

JCT-BCSG capacity building seminar / training on handling Avian Emergencies during Makar-Sankranti (kite flying festival)

A training program meant for educating participants on avian emergencies during Makar-Sankranti festival (due to kite flying) was conducted on 27 December 2015 at Ahmedabad. The program was attended by more than 70 participants from different corners of the state. The first presentation was made at AMA Ahmedabad, followed by a live training session by Jivdaya staff and doctors at Jivdaya Charitable Trust (JCT), Panjrapole.

The first session was chaired by the Mayor of Ahmedabad, Gautam Shah, senior state forest department officials, senior doctors of JCT and vice-president of BCSG, Bhavbhuti Parasharya.

The technical session was held at JCT campus, for teaching participants about handling emergencies, especially injured birds, during Makar-Sankranti. Participants were divided into five teams each, and routed through different training stalls, with emphasis on medical basics like first aid techniques, bird-handling, feeding and rescue methodology. The programme was appreciated by the visiting participants, who learned a lot from the team of professional doctors and volunteers, working dedicatedly for wildlife rescue and release.



Birding in LRK : 23-24 January 2016

A bird-watching program was organized at Little Rann of Kachchh (LRK), Wild Ass Sanctuary, Bajana, with an aim to study the avian diversity of the Rann, especially Raptors, which are seen in good numbers in the winter. The participants were asked to report at Bajana Forest Office by 9.00 am on 23 January 2016. The special dignitaries present during the morning session were Hem Kumar Pande, Additional Secretary, MoEFCC; PCCF, Dr. S. C. Pant and D.C.F., S. M. Saiyad. A post-breakfast audio-video presentation on 'Raptor Identification' was given by senior birder Nirav Bhatt, who explained the field identification of Raptors, which is a very challenging subject. The session was well appreciated by everyone present, including forest officials. A speech by Hem Kumar Pande, and Dr. S. C. Pant, focused on the rich wildlife heritage of LRK and threats to its habitat which have emerged in the recent years. This was followed by a brief speech on the role of BCSG, and its efforts towards conservation, by Vijaya Nadgoda and Shubha Lagavankar.

After lunch, the participants were taken for a jeep safari, covering a distance of more than 25km. The aim was to look for resident and migratory birds. A camp fire at night, with

poetry and jokes by BCSG senior member Bhanubhai Advaryu, made everyone to crack up with laughter.

The second day's session started with a visit to Kharagodha, where every participant got a chance to see the rare Macqueen's Bustard, and an opportunity to understand its habitat preferences. The post-lunch session, the last in the list, was at Tundi Tower and nearby wetland, giving participants an opportunity to see a large number of Flamingos, Cranes and wetland birds.

The forest department staff appreciated the programme and assured help to BCSG for their conservation activities.



Jessore Sloth Bear Sanctuary: 12-13 March 2016

Jessore Sloth Bear Sanctuary, in Arravali hills, was chosen for a two day bird-watching programme in coordination with Arravali Adventure, Palanpur. The programme witnessed a healthy participation of 52 people, including members and non members, coming from different areas of the state. The two day programme was segregated into two bird count sessions, to be covered by 3 teams (each team was named after special birds of Jessore). The first day's trek covered the circumference of the lake, and the forest beside the lake. The first day's session ended with a talk on Jessore Sanctuary by RFO R. K. Jhalundra, followed by a powerpoint presentation on the flora and fauna of Jessore Sanctury by Anuj Raina and Kailash Jani. The second day's birding required a strenuous trek to the mid of Jessore hills via Kedarnath Temple.

The two day bird count totaled 113 species, of which 15 were migratory, including wetland and forest birds. Some special birds seen were Red Spurfowl, Jungle Owlet, Indian Grey Hornbill, Brown-headed barbet, Indian Scops Owl,

Indian Nightjar, Bonelli's Eagle, Shaheen Falcon and a pair of Woolly-necked Storks. The session ended with the felicitation of Dr. Navinbhai Shah and Dr. Jitubhai Vaid (Jitubhai Patel) from Disa, who have been regularly contributing towards conservation by plantations.



A Tip for Longevity - People say you can't make a living from bird watching. That's perhaps true but, it is also true than man does not live by bread alone. Just look at the people who have no such hobbies and spend all their time solely on earning a living. After 60, when they retire from official chair, they don't know what to do with all the time in their hands and just spend it watching the clock! If they had cultivated a hobby like bird watching, perhaps they would have lived longer to enjoy their pension.
- Dr. Salim Ali



Dharmakumarsinhji in the field (Courtesy : 'Sixty Indian Birds')

Raol Shree Dharmakumarsinhji (April 1917 to January 1986)

R. S. Dharmakumarsinhji was youngest among the three sons of late Maharaja Bhavsinhji of Bhavnagar. His childhood spent at Nilambaug palace Bhavnagar and schooling and higher education was at Rajkumar College, Rajkot as well as at Harrow School, England.

He had keen interest in nature and wildlife specifically in birds. He started systematic study on birds in India. He was a wonderful author! In the year 1955 he produced a legendary book "The Birds of Saurashtra" in which he described around 350 species. All the colour paintings/drawings in his book were prepared by Somalal Shah by observing the birds in hand!! He himself was a wonderful artist and had prepared many drawings of birds and animals. His contribution to Indian ornithology is great. He authored four books and 118 scientific articles on birds and natural history in various scientific journals and well known natural history magazines.

In 1950 the Indian Government appointed him to survey five states – Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Punjab and make recommendations on suitable areas to be declared national parks and wildlife sanctuaries. Over the next three decades he held several conservation-oriented government positions. He was India's first Honorary Wildlife Warden. He also contributed as Vice Chairman of the Indian Board for Wildlife, and a member of the Rajasthan and Gujarat Wildlife Advisory Boards.

R. S. Dharmakumarsinhji would be a classic example of an absolute amateur who achieved full recognition as an ornithologist of enviable reputation. He was the epitome of how a shikari, a photographer, an artist, and a birdwatcher could carve for himself a niche, among scientists, without any formal scientific training.

- I. R. Gadhvi

Department of Marine Science, Bhavnagar

“ Down the millennia of biological evolution, the capacity to cope with the powers of elemental nature has been the driving force of life. The rewards have been the comforts. The disability for whatever reason to stand up to the external forces meant death. Death then refined life! Avoiding death developed a strong thread woven into the fabric of instincts and avoiding it a hallmark of a successful life. Fear of death has driven mankind to extremes of intellectual achievements, damnations and absurdities. Even in this age of so called scientific enlightenment we have not come to terms with death. Death is the cessation of life and instead of making it a preoccupation it is living life vigorously and purposefully that alone can place it in its correct perspective. ”

- Lavkumar Khachar



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