

Editorial

Esteemed Readers,

Environmentalists, biologists and others concerned about the health of the planet and its inhabitants recognize the key role wetlands play in life on Earth. Besides containing a disproportionately high number of plant and animal species compared to other land forms, wetlands serve a variety of ecological services including feeding downstream waters, trapping floodwaters, recharging groundwater supplies, removing pollution and providing fish and wildlife habitat.

Wetlands are critical for human development and wellbeing, especially in India where a large number of people are dependent on them for drinking water, food and livelihood. Despite their immense importance, wetlands are one of the most degraded ecosystems globally. Research suggests that over-exploitation of fish resources, discharge of industrial effluents, fertilizers and pesticides and uncontrolled siltation and weed infestation, among other reasons, have wiped out or severely damaged over 1/3rd of India's wetlands.

Wetlands are on the "front-line" as development pressures increase everywhere. When they are viewed as unproductive or marginal lands, wetlands are targeted for drainage and conversion. The rate of loss and deterioration of wetlands is accelerating in all regions of the world. The pressure on wetlands is likely to intensify in the coming decades due to increased global demand for land and water, as well as climate change.

The Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2010 is a positive step towards conservation of wetlands in India. Under the Rules, wetlands have been classified for better management and easier identification. In order to ensure there is no further degradation of wetlands, the Rules specify activities which are harmful to wetlands such as industrialisation, construction, dumping of untreated waste, reclamation etc. and prohibit these activities in the wetlands. Other activities such as harvesting, dredging etc may be carried out in the wetlands but only with prior permission from the concerned authorities.

This quarter had the World wetland day on 02 February, 2015. Keeping the importance of wetlands in mind, the World Wetland Day was celebrated on 02 Feb 2015, in which college students had the opportunity to visit wetlands and study them. Their observations are insightful and interesting. Readers can do their part by staying current on wetland laws, keeping an eye on local wetlands and speaking up if something looks amiss. Potential problems are much easier to resolve early on than after damage is done, so speaking up soon can often lead to more successful and less contentious outcomes. Wetlands are a part of our national heritage that must be preserved from commercial, industrial and similar human activities.

Any comments, suggestions for improvement are most welcome, always!

Regards,

– Editor



Painted storks
(*Mycteria leucocephala*)

Photo Credit :
Neeraj Mishra

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1- Journey of Biodiversity Bus

The formal launch of Prakriti Bus was held on 2 August 2014 at Lucknow by Prof. Abhishek Mishra, Minister of State for Vocational Education and Skill Development. So far bus has travelled to 4 districts of Uttar Pradesh covering Lucknow, Barabanki, Kannauj and Unnao district.

Details of Visit of Biodiversity bus (upto March 2015):

- Prakriti Bus started its journey from 4 August 2014.
- Overall status of outreach of the bus:
 - Total Visitors : **80,882 visitors**
 - Total No. of Schools & Colleges Visited : **158**
 - Name of District/s travelled : **Lucknow, Barabanki, Kannauj & Unnao**
 - Total Kilometers travelled by bus : **Over 5500 kms**

Prakriti Bus Inauguration Event at Nawabganj Bird Sanctuary, Unnao was held on 28.01.2015:

Prakriti Bus Inauguration Event at Nawabganj Bird Sanctuary, Unnao was held on 28.01.2015. Chief Guest of the Programme Shri Dhirandra Pratap Singh, Block Head of Nawabganj, Unnao along with Shri Vijay Kumar, Deputy Conservator UP State Biodiversity Board, Shri Uday Veer Singh, SDO Unnao, Mrs. Preeti R. Kannoja, Regional Coordinator, Centre for Environment Education along with students and teachers graced the occasion with their presence.

CEE representative Mr. Neeraj K. Pal briefed about the Prakriti bus and its objective to the students guests and also gave a brief introduction on biodiversity. After his briefing he invited the guests for a formal inauguration of the Prakriti Bus. He said that Unnao is the fourth district on the route map, as the bus has already covered three Districts of UP. Chief Guest of the Programme, Shri Dhirandra Pratap Singh inaugurated the Bus by cutting the ribbon along with other guests and students.

Followed by the formal inauguration, all the guests, teachers and students visualized the Prakriti Bus. Bus communicators explained the exhibited panels to guests and other members. Guest also interacted with the communicators and appreciated the efforts of UPSBB, CEE and Lucknow University.

Ms. Preeti R. Kanaujia from CEE conducted various biodiversity games for children and encouraged them to take back hand print messages for conserving biodiversity. Mr. Neeraj Pal from CEE informed that bus has reached out to more than 60000 people where bus has visited over 170 schools.

Over **250 participants** including school children, teachers, Gram panchayat members, Education and Forest Department Officials, Media etc. participated in the programme.

Following education material were also distributed:

- Brochure on the bus in Hindi
- Oath cum certificate for schools where bus visits

Glimpses of the Prakriti Bus Inauguration Event at Nawabganj Bird Sanctuary, Unnao



- Flyers for visitors
- Cap with bus logo as prize for quiz winners
- Prakriti Bus mug as souvenir for guests
- Pamphlet on Biodiversity Campaign in English and Hindi. Campaign was launched during wildlife week.
- Also distributed other materials to support environment conservation activities in schools:
- National Biodiversity Campaign posters
- Water Testing kit

Month wise School Visit Details of Prakriti Bus from January 2014 to March 2015

January 2015

S.No	Date	Name of School	Footfalls
1	16.01.2015	Prathamik Vidyalaya, Bibipur, BKT, Lucknow	130
2		Purva Madhyamik Vidyalaya, Bibipur, BKT, Lucknow	130
3	21.01.2015	Government Girls Inter College, Vikas Nagar	909
4	22.01.2015	St. Stephan's Academy, Takrohi, Chinhat, Lucknow	129
5	23.01.2015	Purva Madhyamik Vidyalaya Naubastakala, Chinhat, Lucknow	156
6		Mother Saroj Convent School, Naubastakala, Chinhat, Lucknow	188
7	27.01.2015	Prathamik Vidyalaya, Gulam Hussain Purwa Vibhuti-khand, Lucknow	197
8		Purva Madhyamik Vidyalaya, Gulam Hussain Purwa Vibhuti-khand, Lucknow	99
9	28.01.2015	Nawabganj Panchi Vihar during Bus Launching in district Unnao	136
10	29.01.2015	HLSD Inter College	340
11	30.01.2015	Church School Nawabganj	447
			2861

February 2015

S.No	Date	Name of School	Footfalls
12	02.02.2015	Government Girls inter College, Nawabganj, Unnao	1299
13	09.02.2015	Prathamik Vidyalaya, Chandrawal Sarojini Nagar, Lucknow	87
14		Purva Madhyamik Vidyalaya, Chandrawal, Sarojini Nagar, Lucknow	70
15	10.02.2015	Radha Krishnan English Medium School Nawabganj, Unnao	630
16	11.02.2015	St. Lavaib Public School Nawabganj, unnao	424
17		Saraswati Shishu Vidhyamandir, Nawabganj, Unnao	213
18	12.02.2015	Shyamlal Inter College Nawabganj, Unnao	1405
19		Shishu Shiksha Niketan Primary and Junior High School, Nawabganj, Unnao	313
20	13.02.2015	Janta Montessori Vidhyalaya Gram-Ashakheda, Nawabganj, Unnao	236
21	16.02.2015	Purva Madhyamik Vidhyalaya, Gram- Ashakheda, Nawabganj, Unnao	102
22		Prathmik Vidhyalaya, Gram- Ashakheda, Nawabganj, Nawabganj, Unnao	100
23	18.02.2015	Purva Madhyamik Vidhyalaya, Gram- Himmatgarh, Nawabganj, Unnao	59
24		Prathmik Vidhyalaya, Gram- Himmatgarh, Nawabganj, Nawabganj, Unnao	188
25	19.02.2015	Prathmik Vidhyalaya, Gram- Nathaikheda, Nawabganj, Unnao	60
26		Maa Saraswati Senior Secondary School, Gram- Pipahari, Lucknow	73
27		Babu Ram Dayal Public Inter College, Gram- Pipahari, Lucknow	153

28	20.02.2015	Purva Madhyamic Vidhyalaya, Gram-Bhaisaura, Nawabganj, Unnao	87
29		Jagroop Prasad Senior Secondary School, Gram- Bhaisaura, Nawabganj, Unnao	370
30	23.02.2015	Prathmik Vidhyalaya, Gram- Beechpari-II, Nawabganj, Unnao	175
31	24.02.2015	Purva Madhyamic Vidhyalaya, Gram- Bhagukhera (Mauhari), Unnao	147
32	25.02.2015	Prathmik Vidhyalaya, Gram-Raipur, Nawabganj, Unnao	92
33		Purva Madhyamic Vidhyalaya, Gram- Raipur- khailamau, Nawabganj, Unnao	159
34	26.02.2015	Prathmik Vidhyalaya, Gram- Mauhari, Nawabganj, Unnao	184
35	27.02.2015	J.P Convent School, Asha Kheda, Unnao	142
			6768

March 2015

S. No	Date	Name of School	Footfalls
36	4.3.2015	Purva Madhyamic Vidhyalaya, Gram- Rajauli, BKT, Lucknow	44
37	4.3.2015	Prathmik Vidhyalaya, Rajauli of BKT block Lucknow	108
38	9.3.2015	I.B. Public School, Rasulpur, Sadat, Lucknow	180
39	10.3.2015	D.B.S Montessori School, Jarhara, BKT, Lucknow	191
40	11.3.2015	Raj Public School, Gram- Rajauli Lucknow	212
41	18.3.2015	New Pattern Public School, Muspipari, BKT, Lucknow	666
42	19.3.2015	Zamia Sayad Amir Ali Shaheed, BKT	375
43	20.3.2015	Purva Madhyamic Vidhyalaya, Gram- Pahadpur, BKT, Lucknow	135
44	20.3.2015	Prathmik Vidhyalaya, Pahadpur- I, BKT block Lucknow	120
45	20.3.2015	Prathmik Vidhyalaya, Pahadpur- II, BKT block Lucknow	90
46	20.3.2015	Kanya Kramottar Vidhyalaya, Pahadpur, BKT block Lucknow	123
47	23.3.2015	Pratahmic Vidyalaya, Bhardsar, BKT	122
48	23.3.2015	Purva Madhyamic Vidhyalaya, Gram- Raisingh Pur, BKT, Lucknow	222
49	24.3.2015	Purva Madhyamic Vidhyalaya, Dariyapur, BKT block, Lucknow	98
50	24.3.2015	Prathmik Vidhyalaya, Dariyapur, BKT block, Lucknow	124
51	25.3.2015	Purva Madhyamic Vidyalaya, Khantari, BKT block Lucknow	235
52	25.3.2015	Prathamik Vidyalaya, Khantari, BKT block Lucknow	112
53	26.3.2015	Purva Madhyamic Vidhyalaya, Indara, BKT block, Lucknow	141
54	27.3.2015	Adarsh Public School, Karim Nagar, Khumrahwan, BKT block, Lucknow	411
55	30.3.2015	Kasturba Gandhi Avasiya Balika Vidyalaya, Malihabad	242
56	31.3.2015	Maa Saraswati Gyan Mandir, Village- Purwa, Post- Malihabad, Lucknow	260
			4211
Total number of footfalls			13840

2- World Wetlands Day, 02nd Feb, 2015

Wetlands for our future for the World Wetlands Day theme for 2015. The U.P. State Biodiversity Board celebrated *World Wetland Day on 2nd February, 2015* in collaboration with Biodiversity and Wildlife Conservation Lab, Department of Zoology and University of Lucknow. The programme aimed at creating awareness for the wetland conservation among the students of schools and colleges and local people of the Lucknow.

On *2nd February 2015*, the programme started with flagging off wetlands diversity surveying cars from the campus of University of Lucknow. The aim of the survey was to explore wetlands in Lucknow and its associated area (Hardoi, Sandi, Faizabaad, Raibareilly, Gonda and Kannauj), to study the flora and fauna in the identified wetlands, to study the threats to wetlands. The visit also aimed at creating awareness in the local community and students about the wetlands and conservational requirements. During the survey, observations were made, for a full day, at 6 sites in Lucknow and its associated area. A total of 24 wetlands were explored by the 05 groups comprising of 21 participants. The survey was done starting from 7:00 A.M to 5:30 P.M. Awareness for Wetland Conservation was also created through distribution of awareness materials such as flyers and pamphlets to the local people as well as students of nearby Schools.



Some major threats to wetlands observed during the visit were: excessive fish culture, soil-digging, farmers draining and converting it to agricultural land, use of wetland water for irrigation purpose, excessive cultivation of water chestnut (*Singhara*), overgrazing near wetland area, excessive use of pesticides and insecticide, dumping of garbage, development activities, poaching of water birds, conflicts between *Sarus cranes* and man, pollution, garbage dumping on marginal areas of such wetlands by nearby shopkeepers as well as local people reduction in water spread by such encroachment.

Followed by different field visits/surveys, a power point presentation was given on 10-03-2015 at U P State Biodiversity Board's Conference Hall. Teams that visited the field shared their experience. Certificates of participation were awarded to the participants by Mrs. Pratibha Singh, Secretary, U.P. State Biodiversity Board, Lucknow.

LIST OF WETLANDS VISITED DURING THE SURVEY

S.NO	SITES	NAME OF WETLANDS	G.P.S. COORDINATES	AREA (in ha. visual estimate approx)
1.	HARDOI	A) Arni talaab	N-27° 09' 386", E-080°20' 590"	1.5
		B) Pasni ka talaab	N-27° 09' 882" E- 80° 20' 058"	3.75
		C) Pabna talaab	N- 27° 09' 527" E- 80° 19' 534"	75
		D) Sakah talaab	N- 27° 29' 303" E- 80° 01' 691"	12.5
		E) Sikrohri wetland	N- 27° 24' 221" E- 80° 14' 873"	12.5
		F) Sundari taal	N- 27° 23' 180" E- 80° 17' 656"	125
		G) Khuddipur talaab	N- 27° 22' 859" E- 80° 17' 378"	100
2.	KANNAUJ	H) Lakh Bahosi Bird Sanctuary	Lakh- N-26° 54' 653" E-79° 38' 196" Bahosi- N-26° 56' 849" E-79° 37' 408"	8000
		I) Nayapurwa Jheel, Bahadurpur	N-27° 00' 541" E-79° 50' 241"	10
		J) Muraiyan Jheel	N-27° 00' 960" E-79° 50' 799"	7-8
3.	FAIZABAD/ GONDA	K) Bharua taal, Faizabad	N-26° 47' 16.0" E-81° 44' 25.0"	16.25
		L) Choti jheel, Faizabad	N-26°47' 6.5" E-81° 44' 40.6"	11.25
		M) Kathiyaar jheel, Faizabad	N-26° 48' 44.3" E-81° 42' 41.1"	250
		N) Amosa jheel, Faizabad	N-26°49'39.4" E-081° 43'17. 5"	10
		O) Sarahi jheel, (Barabanki+faizabad)	N-26° 55' 24.5" E-081° 33' 47. 4"	37
		P) Amrawali-Baraulia jheel (Barabanki+faizabad)	N-26° 59' 41.0" E-081° 29' 22. 0"	37
		Q) Parvati-Aranga Bird Sanctuary, Gonda.	N-26° 57' 11.9" E-081° 10' 29. 0"	1084
4.	RAIBAREILLY	R) Samaspur Bird Sanctury	N-25° 59.458' E-81° 23' 857"	799.371
		S) Bela Tikai Jheel	N-26° 05.401' E-81° 12' 614"	2222
		T) Johvanatki Jheel	N-26° 06.895' E-81° 03' 067"	900
		U) Nadaan jheel	N-26° 06.421' E-81° 09' 421"	58
5.	UNNAO	V) Nawabganj Bird Sanctuary	N-26° 37' 177" E-80° 39' 705"	224.6
		W) Chidnikheda village Wetland	N-26° 37' 652" E-80° 36' 841"	12.5
		X) Birsinghpur Wetland	N-26° 37' 652" E-80° 36' 841"	50

Glimpses of field visits/surveys organized on 2nd February 2015 on the occasion of World Wetland Day -2015



A view of Arni Taalab, Kichhauna, Balamau, Hardoi



A View of Pasni ka Taalab, Behind Kichhauna Police Chowki, Hardoi



A view of Pabna Taalab, Bhawanipur Village, Hardoi



A view Sakah Taalab, Sakah Village, Hardoi



A view of Sirkhori Wetland, Sirkhori Village, Hardoi



Sundari Taal, Bhadail Village, Hardoi- Sitapur Road



A view of Khuddipur Taalab, Khuddipur Village, Sitapur-Hardoi Road



Lakh Bahoshi Bird Sanctuary, Kannauj



Nayapurwa Jheel, Bahadurpur Block, Kannauj



A view of Muraiyan Jheel, Village Muraiyan, Kannauj



A view of Bharua Taal, Rudauli, Faizabad



A view Choti Jheel, Firozpur, Faizabad



Kathiyaar Jheel, Icholia Village, Faizabad



A view of Aмоса Jheel, Village Junaaidpur-Amrauti, Faizabad



Sarahi Jheel, Sarahi Village, Tikaitnagar (Faizabad+ Barabanki)



Amravali-Baraulia Jheel, Baraulioa Village (Barabanki+Faizabad)



Parvati-Arga Bird Sanctuary, Gonda



Samaspur Bird Sanctuary, Salon, Rae Bareilly



Bela Tikai Jheel, Raibareilly



Nadan Jheel, Raibareilly



Johvanatki Jheel, Raibareilly



Nawabganj Bird Sanctuary, Unnao



Chidnikheda Wetland, Chidnikheda Village, Unnao



A wetlands in Birsinghpur, Ajgain, Unnao



A view of Janorra Taal, Village Janorra, Unnao

Creating awareness about importance of wetlands by participant teams amongst schools, students, children and local people

FAIZABAD



UNNAO



GONDA



KANNAUJ



RAIBAREILLY



Recommendations of the Participants:

- 1) Creating awareness about the disadvantages of use of high quantities of pesticides and fertilizers in fields that are along the wetlands.
- 2) Prevent over exploitation of wetlands for fish, water chestnut cultivation (Singhara) and irrigation.
- 3) Prevention of soil digging from wetlands.
- 4) Some dead fishes, birds and reptiles were found around some wetlands. Hence, a mechanism to periodically study/test the water quality of these wetlands is recommended.
- 5) Wetlands should not be used as dustbins.
- 6) Prevent filling of wetlands.
- 7) Fisheries department and Forest department need to discuss on a common platform along with National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources (NBFGR) on the species of fishes to be cultured in

PPT Presentation by World Wetland Day Participants at Uttar Pradesh Biodiversity Board



Certificate given to participants by Mrs. Pratibha Singh and Mr. Vijay Kumar at UP State Biodiversity Board



wetlands on public lands. Especially on the release of exotics- more thought is required. Lack of co-ordination and complicity and contradictory objectives of policies have led to unwise, unsustainable and destructive exploitation of wetlands.

- 8) In most wetland reserves, vegetation (e.g. *Paspalum distichum*, *Vetiveria zizanoides*, etc.) needs to be cleared periodically and moderate/controlled grazing to be allowed. Some wetlands require digging or dredging in the dry season, and encroaching *Prosopis juliflora* annually removed.
- 9) More efforts are needed to control hunting, including by patrolling wetland protected areas and intercepting illegal hunters, monitoring trade and sale of water birds is also required. Huge posters/hand bills in local languages can be put up to spread awareness on what is illegal.
- 10) Surveys are required to identify key feeding and roosting areas for residential and migratory birds.
- 11) Promoting the cultivation of water spinach, Jussiaea and other similar weeds on which water birds feed.

Awareness Material distributed



Pocket Calendar



Flyers



Pamphlet

3- World Sparrow Day

20th March, 2015

Celebration of World Sparrow Day was first started by Nature Forever Society on 20th March, 2010. World Sparrow Day celebration has a broader vision to provide a platform where people who are working on the conservation of the House Sparrow and other common birds can network, collaborate and exchange conservation ideas which will lead to better science and improved results. It aims to provide a meeting ground for people from different parts of the world to come together and form a force that can play an important role in encouragement and in spreading the awareness on the need of conserving common biodiversity or species of lower conservation status.



The U.P. State Biodiversity Board, Lucknow celebrated **World Sparrow Day** on **20th March, 2015** in collaboration with Zoology Department, Lucknow University at the Regional Science City, Aliganj, Lucknow. The aim of this celebration was to spread awareness among school and college students about sparrows. On this occasion, following programmes were organized:

- a) One Day Workshop on 19th March 2015
- b) Awareness and Sparrow Count on 20th March 2015
- c) Various Competitions among Students on 20th March 2015

a) One Day Workshop at Daliganj and Itaunja, Lucknow on 19th March 2015:

A workshop on 19th March was organized for the public in Daliganj and Itaunja residential area of Lucknow. The aim of this workshop was to spread awareness on the importance of house sparrows in their area. During the interaction, information was given about the three types of Sparrow houses i.e. shoe box, earthen box and wooden sparrow box. These boxes have already installed in the houses of sparrow lovers and are being monitored by them with the help of research scholars. Bird feed has been also distributed to local public to feed the Sparrows regularly.

Awareness materials such as pamphlets, booklets, flyers and pocket calendars were distributed among the public and students.

Glimpses of the Workshops at Daliganj and Itaunja, Lucknow



Participants of the workshop held at Daliganj, Lucknow



Participants of the workshop held at Itaunja, Lucknow

b) Awareness and Sparrow Count, 20th March 2015:

Like previous years this year also on 20th March near about 80 volunteers came forward to participate in World Sparrow Day Campaign. The campaign started in the morning from 6:00 am onwards. Groups of three to four students and volunteers distributed the awareness materials and counted the sparrows at more than 25 places of the Lucknow (Triveninagar, Khadra, Daliganj, Aliganj, Aminabad, Indiranagar, Alambagh, Chowk, Telibagh, Kapurthalla, Vikasnagar, Mahanagar, Gomtinagar, Chinhat, Munshipulia, P.G.I., Bangla Bazar, Rajajipuram, Faizullaganj, Smileganj, Niralanagar and New Hyderabad in Lucknow city and its associate areas like Kakori, Malihabad, Itaunja, Gosainganj, Bakshi Ka Talab, Mahona, Nagram, and Amethi). A general appeal was also made from local public through daily newspaper for Sparrow counting in and around their houses. The timing of the Sparrow counting was between 7:00 am- 7:30 am. The volunteers interacted, communicated and distributed the awareness materials like flyers, pamphlets, pocket calendars amongst students and local public of the Lucknow related to Sparrow. The people responded very well. The response from people was encouraging.

c) Various Competitions among Students, 20th March 2015:

Painting completion on topic “Sparrow Conservation”, Rangoli competition on topic “Feeding, Roosting and Flying Sparrows” and Quiz competition on “Sparrows” were held for the Students of different Schools and Colleges at the Regional Science City, Aliganj, Lucknow. About 400 students from more than 13 schools expressed their thoughts in these events. The winners were felicitated with prizes and certificates by Mrs. Pratibha Singh, IFS, Secretary U P state Biodiversity Board, Lucknow, Shri Umesh, Project Co-ordinator Regional Science City, Aliganj Lucknow and Prof Madhu Tripathi, Head Department of Zoology, University of Lucknow, Lucknow.

Paintings Made By Winners on World Sparrow Day, 2015

Group- A Class 6th -8th



First prize : Aditi Singh, Class 7th B, Lucknow Public School, Jankipuram, Lucknow



Second prize : Shivam, Class 8th A, New Way Sr. Sec. School, Aliganj, Lucknow



Third prize : Mansi Soni, Class 7th, Bright Way Inter College, Lucknow



Consolation prize :
Gracy Rawat, Class 6th,
Lucknow Model Public School

Group- B Class 9th -12th



First prize : Anshul Patel, Class 11th, Pioneer Montessori Inter College



Second prize : Shourya Srivastava, Class 9th, Bright Way College



Third prize : Shivangi Patel, Class 11th, Pioneer Montessori Inter College



Consolation prize : Amrita Kumari, Class 9th, Pioneer Montessori Inter College

Paintings Made By Especially Abled Students of Chetna Sansthan



First prize : Shwtenk Mishra, Chetna School, Aliganj, Lucknow



Second prize : Arshia Bano, Chetna School, Aliganj, Lucknow



Third prize : Shubhangi Sinha, Chetna School, Aliganj, Lucknow

Rangoli Made By Prize Winners on World Sparrow Day, 2015

Group-A Class 6th -8th



First prize : Aman Gupta, Class 7th,
New Bal Bharti School, Lucknow



Second prize : Vaishali Shukla, Class 7th,
R K Senior Sec Scholl, Lucknow



Third prize : Meenakshi Yadav, Class 7th,
Bright Way Inter College, Lucknow



Consolation prize : Sanya Maurya, Class 7th,
Bright Way Inter College, Lucknow

Group-B Class 9th -12th



First prize : Khushboo Namter, Class 12th,
Bright Way Inter College, Lucknow



Second prize : Sonali Bajpaye, Class 9th,
R K Senior Sec Scholl, Lucknow



Third prize : Jyoti Yadav, Class 9th,
Bright Way College, Lucknow



Consolation prize : Shivangi Patel, Class 11th,
Pioneer Montessori School, Lucknow

Standard Quiz Competition

Group- A Class 6th -8th

SN	Name of the student	Name of the School	Class	Prize
1	Dhananjay Rajput	R K Senior Sec. School, Lucknow	7th	Ist Prize
2	Aamod Vardhan Pandey	New Way Senior Sec School, Lucknow	8th	II nd Prize
3	Manisha Singh	New Bal Bharti School, Lucknow	7th	IIIrd Prize
4	Tanya Srivastava	R K Senior Sec. School, Lucknow	6th	Consolation

Group- B Class 9th -12th

1	Shiv Kumar	Pioneer Montessori Inter College, Lko	9th	Ist Prize
2	Shivam Kumar	Sri Ayodhya Singh M Inter College, Lko	9th	II nd
3	Yashesh Sri	Colvin Talukedar College	10th	IIIrd
4	Anjali Bajpai	Pioneer Montessori Inter College	11th	Consolation

Quiz Competition for Especially Abled Students

SN	Name of the student	Name of the School	Class/ age	Prize
1	Sumit Verma	Chetna sansthan, Aliganj	14 Year	Ist Prize
2	Md. Sarij	Chetna sansthan, Aliganj	19 year	II nd
3	Sanjeev Vidhyarthi	Chetna sansthan, Aliganj	21 year	IIIrd
4	Md Hamid	Chetna sansthan, Aliganj	16 year	Consolation

Photographs of the World Sparrow Day, 2015



Students participating in Painting Competition at Regional Science City, Aliganj

Photographs of the World Sparrow Day, 2015



Students with their paintings on the topic "Sparrows Conservation"



Specially abled students of Chetna Sansthan with their painting on topic "Sparrow Conservation"



Specially abled students of Chetna Sansthan with their painting on topic "Sparrow Conservation"



Participants are taking parts in the Rangoli Competition on the topic "Feeding, Roosting and Flying Sparrows"



Students participating in Quiz competition at Regional Science City, Aliganj Lucknow



Mrs. Pratibha Singh is briefing the Participants about the role of House sparrow in our life.



Prize distribution to winners at Regional Science City, Lucknow by Mrs. Pratibha Singh

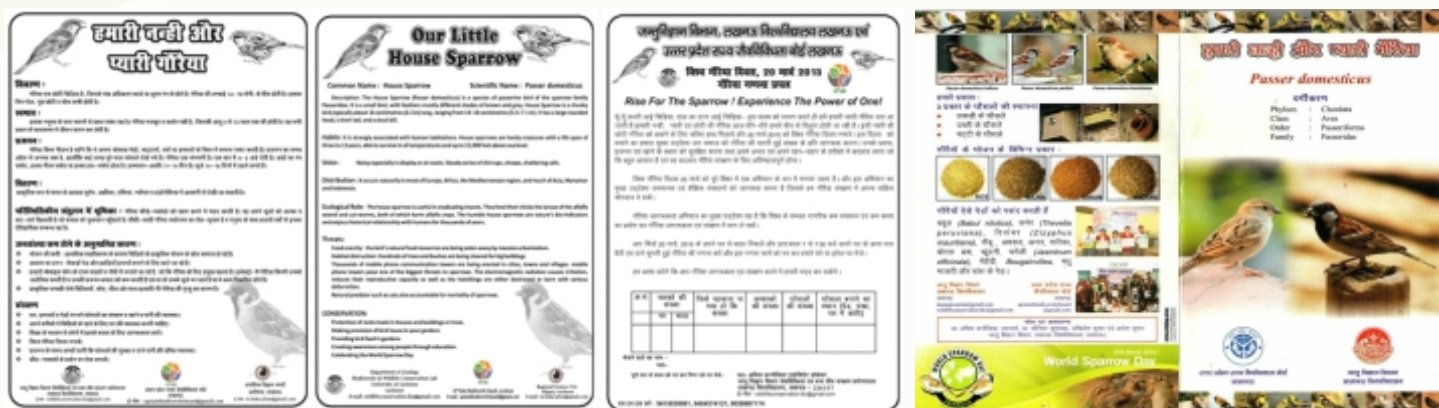


Prize and certificate distribution to the winners by Shri Umesh Kumar, Project Co-ordinator, Regional Science City, Lucknow



Winners of all events held at Regional Science City, Aliganj, Lucknow

Awareness Materials Distributed



4- People's Biodiversity Register (PBRs):

During this period Three (03) People's Biodiversity Register (PBRs) have been completed by the U.P. State Biodiversity Board. The details of the flora & fauna recorded in the PBR is furnished below:

S. No	Name of Division/ District	Name of the Village	Name of the Block	Date of BMC Formation	Date of Validation	Total Flora	Total Fauna	Total Species	Cover page of the PBR
1	Mau	Pardahan	Kahinaur	20-11-2014	24-02-2015	149	32	181	
2	Aligarh	Dhanipur	Gurusikran	26-11-2014	26-02-2015	196	46	242	
3	Shahjhanpur	Dadraul	Mansoorpur	26-09-2013	19-12-2014	98	80	178	

5-Trainings/Workshops:

Training on "Biodiversity: Law and Policy" at Forestry Training Institute, Kanpur (05-01-2015 to 06-01-2015)

A training programme on "Biodiversity: Law and Policy" was conducted by U.P. State Biodiversity Board, Lucknow at Forestry Training Institute, Kanpur from 05-01-2015 to 06-01-2015. The participants in the training programme were in-service Deputy Rangers and Foresters from the different forest divisions of U P Forest Department.

A total of 19 forest officials attended this programme, in which 04 Deputy Rangers and 15 foresters participated actively.

The lectures in this training were delivered by the distinguished experts on various aspects of biodiversity, law and policy.



Glimpses of the training programme



6. Newspaper Clippings

(i) International News

ALLAHABAD
THE HINDU • TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2015

Back from the brink of extinction

Oliver Milman

If you're planning on scouring a vast Australian mountain range looking for what is probably the rarest frog in the world, scientists suggest a rudimentary approach works best.

"We shout out 'hey frog, hey frog' and listen for a call back," says David Hunter, a threatened species officer at the New South Wales state government. "I hate to think how many times I've shouted that out." A more technological approach — camera traps, for example — wouldn't really work given the endangered southern Corroboree frog measures just 3.5 cm in length.

The frogs — the females are largest and pear-shaped when carrying eggs — are coloured by flashes of bright yellow as a warning to predators of the toxins developed from the gobbling up of ants. But the frogs aren't fully visible unless you stoop down for a close look.

The other key difficulty in finding the frog is the vanishingly tiny numbers of the species' population. In January, Hunter and his team found there were just four frogs — two male, two female — in Kosciuszko national park in the southern part of New South Wales, its entire range. Such a minuscule band of wild survivors — four in the entire world — means the southern Corroboree is "effectively extinct," Hunter says.

But the combined effort of Australians academics, zoos and governments mean that the frog is being dragged back from the brink — with potentially huge implications for other amphibian species around the world that have been decimated by a deadly fungus.

Chytrid fungus has spread across six continents and has been blamed for causing the decline or extinction of around 200 frog species since the 1970s. In Australia, six frog species are thought to have been wiped out by the fungus, which is carried in water and by other frogs. The fungus causes a disease called chytridiomycosis on the skin that fatally impairs frogs' ability to maintain electrolyte, water and oxygen levels.

The southern Corroboree frog was seemingly destined to be its next victim. But a pioneering collaboration has seen southern Corroboree frog numbers steadily climb in captivity, with last week containing an important milestone in a plan to reintroduce the animals back into the wild.

Amphibian experts from Melbourne Zoo and Sydney's Taronga Zoo, along with NSW government wildlife officials, released 80 frogs into an enclosed, fungus-free area of Kosciuszko national park.

The release, the first time that adult Corroboree frogs have been reintroduced back into the mountains that once teemed with millions of the animals, could mark a key turning point in the global effort to reverse plummeting amphibian numbers.

— © Guardian Newspapers Limited, 2015



There were only four Corroboree frogs in the world at one point of time. — PHOTO: AFP

10 Mar. 2015: The Hindu : The endangered Southern Corroboree frog measures just 3.5 cm. in length. Only four such frogs were found in Kosciuszko national park of New South Wales. The main culprit for wiping out frogs is the Chytrid fungus. An important milestone was achieved when 80 corroboree frogs were released back into the wild.

ALLAHABAD
THE HINDU • WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2015

RISK ALONG THE FOOD CHAIN

Corals feeding on plastic debris

Great Barrier Reef faces another threat, say scientists

SYDNEY: Corals in the Great Barrier Reef are eating small plastic debris in the ocean, Australian researchers said on Tuesday raising fears about the impact the indigestible fragments have on their health and other marine life.

The scientists found that when they placed corals from the reef into plastic-contaminated water, the marine life "ate plastic at rates only slightly lower than their normal rate of feeding on marine plankton," the study published in the journal *Marine Biology* said.

"If micro-plastic pollution increases on the Great Barrier Reef, corals could be negatively affected as their tiny stomach cavities become full of indigestible plastic," Mia Hoogenboom of James Cook University in Queensland said. Micro-plastic is defined as particles smaller than half a centimetre. The scientists found the plastic "deep inside the coral polyp wrapped in digestive tissue," and expressed concern that the substance could then hurt the creature's ability to digest normal food.

They sampled waters near inshore coral reefs in the World Heritage-listed site and found micro-plastics, including polystyrene and polyethylene, in small amounts, study co-author Kathryn Berry said.

Climate change, poor water quality from land-based run-offs, coastal developments and fishing all threaten the biodiversity site.

As much as 88 percent of the open ocean's surface contains plastic debris, findings published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* last year found.

The small pieces — from mass-produced plastics such as toys, bags, food containers and utensils — make their way into the sea through storm water run-off, raising concerns about the effect on marine life and the food chain. The United Nations Environment Programme estimated in 2012 that around 13,000 pieces of micro-plastic litter were found in every square kilometre of the sea.

— AFP



The digestive tissue of coral polyps was found contaminated by micro-plastics. — FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

25 Feb. 2015: The Hindu : Scientists have found micro-plastic deep inside the coral polyp wrapped in digestive tissue of corals. They have expressed concern that the substance could hurt the corals ability to digest normal food. The UNEP estimated in 2012 that around 13,000 pieces of micro-plastic litter were found in every square kilometer of the sea.

7. Newspaper Clippings

THE TIMES OF INDIA, LUCKNOW
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2015

For Saudis and Pakistan, a bird of contention

Declan Walsh



For decades, royal Arab hunting expeditions have travelled to the far reaches of Pakistan in pursuit of the houbara bustard — a waddling, migratory bird whose meat, they believe, contains aphrodisiac powers. Little expense is spared for the elaborate winter units. Cargo planes fly tents and luxury jeeps into custom-built desert airstrips, followed by private jets carrying the kings and princes of Persian Gulf countries along with their precious charges: expensive hunting falcons that are used to kill the white-plumed houbara.

This year's hunt, however, has run into difficulty.

It started in November, when the Houbara Bustard Conservation Centre in Balochistan, that is a favoured hunting ground, cancelled all foreign hunting permits in response to complaints from conservationists. Those experts say the houbara's habitat, and perhaps the long-term survival of the species, has been endangered by the ferocious pace of hunting.

That legal order ballooned into a minor political crisis last week when a senior Saudi prince and his entourage landed in Balochistan, attracting unusually critical media attention and a legal battle that is scheduled to reach the country's SC in the coming days.

Anger among conservationists was heightened by the fact that the prince — Fahd bin Sultan bin Abdul Aziz, the governor of Tabuk province — along with his entourage had killed 2,100 houbara over 21 days during last year's hunt, according to an official report leaked to the Pakistani news media.

Still, Fahd faced little censure when he touched down in Dabbandin, a dusty town near the Afghan border on Wednesday to be welcomed by a delegation led by a cabinet minister and including senior provincial officials.

His reception was a testament, critics say to the money-driven magnetism of Saudi influence in Pakistan, and the walk-on role of the humble bustard in cementing that relationship. "This is a clear admission of servility to the rich Arabs," said Fervez Hoodbhoy, a physics professor and longtime critic of what he calls "Saudiization" in Pakistan.

The dispute has focused attention on a practice that started in the 1970s, when intensive hunting in the Persian Gulf nearly rendered the houbara extinct there, and with it a cherished tradition considered the sport of kings. As the houbara migrated from its breeding grounds in Siberia, newly enriched Persian Gulf royalty flocked to the deserts and fields of Pakistan, where they were welcomed with open arms. For the Pakistanis, the hunt has become an opportunity to earn money and engage in a form of soft diplomacy. BY NEWS SERVICE

09 Feb. 2015: The Times of India : A Saudi Prince has hunted 2,100 internationally protected Houbara bustards in a 21 day hunting safari (from 11 Jan. to 31 Jan. 2015) in Chagai, Baluchistan. Hunting of this internationally protected species is banned in Pakistan but the federal government issued special permits to gulf states royals. The report also says that the royal hunted birds in 15 days in reserved and protected areas! Is the

(ii) National News

THE HINDU • THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2015

FARMER'S NOTEBOOK

Plant clinic for diagnosing pests and infestations

Distinguishing between pest and infestations is important

M.J. PRABU

The M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) along with an international organisation called CABI jointly piloted a project called plant clinic (PC) in Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Maharashtra through the institute's Village Resource Centres located in the regions.

The main aim of setting up such clinics is to diagnose pests and diseases in any crop and render accurate knowledge to the farming community. Basically it is a community-driven model, conducted in a common location, accessible to all categories of farmers in a village.

Need guidance

Farmers need guidance to distinguish the difference between pest and infestations, understand harmful effects of red labelled/banned pesticides, pest resurgence, resistance to pesticides etc.

"The clinic provides an array of technological solutions along with cultural, biological and chemical methods, which are nationally and internationally permissible, ecologically safe and environmentally sustainable for mitigating crop loss and enhancing plant health and economic benefit," says Ms. Nancy J Anabel, Director, Information and Communications of the Institute.

The clinics are conducted fortnightly and do not cost any money according to her. Persons with agricultural background are chosen and trained by CABI as plant doctors to diagnose the issue and provide appropriate solutions.

TECHNOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS: The PC treats the crop samples with the help of the comprehensive factsheets. • PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

However, MSSRF encourages progressive farmers, who are reservoirs of pragmatic knowledge and traditional wisdom to be trained and enrolled in this. A tool kit encompassing lens, microscope, laptop, projector, knife, gloves, tissue and sanitiser along with required templates to collect case history and issue prescriptions are given.

Prescription

Farmers bring their affected crop samples to the clinics to recognise the problem and get technological solutions. Every farmer is provided with a prescription, detailing the case history along with recommendations.

The PC treats the crop samples with the help of the comprehensive factsheets in the local vernacular brought by the farmers.

As farmers are hungry for information regarding their crop details the role of this plant clinic is more important to help offer appropriate knowledge to them to grow healthy crops which in turn generate better revenue.

Presently about 37 plant doctors serve through 34 Plant clinics; 391 clinic sessions have been conducted till now across Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Maharashtra, spanning 62 villages, in which more than 6,000 farmers including 992 women farmers have been reached.

Recently about 46 farmers from Varagore village, Thanjavur District brought crop samples to the clinic and found them to be affected by rice blast.

After examining the tillers, the plant doctors recommended the right type of spray to be used. Timely application helped them save their crop with additional yield of 5.9 tons in 100 acre.

Case study

Take the case of another woman farmer, Ms. Dhana-lakshmi from Padakkuppam, Puducherry, who chose agriculture as a profession, a few years back, struggled due to her no knowledge about the subject and discouragement from others.

"I was confused. I didn't know whether I had taken the right decision. Thanks to this plant clinic concept I am able to diagnose and spot the pest and infestations if any on my paddy, plantain and mango crops," she says.

Mr. Arunachalam, Pannuthukottai village in Thanjavur district realised an additional yield of 60 kg / half acre in Gingli crop by preventing 50 per cent yield loss from Jassid and wilt disease attack, when the rest of his fellow farmers realised a meagre 250 kg / acre.

Another beneficiary

Similarly Mr. Gajanan Shyamraji Wankhede, in Papal village in Amravati, Maharashtra could address leaf curling infestation in his capsicum and stem borer in his brinjal crop through one of the clinics in his region.

"We welcome farmers across the country to contact us for details on this and are ready to address their queries. If need be, more clinics like this can also be established in other parts of the country as well," says Ms. Nancy.

For more information contact Ms. Nancy J Anabel, Director, Information and Communications, MSSRF, III Cross Street, Institutional Area, Taramani, Chennai 600 113, email: anabel@mssrf.res.in, mobile: 9445002967 and 9445002966.

THE HINDU • THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2015

India home to 18% of world's raptors

Shiv Sahay Singh

KOLKATA: India is home to 106 species of raptors, popularly known as 'birds of prey,' says a recent publication by the Zoological Survey of India.

The publication reveals that more than 18 per cent of the 572 species of raptors spread all over the world can be found in India alone.

"The presence of raptors in the wild serves as a barometer for ecological health. They play an important ecological role by keeping the balance, especially by controlling the population of rodents and other small mammals," ZSI director K. Venkatesan told The Hindu.

There are primarily two kinds of raptors — diurnal (day flying) and nocturnal (night flying). Out of the 333 species of diurnal birds of prey found in the world, 101 species can be found in the Indo-Malayan region. India's bio-geographical regions support 69 species of raptors, eagles, hawks, buzzards and falcons in different habitats.

"Of these 59 per cent are resident; 16 per cent are migratory; five per cent vagrant; and 19 per cent both resident and migratory. In addition, India has 32 species of owls and, being nocturnal, are less studied," the book Raptors of India said.

Among these raptors, the Indian White-backed Vulture, the Long Billed Vulture, the Slender Billed Vulture, the Red headed Vulture and the Forest Owl are in the 'critically endangered' category, and the Egyptian Vulture and the Saker are in the 'endangered' list of the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) 'Red List'.

Other birds of prey like Amur Falcon, Buffy Fish Owl, Great Spotted Eagle and Chinese Sparrowhawk are also included in the book.

The presence of raptors is an indicator of ecological health, say experts. — FILE PHOTO: RITU RAJ KONWAR

26 Feb. 2015 : The Hindu : About 572 species of raptors exist in the world of which 106 are found in India. There are primarily two kinds of raptors—diurnal (day flying) and nocturnal (night flying).

26 Feb. 2015: The Hindu : The MS Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) piloted a project called "Plant Clinic" (PC) in TN, Pondicherry and Maharashtra to diagnose pests and diseases in any crop and render accurate knowledge to the farming community. The PC provides an array of technological solutions along with cultural, biological and chemical methods that are internationally permissible and ecologically safe.

Newspaper Clippings

ALLAHABAD
THE HINDU • THURSDAY, JANUARY 22, 2015

QUESTION CORNER



Neela Kurinji in Western Ghats bloom once in twelve years, why?

C. GEORGE VARGHESE,
Thrissur, Kerala.

Neela Kurinji or *Strobilanthes kunthianus* is a shrub predominantly found in the Shola forests of Western Ghats and Nilgiri Hills of South India. It flowers once in 12 years and dies immediately after producing seeds. Such plants are called gregarious flowering plants.

Flowering is influenced by the surroundings, temperature, time of exposure to sunlight, humidity and favourable circumstances for pollination, seed formation and seed dispersal.

Under these favourable conditions, the receptors such as phytochromes present in the leaves will send the signals to rush more nutrients, carbohydrates, sugars, water and florogens such as Gibberellins (plant hormones) to the meristems to produce floral buds. These floral buds bloom on receiving more sugars and water. But this blooming will take place only when the inhibitors concentration falls below certain critical levels.

In Kurinji plants this happens regularly after a gap of twelve years. The period between each flowering season is called the Oscillatory period. This is under the control of an endogenous oscillator.

In plants like Neela Kurinji, Bamboo etc, the plants take several years to gather resources and prepare them selves for flowering.

By this time the inhibitor levels in Kurinji must have fallen below the critical levels making it suitable for both flowering and seed formation. Hence mass pollination takes place and seed formation occurs. Once the seeds are shed the plants will die.

Hence it is the inbuilt oscillatory mechanism which is responsible for the mass flowering in Neela Kurinji which in turn is controlled by the inhibitors present in the plant itself.

Interestingly certain Bamboos bloom once in hundred years!

DR. T. BHAVANI,
Bengaluru

22 Jan. 2015 : **The Hindu** : Neela Kurinji—*Strobilanthes kunthianus* is a shrub that used to grow abundantly in the Shola Grasslands of western ghats in India. It belongs to the family Acanthaceae. It occurs at an altitude of 1300 to 2400 m- and blossoms gregariously once in 12 years

Mass nesting of Olive Ridleys begins

Sib Kumar Das

BERHAMPUR: Although delayed by around three weeks, mass nesting of endangered Olive Ridleys has started at Rushikulya rookery coast in Ganjam district of Odisha.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Berhampur Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) S.S. Mishra said as per the official enumeration, mass nesting at Rushikulya rookery coast had started on wee hours of March 12, with nearly 10,000 mother Olive Ridleys laying their eggs.

On March 12 night and early morning of Friday, around 59,000 Olive Ridleys reached the coast to dig up the nests in the sand to lay eggs. Mass nesting of Olive ridleys is expected to continue at the coast for one week or more as thousands of Olive ridleys are being seen in sea near the coast.

As per reports, mass nesting of Olive Ridleys started at Nasi beach under Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary in Kendrapara district of Odisha from March 11 night. Last year, Olive Ridleys had not preferred to have mass nesting at this coast.

At the Rushikulya rookery coast, till now Olive ridleys are only nesting between Gokharkuda and Podampeta villages.

A 1.6 km long and 80 metre-wide sand bar also exists in



The nesting beach has been divided into 44 sections and each section is monitored by a team of forest officials. PHOTO: LINGARAJ PANDA

sea near the Rushikulya rookery coast. According to the DFO Mr Mishra, till now Olive Ridleys have not preferred to nest on this sandbar as they find it hard to get on it because the walls of the sandbar are steep and high. It is expected that in the last phase of mass nesting, some turtles may prefer to nest on this sandbar.

The whole nesting beach near Rushikulya rookery which is around 4.5 km long has been fenced with nets to protect the Olive Ridley nests with eggs from predators like dogs and jackals.

The whole nesting beach has been divided into 44 sections by the forest department and each section is being monitored by a team of forest officials and local volunteers. They are involved in

census of mass nesting as well as protection of Olive Ridley nests in the sands of sea coast.

Reasons for delay

The Hudhud cyclone in October 2014 and the rains that followed is said to be the reason behind delay in mass nesting this year. Climatic change had stopped mass mating of Olive Ridleys for few weeks near this coast in December.

Added to this, increased humidity due to rains had packed up the sand on the coast, which was not conducive for Olive ridleys to dig up their nests for mass nesting. It seems the Olive Ridleys waited for the humidity to decline and sand to become soft to start their nesting process at this coast, said Mr Mishra.

16 Mar. 2015 : **The Hindu** : Nesting of endangered Olive Ridleys has been delayed by 3 weeks this year at the Rushikulya rookery coast in Ganjam district of Odisha. This began on March 12 night and will continue for a week. The whole nesting beach has been divided into 44 sections by the forests department.

Newspaper Clippings

ALLAHABAD

THE HINDU • MONDAY, MARCH 9, 2015

Sunderbans losing green cover and land mass, says ISRO study

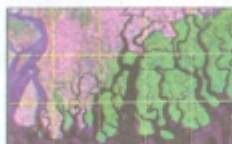
Shiv Sahay Singh

KOLKATA: The Indian Sunderbans has lost 3.71 per cent of its mangrove and other forest cover, while losing 9,990 hectares of its landmass to erosion in one decade, according to a satellite analysis conducted by the Indian Space Research Organisation.

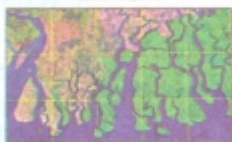
As much as 1,607 hectares of the eroded area had vegetation, says the study comparing satellite data from February of 2003 and 2014. During the 10 years, 216 hectares of landmass had been added, of which 121 hectares has green vegetation.

The Eastern Zone Bench of the National Green Tribunal, which is hearing a case of environmental violations in the Sunderbans, directed holding the study.

The study shows that about 95.14 per cent of the green cover has not undergone gone any change, while fresh vegetation has come up in 1.1 per cent of the entire area.



11 February, 2003



01 February, 2014

Satellite images (with 15' X 15' grid overlaid) used by ISRO to make a comparative study of the Sunderbans landmass.

The satellite mapping, which has not gone into the details of the reason for loss of green cover, says the depletion may be due to natural and anthropogenic (human intervention) processes.

The 9,600-sq.km Indian Sunderbans is highly suscep-

tible to coastal erosion and coastal land dynamics. A recent World Bank report pointed out that the carrying capacity of the landmass had exceeded with the population density of over 1,000 a sq.km.

Ajanta Dey, joint secretary of Nature Environment and Wildlife Society, said the ISRO study once again highlighted that the Sunderbans was a very fragile and dynamic landscape. Ms. Dey, who is assisting the Green Tribunal on the issue, said more studies were required to ascertain the exact loss.

Subhas Datta, environmental activist and amicus curiae in the case, said a ground investigation too was required to ascertain the loss of forest and landmass cover.

"In my opinion, the loss is far more than what has emerged in the satellite imaging. This loss has created a paradox where the land and resources are shrinking and the population is rising," Mr. Datta said.

09 Mar. 2015 : The Hindu : ISRO says the Sunderbans have lost 3.71% of its mangrove and other forest cover to erosion in the last one decade. The study shows that 95.14% of green cover has not changed and fresh vegetation has come up in 1.1% of the entire

ALLAHABAD

THE HINDU • THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2015

Beneficial algal species discovered

K.S. RAJGOPAL

Two new bloom-forming algal species were discovered recently off the west coast of India. These two species have excellent carbon capture properties — ability to absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and reduce global warming — and are also promising candidates for use as bio fuels.

Currently, a number of research groups are working on using algae as a potential candidate for carbon sequestration because they grow at very high rates and can absorb atmospheric CO₂.

Both of the newly discovered species are endemic and bloom-forming.

As they are endemic, their cultivation is not going to cause any environmental harm; had it been a species of Atlantic or Mediterranean

origin, it might overgrow local flora and might wreak havoc on the local habitats — the so-called bio invasion.

Bloom forming indicates spontaneous growth. There is no need for fertilizers/pesticides or any expensive cultivation systems such as photobioreactors for their cultivation. These can grow sporadically at shorelines and can sequester CO₂.

The algae species named *Ulva paschima* Bast, and *Cladophora goensis* Bast were discovered by Dr. Felix Bast and two research students working with him, Mr. Satej Bhushan and Mr. Aijaz Ahmad John, from the Central University of Punjab, Bhatinda. The findings were reported in the journals *PLoS ONE* and *Indian Journal of Marine Sciences*.

The main criteria used for determining these species as

newly discovered is a mix of morphological as well as molecular characteristics. Molecular evidence is especially strong; as nearest match is less than 90 per cent sequence identity.

For example, *Cladophora goensis* Vs. *Cladophora glomerata* — its nearest match — is 17.7 per cent differences.

"Compare it with human Vs. chimp. Our sequence identity is 98 per cent and 2 per cent difference makes us what we are. These newly discovered algae have profound sequence differences from previously discovered algae. Morphology is not reliable; as algae can change its morphology to suit its environment. Ours is the first molecular study on Indian algae, and first algal species discovery for last 40 years," notes Dr. Bast in an email to this correspondent.

Pharmaceutical products from algae are under the realms of another project by Dr. Bast.

A number of active substances are isolated from algae including some algae of genera *Cladophora* and *Ulva*. Probably most famous is Kahalalide-F, which is now being used in clinical trials against prostate and breast cancers.

Kahalalide-F is isolated from *Bryopsis* — a closely related green algae to *Cladophora* as well as *Ulva* and it is very probable that same or related chemical is present in newly discovered endemic algae.

He intends to work on this. *Cladophora goensis* and *Ulva paschima* — recently discovered species — have had no chemical/pharmaceutical studies conducted on them yet.

05 Feb. 2015 : The Hindu : Two new bloom-forming algal species were discovered recently off the west coast of India
(a) *Ulva paschima* Bast
(b) *Cladophora goensis* Bast
These newly discovered algae have profound sequence differences from previously discovered algae.

Newspaper Clippings

ALLAHABAD
THE HINDU • THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2015

A compound in litchi behind mystery brain disease?

N. GOPAL RAJ

A compound found in litchi seeds might be responsible for a mysterious brain disease that strikes many young children in Muzaffarpur district of Bihar each summer, according to two independent groups of researchers.

"Eating litchi is absolutely not dangerous for adults or well-nourished children," said T. Jacob John, who is a paediatrician but is better known as a leading virologist. He was with the Christian Medical College at Vellore in Tamil Nadu.

Along with colleagues, Dr. Jacob John had published two papers last year in Current Science suggesting that 'methylene-cyclopropylglycine' (MCPG), a substance that exists in litchi seeds, could be behind the yearly outbreaks in Muzaffarpur, a major cultivation centre for this fruit.

The symptoms

In these annual outbreaks, which peak in June, young children would be healthy in the evening but early next morning have convulsions and even become unconscious.

A large proportion of those affected died and many of those who survived continued to suffer from mental retardation, muscle paralysis or movement disorders.

It was under-nourished children who were affected by the disease, Dr. Jacob John told this correspondent. Children in poor rural families, typically of labourers working in litchi orchards, were the ones at risk.

In work just published in the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR), a large team of Indian and U.S. researchers, including from the National Centre for Disease Control in New Delhi and the Centers for Disease

SUSCEPTIBLE: It was under-nourished children who were affected by the disease.

—PHOTO: CHULUJA BHASKAR

Control and Prevention in the U.S., ruled out bacterial and viral infections as causative factors.

"One specific hypothesis" to explain the disease was that exposure to MCPG might cause very low blood sugar levels and brain problems in some children, noted Ashish Shrivastava and others in the MMWR paper.

In tests carried out in animals, MCPG has been shown to lower blood sugar levels and produce brain problems. It was found to interfere with a biochemical pathway in cells that turns fatty acids into glucose, which also resulted in the accumulation of toxic molecules.

In under-nourished children, who had little glucose reserves in their body, MCPG could be blocking their cells' ability to utilise fatty acids when blood sugar levels dropped early in the morning, remarked Dr. Jacob John.

As a result, the brain could then be deprived of the glucose it needed. The toxic substances that MCPG produced could also be taking their toll on brain cells.

MCPG's mechanism of action is thought to be similar to the one produced by a toxin found in unripe akee, a fruit found in West Indies and West Africa.

The clinical symptoms of akee poisoning are similar to those displayed by affected Muzaffarpur children.

However, it has still to be conclusively established that MCPG in litchi is indeed the cause of the disease seen in children.

During the forthcoming litchi season, the MCPG levels in unripe and ripe litchi fruit as well as seeds would be examined, said Mukul Das of the CSIR-Indian Institute of Toxicology Research at Lucknow, a co-author of one of the Current Science papers published last year.

The published literature indicated that the compound was present in litchi seeds. The unripe fruit might be having more of it than the ripe fruit. "These things need to be tested," he remarked.

In the MMWR paper, Dr. Shrivastava and colleagues said that laboratory investigations to assess the possibility of MCPG in litchi being the cause and to understand why only some children were affected are ongoing.

05 Feb. 2015 : The Hindu : Methylene-cyclo-propyl-glycine MCPG- a substance that exists in litchi seeds could be behind a mysterious brain disease that strikes many young children in Muzaffarpur district in Bihar each summer. This is not dangerous to adults or well-nourished children.

ALLAHABAD
THE HINDU • FRIDAY, JANUARY 2, 2015

Sri Lankan flying snake sighted in A.P.

A.D. Rangarajan

TIRUPATI: In the first-ever sighting outside Sri Lanka, *Chrysopelea taprobanica* or the Sri Lankan flying snake, considered endemic to the dry and intermediate zones of the island nation, has been sighted in Andhra Pradesh's Seshachalam Biosphere Reserve.

This significantly expands the known area of presence of this species, indicating its probable movement between the dry zones of peninsular India and Sri Lanka, which remained connected around 17,000 years ago.

This rare sighting has found a mention in the tenth anniversary issue of Checklist, a journal of biodiversity data, anywhere outside Sri Lanka.

The study was conducted by researchers Bhubesh Gupta and N.V. Sivaram Prasad of the Biodiversity

Chrysopelea taprobanica, sighted for the first time outside Sri Lanka in Seshachalam Biosphere Reserve, A.P. — PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Lab in the Tirupati Wildlife Management Circle under the guidance of the Conservator of Forest M.Ravikumar, in collaboration with Simon T. Maddock of The Natural History Museum, London and V. Deepak of Centre for Ecological Studies, Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru.

Previous 'sighting'

In fact, an unidentified specimen suspected to be *Chrysopelea taprobanica* was sighted in 2000 in Rishi Valley, Andhra Pradesh, and even photographed by V. Santharam, but it was not collected. "In November 2013, we collected the specimen in the dry deciduous forest of Chalamla and conducted morphological studies and DNA test to prove that it is the same," Mr. Gupta told The Hindu.

The chain of broken hills in the peninsular India, comprising the Eastern Ghats, has remained unexplored compared to the Western Ghats.

"The Eastern Ghats are a repository of biodiversity and further studies will certainly bring newer species to light," said Mr. Prasad.

02 Jan. 2015 : The Hindu : The Srilankan flying snake, *Chrysopelea taprobanica* in the first ever sighting outside Sri Lanka has been sighted at Tirupati in the Seshachalan Biosphere reserve.

THE TIMES OF INDIA, LUCKNOW
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2015

2,226 & roaring: Population of tigers rises 30% in 4 years

Conservation Efforts Pay Off Handsomely

BIG BOOST FOR THE BIG CAT

30% rise in tiger population in 4 yrs

MAJOR TIGER STATES

Karnataka	486	+35%
Uttarakhand	340	+30%
MP	306	+18%

*Sampling ongoing, may be revised

New Delhi: There are more than 2,200 tigers in India's forests, as opposed to 1,700 found in 2010. The southern states of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala of the Western Ghats landscape recorded nearly one-third of the country's total number of big cats, according to the figures. Karnataka has the highest number of tigers in India, which itself is home to 30% of the world's tiger population. The Mudumalai-Bandipur-Nagarhole-Wayanad forest corridor in the Western Ghats holds the world's single largest tiger population. This complex—spread across Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu—has 570 tigers. If one compares the results of the 2006 census—when modern methodology was first adopted, noting a tiger population of just 1,411—the overall rise is a phenomenal over 800 tigers in the past eight years.

Releasing the 2014 data for tigers on Tuesday, Union environment and forests minister

Prakash Javadekar said, "We must be proud of our legacy. We have increased the number of tigers by over 60% from the last census in 2006. That is a big achievement." A total of 3,78,118 sq. km of forest area in 18 states having tiger population was surveyed during the census exercise with 'double sampling' approach, including ground survey and remote-sensing through satellite and ground-based camera traps and capture-recapture techniques, being used. Besides, scat DNA sampling method was also used for corroboration in many forest areas.

More than 8,700 cameras were used in the exercise carried out by National Tiger Conservation Authority in with state forest departments, national conservation NGOs and Wildlife Institute of India.

► 'Ready to donate tigers', P.S.

21 Jan. 2015 : The Times of India : The latest census held in 2014 has found evidence for 2,226 tigers in India. The Mudumalai-Bandipur-Nagarhole-Wayanad forest corridor in the western ghats holds the world's single largest tiger population -570 tigers. A total of 3,78,118 sq. km of forest area in 18 states holds Tiger habitat in India.

हिन्दुस्तान
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देश में बाघों की संख्या बढ़कर 2,226 तक पहुंची

2010 के मुकाबले 30 प्रतिशत की वृद्धि दर्ज की गयी। पिछले चार सालों में देश में 570 बाघों की वृद्धि हुई है।

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Newspaper Clippings

(iii) State News

THE TIMES OF INDIA, LUCKNOW
SATURDAY, JANUARY 17, 2015

Kashi dumps 3K bodies in Ganga every year

Binay.Singh@timesgroup.com

Varanasi: The unearthing of over 80 human bodies in the Ganga in Unnao may have the country mystified, but a research report on year-on-year disposal of bodies in the river conducted by environment expert and Ganga researcher B D Tripathi suggests more than 3,000 bodies were disposed of in the river in a year in just the Varanasi stretch of the river.

The report also refers to Supreme Court orders that ban the disposal of bodies in the river by any community. The court's 1998 ruling also holds civic authorities of the concerned area responsible for ensuring proper last rites of any bodies that are found in the river. Contrary to this order, though, local administrations fight shy of taking responsibility for such acts. They claim that the practice of disposing bodies in the river is gradually reducing due to awareness among the people.

"During our study a couple



UNHOLY PRACTICES

Cremation facility defunct in Unnao

Unnao: The electric crematorium at Gangaghat in Shuklaganj area of Unnao, the lone one of its kind in the district, is dying a silent death. It has no power connection and other facilities. The worst affected are people, who come from economically weaker sections as funeral rituals have become a costly affair for them. TNN

of years back, we documented 3,028 human bodies of adults and infants and about 6,000 bodies of animals floating in Ganga in a year," said Tripathi.

17 Jan. 2015 : The Times of India : It is said that more than 3000 bodies are disposed of in a year in the Varanasi stretch of the Ganga river.

THE TIMES OF INDIA, LUCKNOW
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4, 2015

Another Blot On Wildlife Safety In The State 1 held for killing Gangetic dolphin

17 pairs of cranes found dead near Dudhwa park

TIMES NEWS NETWORK



The dolphin which was found dead near Barabanki

Bahraich: A 7-foot long Gangetic dolphin was killed by poachers in Sharda canal near Deva in Barabanki on Monday. One poacher has been arrested. A case has been registered under Wildlife Conservation Act.

According to reports, a Gangetic dolphin was spotted by villagers in Sharda canal near Udwatpur village in Deva. The divisional forest officer (DFO) was informed. Efforts were started to catch

the fish but it disappeared. On Monday morning, the dolphin was spotted near Pratappanj minor. It was unable to swim properly because of less water. Taking advantage of it, five to six poachers killed it near Zaidpur.

The forest team reached the spot and recovered the dead dolphin. One poacher was arrested from the spot. But other poachers managed to escape. TNN

Bahraich: Death of 17 pairs of cranes in a pond at Narayanpur village of Mailani range under Dudhwa National Park has created panic. The incident had shocked wildlife lovers here and put a question mark on the functioning of the forest department. The case is about one month old. An investigation has been launched.

About 17 pairs of cranes died under suspicious circumstances on January 27 at Narayanpur village under Mailani forest range. The forest department initially tried to hush up the case. But the villagers spotted the carcass of the cranes and raised an alarm.

The pond is situated in the reserved forest area. Birds and other wild animals come to the pond to quench thirst. Forest ranger V S Yadav said that the incident is being probed.

04 Mar. 2015 : The Times of India : A 7 foot long Gangetic Dolphin was killed by poachers in Sharda canal near Deva in Barabanki district. About 17 pairs of Sarus Cranes were reported to be dead in a pond at Narayanpur village of Mailani forest range.

Newspaper Clippings

Uttar Pradesh

THE TIMES OF INDIA, LUCKNOW
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2015

Dudhwa study brings out facts on Bengal florican

Only 400 Adult Birds Remaining

Neha Shukla@timesgroup.com

Lucknow: A male Bengal florican would fly up to 20 feet and then swoop down suddenly to attract a 'shy' female. Maximum height to which a male can fly decided how dominant it is. A male bird is fond of 'display' but female is elusive and shy.

The first ever telemetry study on Bengal florican done in Dudhwa tiger reserve of Uttar Pradesh has given initial leads about the habits and habitat of the bird which has neither been counted nor studied so far.

Dudhwa is the last remaining strongholds for the grassland-dependent bird and Union ministry of environment and forest (MoEF) has picked it up as the study ground for critically endangered Bengal florican.

Ornithologists from

ON THE BRINK

► International organizations met at Dudhwa National Park and urged UP government to declare April 16 as Bengal Florican Day

► 174 out of 1,300 bird species in India are threatened under various categories of International Union for Conservation of Nature

► 17 bird species are listed as 'critically endangered'

and face imminent threat of extinction

► Bengal Florican found in grasslands of terai in UP, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh

► MoEF in 2013 assigned Bombay Natural History Society a research project to study habitat-selection and habitat-use for Bengal florican



BirdLife International (UK), Royal Society for Protection of Birds, WWF-India and Nepal, Bombay Natural History Society, Wildlife Institute of India, Wildlife Trust of India and officers from forest departments of UP, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh gathered at Dudhwa for mid-term evaluation workshop on Bengal florican on December 25.

Experts have urged MoEF and UP government to hold census of the bird every year and mark April 16 as Bengal Florican Day.

The bird was first spotted in Dudhwa in 1981. "Three years back, 24 males were counted. But there is no data on females," said V K Singh, deputy director of Dudhwa tiger reserve.

In September-October 2014, three birds in Sonaripur range of Dudhwa were tagged with a device called platform telemetry terminal (PTT) to track their movement. While one of the devices failed, two other birds were tracked moving in a range of 500metre to 50km.

Experts have urged MoEF and the state government to hold census of the bird every year and mark April 16 as Bengal Florican Day

Bengal florican is found in six feet tall grasslands. In Dudhwa, so far, birds have only been spotted between February and June and not after monsoons when grasses grow.

Telemetry, however, has recorded birds' presence even in dense and tall grasses. It makes them more vulnerable to attacks by jackals and other second-rung carnivores. They are territorial birds.

Satellite-tracking has found birds coming together in a flock only during mating season. Protected under Schedule (I) of the Indian Wildlife Act, there might not be more than 400 breeding adults left in India and Nepal.

HINDUSTAN TIMES, LUCKNOW
SATURDAY, JANUARY 31, 2015

Faith saplings to adorn lands of Ram, Krishna

HOLY HUES Parijat, kadamba to be planted in Ayodhya, Mathura

Parag Jain

parag@hindustantimes.com

LUCKNOW: The circumambulation (parikrama) areas around the place in Ayodhya where Lord Ram is believed to have born, and the one that fringes Govardhan hill in Mathura, which is associated with Lord Krishna, will have 'parijat' and 'kadamba' trees planted.

"Perhaps, this will be the biggest plantation drive of the two trees ever in the country," said additional chief conservator of forest (ACCF), social forestry UP forest department, SK Sharma.

While both the circumambulations hold significance for the devotees of Ram and Krishna, the two trees also have religious and mythological significance for Hindus as these find mention in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

The idea is the brainchild of Uttar Pradesh chief minister Akhilesh Yadav who had earlier directed the UP Public Works Department's national highway wing not to cut a 'parijat' tree that came in the way of his proposed asphalt bicycle track project in Etawah.

The chief minister has asked the UP forest department to plant 100 'parijat' trees on the 'chakra' and 'parikrama' in Ayodhya and 100 'parijat' and 'kadamba' trees on Govardhan 'parikrama' area.

It is believed that to save the villages from the wrath of rain god Indra, Krishna made a giant umbrella by lifting the Govardhan hill on his little finger.

The figure 100 is considered to be auspicious among Hindus.

"We have completed surveys on the spots that are vacant and the department has identified the same," said Sharma. Except a 300-meter patch that falls under Forest department area of an Ayodhya circumambulation there is no issue in the plan. The forest department is seeking clearance from Punjab government for carrying out plantation on the patch.

"We have sufficient number of 8-10 feet long 'kadamba' saplings in Mathura division, and 'parijat' will have to be transported from Lucknow to Mathura and Ayodhya," said Sharma.

"Parijat" is among the most significant trees in Hindu mythology which terms it as one of the several things, which surfaced when gods and demons performed 'samudra manthan' (churning of the ocean).

Mythology and folklore associate 'kadamba' with Krishna-Radha romance and they associate the tree with 'Krishna lakshya' with 'yogi'.



It is the chief minister's idea to plant 100 'parijat' trees on the 'chakra' and 'parikrama' in Ayodhya and 100 'parijat' and 'kadamba' trees (below) on Govardhan 'parikrama' area.

and the plantation drive will be launched soon," said Sharma.

It is the social forestry wing that is executing the project.

Ayodhya's 'chakra' circumambulation is roughly 25.2 kilometres and 'parikrama' is about 10 kilometres long.

The Govardhan path will have 40 'kadamba' and 60 'parijat' trees. Every year, thousands of pilgrims from all over the country and abroad perform circumambulations every year.

"The saplings will be planted on the spots that are vacant and the department has identified the same," said Sharma. Except a 300-meter patch that falls under Forest department area of an Ayodhya circumambulation there is no issue in the plan. The forest department is seeking clearance from Punjab government for carrying out plantation on the patch.

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31 Jan. 2015 : Hindustan Times :

The 2 parikramas in U.P. :-

(1) Ayodhya

(2) Govardhan

will be planted with Parijat and Kadam trees.

02 Feb. 2015 : Times of India : A mid-term evaluation workshop on Bengal florican was held in Dudhwa Park recently. This bird was first spotted in Dudhwa in 1981. 3 years back 24 males were counted in Sep-Oct. 2014, 3 birds in Sonaripur range of Dudhwa were tagged; it was found that birds were moving in a range of 500m to 50 km.

Newspaper Clippings

HINDUSTAN TIMES, LUCKNOW
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2015

HUNDREDS OF DEAD FISH FOUND AT KUDIYA GHAT



- Experts say damming work responsible for the mass death.

LUGANO: Morning walkers at Kudiya Ghat were in for a shock on Friday morning, as they found hundreds of dead fish floating on the banks of river Gomti. As the day progressed, similar news poured in from other parts of the city too, where dead fish were found in bulk.

Experts have said that prima facie it appeared that the ongoing damming work at Kadiya Ghat might be responsible for the mass death, as the machines and equipment could have brought down the level of Dissolved Oxygen (DO) in the river water.

An official of the Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board (UPPCB) said, "Owing to the damming of the river, the water got stagnated and led to a fall in the level of dissolved oxygen in the water. The fall in DO level could be associated with the loss of aquatic animals. It's a short term effect. The level is expected to be restored after the completion of the ongoing cleaning project at Kudiya Ghat."

However, as the day progressed, fishermen who were out to make their catch at Gulasaghat, a kilometre away from Kudiyi Ghat, also reported similar deaths of fish. The situation was no different near Hamuman Setu, where two morning walkers spotted dead fishes in the water. "We were really shocked to see so many dead fish floating on the river's surface," said Kushal Sharma, a morning walker who was among the first ones to spot the fish at Kudiyi Ghat.

When contacted, district magistrate Raj Shekhar said he was keeping a watch on the cleaning project. "We will send a team of experts at places where dead fish were found to investigate the deaths," he said.

Help save the sparrow: CM to bird lovers

WORLD SPARROW DAY Akhilesh Yadav puts up artificial nest at his official residence, urges people to do their bit

H. C. Garg

SPOTLIGHT When chief minister Attal Bihari Vajpayee put up an official seal to house speakers at his official residence and then posted the photograph on social media on the occasion of World Speech Day on Friday, the message was loud and clear to bird lovers in northern India: help the cause of conservation.

shaking hands with the chief minister. "I was completely speechless," she said. Pavlidou placed a key role in approving awareness about the ill-effects of pesticides. Adimou tagged him for his work on water conservation. These two were winners of Euro Pharmacy's Leadership award titled *Agree* last

The events started early in the morning with a speech by **Mani Shankar Prasad**, minister of education and chairman of Lucknow University and different places were taken for the program in the morning. The program was held in the form of a seminar. The first, second and speaker comes from the

5,637 of human, Prion
Medicine, Tripathi,
HHS, sociology
Department,
Lockport
University
member
aged 40-45
4/2/00 10

The chief minister appealed to his followers to help in maintaining an ecological balance by creating an environment that would not contribute to increasing the number of human species.

FUNCTIONS ALL-AROUND
Like previous years, the conference will focus on a wide variety of topics. It was calculated in 1991 and annual the Lactation with the joint effort of the Biotechnology and Wildlife Conservation Lab, department of zoology University of Lethbridge Regional Science in Alberta, Lethbridge, Alberta.

...capable of making their way even in adverse circumstances. He said that the concentration of the human species would allow humans to overcome adversity.

United Nations project coordinator, Regional Science City Liaison also gave a message to

THE TIMES OF INDIA, LUCKNOW
FRIDAY, MARCH 20, 2015

Start bird watching for a cause today

Uzma Talha | 110

Lucknow: Watching and counting birds was never so useful. You can contribute to the conservation of house sparrows by counting the number of birds in your neighborhood and telling the biodiversity and wildlife conservation lab of Lucknow University about it.

University researchers and environmentalists in

WORLD SPARROW
WEEK FROM TODAY

collaboration with Uttar Pradesh State Biodiversity Board have urged city folks to not only keep an account of the number of sparrows but also provide them food and shelter by creating nests out of waste material.

Getting out of the house between 7am and 7:30am, counting them and sending feedback will certainly help us in analyzing the situa-



A sparrow hut at the residence of a bird lover in the city

Sparrow counting contest at zoo today

On World Sparrow Day on March 20, the Akhil Bharatiya Vidhyarthi Parishad's Students for Development has decided to hold a "count sparrows" competition at Lucknow Zoo for children aged between 5 and 15 years, at 10am. The child who counts the maximum number of sparrows in 10 seconds would be awarded. Adults accompanying the children would be given pamphlets about awareness. **THE**

tion," said Amita Kanaujia associate professor in the department of zoology at Lucknow University.

A study shows though there has been a considerable increase in the number of sparrows in Chowk, Aminabad, Daliganj and New Hyderabad, due to urbanization people in Gomtinagar and Indiranagar have failed to see even a single sparrow.

Rampant urbanization and changing lifestyle have destroyed the natural habitat of the sparrows, which love to make their nests inside houses of human beings," said Pratibha Singh, secretary of the Board.

Wave Mall will observe sparrow conservation week from March 20 to 27. There will be various activities to spread awareness about the bird.

28 Feb. 2015 : Hindustan Times : Hundreds of fish were found dead and floating at Kudiya ghat in Lucknow. The cause seemed to be low DO levels in the river.

21 Mar. 2015 : Hindustan Times and Times of India : World Sparrow Day was celebrated in U.P. with enthusiasm!

Newspaper Clippings

HINDUSTAN TIMES, LUCKNOW
SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 2015

hindustantimes | n

Water-starved B'khand village hosts 'gauraiya ki shaadi' to spread

WORLD SPARROW DAY 600 villagers attend ceremony, pledge to save birds; the wedding organised as per the traditional Bundelkhar

Pankaj Jaiswal

• ppaw@hindustantimes.com

LUCKNOW: The World Sparrow Day on Friday proved too literal for a 'Gauraiya couple' who were wedded to each other in a grand ceremony attended by some 600 human guests in village Mohanpur of Banda district. While it may sound like some tale from a children's book, the wedding, held as per the traditional Bundelkhandi rural rituals, took place in real and saw as many as 11 horses dressed in their best dancing to their heart's content.

While guests included natives

from four nearby villages — Mohanpur, Ranipur, Bilharka and Piparhari — the celebrations also saw 'Baratis' making a nest cushioned by straw on a parapet of a house.

Mohanpur's Yashwant Patel, a school teacher and wife Sumanlata Patel led the bride sparrow's side and a Ranipur village resident Ramprakash Patel and wife Anita led the groom sparrow's side.

Decked up horses came leading the wedding procession from Ranipur for the Friday event even as the other rituals kept taking place for last six days.

Though some people mocked



• Wedding of sparrows being solemnised in a Bundelkhand village.



NT PHOTO

at the event, the 'auspicious ceremony' was graced by many enthusiasts, including a forest

ranger JK Jaiswal.

"Being held for the protection of sparrows, it is a praiseworthy

move," he said while reminding the villagers that the House Sparrow that once was integral

THE OCCASION WAS ALSO USED TO DISCUSS THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS, FARMERS' ISSUES IN BUNDEL KHAND

part in human habitations—urban and rural, was now on the Red List (endangered).

The occasion was also used to discuss the environmental concerns, farmers' issues in the Bundelkhand region as well as the new land acquisition bill currently in discussion in the Parliament.

"Before wedding ritual began, the farmers discuss illegal mining that has been taking a toll on Bundelkhand environment, farmers' suicide, destruction of forests, river and hills," said Ashish Sagar, Bundelkhand activist, who was behind the wedding idea.

An environmentalist Manje who came from Allahabad, came up with simple practical demonstrations to make villagers understand how pesticides and insecticides have been contributing to the dwindling presence of sparrows. The other factors, they play villain to sparrows, named mobile towers radiation, lack of food and water especially in summers, and vanishing culture: parapets, lessening of trees, at even eradication of sparrow nest by people were listed as the reasons behind the vanishing sparrows.

While many villagers pledge that they will not destroy nest a few promised to make bird houses and bird baths at the houses and farms.

Keeping in tune with the green theme, the entire ritual was kept environment friendly. The feast comprised a dish made out of raw green chickpeas and 'be (jajube) and 'chulha'-cooked 'da roti-chawal'.

21 Mar. 2015: Hindustan Times : Village Mohanpur of Banda district organized a wedding ceremony for sparrows on the occasion of World Sparrow Day. An innovative way to spread world for awareness on sparrow conservation!



Eurasian Spoonbills or Common Spoonbills (*Platalea leucorodia*) Photo credit Neeraj Mishra



Spot billed Ducks (*Anas poecilorhyncha*) Photo credit Neeraj Mishra

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