

Education Reports

Tata Zoo Environmental Camp

The Tata Steel Zoological Park initiated a programme to orient school children towards preserving Nature and wildlife. The first two camps were held in 2007 and 2008. This was a 3-day residential camp, attended by 46 girl children and 4 teachers from 4 Schools D.B.M.S. English School, Motilal Nehru Public School, K.S.M.S. Sakchi, & Rajendre Vidyalaya, Sakchi.

The three day residential camp was divided into nine sessions starting with formal inaugural and distribution of camp kits. During the second session, the participants were exposed to different colours of Nature by a noted cardiologist of the city, Dr. (Mrs) Vijaya Bharat who is also an avid nature lover. This was followed by an interactive quiz session on environment & wildlife coordinated by Ms. V. Chand.



Distribution of camp kits by Mrs. Bina Khemka

Day 2 participants were taken on a nature trek within the zoo campus and oriented towards identification of wild birds. Later the participants were taken around the zoo by Dr. M. Palit, Deputy Director of the Zoo and taught about the way wild animals are cared for and looked after by the zoo personnel. Later in the evening the participants



Distribution of participation certificates and mementoes by Mrs. Neelam Singh

were taught about adolescent behaviour of animals by Mrs. Ratna Choudhury and about ecosystem and human well being by Dr. Raghu Ram Tata, Associate Prof. XLRI, Jamshedpur.

Day 3 participants were taken for a nature trek in the zoo campus and asked to identify the birds themselves. A pictorial questionnaire was handed over to them to see how much they learned and, amazingly, all participants had identified the birds in the questionnaire. As a reward participants went on a boat ride in the Jayanti Sarovar. Afterwards, all participants were asked to identify wild animals based on its horn, antler, skull etc., followed by choosing names for young leopard cubs and their parents.

The valedictory session was presided over by Shri M. G. Singh, Secretary, Tata Steel Zoological Society and his wife Mrs. Neelam Singh who presented participation certificates and mementos to all the participants. **Submitted by S. K. Mahato, Curator and Camp coordinator, Tata Steel Zoological Park, Jharkhand.**



Group Photo of Tata Zoo Environmental Camp

Getting along with Elephants HECx at Sunshine Camp, Karnataka

About 57 Chiranthana Camp Sunshine students from various backgrounds and aged 8-14 years, participated in this program conducted end of April 2009. Most came from rural backgrounds but have



good knowledge about animals and are enthusiastic learners. The programme was based on Human Elephant Coexistence but used South Asian primates and South Asian bats colouring books. The objectives of the programme was for the students to understand meaning of wildlife, know Elephant Etiquette, understand the problems of today's elephants, to learn to appreciate elephants' behaviour, and to have a better understanding of primates and bat.

In the "Sound off" Game kids got completely involved enacting and imitating cats, birds, cows calls very well. This game functioned as an icebreaker so the organizer could talk more about wildlife and introduce the day's theme of HECx. A concept map followed by attitude assessment



activities done to comprehend students behaviour and feelings.

The session on general information about forests in India led into major elephant habitats and a task of listing examples of elephant symbols used in everyday life in India. They were asked to categorize these examples under art, cinema, sports, advertising, songs etc.

Using Ele-Kit contents such as quiz, friendship band, arm band and Eswari - Elango finger puppet chat excited and encouraged students. Protect resources and save elephants - food, water, shelter game was played to promote understanding of today's elephant problems. Children took oath to conserve nature and said NO to animal products. They agreed to adopt formula 'RRR' - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. Keeping childrens' interest in the mind, a drawing competition was conducted on primates and bats. Prior to the competition they were taught

about the four types of primates, their habitats and threats. Similarly they learnt about bats home, colours, kinds, their importance and threats to bats. They displayed their art entries and the best drawings and participants were given primates poster as token of appreciation.



The class was encouraged to form a Nature Club to facilitate learning more about wildlife and contribute to saving Mother Earth and her natural resources to improve our planet.

My programmes have been successful just because of the Zoo Outreach education materials. Tool kits are working as Teaching Aids and the approach is learning while playing. Thanks to US Fish and Wildlife Service, Columbus Zoo, Elephant Family, Twycross Zoo, and Schonbrunn Zoo.



Submitted by S. Mamtha, Faculty, DPIRS, Mysore.
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Summer Camp at Mysore Zoo

Having been associated with Mysore Zoo and its education activities for 15 years gives impetus to carry out more such activities. Mysore Zoo or Sri Chamarajendra Zoological Gardens, is a forerunner in conducting Zoo Education in the country with increased activities every year, including quality of programmes, and number of individuals reached, e.g. the summer camp which



increased from 20-35 individuals and batches from 1 to 3. I could interact with three batches of Camp students. For first batch I used Bear educational material. The

session began with students telling what they knew about bears of which they had some from nature programmes in television, as well as other sources such as friends, relatives, parents, books, etc. They were aware of the dancing bears; a few knew it was illegal and wouldn't hesitate to complain about it to the police. In this programme students learned about different kinds of bears in the country and those housed in Mysore zoo. What bears eat in the wild and their preferences of food were conveyed. Many children believed the myth that bears tickle humans to death and were set right. They received Bear material from Zoo Outreach Organisation and read through the materials of the Agra Bear Rescue Centre and the ABC's of Wildlife. *Rakhi* tying, masks, and taking a pledge to save bears by not patronizing dancing bear show gave the memorable activity to reinforce what they had heard.



The theme for the second batch was Daily life Wildlife, Conservation and Welfare. The programme began by asking students to name a few of the wildlife they had seen around their house, school, park or playground. Butterfly, millipede, centipede, spiders and other invertebrates were not mentioned as there is a peculiar bias towards larger animals, particularly mammals. In the kit students worked with a puzzle completing a butterfly with invertebrate pictures, referring to the clues given overleaf. This generated thinking and gives them hands on work. The students pledged to look, learn and protect the invertebrates around them.



Bats and Rats was the theme of the third batch. I asked if students were aware of the wildlife around them and taught the importance of it from tree top to grass root! Between these, one can find many living forms. Bats from the tree canopy to rodents in the grass represent Life between the two levels.



Students were happy to wear the bats, rodents mask and to tie the rakhi on one another. The students with rodent mask walked like rodents while the bats tried their hands hanging upside down.

In all the three batches, the students enjoyed using the materials. This method of teaching is different for them; they had never used these kind of materials ever before. I thank the Mysore Zoo Director, staff, Summer camp students for giving me an opportunity and Zoo Outreach Organisation, for the materials. **Submitted by Tanuja, Mysore.** <tanujadh@gmail.com>

Bat Awareness Program in Nepal

Bats are least studied and known species in Nepal. Out of 1116 species in the world only 53 species



Lectures among adults in Madam Pokhara Valley

have been reported from some parts of Nepal. There are many potential sites where they have not been studied. Bat conservation in Nepal has been virtually ignored but for very occasional foreign researchers until some people in different localities of Nepal began bat conservation work. There are many misconceptions regarding bats and they are often killed meaninglessly. Conservation must start from the grass root level.

This BCI sponsored education project (assisted by Natural Resources Research/Conservation Center (NaReCon) and ZOO/CCINSA/SANIZE targeted Palpa district which is rich in biodiversity and has an agricultural land over 2000 hectares. Large numbers of insectivorous bats consume large numbers of insects in the area. These bats have been helping local people by reducing their expenses in using fertilizers and pesticides. But local people in that area have not realized their importance. Along with insectivorous bats, fruit-eating bats such as *Pteropus giganteus* also have been roosting in that



School teaching among students near *Pteropus* roosts

area. Other roosting sites of bats (caves and trees) are present in Palpa district, such as Siddhapani Cave, Hattilake Cave, Gure cave, Siddha Cave, Balsiddha Cave, Ridika Cave and Siddesor Cave.

An awareness campaign on bats was conducted Jan - Nov 08 in Madanpokhara Valley of Palpa district. Different programs were organized to make people familiar with bats. Positive impact has been observed in that area after this campaign. Now, many misconceptions related to bats have been replaced by accurate knowledge.

Making a difference

1. We used a combination of approaches including teaching through schools, published literature for youngsters, radio media and publishing articles in local magazines, conducting competitions and providing suggestions for promoting the need for changed attitudes and behaviour towards bats.
2. Group discussions on the importance of bats were organized among community members, social worker, local conservationist, journalist, teachers, where suggestions for bat conservation were exchanged.
3. Broadcasted through different conservation related programs from two F.M. stations. Around 5 million people heard this program.
4. Articles were published in journals, magazines, newspaper to literate persons aware on importance of bats.

5. Fifteen students from Institute of Forestry (IoF) and other colleges from different districts throughout Nepal participated orientation program on different aspects of bats. Materials developed for Phase II were leaflets, "Bat conservation in Palpa" and posters in English and "Bat conservation in Nepal: An Educational Kit" in



Materials preparation during school teaching

Nepali language, and posters in English - Three schools on the periphery of roosting sites of *Pteropus giganteus* were selected for teaching purpose.

- Students were assisted in making wall magazines on different aspects of bats.
- Meetings with school headmasters of 3 schools of Palpa District were conducted with lectures on bats which had a positive impact on students.
- Impact of the overall program was measured by using structured questionnaires both before and after the programme. Above 75% level of knowledge has been increased among this group.

Acknowledgement:

We are thankful to BCI, NaReCon, IUCN SSC CSG, ZOO, CCINSA, SANIZE, Lube Foundation for various help. **Submitted by Hari Adhikari, Coordinator, NaReCon. Email: harisubash@2002yahoo.com.**

Teaching about Amphibians at Sethu Bahndan Trust Summer Camp

One of our batch-mates at the Teachers for Tigers (T4T) training in Mysore invited me to visit the summer camp he runs and to conduct a programme.

There were two batches of students, younger ones (below 6th Standard) and older ones (7th Standard and above) from different schools around Mysore, but from the same residential area. They were working on an assignment independently and after their assignments they gathered around me. I conducted a programme on amphibians.

First I asked them what came to their mind when they think of rain – they related with crop, farmer, etc and finally frogs. I asked them what they knew about frogs. They knew it was an amphibian: that it live both in water and land, that they come in different colours, that they made lot of noise after a heavy rain and that they eat insects.

Taking the cue that they already knew so much about the frogs, I could then pass on information about the threats to frogs like insecticides, pesticides, disease, habitat destruction, etc. I also described the role of amphibians in our environment, how they consume disease vectors that harm our crops, how they help us by controlling mosquitoes, etc was shared. I also described how frogs used to be caught live for dissection and study in the laboratories but now many people have switched to computer models for teaching the same. However, amphibians are still considered delicacies and are utilised for food in some places. I asked if they ever had killed a frog, and they replied with a united "no"! Some of the students were afraid of frogs because their skin is scary. This provided me an opening to talk about amphibians' skin and how it is susceptible it is for Chytrid fungus.

We handed out the Amphibian packet and introduced all materials. Students put on their mask and played frog by croaking and hopping which they enjoyed. We ended the programme with their commitment to help frogs survive.

I wish to thank Mr. Krishnan, Sethu Bahndan Trust, the students of the Summer Camp as well as the Zoo Outreach Organisation ZOO, Coimbatore.





Submitted by Tanuja, Email: tanujadh@gmail.com

Amphibian Workshop 2009
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Greetings from Zoo Negara,

We are pleased to inform you that, we are organizing and hosting another Amphibian Workshop 2009. It will be a 4 days in-house program focussing on a more hands on *ex-situ* husbandry management protocol from quarantine to breeding them. The workshop will be facilitated by Ron Gagliardo (Amphibian Ark Training officer) and Dr. Brad Wilson (Atlanta Zoo) For more information on the workshop, please log onto our website at; www.zoonegara.org.my

Hope to see you all in Kuala Lumpur. Thank you.

Regards,
Felix

