

Fortnight training on aspects in Wildlife conservation and education projects – Intern report

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Post Graduate course in Bioresources Management includes internship training for a period of about 15 days in an area that fall within the course syllabus. We opted to take up training on Wildlife Conservation and Conservation Education. On application Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore allowed to take up this training from 16-30th June 2008. During our training we focused on three aspects: i) Amphibian Ark (AArk) to understand the principles of the project and to take part in field work locally; ii) a survey to understand the attitude of the people who live in Human Elephant Conflict HEC areas at selected villages near Coimbatore and iii) to take part in Intensive Educator Skills Training organized by ZOO.

Under AArk project, our task was to understand the aims of the global initiative and to involve the public by organizing signature campaign in the city. We set up signature campaign at VOC Park Zoo and explained Zoo visitors about AArk, status of amphibians, three groups of amphibians, total number of species in the world and in South Asia, number of endemic species, and problem faced by



the frogs towards chytrid disease. We also created awareness among the visitors with colorful education packets developed by ZOO containing mask, booklet, placards, sticker and raki. We built interest to the visitors about declination of frogs and we received signature from the observers. This campaign gave an opportunity to meet different people with different thoughts on Amphibians. By this programme we got wide knowledge about amphibians and its conservation.

HEC – Human Elephant Conflict is one of the major issues that arise in areas where elephants and people live close to each other. Our task was to conduct a survey at selected villages using a



questionnaire developed by ZOO. The purpose of the survey was to know the attitude of the villagers about the elephant visit to their village in Human Elephant Conflict area in selected villages near Coimbatore. Before the data collection, we translated the questionnaire into Tamil. We selected two villages namely Periya Jambukandi and Varappalayam which is at the foot hills of Western Ghats and about 30 kms away from the City that has a record of elephant visitation for few years. We interviewed all groups of people like villagers, parents, teachers and Children. We enjoyed surveying people about HEC in their village. The data collected was computed in Access programme and tabulated. The survey declares an ample of information on frequency of elephant visitation, mitigating steps taken by the villagers, damage details due to elephant visit, attitude of the people, children towards elephants.

We also attended a three day Intensive Educator Skills Training from 25-27th June. The main focus of the training was to provide an effective source of activities teaching strategies to reach children and evaluation tools to assess their efficacy and, to provide information



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about various other local/global conservation initiatives. This training helped us to learn and enrich our experience. We learned many teaching tools that can be tried with a wide range of audience from children to adults and met many scholars from different States. We also used this opportunity to build new relationships with them .We involved in several activities such as sound off, brain mapping, species information and classification, understanding dramatic decrease in habitats and population as a result of human behavior, debate, drama, song writing and many indoor and out door games to teach wildlife teaching. The intensive training programme gave a huge range of practices and skills.

We received brilliant ideas and thoughts from scholars which were of great use for our project; also we improved our knowledge regarding wildlife conservation by gathering information from them. These were the most amazing experience we received in our training programme. Many thanks to Ms. Sally Walker for allowing us to take up this training and Dr. B.A. Daniel for his constant encouragement and guidance.

