

Recent education activities of Sundarvan, Ahmedabad, Gujarat

Celebrating 20th Birthday of Indian Rock Pythons

In 1995, two Indian Rock Pythons (*Python molurus*) were born in captivity. On 14 July 2015, celebrated their 20th birthday with a Zoo Reptile Fundraiser and Snake Awareness Poster Release. The party started with measurement of length and weight of the 20 year old Pythons, done for the first time in front of park visitors. One Indian Rock Python weighed 20 kg and its length is 9 ft. 6" and another one weighed 22 kg and its length is 9 ft. 3" and this gave people behind-the-scenes seats to witness monitoring of reptiles at a Zoo. This was followed by click a

can be made available to schools, institutions or industries upon request. People of all ages gathered at the park, attracted to the chance of clicking a photograph with the Indian Rock Python. There were many who arrived too late for the selfie but did not leave disgruntled, instead, they stayed for the awareness events and were still willing to make donations. Apart from management of an enthusiastic crowd, our team learned that people are willing to donate funds for a good cause and also looking for opportunities for gaining more information on reptiles.



Snake Awareness Poster Release

python-in-a-selfie to raise funds for zoo reptiles at Sundarvan (handling was prohibited and the snakes were at safe distance from the visitors).

Snake Awareness Poster Release was done by Mr. Dipak Patel. It is a set of two posters containing information regarding some of the commonly found venomous and non-venomous snakes of India which

Moth Watch at Sundarvan

On 31 July 2015, we organized a night of Moth Watch to encourage interest in lesser charismatic species such as moths, begin informal documentation and introduce individuals to macro photography. The night began with an interactive talk by Mr. Kedar Champhekar, Programme Officer, CEE who took us into the fascinating life of moths. A mercury lamp was set up to reflect light on a white sheet to attract moths and other six-legged beings in the area.



Curious participants of 'Moth Watch' at Sundarvan along with insects and spiders of the night

Mr. Ramjee Nagarajan, Programme Coordinator, CEE enlightened us with a basic introduction, various tips and suggestions on macro photography. His session went live as the participants witnessed and photographed different species of insects such as moths, beetles, moth caterpillars, leaf hoppers, tortoise beetles, wasps, midges etc., close to the light. Some were attracted to it, others just happened to be crawling around in the dark while many like the toad, came curiously for a quick snack. The night concluded with Mr. Ramjee Nagarajan's introduction of 'India Biodiversity Portal' as a means of identifying species and documentation.



Conducting an artifact aided presentation for awareness

Being encouraged by National Moth Week (18 - 26 July 2015), Sundarvan team conducted this event for the first time. Before the actual event, several nights and days of insect watch was carried out with the help of Sundarvan's enthusiastic volunteer, Mr. Pavan Patel. It was no surprise that all sorts of creatures of the dark crawled towards the light, carrying vivid colours on their back. Our small group of children and adults who attended the session coozied up to the idea of appreciating magnificent moths. They also got to see little crawly bugs and several spiders out on a prowl.

Exploring the amazing world of dragonflies and damselflies

The first August weekend celebrates Friendship Day and it filled Sundarvan with a batch of over 60 curious students each, from St. Kabir School (Saturday, 2 August) and Prarthana Global School, Modasa (Sunday, 3 August) who decided to be friends with dragonflies and damselflies. The workshop was conducted as part of a workshop series that has been initiated by Sundarvan team to encourage learning and awareness about lesser charismatic species. Students from 4th to 10th class participated in interactive sessions about Odonates, fascinating facts, documentation, photography and a field visit to Thol Bird Sanctuary. Students were very excited to learn and delighted at the idea that the colourful insects they saw on a projector screen could actually be spotted on the field. Once at the field-site, the students split into small groups and hurried gestures to resource persons meant they had spotted an insect; be it a dragonfly or a beetle. It was most rewarding to see their interest and change of perspective in observing the world around them.



St. Kabir school students capturing a pair of insects at Thol

The various sessions were conducted by Mr. Ramjee Nagarajan, Programme Coordinator, CEE; Mr. S. Sivakumar, Park Manager, Sundarvan and Ms. Jignasa Patel, Education Officer, Sundarvan. Our helping team also included trained Sundarvan volunteers, Mr. Pavan Patel, Mr. Dhrumil Shah and Ms. Kaushavi Patel.

An introductory beginner's booklet about dragonflies and damselflies and participation certificates were distributed to students as well as teacher. They appreciated the efforts taken by Sundarvan team as we encouraged them to contribute their colourful sightings to the Facebook group 'Dragonflies of Gujarat'. **Submitted by: Mr. S. Sivakumar, Park Manager, Ms. Jignasa Patel, Education Officer, Sundarvan. Email: sundarvan@ceeindia.org**



Workshop session with Prarthana Global School students In the amphitheatre at Sundarvan