club's youth activists visited Koabari Doloni wet land, a key habitat for aquatic life forms to observe the biology of frogs. The group witnessed the places of hibernation and water-logged areas where the tadpoles live. After the visit the group returned to Club premises where they participated in a classroom type lesson about frogs and frog myths. Another amphibian programme was held in Chetia Gaon on 16 January 2008. Students participated in this programme and enjoyed it since most of them are anglers and do fishing in the ponds. They often blame frogs for the

disappearance of their fishes. After the homely programme on frog and toad the student anglers came to know that the frogs are not eating the fishes. Further they found from the programme that the frogs are controlling insects and taking a big



part in reducing mosquito. This programme laid foundation for another programme for the Borbari Village Development committee and a programme was conducted in Borbari L.P. School on 10 February 2008. Twenty seven people attended this programme. The agenda for them would includes introduction of biodiversity, contribution of frogs towards agriculture and mosquito control, organic agriculture, global warming and sustainable fishing were explained. Zoo Outreach Organisation's different education packets of different species were demonstrated and provided.

Other programmes: On 20 January 2008 a daylong training for new NGO-"EROSION" on the topic "Youth for Environment" was held at Phata bihu Toli. Eighty participants attended this training. They were taught how biodiversity supports environmental safety, agricultural productivity, richness, health and hygiene. Mr. Debojit Phukan, Mr. Likhan Gohain from Megamix and Mr. Likhan Gohain and Mr. Tuiniram Phukan from 'Assam Science Society' were the resource persons. **Submitted by Mr. Debojit Phukan, Megamix Nature Club, Dhakuakhana, Assam**

