

Education Reports

Tata Steel Zoological Society-Biodiversity and Wildlife Conservation awareness Residential Camp

Tata Steel Zoological Society has been organizing Residential Nature Camp for the past 8 years for the girl students. The objective is to promote each girl child's personal development, to inspire the young women of today to become environmentally responsible and conscientious citizens of tomorrow. It was organised from 8-11 May 2015 in which 41



Breakaway session on "Animal Management" being conducted by Curator Sanjay Mahato

girls and four teachers from four schools - SDSM School for Excellence, Chinmaya Vidyalaya South Park, DBMS English School and Rajkiya Madhya Vidyalaya, Sundarnagar participated. The camp was financially supported by the Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change, Government of India.

The Chief Guest Sabah Alam Ansari, IFS, Divisional Forest Officer - Jamshedpur Forest Division, formally inaugurated the camp on 8 May and addressed to the participants and appreciated the initiative taken by



Breakaway Session on "Health & Care" being conducted by Veterinary Officer Manik Palit

Tata Zoo to educate the girls and stated about the needs of conservation of biodiversity. Thereafter, the camp coordinator Seema Rani explained the schedule, rules and regulations and what they may expect from the camp. Sanjay Mahato, Curator gave a presentation on "Tata Steel Zoological Park and its role in conservation of Wildlife- Butterfly as a case history". Followed by a very interesting and interactive session on "Animal Welfare" by the city's renowned animal activist, Kishore Oza. Ajay Kumar - Range Forest Officer, Sonua Block, conducted another interactive session on "Forests and Wildlife".

On the second day, the camp started with the yoga session by Anusha Karmakar from Karmakar Yoga School. Then participants were divided into three groups for breakaway sessions on "Health & Care" led by Manik Palit - Deputy Director cum Veterinary Officer, "Animal Management" led by



Campers with Rajani, a rescued Asian Elephant calf at the Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary

Sanjay Mahato - Curator and "Education & Research" led by Seema Rani - Biologist cum Education Officer. For half a day, the teams were attached to these Zoo officers who took them on a field visit within the Zoo and demonstrated to them about their daily activities in the Zoo. After the field visit, each group had to present to the entire camp on what they learnt on the subjects they were assigned and how the Zoo functions. In the evening, there was a nature, wildlife and biodiversity quiz conducted Sandeep Raj Singh where challenging questions were posed to the participants and interesting trivia was shared with them.

On the third day, a bird watching session was held at Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary. The participants were taught to identify different kinds of bird species, which they came across with the help of the "Bird Identification Sheet" which had pictorial descriptions. After this, the participants were taken on a guided tour of the Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary. The high point

of tour was when the participants came across a herd of wild elephants along with their calves. It was the first time for almost all participants that they had ever encountered elephants in the wild. There was another presentation at the zoo in the evening by Rahul Tiwary and Sandeep Raj Singh on "Snakes in and around Jamshedpur".

On the final day, they visited Indian Council for Agricultural Research Complex for Eastern Region. The scientists at ICAR Research Complex showed the participants modern techniques of grafting, air-layering, irrigation etc. and the pioneering work they have undertaken for strategic and adaptive research for efficient integrated management of natural



Camp participants on field visit to ICAR Research Complex at Plandu, Ranchi

resources to enhance productivity of agricultural production system through agro forestry and horticultural crops.

The valedictory was held at the zoo. The Guest of Honour, Rishad Chinoy, Secretary, Tata Steel Zoological Park felicitated the participants, teachers and volunteers. The participants were presented with certificates and each of them was also presented with a copy of the book "Birds of the Indian Subcontinent – A Field Guide (Bombay Natural History Society)" and a Zoo memento. The participants, on their part, shared their four days' experiences with all present and how the camp had made a difference to their perception about wildlife and biodiversity. **Submitted by: Ms. Seema Rani. Email: cmarani00@rediffmail.com**

Van Mahotsav celebrated at Tata Steel Zoological Park

Tata Steel Zoological Park celebrated *Van Mahotsav* on 4 July with the commemorative planting of fruit bearing saplings by Rishad Chinoy, Secretary – Tata Steel Zoological Society. This year, the zoo has made *Van Mahotsav* more inclusive by involving its own staff in tree plantation. The purpose of this involvement is to extend the care they currently provide to captive animals at the Zoo and make it



Rishad Chinoy Secretary - Tata Steel Zoological Park participating in the Van Mahotsav celebrations at Tata Zoo

even more comprehensive by also tending to trees planted by them. The motto of the *Van Mahotsav* celebrations this year is *Ek Prani Ek Pedh (One Animal One Plant)* – where the zoo staff has taken an oath to plant one tree for every animal that resides in the zoo.

The trees planted include Mango, Pomegranate, Jackfruit, Kendu, Cashewnut, Guava and Amra. Once it mature, these trees will bear fruit, which will be



Zoo staff officers planting saplings inside animal enclosures during Van Mahotsav today

consumed by a host of free-ranging animals and birds that frequent the zoo premises for food, especially the Greater Indian Fruit Bat. These bats traverse vast distances in search of food and the presence of fruit trees in close proximity to their colony will undoubtedly benefit them. In order to preserve and attract these birds and animals, Tata zoo promotes children, students, civil society and corporates in and around Jamshedpur to plant more and more of these trees so that the legacy of Jharkhand's biodiversity is preserved for future generations.

Further, the Zoo has taken the initiative to make more and more people aware of the value of biodiversity by organizing various educational activities throughout the year with the aim of educating one lakh students and planting 50000 trees in the Kolhan region of Jharkhand by the year 2020. **Submitted by: Ms. Seema Rani. Email: cmarani00@rediffmail.com**

Odonate Workshop and Indian Amphibian Photo Exhibition at Sundarvan, Nature Discovery Centre



David Raju indulging participants in amphibian stories at the photography exhibition

On 4-5 July, 2015 Sundarvan and Gujarat Council on Science & Technology (GUJCOST) welcomed the monsoons by organizing a two days of Odonate Workshop to increase awareness about the amazing world of the lesser charismatic species, dragonflies and damselflies. Aimed for a limited group, upon prior registration, the workshop included learning about these stunning insects, their photography, field visit to Thol lake, monitoring, discussions and more. A group of 40 participants from different fields including school and college students made the workshop very interesting. The field visit gave chance for observation, conversation, ideas of what



Sundarvan team & workshop participants with Dr Narottam Sahoo, Advisor & Member Secretary, GUJCOST

each one could do to help the dragonflies and documenting these species in Gujarat.

An Indian Amphibian Photo Exhibition was also held open to park visitors on the same dates. India is home for close to 350 species of amphibians of which the exhibition showcased a wide variety in terms of photographs, common names, and information regarding diversity, life cycle and threats. It was an opportunity for people to be aware and view such beautiful diversity of colours in a single space. Invited resource person, David Raju, Naturalist and photographer conducted the photo exhibition and workshop. As an outcome of the workshop, the team at Sundarvan distributed a booklet for beginner's introduction to dragonflies and damselflies and along with the participants we started an informal 'Dragonflies of Gujarat' group on Facebook which can be used to encourage young naturalists as well as documentation. The Odonate workshop was the first of a series of workshops, which may be conducted in future at Sundarvan. **Submitted by: Meena Nareshwar, Senior Programme Co-ordinator, CEE, S. Sivakumar, Park Manager, Sundarvan & Jignasa Patel, Education Officer, Sundarvan. Email: jignasa.patel@ceeindia.org**



Serious field photography by participants



Being a child for learning Echolocation

Discovering the World of Bats at Sundarvan, Nature Discovery Centre- Summer Workshop

At Sundarvan, summer began with the warm glow of curiosity lighting up faces of kids as we ushered in 'Nature and Art' workshops at the park. Young explorers of 7 to 13 year old participated in two separate batches of 6-day workshops, which included learning about nature through art as well as a night-camp to learn about the nocturnal life that comes alive in the dark. Day one began with introduction, games of 'Who Am I' and a discovery of which animal they most relate to as the students find out about all the mammals, birds & reptiles of the park in a guided zoo visit & nature trail. The artistic skill of these young minds was in full swing during next three days to paint a forest and an ocean ecosystem on a piece of wall near entrance of the park and glass painting with nature reflecting through. Children did everything from brainstorming to deciding the theme, pouring their dream on paper and group work to painting it all on a wall, under the guidance of a team of artists from Art Pulse. It was pure joy to watch the children learn about mixing of colours, shades and relate it with nature.

On the fifth day, the evening started with pebble painting and rolled on to adventure activities, introduction to bird watching, star gazing, bat observation and night trails. The participants were thrilled to find the nocturnal creatures out and about, such as porcupine and hedgehog in exhibits as well as free-ranging bats and variety of spiders and insects. After their adventures, the young explorers were all geared to spend the night at Sundarvan.

Feedback sessions and certificate presenting followed. One by one the kids left, carrying their artwork and beautiful memories promising to return to the park soon. The workshops were indeed challenging and rewarding for the team in terms of knowledge exchange, smiles and bringing out creativity inspired from nature.

On World Environment Day, our team at Sundarvan wanted our visitors and public to realise that in our seven billion dreams we often forget to leave a little space for animals. An evening bat awareness programme, 'Discover Bats', was organized to shed light on how we share this one planet with the only mammal of the world that can fly – the Bats. A group of more than 40 participants; which included active kids with their parents and curious teenagers, saw in wonder, natural bat roost sites at Sundarvan Park. A childlike understanding was observed while 'Echolocation' was explained with an outdoor game. The pictures during presentation kept the children engaged while facts and messages were dispelled and the cool summer evening offered respite.

A walk after dark was organised so that participants could witness bats leaving their roost sites to feed. Surprise was in store for the team as participant questions ranged from myth busting to habitat to how can one help. During this year's World Environment Day celebrations, our team learnt that people want to help but often they are not aware of how their little actions can have huge impacts.

Submitted by: Jignasa Patel, Education Officer, Sundarvan. Email: jignasa.patel@ceeindia.org

Painting a forest on the wall

