
WILD LIFE WEEK -- An Indian Zoo Education Boon

Wildlife Week was declared a national event by the Indian Board for Wildlife more than 30 years ago. It is probably the most assiduously celebrated wildlife "event" in India. Almost any forest department owned zoo or wildlife wing in India can get some funding from their government to celebrate Wildlife Week. Over the years, nature clubs and conservation organisations also celebrate Wildlife Week. This page is a sort of pourpouri of Wildlife Week Reports and events.

NATIONAL ZOO, NEW DELHI

The National Zoological Park celebrated it's 40th Wildlife Week in a big way by involving people of all age groups 'from all walks' of life. Some activities were:

a) For children between 5 to 16 years of age: Various competitions like painting, essay, mask making, cartoon and clay modelling, especially for the blind children were organised. The response was overwhelming, more than 3000 students participated in them.

b) For adults: A programme named "Zoo: An Inside View" was organised for the enlightenened few who wanted to know more about the working of the zoo organisation and management. They were taken round the Park in groups of 10 each and shown stores, kitchen, hospital i.e. the actual process of preparation and distribution of feed and health, care facilities, etc.

c) For deprived children: Slum children who otherwise do not get the opportunity to come and visit the zoo were brought to the Park in vehicles hired by us and shown around the zoo. The children were also given snacks and lunch during their stay here.

Besides this during the week children upto 12 years of age were given free entry. A film show were organised twice daily during the week to make people aware of their wildlife heritage and to motivate them for conservation.

The inauguration for these week long ceremonies was honoured by Addl. I.G.F. Mr. S.C.Dey, IFS by lighting a lamp on 2nd October 1996. It would have been virtually impossible for us to hold all these activities on our own but for the help and support from the Ministry. We are thank-

ful to the Ministry for the concern that they have shown to make this programme a success.

Report submitted by Director, National Zoo, New Delhi.

SEPAHIJALA ZOO, TRIPURA

Senior Forest Ranger delivered a talk entitled "Role of Zoo in Wildlife Conservation" at the start of Wildlife Week which was broadcast from the All India Radio, Agartala Centre on 1 October 1996. Twenty schools around the Sepahijala Zoo were contacted to arrange participation in Wildlife Week '96 and all agreed for participation. The two days programme was fixed on 15th and 16th October 1996. Materials from Zoo Outreach Organisation were collected and utilised for the occasion. All India Radio, Agartala announced the programme well ahead of time and frequently which helped to have a good gathering in the zoo. Many participants ignored all the inconvenience to come a long distance on foot.

On 15th October 74 students in four groups attended the "Sit and Draw Competition. Later in the morning up to lunch-time there was an "On the Spot Essay Writing competition" in two groups on the subjects 1) Necessity for conservation of wildlife and 2) Sepahijala and wildlife conservation of which 28 participants attended. Most of the participants were accompanied by interested guardians and teachers.

The following day was really a grand event for Sepahijala Zoo with all types of visitors visiting the zoo, enquiring of staff regarding wildlife and participating in the quiz and finally a seminar. Six schools participated in the interesting wildlife quiz, which was the first in Sepahijala with six of their best teams up to 12th Standard. The programme was arranged in the Auditorium Hall of the Forest Training School, nearby where at least 300 persons attended with keen interest. Mr. Pradush Roy, Honorable Member Wildlife Advisory Board presided over the programme and also distributed the certificates and prizes among



Prize distribution for the Sit and Draw Competition at Sepahijala Zoo, Tripura, Wildlife Week, 1996 (Photo by Raja Studio, Tripura)



Mita Bannerjee, I.F.S., Wildlife Warden, Madras addresses the gathering at Wildlife Week celebrations at Madras Veterinary College.

the winners. All the participants was given a certificate.

Appeals of the wildlife warden towards conservation of wildlife were distributed among all attends. Attractive materials supplied by Zoo Outreach Organisation were distributed until the supply ran out. The prizes were all wildlife books. Soon after completion of the function all attendants expressed their views to continue such awareness programmes in future.

My personal commitment is to continue to fulfill the educational objective of the zoo by these types of public programmes. Our Chief Wildlife Warden is always keen in encouraging me to go ahead with a positive result. Although we may be beginners in conservation education in the zoo, our continuous effort can bring us ahead.

Report submitted by Ajit Kumar Bhowmik, Sr. Forest Ranger, In-charge of Sepahijala Zoo

MADRAS VETERINARY COLLEGE WILDLIFE CLUB

The Wildlife Club of Madras Veterinary College celebrated Wildlife Week for the 6th year after its founding in 1990. A function was held on 8 November to acknowledge various competitions were held earlier in October with participation by more than 115 students.

Ms. Mita Banerjee, Wildlife Warden, Chennai was Chief Guest. She gave a special address on "Endangered Wild Animals and Conservation". She also distributed prizes to winners of various competitions. Some of the competitions were Elocution in English and in Tamil, painting competition on saving wildlife, poster designing competition on pollution, Rangoli competition and Twenty questions quiz.

Dignitaries from the Madras Veterinary College gave felicitation address and special address. The function was attended by students and staff of the college.

Coimbatore Zoological Park and Conservation Centre

Coimbatore Zoo celebrated Wildlife Week on 1st and 3rd October with a written test and oral test to which Coimbatore colleges had been invited. PSG and Krishnamai College were venue for the two days with many of the 38 invited colleges participating. Prizes were distributed for the best test performance including the Kestrel Rolling Trophy, instituted last year. The trophy is awarded and a photo is taken of the winner and presented with a Certificate to the school.

This year the quiz was very tough and the topmost score was 58 out of 100 marks. Shri V. N. Singh, Conservator of Forests, Coimbatore, distributed the prizes.

For the first round of activities, the Coimbatore Zoo staff had constructed a superb wildlife quiz for higher level students, an Intercollegiate Wildlife Quiz Contest of three pages. The duration of the test was one hour with 100 marks and 8 sections.

The first section of this quiz programme was a set of ten true/false questions about animals from around the world, such as "Rattlesnakes are non-poisonous snakes found in North America." True or false. Second section was a cross-word puzzle with all wildlife questions. Third section was a matching quiz for predators and prey with predators from both animal and plant life. There was a section devoted to information about states, such as which three states encompass the Eastern Ghats.



Animal parts contest from Coimbatore Zoological Park

A particularly innovative part of the quiz was the "One and Only One" section in which participants were asked to fill in the blanks of questions such as "The only true nocturnal monkey, the only mammals with a body carapace, the only South American species of bear," etc.

There was a section on Natural Parks and Sanctuaries which asked participants to connect species, and ecosystems with the correct park. There was also a "logo contest" of well-known conservation organisations and their logos to match the name with the logo.

Finally there was a selection of horns, antlers, tusks and other mammal and bird parts with instruction to identify them. This is reproduced on the previous page.

While the lengthy process of acquiring land for the zoo goes on, the Coimbatore Zoo Staff is not idle. They conduct a variety of educational activities to prepare the Coimbatore public for the very unique zoo which will begin construction in a few months.

If anyone is interested is a copy of the Coimbatore Zoo Quiz to use as a model for their own contests they may like to write to Coimbatore Zoo, Pioneer House, Peelamedu, Coimbatore 4.



Kamala Nehru Park, Indore

The Indore Zoo usually takes any opportunity it can to celebrate wildlife and this year was no exception. Particularly well-known for innovative parades and rallies, this year saw costumes and clowns, students in uniform marching like soldiers for wildlife and animals dressed for the occasion.

Wildlife Week was inaugurated by Dr. Rekha Gandh, Chairman of the Public Relations Committee. There was a display of the ZOOS' PRINT calendar issue of 1993 which featured the famous birth of wild origin Bengal tiger cubs at Indore Zoo on 30 August 1992.

New graphics were designed showing the variation in zoos throughout the centuries. There was an exhibition also of the paintings submitted for the various contests. The rally was joined by the staff of the zoo, school children of Sannita Higher Secondary School and others including a giant and two dwarfs.

There were painting competitions, drawing competitions, and essay writing competitions. There were film shows daily for the whole week. The new Dr. Salim Ali Nature Club in Holker College was inaugurated with students of S.Sc. Zoology and Staff, including the Principle and HOD. This may have been Indore Zoo's biggest Wildlife Week.

Corrigendum

In the paper "Characterization of Mithun: A semi-wild Animal of North-eastern region" by S. K. Prasad as senior author published in January, 1997 issue of ZOOS' PRINT, the para 4 on page 34 the sentence reading "In contrast to cattle, the diploid chromosome number of this species is 28" contains a printing error.

The diploid chromosome number of mithun is 58 not 28. The latter was a typographical error on the part of the typesetters and Editor.

Also Dr. S. C. Gupta is a Senior Scientist and not Head, Immunogenetics and Biochemical Genetics as was published.

We apologise -- both to the author and to our readers -- for these errors.

Editor