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2013

WORLD SPARROW DAY

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WORLD SPARROW DAY REPORT 2013



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It will also tremendously help the winners take forward their work towards conservation.

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Introduction

The world House Sparrow Day is an international initiative by Nature Forever Society in collaboration with, Eco- Sys Action Foundation and numerous other national and international organizations across the world. Since the year 2010, 20th March is dedicated to the ubiquitous diminutive bird- The Sparrow and is being celebrated as World Sparrow Day. The idea was to earmark a day for the House Sparrow; to convey the message of conservation of the House Sparrow and other common birds and also mark a day of celebration to appreciate the beauty of the biodiversity found in our immediate environment which are often overlooked and abused by virtue of being too commonplace.

In a hope to bring together individuals, NGO's, national and international groups and create a common platform to underscore the need to conserve sparrows as well as the urban biodiversity; the World Sparrow Day is celebrated each year in a different city with an intention to involve more and more citizens in the conservation movement and spread awareness.

It will also help in attracting the attention of government agencies and the scientific community to take notice of the need for the conservation of the common bird species and urban biodiversity. In less than three years the WSD has become very popular and is celebrated in more than 30 countries across the World, gaining popularity in Europe and parts of South Asia.

The celebration of World Sparrow Day shows the way towards a new way of conservation by people's participation and how much difference it makes by including common man into the conservation movement. It also shows the concern that people of different age group from different backgrounds have in the conservation of House Sparrow and other birds.

World Sparrow Day 2013

For the past three years, World Sparrow Day toured Delhi (2010), Bangalore (2011) and Mumbai (2012). This year World Sparrow Day was celebrated in Ahmedabad, Gujarat at the Serenity Library, an institution that encourages nature conservation as a whole and propagates the importance of flora and fauna amongst the school children and the youth. This was the ideal place to host the World Sparrow Day celebration- nestled in the sprawling city of Ahmedabad, a lush green landscape boasting a wide variety of urban biodiversity and native plants.

The World Sparrow Day 2013 was a success, with the joint efforts put in by Nature- Forever Society, The Hindu, Wipro, N' chant, RedFM, Jaypee Group, The Serenity Library, media and numerous sparrow supporter across the world.

The theme for this year's World Sparrow Day was "Rise for the Sparrow". The theme has been designed in order to involve citizens from all walks of life into conservation of house sparrows and to encourage easy doable actions which will help in habitat creation (adopting nest boxes and bird feeders, providing water), generating awareness, scientific monitoring (being citizen scientist), advocacy, photo documentation and campaigning for sparrows. Thus "Rise for the sparrow" is seen as a major step towards functional conservation, taking a 360 degree approach from monitoring to habitat creation.

These simple conservation measures are joint responsibility to take forward the conservation of sparrows. Citizens can be Sparrow Heroes, Voice of Sparrows, Sparrow Supporters and Sparrow Citizen Scientist.

**The official poster for World Sparrow Day 2013 symbolizing this year's theme
Rise for the Sparrows**



Be a Sparrow Supporter

When you become a Sparrow Supporter, you make your locality and home; sparrow- friendly. It's not just the conservationist, researcher or government agencies that can save the House Sparrow. This bird depends on us to meet its ecological needs and it's our responsibility to provide it with nesting sites, food, and water and keep its habitat safe. You can be a Sparrow Supporter through following ways:

- Adopt a nest box and bird feeder
- Participate in 'Help birds in summer' campaign by setting out water and bathing trays for sparrow and other garden birds.
- Plant more native hedges and shrubs
- Say yes to green living- taking small measures like segregating waste, saving water and power will go a long way in saving birds and making our planet a better place to live.



Be the Voice of Sparrow

If you are passionate about saving the sparrow, there are enough and more ways of doing it. By penning a few lines on the bird, be it through a poem or a story, writing articles, shooting a small film and sending it to the Nature Forever Society for us to post it on the website, you will be doing your bit to inspire others to save the sparrow.

- Write poems/ stories for sparrows and share your experience of how by adopting nest boxes and bird feeders, you have been able to play a significant role in the conservation of sparrows.
- Sketch/Paint for sparrows
- Photograph or video shoot sparrows and you can participate in NFS BiodiverCity photo competition
- Chirp and tweet about your initiatives to save sparrows on social networking sites



Be a Sparrow Hero

Small deeds can be hugely inspiring. We at Nature Forever Society (NFS) believe no right step will go the wrong direction. Every time you do something to save the House Sparrow, you become a hero for NFS.

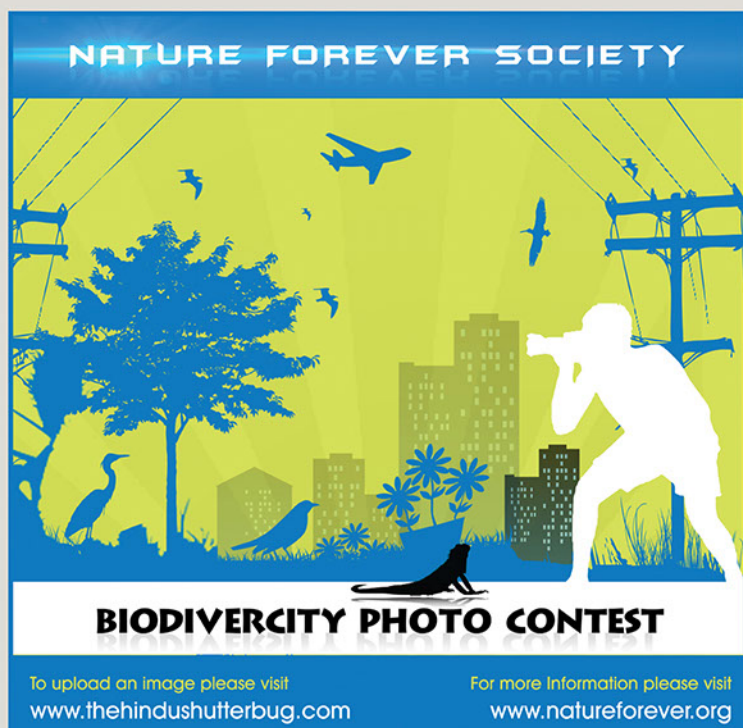
- Celebrate World Sparrow Day in your community/office/college/school.
- Spread the word about WSD and raise awareness.
- Provide water and feed for birds.
- Organize a Sparrow Talk- Screen a documentary and discuss issues and conservation measures.
- Organize a Sparrow party/conference at schools. Involve students in various co curricular activities such as drawing, bird watching around school etc.



Be a Citizen Scientist

You too can be a Citizen Scientist by participating in Common Bird Monitoring Program of India. Help us to collect vital data about sparrows and other birds and enter the data online. It's simple and will take only 15min to monitor birds. You can also write notes, observe and report about these common birds if you come across any interesting behavior.

Helping sick and injured birds-. You can help us collect data on people who can treat birds and bird hospitals in your city, village so that no town or city in India goes unrepresented! Make sure you send information only about genuine organizations about whom you are sure. For more information on treating birds visit http://natureforever.org/sick_injured_baby_and_baby_birds.html



HIGHLIGHTS OF WSD CELEBRATION

● BIODIVERCITY PHOTO CONTEST

Every year Nature Forever Society conducts BiodiverCity photo contest aimed at involving citizens in this pan-India mission of photo documenting the biodiversity in and around human habitats of our country, with whatever camera they have, including the mobile one.

Nature photography has long been associated with glamorous species, costly cameras and travelling to exotic locations. But appreciation of commonly found species is seldom done. In an attempt to shift focus and raise awareness of the rich flora and fauna found in "our backyards," this year, Nature Forever Society in association with – 'The Hindu Shutterbug' launched 'BiodiverCity Photo Contest' with a participatory approach towards conservation, where the citizens would not merely shoot pictures but explore and appreciate better, the rich biodiversity around them and take some time out for the wildlife around them.

This year the BiodiverCity photo competition received an overwhelming response from citizens all over the country.

Around 2300 entries were reported capturing an array of wildlife of all forms, shapes and sizes. From the tiniest creepy crawlers like the ants, snails, spiders etc to some amazingly colourful reptiles. From some lone standing beautiful, handsome tree species to some richly fragrant and colourful flower's. From the tiny bee buzzing to some splendidly coloured butterflies fluttering and a whole lot of surprises from the avian world; All this and lots more were captured through this photo contest.

These photographs unfolded a lot of mysteries, stories, information about them. There were photographs depicting their feeding, roosting pattern. Some depicted habitat of a certain species, its role in the ecosystem, some gave insights of its behaviour and of all there were photographs clearly showing the present condition faced by these creatures owing to lack of nesting sites, food, habitat destruction through direct/indirect interference by man, changing urban landscapes etc.

With a thorough check and after scrutinization of all entries, the best were selected by our judges –Mr. Sudhir Shivaram an eminent wildlife photographer and Mohammed Dilawar, President of Nature Forever Society.



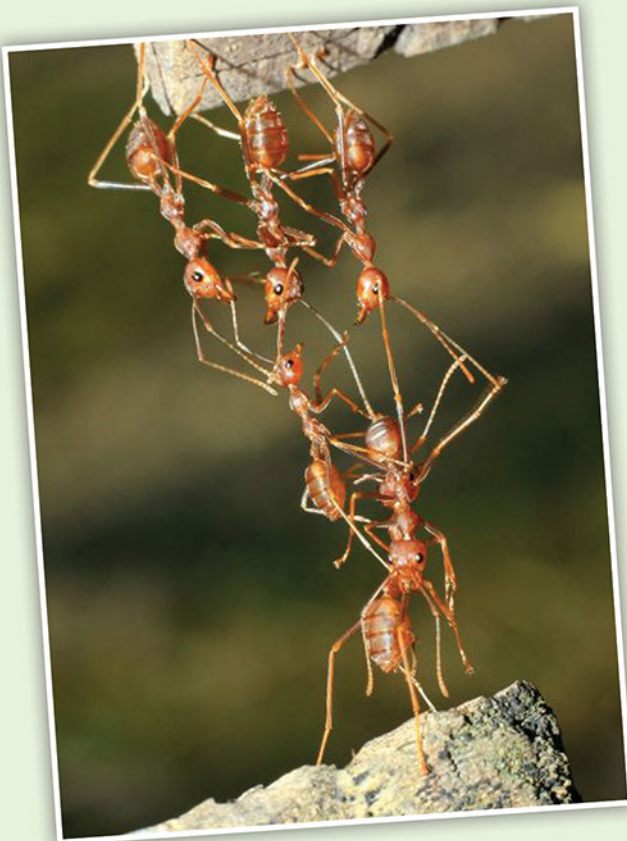
THE WINNERS OF THE NFS - THE HINDU SHUTTERBUG BIODIVERCITY PHOTO CONTEST 2013

I prize- Mr Thangaraj Sakthivel

This photograph is shot at the Pallikaranai marshland, one of the last few remaining natural ecosystems in the city of Chennai, Tamil Nadu. In this picture Pelican's can be seen perched on high tension wires. The photo very well describes the plight of these birds and many other such birds that they are falling short of roosting/perching sites due to their habitat being destroyed or habitat being fragmented for the sake of creating concrete jungles. So in search of alternative sites sometimes they may stumble upon such high tension power lines.



II prize- Mr. Michael Nongthombam



There is no limit to what these critters can do and this picture exactly portrays the same. This moment is captured by Mr. Michael at the backyard of his residence in Imphal, Manipur. These master architects and engineers are capable of building nests and bridges to acquire food resources, and their creations represent the most complex systems reported in ants. The photograph here is an example of one such creation. With immaculate coordination, they create very strong ant bridges by linking legs.

THE WINNERS OF THE NFS - THE HINDU SHUTTERBUG BIODIVERCITY PHOTO CONTEST 2013

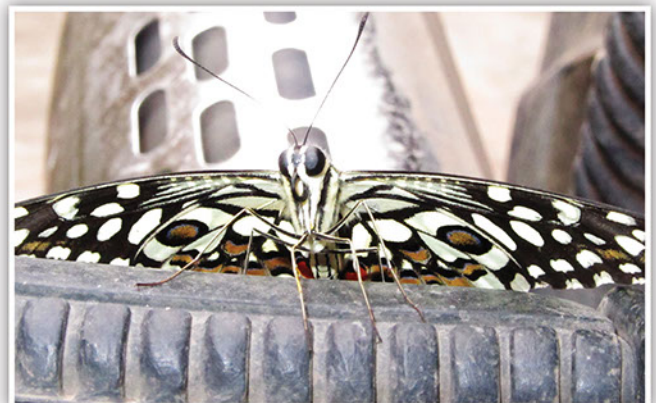
III prize - Mrs. Lakshmi Annamalai

This photograph in the true sense symbolizes 'Biodiver-City' - Biodiversity in City. The photograph is taken near OMR toll plaza in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. To spot bird species these days that are usually and commonly found near urban habitats is a rare sight. The rapid urbanization is taking a toll on these creatures. But this photo is surely a treat to eyes. Four different species of birds namely Green Bee-eater, Pied Kingfisher, White-throated Kingfisher and Little Cormorant are seen congregating at the same place at the same time in close proximity to human habitation.



Special Mention - Mr. Rajesh Kovilakar

This photograph of a Lime Butterfly is seen resting/ basking not on any of its usual places like its host plants or on some flower for nectar but on a foot rest of a motorbike. This picture suggests that biodiversity can occur almost anywhere around us. What we only need to do is take some time out and look around us to find some very interesting creatures and the habitat they live in.



Special Mention - Mr. Niraj Mani Chourasia



As the photo contest suggests that you need not have expensive camera's or need to go to famous National Parks to shoot pictures of wildlife. This is just the kind of picture taken by Mr. Niraj on the campus of Agricultural College and Research Institute, Tamil Nadu with his Nokia mobile phone camera.

Nature has so many things to tell us in one form or another through which we can learn a lot. In this photograph ants are seen building a bridge to cross over. Thus serving as models for human beings at figuring out how big, complex jobs get done with small parts and a minimum of instructions.



HIGHLIGHTS OF WSD CELEBRATION

Illustration by : Kim Rosen

● THE COMMON BIRD MONITORING OF INDIA PROGRAM

Common Bird Monitoring of India (CBMI) is a Citizen Science Program of Nature Forever Society which turned a year older this World Sparrow Day i.e 20th March 2013.

The aim of the program is to collect data on 18 common Indian birds. It is a pioneer project, certainly a first of its kind in the country to monitor the common birds. As there is no scientific data on these species in the country, the acquired data will help map the presence or absence, and the population and distribution of these common birds

After a year of launching this program, statistical analysis has given some insights about CBMI in general and common birds of India.

Apart from the 18 common birds being monitored through this program, another 141 species of birds were also observed across the country during the past one year.

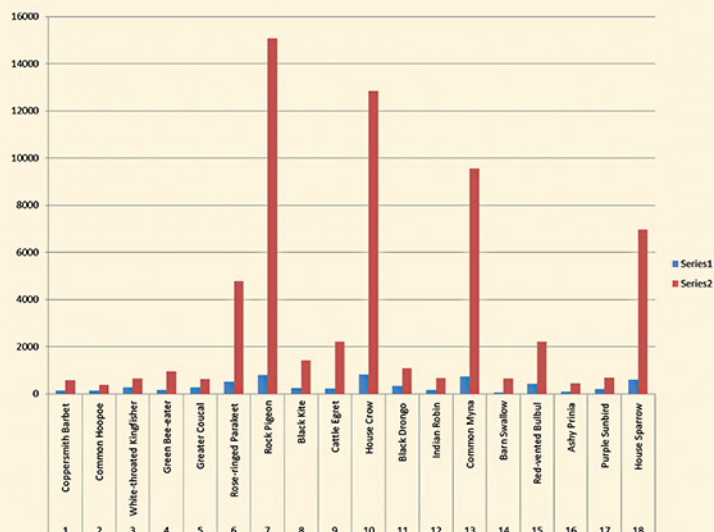
1850 Citizen Scientists have got involved in monitoring common birds in a year's span.

Population of Rock Pigeon is highest amongst the 18 common birds followed by House Crow, Common Myna.

House Sparrow ranks fourth in total population count.

180 cities across the country contributed to this year long data.

A total of 690 data points recorded sightings of birds across the country, out of which 594 locations were those where sparrows were spotted.



The graph depicts the abundance of 18 common birds during the year 2012 - 2013



HIGHLIGHTS OF WSD CELEBRATION

● WIPRO - NFS SPARROW AWARDS 2013

The NFS sparrow awards were instituted in 2011 with an aim to identify people who are an inspiration for other citizens to get involved into conservation.

The Nature Forever Society Sparrow Awards are not given to professional conservationists, ecologist or environmentalists but to citizens whose job or profession is not conservation, but they are making vital and important contribution in a selfless way to save the environment.

This year the efforts of Nature Forever Society received a big boost with Wipro financially supporting the awards by offering cash prize of Rs 50,000/-for each winner of Wipro-Nature Forever Society Sparrow Awards. The funding will help winners to carry out the vital conservation work undertaken by them. It will also help inspire citizens to get involved in conservation movement of India.

Nature Forever Society is committed to help the winners to carry out the vital conservation efforts undertaken by them. The objective behind Wipro- Nature Forever Society's Sparrow Award is

To involve the citizens from diverse sections of the society in the conservation movement.

To honor the work of individuals and organizations at the grassroots level for strengthening the conservation movement for better protection of the environment and biodiversity.

Thus, the Wipro- NFS Sparrow Awards are given to citizens who are doing innovative, inspirational work towards conservation of environment. Since its inception in 2011, the NFS Sparrow Awards has recognized the inspirational work of non- professional conservationists and researchers. In the coming years Nature Forever Society aspires to make Wipro- Nature Forever Society Sparrow Awards one of the most prestigious honors one could hold; tough to attain and inspirational to retain.

The Nomination process for this year's awards was closed on 23rd February 2013. Three individuals from different parts of the country were selected as outstanding recipients of the Wipro- NFS sparrow awards 2013.

Saleem Hameed

Despite the frequent temptation to give up on these hapless creatures, his demand for a centre that is dedicated to wildlife rehabilitation is unrelenting. Saleem Hameed is one such breed of URBAN WILDLIFE REHABILITATORS who has single handedly rescued, rehabilitated and released thousands of injured and abandoned small urban wildlife back into their habitats in the past 25 years. 'Retaining their wilderness is the most essential quality for their survival' says he.

Aabid Surti

Save every drop or drop dead- a "one-man" NGO out to save every drop of water. That's all Aabid Surti has to say to each one of us. The National Award winning author who has earned accolades within India and abroad as an artist, cartoonist, playwright and screenwriter; along with a partner, plugs dripping taps in homes in a Mumbai suburb, free. Ask him what his proudest achievement is and he will tell you he has saved more than 1.5 million liters water from going down the drain, literally!

Jaywant Dukhande

It is rightly said that 'Some people cannot serve enough'. Sub- Inspector Jaywant Govind Dukhande may not have many years till he retires from police force but he certainly has no plans to retire from serving the environment. His selfless, relentless endeavor to serve and save the natural environment has earned him the 'Sparrow Award' this year.



Venue of World Sparrow day 2013 – At Serenity Library, Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

World Sparrow Day Celebration at Ahmedabad.

The World Sparrow Day 2013 was celebrated in Ahmedabad, Gujarat at the Serenity Library, an institution that encourages nature conservation as a whole and propagates the importance of flora and fauna amongst the school children and the youth.

At the celebration were present many sparrow enthusiasts and nature lovers to show their support for the cause of saving house sparrow and other urban wildlife which are often overlooked. The World Sparrow Day celebration has always been a meeting ground for people of diverse interests to come together and form a force that can play an important role in advocacy and in spreading the awareness on the need of conserving common biodiversity or species of lower conservation status.

This year's World Sparrow Day celebration was a success with the efforts put in by Nature Forever Society, Wipro, N'chant, Jaypee group and with support and help from Serenity trust/ Library.

The celebration was kicked off by rising to the National Anthem. It was an audio-visual clip created by Felis creations offering a tribute to India's Wildlife.





Mr. Mohammed Dilawar, President of Nature Forever Society addressing the audience at the World Sparrow Day 2013 event. Venue of World Sparrow day 2013 – At Serenity Library, Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

The President of Nature Forever Society Mr. Mohammed Dilawar briefed the audience about how and when this day - 20th March took form to be celebrated as World Sparrow Day. The first World Sparrow Day was celebrated in the year 2010 at Delhi in the presence of Hon. Chief Minister of Delhi Dr. Sheila Dikshit. The year 2010 and the following years have got tremendous support and following from individuals, organizations, schools, colleges not only from India but from countries across the globe. Mr. Mohammed Dilawar was very happy to inform everyone that this year World Sparrow Day was in its fourth leg and is being celebrated in more than 30 countries across the World, gaining popularity in Europe and parts of South Asia. He said that the aim of this celebration has always been to involve more and more citizens in the conservation movement of India and 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.

Mr. Dilawar also talked about some of Nature Forever Society's initiatives for involving citizens into conservation. He also said that Nature Forever Society was formed with a vision to have an organization dedicated towards the research and conservation of House Sparrow and other common flora and fauna which have been neglected in India.

One of the initiatives of Nature Forever Society is CBMI i.e Common Bird Monitoring program of India. It was this day that CBMI was launched and this 20th March 2013 it completed a year giving some very good output from the data system which was designed by technical team of JILIT of Jaypee group, said Mr. Dilawar. The data collected for the CBMI over past one year was shared with everyone during this event.

The data so far reveals that Rock Pigeon tops the list of the most commonly found bird followed by House Crow and Common Myna. At the fourth position is House Sparrow. Mr. Dilawar anticipated 'Kabutarkhanas' in the city for growing number of Rock Pigeon everywhere. He was also not happy with the number of participating people. He said that in country having around 1.2 billion people, only 1850 Citizen Scientists have got involved in monitoring which is a very miniscule number. He hopes that in certain period of time with more efforts, there will be an increase in the number.

Dr. H.S Singh CCF and member of the Biodiversity Board of Gujarat, was also present on this occasion. Mr. Dilawar requested Dr. Singh to involve the citizens of Ahmedabad in the monitoring of the common birds in and around the city which will help in making the data richer with time with more distribution, thus more people, educational institutes, forest departments getting involved in the cause.



Mr. Deepak Dave, briefing the gathering about the CBMI program designed by JIL IT and involvement of Jaypee group in activities concerning environment conservation.

On this occasion Mr. Deepak Dave Senior Vice President of Jaypee Group was present.

He addressed the audience about how Jaypee Group helped in creating CBMI and designing the online database system. The IT wing of Jaypee group JIL IT is involved with the technical aspect of CBMI that will help in documentation, mapping, distribution and status of the common birds which was never monitored before in such a scientific way.

The program developed, which captures data points on the map and other valuable information entered by the citizen scientist is a pioneering work that will help fill a huge gap regarding the lack of information on distribution patterns of birds, said Mr. Dave

Mr. Dave also said that the founder chairman of Jaypee Group Mr. Jaiprakash Gaur is an ardent nature lover and has always favored and supported such initiatives/projects which are of help in conserving the environment. On concluding his talk Mr. Dave said, 'Whatever has happened to the vultures should not be the case with this tiny beautiful chirpy bird' and so will continue to extend our support for the initiatives taken by Mr. Dilawar.

Along with this, one of the main features of this gathering was to honor and felicitate the Sparrow Award winners 2013.

The President of Nature Forever Society drew more light on Wipro - NFS Sparrow Awards. Mr. Dilawar said that Sparrow Awards are not for people who are working on conservation of sparrows alone, but because the name Sparrow is synonymous with the citizens of India, who is the common man of this country, the name of the award is 'Sparrow Award'. These awards are given to people who are not professional conservationist, ecologist or whose job is to do conservation. It's given to citizens who are from other businesses, vocations and whose job is not to do conservation but through their innovative, inspirational and doable efforts; they make real conservation happen at grassroots level and are ideal rolemodels.

Mr. Dilawar thanked Wipro for sponsoring Sparrow Awards and that each winner will receive a cash contribution of Rs. 50,000/- to carry forward the vital conservation work they have undertaken. Wipro extends support not only to Sparrow Award's but also World Sparrow Day. 'We at Nature Forever Society are committed to support the winners in every possible way - It can be in the form of linking them with the right kind of organizations or facilitating their conservation work', said Mr. Dilawar

On behalf of Wipro, Shweta Adlaka – Marketing Head to Wipro was present to share Wipro's involvement in World Sparrow Day and Sparrow Awards. She talked about the association of Wipro and Nature Forever Society and how this idea was seeded as they both share a similar agenda for sustainable conservation and urban biodiversity conservation. Wipro believes in recognizing the real heroes and so to support the winners in their conservation work, Wipro is contributing cash prize to all the winners. Mrs. Adlaka concluded by saying that this is just the beginning to the people's movement and will certainly draw more and more citizens.



Mrs. Shweta talking about Nature Forever Society and Wipro's association and Wipro's support towards World Sparrow Day and Sparrow Awards .

INTRODUCING WIPRO - NFS SPARROW AWARD WINNERS 2013

Mr. Mohammed Dilawar took great pleasure in introducing to all the winners of Sparrow Awards 2013.

SALEEM HAMEED

Dedicated 25 years of his life to one of the most difficult work; that is rescue and rehabilitation of wildlife. It ranged from small birds, squirrels, snakes, Loris - not only treating them but also successfully introducing them in the wild. Mr. Dilawar says the kind of knowledge he possess cannot be found in any books but comes only through years of experience. The kind of knowledge he has is phenomenal and no book has such knowledge, says he.



Mr. Saleem Hameed receiving the Sparrow Award 2013 for his exceptional work of Rescue and Rehabilitation of urban wildlife.



Sparrow Award winner Saleem Hameed expressing his feelings after he was honored with the Wipro- Nature Forever Society Sparrow Award 2013.

On receiving the award and when asked about how the journey has been so far, he said that we humans have practically known nothing about the animals and the co lateral damaged is caused by our own hands . We also haven't been able to figure out for many years what we can do to put these animals back into the wild. For him the whole journey has been tough and has been painful. But when he manages to do this rehabilitation and see the animal returning to the wild, this moment is really a wonderful one.

JAYWANT DUKHANDE

He wears the uniform of a police man but he is the real savior of wildlife. He's heart beats for wildlife in the same way his heart beats from protecting the country. He is involved in rescue of urban wildlife, reptiles, small birds for 25 years and in the process has made many sacrifices. He makes sure that he not only rescues wildlife but also creates awareness and has trained a lot many people under him.



Mr. Jaywant Govind Dukhande receiving the Sparrow Awards 2013 for his outstanding work of rescuing wildlife and also creating awareness about their conservation.



Sparrow Award winner Mr. Jaywant Dukhande speaking out his heart on receiving this award.

After receiving the award Mr. Dukhande said he was proud of his family and himself and that whatever work he has been doing since past few years is not because people should recognize him or reward him for his good work, but because he feels that he should do something for the wildlife and is concerned about them. He was thankful to his family and especially to his wife for being the support system and also appreciated support of his colleague's in the department.

AABID SURTI

He is one of the most celebrated cartoonist, writer and artist of the country. Mr. Dilawar said that the reason for which he is being honored today is not for the field in which he is a master. He has been addressing one of the most critical problems that we are facing today and that is of water scarcity. He has given a solution leading by example, in an amazingly innovative and inspirational way. He has been fixing leaking taps free of charge and thereby saving unused water from going into drains. When most of the people get retired at his age, he has taken up this wonderful initiative.



Mr. Aabid Surti received Sparrow Award 2013 for his exemplary work of water conservation in a unique and inspirational way.



Sparrow Award winner Mr. Aabid Surti sharing his story of getting into conservation and starting up his one man NGO- 'Drop Dead' Foundation.

On receiving this award he said that, this idea was with him since his childhood and it grew older with him and took form at this age. He says, whenever he sees a leaking tap, he thinks of how this problem can be fixed and liters of water can be saved. He once read this in a newspaper that, 'A drop of water leaking every second from tap wastes 1000liters of water in a month' and this made him come to this solution of fixing leaking taps.

Mr. Dilawar then made a concluding note by saying that, 'we want citizens to take the winners as shining example who show how conservation can be done even if you are in some other profession and that such initiatives will inspire citizens to get involved in conservation movement of India'.

Let's RISE for Sparrow, Let's RISE for common birds & Let's make a difference towards conservation.



PROFILE OF THE SPARROW AWARD WINNERS



Mr. Saleem Hameed

Saleem Hameed is one of the rare breed of URBAN WILDLIFE REHABILITATORS crusading tirelessly to increase awareness among the general public of the damage we inadvertently do to the animals and birds we share space with. He has single handedly rescued, rehabilitated and released thousands of injured and abandoned small wildlife back into their habitats in the past 25 years. Apart from being a dedicated rehabilitator, he is an established wildlife photographer, exceptional nature illustrator and environmentalist who has done tremendous work to restore natural order and nurture native species of plants and trees.

It is rare to find qualified people to care for injured or abandoned wildlife. This was what provoked Saleem, who was an advertising photographer to take up wildlife rehabilitation in Bangalore – a city that was growing in an unprecedented manner and causing irreparable damage to the fragile ecosystem. With no institutes to train him, he had to teach himself through books, his sister who is a doctor and wildlife veterinary / rehabilitator friends visiting India who were taken up by his passion to make a difference.

He is an expert on treating birds, reptiles and small mammals. One of the job hazards in this field is being attacked by frightened animals in pain, who are ready to strike at any sign of capture or threat - Saleem has been bitten more than four times by injured venomous snakes he has treated, but he considers it part of the job and the attack as a natural response deserving sympathy and kindness. Once, he was bitten while caring for a cobra which was badly burnt and he even died for several seconds after being, before doctors could revive him.

Saleem helped set up the first ever wildlife rehabilitation centre in Bangalore called 'Save our Wild Life (SoWL)', run by People for animals and then the 'Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre' (WRRRC) at Bannerghatta run by Compassion Unlimited Plus Action. These centres helped people with some passion and concern for wildlife to volunteer. This had a very positive effect as it inspired groups of youth in Bangalore to take up a career in the field of ecology or wildlife but more than that

created awareness among many Bangaloreans to value the wildlife in their backyard.

Saleem's work with wildlife is not only restricted to Bangalore but whenever there is a call to save animals he is there. In Veerapura (Andhra Pradesh), he rehabilitates fallen Painted stork chicks at a large nesting colony and trains villagers to handle and take care of them. The Bangalore city Corporation depends solely on him to rehabilitate animals injured by the advancing city or by the rapid increase in trade in animals. Many like the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) call him regularly to conduct workshops and train their staff at various rehabilitation centres.

Saleem does all this work without any financial aid from the Government. He raises funds from his photography assignments, illustrations or with the help of friends and family.

Saleem is also an excellent birdwatcher and is very committed to details in identification of a species for which he is often invited to help out with bird surveys.



INTERVIEW

A conversation with

**SALEEM
HAMEED**

How much of a surprise has it been to receive the NFS Sparrow Award?

Surprise is an understatement. Really thought the world had forgotten me. Obviously not! There are friends and relatives out there who are really grateful for my efforts at rehabilitation.

What inspired you to get involved with the conservation of bird and wildlife?

At an early age it was obvious to me that the world was changing rapidly and that there were many collateral casualties in the form of abuse, displaced, orphaned and injured wildlife. The trade in illegally held wildlife continues to grow.

Looking at so called 'animal shelters' where birds, small mammals and reptiles were deposited by the general public who cared enough, broke my belief in such centres where mortality was high due to further abuse and neglect. The veterinary profession was ill equipped to handle and care for injured wildlife. The paucity of knowledge of diverse groups of animals and birds was appalling. I guess the vacuum in these centres galvanized me to assume the burden of the care and eventual rehabilitation of these beautiful creatures.

How do you raise your funds to carry forward your activities?

Apart from my advertising photography it's been friends, relatives and well wishers who have funded my activities thus far and continue to do so. To them, my deepest and most sincere thanks.

How do you manage to maintain a balance between professional/family and your work in regard to conservation?

Rehabilitation is a 24hour responsibility where your social life ceases to exist anymore. Things like trekking, bird watching and travel simply find no place in a rehabilitator's life.

What kind of support do you expect from Government agencies, citizens and society at large?

To value nature and change the highly consumptive lifestyle we lead in the urban areas today which is responsible for the problems face by wildlife. To learn to share space with these small critters.

What are the challenges/ difficulties you face in doing the work you have decided on?

Too many difficulties to enumerate...

If there are pitfalls, what motivates you?

Pain and suffering of animals and the lack of good rehabilitation process in the country.

Such work is often a lonely path. How does it feel to see your efforts being recognized?

Totally amazed that people go to great length that I can be recognized. At one level I revel in the loneliness of rehabilitation and would rather be left alone. But at the other, it is important for my supporters for my efforts to be known. Therefore, accepting this award is a way of repaying them for all the love and concern that they graciously showered on me.

What plans do you have to take forward your work?

Like to give it all up as care worn and frayed at the edges. But I guess I can never stop as long as the abuse of nature by our species continues.



JAYWANT DUKHANDE

Some people cannot serve enough. Take Jayant Govind Dukhande. He joined the Mumbai Police in 1985 as a constable to serve the people. In spite of a demanding job, he has always found time and patience to reach out to others.

Today, this 49-year-old Sub Inspector has more than lived up to his name. Jaywant – the victorious – Dukhande has risen above the call of the daily roster to pamper his passion of conserving nature and wildlife to do for people and for the natural world.

Beginning young, he loved to rescue snakes, birds, small mammals and reptiles only to rehabilitate them back safely in the wild. Doing for others is not new to Jaywant. He has spent years training school children skills like gymnastics, Yoga, malkhamb and taught them body building. He would even take them rock climbing. During his interaction with children, he would make them aware about nature and about how to be kind to the environment and to save wildlife. 1986 was a watershed year for Jaywant. On a nature trek with children at Borivali National Park in Maharashtra, during his off-time from work he spotted a snake resting in the hollow of a tree. He caught the snake and showed it to the children.

However, conscious of the fact that creatures of the wild are best left free, he released it in the wild. His interest kindled, Jaywant began attending lectures on snakes. As his interest increased, he began rescuing snakes and studying their behaviour before releasing them in the wild, where they truly belong.

Gradually, he began to share his knowledge through awareness programmes in schools, villages and in slum areas. He addressed special children and colleagues in the Mumbai Police, especially the RRP commando to increase their awareness and dispel misconceptions about snakes. As part of the package, he also speaks on basic first aid in case of a snake bite. Like most other unfortunate incidents, timely intervention can save many a life and this knowledge imparted by him must have saved many.

Few can appreciate this more than Jaywant. In 2008, while rescuing a Russell's Viper from a children's garden, he was bitten by the snake. His left index finger was damaged permanently but not his spirit.

Discharged from hospital six days later, he has never stopped rescuing snakes and other forms of wildlife.

Rescue work can sound simple but requires a certain amount of expenditure. With no official help from any quarters, Jaywant, encouraged by an environmentally aware family and especially a wife who supports his passion wholeheartedly, has been funding his own work. She has never stood in the way of Jaywant sharing his knowledge and expertise with their young son Tejas Jaywant Dukhande who also rescues small snakes and birds.

What does the future hold for Jaywant? He may not have many years till he retires from the police force but he certainly has no plans to retire from serving the environment. He hopes to continue study the subject of his passion so that he can do much more to conserve Nature and wildlife on a larger scale even while he makes people aware of the issues concerning the environment.

For this selfless, relentless endeavour to serve and save the natural environment and to educate people so that they do more good than harm, Jaywant Dukhande has been selected a winner of the Wipro – Nature Forever Society Sparrow Award 2013.



Mr. Aabid Surti

Aabid Surti, a litterateur who won a national award for his collection of short stories *Teesri Aankh* in 1993, has changed the lives of Mumbai residents by raising awareness that "a tap that drips once a second wastes a thousand litres of water every month." Aabid has authored around 80 books but no story has moved him as much as the truth about water scarcity on the planet. With former UN chief Boutros Boutros Ghali's words echoing in his mind that by 2025 more than 40 countries are expected to experience water crisis, Surti set out to make a difference to the planet.

In 2007, the International Year of Water, 72-year-young Surti, along with a plumber, began fixing leaky taps in apartment units in Mumbai. He began by simply replacing old O-ring rubber gaskets with new ones, buying new fixtures from the wholesale market for 50 paise a piece.

His NGO is aptly named "Drop Dead." He used his experience as a celebrated painter to design posters and pamphlets with the tagline: "Save every drop... or drop dead."

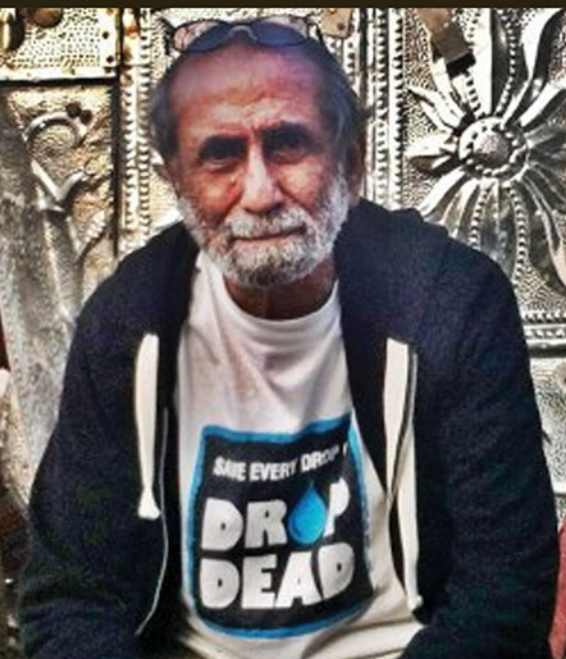
Every Sunday, the Drop Dead team (Aabid, Riyaaz (a plumber) and a female volunteer Tejal) would pick a building, get permission from the housing society, and get to work. A day before, Tejal would hand out pamphlets explaining their mission and paste posters in elevators and apartment lobbies spreading awareness on the looming water crisis. And finally, they would ensure the building was drip-dry.

By the end of the first year, he had visited 1,533 homes in Mira Road, fixed around 400 taps, and saved around 3.84 lakh (0.3m) litres of water.

With dwindling funds, Surti approached the local Mira-Bhayander Municipal Corporation asking them to set up a full-time office with a phone, a plumber and a bicycle so that if leakage starts somewhere, like fire brigade, a plumber would be available, but his request was turned down as was his request for funds. An award for life time

achievement in Hindi literature from the State government and a cash prize of Rs. 50,000 helped him revive his work.

With Maharashtra expecting its worst drought in 40 years in the summer of 2013, Chief Minister Prithviraj Chauhan has warned citizens to begin conserving water. Surti's simple yet effective approach if adopted by every citizen could help save water - the elixir of life.



INTERVIEW

A conversation with

**AABID
SURTI**

How much of a surprise has it been to receive the NFS Sparrow Award?

Not a big surprise.

What inspired you to get involved with the conservation of water by fixing leaking taps?

My childhood. Living in ghetto and fighting for each bucket of water everyday on a public tap.

How do you raise your funds to carry forward your activities?

My fund raiser is God. He pokes right people at the right time, to support my cause. You are the third one.

How do you manage to maintain a balance between professional/family and your work in regard to conservation?

My family is one with me. I am giving my Sundays to the cause. That is my duty. Its like an old gardener planting a mango tree whose fruits will be eaten by next generation.

What kind of support do you expect from Government agencies, citizens and society at large?

Just follow my footprints. Do something good for the society that has given you abundantly.

What are the challenges/ difficulties you face in doing the work you have decided on?

No challenges. Its kids stuff. Anyone can do it.

How difficult is it to work for conservation or environmental issues?

Once you decide, its a rosy path.

If there are pitfalls, what motivates you?

Inner fire.

Tell us more about your initiative?

It's simple. You can also do it in your locality.

Such work is often a lonely path. How does it feel to see your efforts being recognized?

Of course it makes me more happy.

What plans do you have to take forward your work?

It's already spreading like fire. A German Channel who covered Drop Dead phenomena was telecast-ed from Berlin and shown all over Europe.

What are your thoughts on NFS Sparrow Awards?

Great doing.





Interacting with the President of India Shri Pranab Mukherjee at his residence, Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on 30th March 2013.
L to R- The President Shri Pranab Mukherjee, Mohammed Dilawar, Oan Dilawar and Sunita Joshi.

Nature Forever Society meets Hon. President of India.

On 30th March 2013, Nature Forever Society officials met and briefed the President of India on the need to save the common house sparrow and other wildlife species.

They were invited by the President, who was keen to know about the work undertaken in terms of house sparrow conservation.

The founder of NFS, Mohammed Dilawar, briefed the President about the declining numbers of house sparrows and the steps taken by Nature Forever Society to involve citizens into the conservation movement across India and also discussed about plans to revive the sparrow population.

Mr. Dilawar also briefed about the World Sparrow Day and how it was initiated in 2010 by Nature Forever Society. It is a matter of joy, that how in a short span of four years, it has become a people's movement, said Mr. Dilawar.

In the Photo : L to R- Oan Dilawar, Jaywant Dukhande, Aabid Surti, Mrityunjay Bose, President Shri Pranab Mukherjee, Mohammed Dilawar, Sunita Joshi and Saleem Hameed.

NFS also explained to the President how the Common Bird Monitoring of India program is helping in collecting vital statistical data in regard to the population of house sparrows and other common birds across the Indian Subcontinent, along with the results achieved till date. It is the only Citizens Science Project in the country to monitor the common birds of the nation. It is mainly aimed at involving communities into the bird conservation movement of India. Sunita Joshi, Director of Jaypee groups IT wing JIL IT which helped in designing and the Common Bird Monitoring of India was present on the occasion.



Nature Forever Society Representative's and Sparrow Award 2013 winners calling on the President of India Shri Pranab Mukherjee at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on 30th March 2013.

As a token of love and respect the CBMI poster designed by Kim Rosen was presented to the Hon. President.

At the Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi, Nature Forever Society officials were also accompanied by winners of Sparrow Award 2013. The aim behind this visit was also to introduce Hon. President with such citizens who are making vital and important contributions in a selfless way to save the environment, even though they are not professional conservationist or naturalists.

Detailed information was given with regard to the innovative and inspirational work undertaken by Wipro – Nature Forever Society Sparrow Award winners.

The Hon. President Mr. Mukherjee took great interest into the activities of the society. The delegation also briefed everyone about the practical steps being taken towards the revival of the population of house sparrows at national level.



Wipro- Nature Forever Society's Sparrow Award Winners 2013

In Media

DAILY NEWS
Monday Apr 01, 2013

President Mukherjee supports sparrow conservation

Mumbai, April 1 — Nature Forever Society (NFS), which works for the conservation of house sparrows, said Monday that President Pranab Mukherjee supports the cause.

NFS founder Mohammed Dilawar said that Mukherjee had invited society representatives to understand their work on conservation of house sparrows.

"NFS representatives also explained to the president how the Common Bird Monitoring of India programme is helping in collecting vital statistical data on the population of house sparrows and other common birds across the Indian subcontinent," Dilawar said.

"It is the only citizens' science project in the country to monitor the common birds of the nation. It is mainly aimed at involving communities into the bird conservation movement of India," he added.

Dilawar also briefed Mukherjee about the World Sparrow Day (celebrated March 20) and how it was initiated in 2010 by Nature Forever Society.

hindustantimes
April 03, 2013

After CM, President joins sparrow conservation efforts

Darpan Singh, Hindustan Times New Delhi, April 03, 2013
First Published: 23:49 IST(3/4/2013) | Last Updated: 23:52 IST(3/4/2013)

After brightly-coloured nests and boxes were recently put up at chief minister Sheila Dikshit's residence to attract sparrows, the Rashtrapati Bhawan has also shown interest in getting the bird back to Lutyens' Delhi.

President Pranab Mukherjee invited activists of Nature Forever Society (of India), which launched World Sparrow Day in 2010, and discussed plans to revive the sparrow population.

"The President has extended his support. The conservation project needs awareness. We want policies favourable for conservation and reverse the trend of government showing concern only for big animals such as the tiger," NFS founder Mohammed Dilawar said.

"Delhi has been proactive towards conservation of house sparrow and is one of the leading cities in the common bird monitoring of India (CBMI), which started a year ago," Dilawar said. Monitoring will help create a distribution map and effectively execute conservation plans.

The NFS also explained to the President how the CBMI is helping in collecting vital data regarding the bird's population. The Delhi government notified sparrow as Delhi's state bird in October last year.

"We are creating special 'sparrow corners' in about 2,000 schools and holding expert lectures for students. Teachers are also being trained in this effort," said BC Sabata of Delhi's environment department.

House Sparrow declared as State Bird of Delhi

Till some years back, the house sparrow was the most common image to come to mind when one discussed birds. The decline of house sparrows in India and other parts of the world is a wakeup call in regard to the approach taken towards conservation. Conservation till now was only something which needed to be done for species which were rare or threatened.

The need for conservation of common flora and fauna was something which has always been neglected by researchers, conservation organizations and government agencies.

But finally, the sparrow has got its due credit and importance it rightly deserved all along with sustained efforts of Nature Forever Society over the past few years and the sparrow has been recognized for its importance in the urban biodiversity.

On the eve of Independence Day during the launch of 'Rise of Sparrow' campaign Nature Forever Society got the House Sparrow declared as the State bird of Delhi at a Function in New Delhi the Hon. Chief Minister of Delhi Sheila Dikshit house sparrow as the State Bird of Delhi on 14th August 2012, a decision that is expected to go a long way in raising awareness and attention on the species.

The Chief Minister expressed concern over lack of attention and recognition the bird had received thus far. She said Delhi being one of the greenest cities in the world has a tremendous scope for urban conservation of which the sparrow would now be the mascot and bio-indicator. Launching

"Rise for the Sparrows", India's largest conservation program for these birds, Hon. CM said the decision to declare them the "State Bird" would help in raising awareness about and drawing attention to the species.

Nature Forever Society had been working for more than a year and expresses its gratitude towards the Hon. Chief Minister of Government of NCT of Delhi Mrs. Sheila Dikshit for declaring House Sparrows the State Bird of Delhi on behest of Nature Forever Society.

Delhi being the capital of the world's largest democracy; having a bird with which the citizens (common man of India) gets it self-associated with goes a long way. It has given House Sparrow the pride of place as the State Bird of Delhi the Capital of India.

This is the first time that the "common man's bird" has been given this honor and by this Delhi Government has set a new trend. Usually states give importance to rare and glamorous birds and animals and this is a rare occasion when a common bird, though not so common now, has been given recognition. This step will help in generating awareness to save sparrows and to create conditions favorable for the little bird to return to our midst in large numbers.



'House Sparrow' Special Cover released by India Post



HOUSE SPARROW Special Cover

Released by **INDIA POST**

After declaring House Sparrow as the State Bird of Delhi much of the focus was shifted on sparrows and other common birds. This step had rightly helped in creating much needed awareness about house sparrows.

In addition to this another very important step was taken by India Post with joint efforts of Nature Forever Society towards conservation. A Special Cover designed by Nature Forever Society was released by India Post to commemorate House Sparrow being declared as the State bird of Delhi. The cover was released in October 2012 soon after the House Sparrow was declared the State Bird of Delhi on 14th August 2012.

Limca Book of Records



The Special Cover on House Sparrow designed by Nature Forever Society and released by India Post has found a place in the Limca Book of Records 2013 edition. Nature Forever Society would like to thank India Post and Delhi Government.

We are thankful to Limca Book of Records editor Dr. Vijaya Ghosh and her team.

World Sparrow Day website

The awareness in regard to the World House Sparrow Day was generated through www.worldsparrowday.org. The website was also the nerve centre of the whole event as it helped in disseminating information as well as important resources.

The website helped people in many ways as like ideas on how to celebrate the day and organize various events.

The media section of the website was of great help to the media, individuals, organizations as it helped them in downloading high resolution photos of House Sparrow, logos and the official World Sparrow Day

poster which helped them in creating as well as better planning of the events. The website also helped individuals, organizations and media to communicate with the World Sparrow Day secretariat for event updates.

A special link

www.worldsparrowday.org/form1/form.html

is also designed to help citizens get involved and also register their events which will help citizens at the local level to get associated with it. The aim in creating such a link is that it will help in compiling events organized across the globe.

Also post the World Sparrow Day event, the website is updated with photographs of the WSD event at Serenity Trust, Ahmedabad, Gujarat. People who have missed out on the celebration can catch glimpse of the event on the website. A special page is also created for the Sparrow Award Winners – the past winner's (2011 & 2012) and present winners (2013). A detailed profile of the winners along with the interview is on the website for the citizens to see.

The website was the nerve centre of the whole event and helped in many ways in making this event grand success across the World.

Role of Media in World Sparrow Day

The role played by the media in regard to World Sparrow day has been that of a key ally without whose help we would have never ever been able to spread the message to such a wide audience.

Media in this case has not only limited its role to give a news it has also helped in creating awareness, educating people, motivating them to join the cause and also support the World Sparrow Day.

On occasion of World Sparrow Day NFS carried out awareness campaign with the help of various media houses. We thank you all for the support .

This not only shows the positive role that media can play in conservation of species and environment but also the commitment, vision and zeal which is present in the media to bring about positive social changes.

We would not have been successful in celebrating the Day on such a grand scale without the solid support media.

We would like to thank all our friends in print and well as other electronic media we are proud to have you as our conservation partners in our endeavor to save House Sparrow and other common birds.

WSD 2013 CELEBRATIONS AROUND THE GLOBE



Moravian Ornithological Society, Olomouc, Czech Republic

Moravian Ornithological Society organized guided walks and sparrow watching that focused on the coexistence of humans and wildlife in the cities and in general about urban ecology. Next year too they promise to continue in the tradition of World Sparrow Day and will try organizing events in more places in the Czech Republic.



The guide is briefing the members before the start of the bird watching tour.



Trying to spot sparrows and other birds



The guide is helping the members with identifying the bird species.



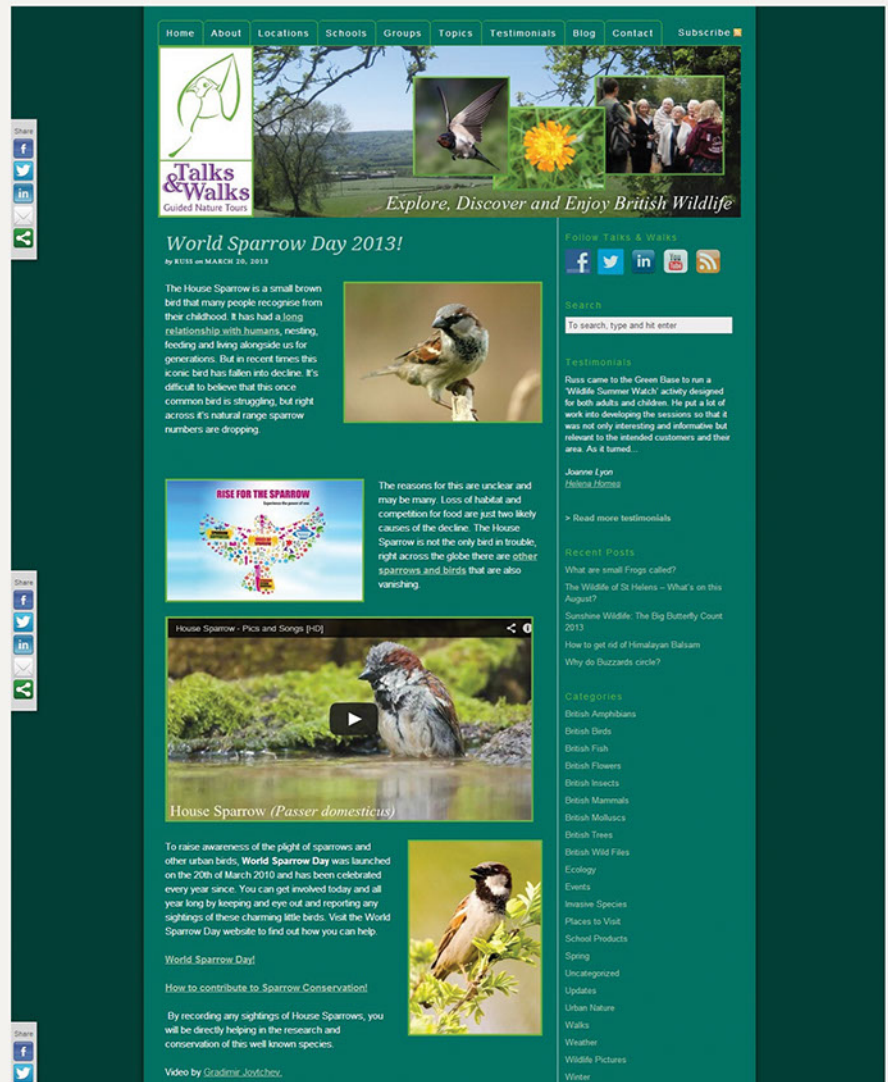
Members spotting birds through binoculars.



Mongolian Bird Watching Club, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

They celebrated World Sparrow Day using their Clubs mailing list, Facebook and blog sites to create awareness about the World Sparrow Day.

Russell Hedley of Nature Talk and Walks showed support to World Sparrow Day by promoting this day on his website. He created a Sparrow blog which talks about the house sparrow and World Sparrow Day. Its aims to encourage people to learn more about and support the World's Sparrows.



A Note on World Sparrow Day by Pamela on her blog - Adventures in India



Joint House Sparrow Project - Waveney Bird Club and Suffolk Biodiversity Action Partnership.

This project on behalf of Waveney Bird Club is being led by Stephen and Louise Dean. Another key player in this project is Hollesley Bay Prison, wherein the prisoners helped construct a number of House Sparrow Terrace Boxes with the materials provided by Waveney Bird Club. The prison had also helped in making a lot of Barn Owl boxes and Small nesting boxes. The nest boxes then were taken to Leiston Primary School and presented to the children at a specially arranged assembly on World Sparrow Day to be put up in school.

House Sparrow Project at MGD Girls' School, Jaipur, India

Stephen Dean, WBC treasurer is also associated with the House Sparrow Conservation Project at MGD Girls' School in Jaipur. The students of this school have initiated an eco club called Green Warriors Nature Club.



Green Warriors Nature Club

Members of the Nature Club took up a project to conserve the House Sparrow : the first school to do that in Jaipur.

They have put up nest boxes and bird feeders in their school campus to increase the no. of birds. The project was initiated in April and was supported by Mr. Harshvardhan and Mr. Sajal Jugran and Mr. Stephen Dean of Waveney Bird Club. About 14 nest boxes and 15 bird feeders were put in the school campus at various places. Later the nest boxes were studied and it was found that it was inhabited by birds and more number of sparrows are spotted were nest boxes were placed.

The nest boxes were also distributed to student and teachers so as to spread awareness amongst students and residents of Jaipur.



Mr. Harshvardhan briefing about installing nest boxes and bird feeders.



(L) A nest box is occupied by a pair of sparrow. (R) Bookmarks displayed at the competition.

They also organized a poster making and bookmark making competition and later displayed them for parents to spread awareness so that more people join them in this initiative.

They also made observations of the nest boxes that were put. After a month, nest boxes which were placed near dense foliage and had more green cover were taken up by sparrows. Those put up on tall trees and buildings were not taken up.

Des Raj Vedhara DAV Centenary Public School, Phillaur

The school started its celebration for World Sparrow Day 1st March onwards. Many competitions and extra-curricular activities were organized for students.

An awareness program was also put up for parents on the day of World Sparrow Day – 20th March 2013. Students and teachers together put up pictorial play depicting the reasons of House Sparrows population being affected. It was very beautifully set up and thought provoking one.

Activities done by the students of kids block

Learning with coloring- On 1st march (Coloring Day) Tiny tots of our school giving the color to House sparrow & spreading the message to save it.



Completed coloring pictures of house sparrow and other birds.

COLLAGE MAKING

On 2nd march activity on Collage preparation was done by the students of 3rd std .



PLAY ON THE PRESENT CODITION OF THE BIRDS

On 4th march Students of 5th std depicting the present condition of birds to their classmates



SPREADING THE KNOWLEDGE

On 2nd march Teachers of our school visited Harike Wildlife sanctuary to enrich themselves with knowledge regarding different kinds of birds. (Students did not go due to the revision days)



Sharing the knowledge with the senior students about common birds & migratory birds. On 4th march



Spreading the knowledge about the things prepared from the water hyacinth (plant that grow in water)



Providing knowledge about the impact of pesticides used in the fields & the pollution on the bird species.



ENRICHING KNOWLEDGE OF BIRDS



After getting the knowledge about the Migratory Birds and collected information on birds like- Bald Eagle, Siberian crane, cocktails etc. and why they migrate from one place to another place & in which season? They shared the same with their younger ones & displayed the pictures of same in the school garden



Photographs showing different activities organized by school to celebrate World Sparrow Day

DISPLAY BOARD ACTIVITY

Save Home Sparrow

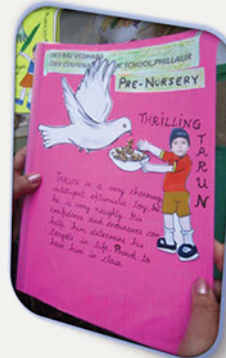


By the students of 10+1 Display boards were prepared on 15 March.



Awareness to the parents & students

Teacher of pre nursery class aware the parents & students through the project file of the students of nursery.



House sparrow day

House sparrow day in a different way — on 20th March our result of junior wing was declared. To aware the society & kids regarding common birds & House sparrow, we have taken theme as "The Heart ending Cry"



How is our life without birds ---?
We can't imagine so give house to house sparrow.





Awareness to the parents about the reason of extinction of house sparrow – Mobile Towers, Pesticides, Lack of insects, Microwave pollution & Lack of hedges etc.



If we want to save the humanity we have to save the birds.



Practical knowledge is much important than theoretical one. Through pictures birds are showing their feelings.



A pictorial display to create awareness about the declining House Sparrows.

Animal Care, Bina, Madhya Pradesh, India.

1100 clay pot which can be used as water-bowls or as bird baths for birds were distributed among citizens in Bina city.



Distribution of Clay pots to the public by members of Animal Care

गौरैया बचाएं, सकोरे में पानी पिलाएं



वीना। तुलनाप्राप्त होती जा रही गौरैया को बचाने के लिए संकल्प पत्र भरवाने के बावजूद सकोरे के तेले एकीकृत हेल्प लाइन के सबन्ध।

विश्व गौरैया दिवस पर वितरित किए 1100 सकोरे, भरवाया संकल्प पत्र

कार्यालय संपादकता | वीना

विश्व गौरैया दिवस के अवसर पर एनीमल हेल्पलाइन द्वारा शहर में 1100 सकोरे का वितरण किया गया। सकोरे वितरित करने के दौरान प्रत्येक व्यक्ति से संकल्प पत्र भी भरवाया गया। हेल्पलाइन की ओर से पंकज प्रकाश लखेरा ने बताया कि शहर की चक्काचौध से घर के आंगन में चहचहाने वाली गौरैया लुप्त होती जा रही हैं। आसानी से पेयजल उपलब्ध नहीं होने से या तो गौरैया अपना मूल स्थान छोड़ देती हैं या फिर मृत हो जाती हैं। हमारे घर की महत्वपूर्ण अंग गौरैया को बचाने के लिए जरूरी है कि हम घर के बाहर, दुकानों पर या पेड़ों पर सकोरे में पानी रखें। गर्मी के मौसम में जीवों के लिए पानी अमृत के समान कार्य करता है।



वीना। गौरैया को बचाने का संकल्प साफ कजर आया। भारी संख्या में लोग सकोरे ले गए।

'Animal Care' distributing clay pots in news- Press release

L.R & S.M Vissanji Academy, Andheri, Mumbai, India

The school conducted the following activities during the week starting from 18th March 2013 up to 26th March 2013 as a pre celebration to World Sparrow Day

Art/craft activity - Puppet making , making different types of bird nests and different types of Bird feeders.

Colouring Competition.

Creating stories and poems on sparrow

Charts were prepared by students on the following topics.

Grade VI : Subject: charts showing prohibition of deforestation & how sparrows can maintain the aesthetic value of nature

Grade VII : Subject: charts on causes of decline in sparrow population & conservation methods for saving sparrows.

Grade VIII & IX: Photography and planting saplings.

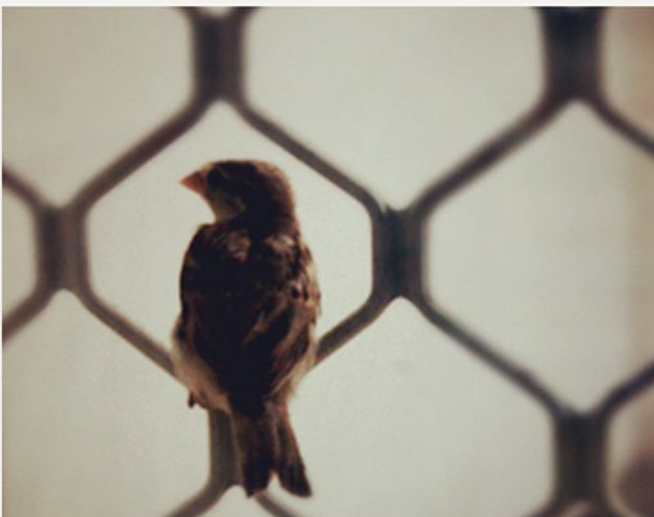
The school had also arranged for talks during the assembly section.

- Description of a sparrow-physical characteristics, distribution and habitat.
- Species of sparrows found all over the world , reasons for decline of sparrow population, steps to help sparrows and other birds survive, etc
- Behaviour of sparrows, eating habits.
- Nesting: types of nests and materials used ,eggs and young ones of the sparrow.

In all it was an enjoyable and learning experience for all the children as they participated in various activities over a week in view of celebrating the World Sparrow Day.



Various Competitions arranged by school to celebrate World Sparrow Day. Students showing their work- Sparrow nests and puppets.



Photographs of sparrows taken by students at different locations – Andheri, Mumbai

Madras Naturalist Society, Chennai, India

The Madras Naturalist Society created a very creative and illustrative pamphlet which talks about the House Sparrows and the ways in which these little feathered friends can be helped. The purpose was to distribute this among people specially children which will go in a long way in creating awareness about the sparrows. Children were also encouraged to distribute this among their classmates in school.

Pamphlet on House sparrow

Spare a thought for the little House Sparrow...

The House Sparrow, *Passer domesticus indicus*, is a small finch-like songbird from the family Poecetidae, to which the Weaverbirds and Munias also belong. Once widespread all over India, the house sparrow has now become relatively rare to spot. The reasons are a combination of dwindling food sources, loss of nesting sites, indiscriminate use of agricultural chemicals and proliferation of phone towers. The following will make this clear:

- The eaves of tiled-roof houses, room ventilators and cups of ceiling fans used to be greatly favoured by sparrows for nesting in. Modern housing design has removed these breeding facilities leaving the birds with hardly any nesting sites
- Draught-animal dung on the roads was a breeding ground for food insects which the sparrows fed upon. These animals are now used more and more sparingly, reducing the numbers of dung-bred insects for sparrows, which also eat insects although they are principally grain-eaters
- Planting of exotic avenue trees and plants do not support the populations of many insect species and this has further decimated sparrow food availability
- Before the advent of plastic packaging, the sparrows enjoyed a banquet of grain and other foodstuffs that spilled onto the road and wayside during transit. Plastic and other packaging has put an end to this spillage – and the sparrow banquet
- The race to produce more has led to the indiscriminate use of agricultural chemicals by farmers which introduce poisons into the food chain. This leads to accumulation of lethal doses of these chemicals being ingested by sparrows (and other birds)

The much-fancied mobile phone has adversely affected sparrows and other birds due to the dangerous radio waves emitted by phone-towers. These waves are, incidentally, also dangerous to other living organisms including us human beings

Accumulated garbage in human settlements provide food resources for small predators which proliferate as a result. Their consequent increased activities threaten the existence of sparrows and other small wildlife

You can help our little feathered friends in several ways:

1. Provide nest boxes and feeders
2. Set out bathing and watering trays for sparrows and other birds
3. Campaign or advocate the use of less (preferably no) chemicals in gardens and households.
4. Planting hedges and shrubs which support nesting
5. Monitor the nest boxes for colonising by sparrows and document activity using student volunteers from schools and colleges
6. Locate active breeding sites and convince householders there to allow and undertake conservation measures
7. Identify natural threats like cats, squirrels, crows and hawks and provide measures to discourage them
8. Interact with builders, masons and carpenters to provide space in new constructions for sparrow nests
9. Make space for the sparrow in your life and surroundings and the world will be a better place for all

Remember, the web of life on earth embraces all living forms. If even one form is eliminated, the adverse effects are felt in the entire system, eventually impacting us.

SAVE THE SPARROW AND OTHER WILDLIFE !

Pamphlet illustrating 'how to build a nest box for sparrows'

How to build a bird box for house sparrows

This home made nest box uses 12mm exterior plywood and will accommodate up to three breeding pairs of house sparrows.

Picture shows what looks basically like a book rack, with 3 separate compartments. A roof overhang at the sides and front helps to help keep the interior dry. The small batten part way up the side gives the young birds a chance for a peek at the outside world before making that all important first flight. Waterproof wood glue and number 4 brass screws were used to secure the panels. The front is fixed with screws only (NO GLUE), to enable the box to be cleaned out at the end of the season.

The 32 mm holes accommodate house sparrows, tree sparrows and nuthatches. Keep the hole near the roof to deter predators and drill a couple of small holes in the base of each compartment to keep the nest dry. Water-based wood stain can be used to enhance and protect the nest box, but on the outside of the box only. Try also to keep any preservative away from the entrance hole.

Ideally fasten the box close to the eaves of the house. This would be the birds' natural choice of location. Try and use a direction between north and east to avoid strong sunlight.

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Madras Naturalists' Society (Regd)

No.8, Janaki Avenue, Abhirampuram, Chennai 18.

Tel: 91-44-24995833 | Email: secretary@blackbuck.org.in | Web: www.blackbuck.org.in

Fravashi International Academy

The World Sparrow Day at Fravashi International Academy was celebrated by organizing a special assembly under the guidance of the Director of Academics- Mrs Vijay Chadha dedicated to the fast dwindling sparrow.

A flex board was put up displaying the different sparrows of the world and also the drawings, stories and poems on the sparrow. Students recited English and a Marathi poem paying tribute to this demure bird.

The FIA Soccer coach Mr. Ravi Dangle made bird feeders which were put up in various locations of the campus to attract more birds. The children were very enthusiastic about the idea of contributing their little bit to save the little sparrow from extinction.



Mrs Vijay Chadha addressing the school at an assembly during World Sparrow Day

EnviCon @ Sarovar, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, India.

The residents of the housing complex fixed 30 bird feeders across the 17 acres of their apartment complex. Also they placed water pots at the prominent locations for birds to sip in some water. A video/documentary was screened followed by a quiz on the sparrows.



Bird feeders being filled with grains and placed at strategic locations at EnviCon Sarovar, Hyderabad



Members of the society celebrating World Sparrow Day.



Members at the auditorium enjoying screening on sparrows followed by a quiz.

University of Lucknow , U.P.State Biodiversity Board and Regional Science City , Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India.

World Sparrow Day has been celebrated with joint efforts of Department of Zoology, University of Lucknow, U.P. State Biodiversity Board and Regional Science City, Aliganj, Lucknow. More than 60 volunteers have come up to participate in World Sparrow Day Campaign on 19th March 2013. The volunteers distributed 10,000 pamphlets, Flyers and poster that included Sparrow count forms. A sparrow Census was held from 7:00 a.m to 7:30 a.m covering more than 25 sites in Lucknow. The volunteers also interacted with the public and students and briefed them about World Sparrow day on 20th March.

In an effort to inspire awareness about the dwindling population of House Sparrows and to throw light on problems faced by species, various competition like Painting, Quiz competition was organized at Regional Science City, Lucknow. In this competition about 300 students from different schools, colleges, institutions and Universities have actively taken part to express their solidarity to protect the sparrow.

Besides this the public responded well to the Sparrow Count Campaign and shared their observations through messages and mails. They also shared their experiences about House sparrows and asked suggestions to bring them back to their homes and gardens. More than 175 mails were received while more than 700 responded through messages on mobile phone. The Sparrow count has exceeded 1800 till now.

Team includes Faculty (Dr. Ashish Kumar, Assistant Professor, Dept of Zoology, University of LKO), Research Scholars (Ms. Sonika Kushwaha, Mr. Akhilesh Kumar, Mr. Adesh Kumar), Students (Anupriya Mishra, Sachin Vishampayan, Asmita, Aditya, Ajay Kumar), Volunteers (Shail Tiwari, Dayanidhi, Sandeep Shukla, Sandeep Bajpai and many more).



Volunteers of the World Sparrow Day



Students from various schools participating in open quiz based on House Sparrow.



Volunteers Interacting with local people and students to create awareness



Students from various schools participating in painting completion on the theme "Draw and paint a house for your little Sparrow"



Winners of the events

Gurijala Trust, Kadapa, Andhra Pradesh, India.



They exhibited a poster to create awareness among the people about importance of birds and biodiversity. Installed bird feeders at Temples and houses and posters which gave message about our responsibility in conservation.



New Era Senior Secondary School, Vadodara, Gujarat, India.

The school helped spread awareness on the vanishing sparrow. And what better day to start other than the world sparrow day. On this day they took police permission and the students along with teachers stood at different round-about circles in their city to distribute hand outs.

A few students stood with posters. They have even put up posters at important public places to spread awareness like banks etc. The event was very successful as they got a massive response from people to buy sparrow nest and the same is being implemented in school where students and parents have bought nest to be placed at home.



Madras Crocodile Bank Trust, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

Organized events on 17th, 18th, 19th and 24th March 2013 on behalf of World Sparrow Day.

17th & 24th March- Monitored common birds around the area including Sparrows and data collection. Conducted talks on World Sparrow Day to the visitors in the zoo, questionnaire survey on sparrows.

18th and 19th March- School Programs for creating awareness about sparrows.



Usha Mittal Institute of Technology, SNDT Women's University, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India.

Poster Making Competition, Lecture on spreading awareness about WSD, spreaded awareness about WSD and its concerns by sharing link on social networking sites and building sparrow houses and placing them at strategic locations in the college campus.



Canine Group Association, Vadodara, India

On 20th March they distributed Sparrow nest (clay nest) in Vadodara & Anand district. Last year too they distributed nest's in Anand district. They achieved a good nesting record in clay nest last year. Not only sparrows but also found nesting record of Indian Robin & Magpie Robin.



ProEm Tech Nature Club, Bangalore, Karnataka, India

The ProEm Tech Nature Club, Bangalore celebrated the World Sparrow Day by organizing various events from 16th – 20th March.

The Events were as follows:

- 1 . Photography Competition
- 2 . Seminar on Sparrows
- 3 . Online Gallery on Selected Photos as part of "Photography Contest"



Subex Green Club, Bangalore, Karnataka

The Subex Green Club organized a Sparrow Photography competition open to all Subex employees across the globe.



Sai Smrudhya Day Care and Play School, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

Creating awareness by chart activity, posters and handing over nests to school children.



MANAV organization, Lalitpur, Uttar Pradesh, India

An exhibition was set up showing different ways in which house sparrow's can be protected.



Nature Environment & Wildlife Society (NEWS), Odisha, India

Conducted essay, elocution and painting competition as well as seminar among the students.

St. Kabir school, Hisar, Haryana, India.

Organized seminar, distributed bird feeders and an awareness program.

Youth to Youth Foundation, Pune, Maharashtra, India.

Installation of 50 bird home at the Sambhaji Garden in Pune at the hands of Hon. Mayor of the city.

Wildlife Conservation Fund, Pampore, Kashmir, J&K, India

Short Film on World Sparrow Day.

Improvement Trust Colony, Sangrur, Punjab, India.

Created awareness in their Colony about House Sparrows.

Mr. Siva Ganapathy, Pondicherry University.

Pondicherry University FM radio 'PUDUVAI VANI' broadcasted Mr. Siva Ganapathy's talk on sparrows.

FM RAINBOW, Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India

A live phone in programme on the life and role of sparrow in biodiversity and biomass.

BIG BAZAAR KALYANINAGAR, Pune, Maharashtra, India.

Free distribution of Water plate and bird food.

National Cadet Corps, Madurai Medical College, Madurai.

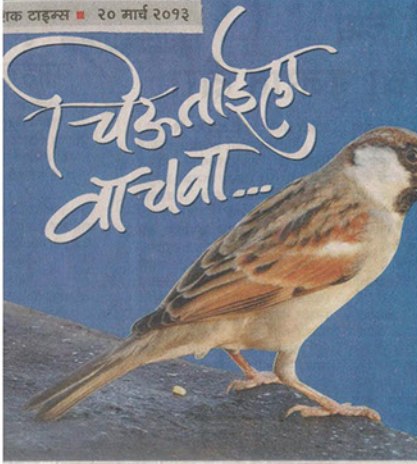
Conducted Drawing Competition. 25 Cadets attended the competition and prizes and certificate of appreciation were awarded for the same.

National Institute of Technology Calicut, Kozhikode, Kerela.

Prof. Prem Raj Pushpakaran of the Department of Biotechnology, National Institute of Technology Calicut organized a seminar on "protecting the sparrows of western ghats".

It's heartening to see that so much love and affection for sparrows and its conservation is pouring in from all over the world. A look at the World Sparrow Day celebrations around the world, one would not fail to observe that these are not just professional conservation organization but people and organization from all walks of life. Schools in large numbers are participating in celebrations and also organizing events for students and spreading awareness regarding House sparrow and common bird conservation in small but creative ways and having a larger impact. Private sector which has their own eco clubs for their employee's have put up events aiming to create awareness and also celebrating the day with full enthusiasm. There are also conservation organizations celebrating World Sparrow Day, organizing events for members, society, schools, and colleges and creating awareness. In all the conservation movement has spread far and wide with people joining in from far and wide.

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फणिंद्र मंडलिक, नाशिक

लहान मुलांना भरवितांना 'चिऊताई, चिऊ ताई' दार उघड' ही कवितेची ओळ हमखास गायली जाते. चिऊताईला दाखवित आई आपल्या मुलांना भरविते. मात्र यापुढील काळात चिऊताई कवितेपुरतीच राहिली तर नवल वाटायला नको, कारण चिमण्यांची घटती संख्या खितेचे कारण बऱ्याच लागली असून त्यांना वाचवण्यासाठी जेव्हा काही वर्षांपासून बोहरी समाजाले पुढाकार घेतला आहे.

बोहरी समाजाने धर्मगुरु सय्यदना मोहंमद बुनाजुदीन यांच्या शैभरख्या वाढीवसाहित्यात बोहरी समाजातर्फे चिमण्यांच्या फुड फिडरचे मोफत वाटप केले जाते. चिमण्यांची घटत असलेली संख्या लक्षात घेऊन बोहरी समाजाने चिमण्या वाचवण्यासाठी ही मोहीम सुरू केली आहे. समाजातील प्रत्येक घरात चिमणीचे घरटे आणि चिमण्यांना चिमण्यासाठी पाणी देण्याची विनंती करण्यात आली असून त्यातील अनेकांनी आपल्या खर्चाने घरटे व फुड फिडर विकत घेतले आहे. या उपक्रमांतर्गत बोहरी समाजातर्फे ५२ हजार फुड फिडरचे मोफत वाटप करण्यात आले

आज जागतिक चिमणी दिन

आहेत. या उपक्रमाची गिनीज बुकातही नोंद झाली आहे. त्याचप्रमाणे चिमणी वाचवण्यासाठी विविध उपक्रम हाती घेण्यात आले आहे.

सरकारकडून काही उपाय नाही

चिमण्यांच्या संख्येत वाढ खादी, याकरीता उपाययोजना हाती घेण्यात याव्या अशी अनेक वर्षांपासूनही पक्षी मित्रांची मागणी आहे. सरकारकडून इतर प्राण्यांकडे विषेशतः वाघ वाचवण्याकडे जास्त लक्ष दिले जाते, परंतु चिमण्यांचा झपाट्याने चिमण्यांच्या संख्येत घट होत असून सरकारमात्र याकडे डोळेझाक करीत आहे.

सर्वांनी सहभाग व्हावे

सर्वसामान्य नागरिक या उपक्रमात सहभागी झाल्यास निश्चितच या उपक्रमाला मोठा हात भार लागणार आहे. त्याकरिता आपल्या घरापुढे, गॅलरीत पाण्याचे भांडे ठेवून त्यात पाणी भरावे जेणे करून पक्षांना पाणी पिता येऊ शकेल, हे पाणी रोज बदलावे. तसेच घरातील घाब्या पक्षांना खाण्यासाठी अंगणात टाकावे, यासाठी पुढाकार घेतल्यास निश्चितच चिमण्यांच्या संख्येत वाढ होण्यास मदत होईल.



हरवलेंल चिऊताईघ घर

सिमेटच्या जंगल वाडू लागल्याने पक्षांच्या घरावर कुन्हाड पडू लागली. चिमण्या हा माणसाजवळ रहाणारा पक्षी असल्याने तो माणसाच्या घरातही स्थिरावत असे, मात्र कालांतराने माणसांचे घरही बदलले. पूर्वी प्रत्येकाच्या घरात तसबिरी होत्या, चिमण्या राहू शकतील अशा जागा होत्या. मात्र फ्लॅट संस्कृतीने चिमण्याची घरे बाहीरी झाली. यामुळे चिमण्यांना घर, पाणी व अन्न मिळणे अवघड झाले. यातून चिमण्याची संख्या कमी झाली.

चिमण्या वाचवण्यासाठी बोहरी समाजाचा पुढाकार

Special



All rise for the SPARROW

Meet Mohammed Dilawar, an ornithologist and ecologist dedicated to saving the sparrow. Named by TIME magazine as one of the Heroes of the Environment in 2008, he set up the Nature Forever Society (NFS) and launched World Sparrow Day in 2010. He shares his ideas about sparrow conservation as World Sparrow Day is celebrated on 20th March.



How did you get involved in sparrow conservation?

As a kid I had grown up with sparrows, birds and flowers. While other kids of my age were more interested in games like cricket, I was attracted more towards the nature and its beauty. Those were the times that sparrows were so numerous that one could see them all over. People didn't mind sparrows making nests in their homes, behind the frames, above the tube lights and wherever they got a nook or crevice. Like every other teenager I also got busy with exams etc, but this was also the time when I got exposed to the much bigger natural world. I learned how everything from a micro-organism to giant trees, everything is important to the planet. Seeing my eagerness in birds and the natural world my mother gifted me with my first pair of binoculars. With Dr Salim Ali's book in one hand and the binoculars around my neck I entered the beautiful world of bird-watching.

It was while I was teaching at college that I came across a report from U.K. which reported a decline in house sparrow numbers. I started going through all the past literature on house sparrows in India and to my horror found out that there was no research done in India. Also, due to the

way conservation is carried out in India common species are not even considered of conservation value. People use to call me crazy for wanting to work for sparrows but craziness is something which is also required when you have to achieve goals which are difficult.

Why should the sparrow be protected?

Everything in the web of life is important from ant to elephant. Sparrow and humans have a very long relationship. Sparrows have been with us for the past 10,000 years, from the time we became agriculturists from hunters and gatherers. As they have evolved with us they have started depending upon us for all their ecological needs, be it nesting sites, food, protection, all their ecological needs are fulfilled by humans.

When you save house sparrows you also save a number of other species of which many are unaware of. When the sparrow population increases the bird of prey population also increases. The sparrow is the true representative of not only urban biodiversity but is also an important link between the influential urban population and the biodiversity found in the remote forest. The sparrow is to urban ecosystems what the canary was to mines. That it is dying out means our cities are in trouble.

Why this decline in sparrows?

There is, it seems, a lethal combination of reasons for the sparrow's decline. Modern architecture and shrinking gardens and parklands have rendered sparrows homeless, since they like to nest in nooks and crannies. Meanwhile, use of pesticides has killed off the bugs the bird needs to feed its young.

Hundreds of trees and bushes are being cleared and replaced with

Sparrow facts

- The house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) is the state bird of New Delhi.
- The house sparrow can swim when it needs to for survival; they have even been observed swimming underwater when threatened!
- Sparrows survive in all temperatures from the humid coastal regions to the hot plains to the hills of Kashmir and beyond to Ladakh, up to 15,000 feet above sea level.
- In the open, a sparrow survives for around 3 years and up to 13 years in captivity.
- They don't migrate more than one to two kilometres, and will die out rather than move to a better environment.



monstrous buildings, open spaces are being concretized; numerous mobile phone communication towers are being erected in cities, towns and villages. Mobile phone towers are one of the biggest threats not only to sparrows, but to other birds like the tailorbird, mynah, sunbird, as well as the squirrel – and human beings too.

A survey by a New Delhi-based organization found that electromagnetic radiation pollution in Mumbai due to mobile phone towers is 200 per cent higher than the permissible limits. This means that we are sitting in an x-ray environment all the time! For the common sparrow, it causes irritation and reduces their reproductive capacity. Even if it lays eggs, the hatchlings are either destroyed or born with serious deformities. Though the species is sturdy, sparrow chicks have a high mortality rate, as high as 50 per cent, which affects its overall population.

Even ordinary feeding of birds seen in cities is restricted to that of pigeons and crows, mainly for religious purposes. Nobody cares to throw seeds for the poor sparrows.

What made you think of making wooden nesting boxes?

One day, I saw a sparrow building a nest in the switch box of a telephone pole. I decided then and there to give a little help to this handy little creature. And so I began to design wooden nesting boxes. After experimenting at home, I started manufacturing and selling them on a non-profit basis. It's heartening to hear from families that their children are thrilled to watch chicks hopping about, being fed by the mother.

Chirp and tweet for the sparrow

Get active on social media! Check out twitter.com/NatureInfo and facebook.com/NatureForeverSociety



What can teens do to save the sparrow?

Here are a few things you teens can do to help:

- Install nest boxes and bird feeders in or near homes. This not only helps in creating habitats for sparrow but also helps teens to get emotionally attached to the conservation of house sparrows. You can adopt sparrow nest boxes and bird feeders too. Visit www.shopping.natureforever.org
- Plant only native plants in gardens which will attract birds and also help the environment.
- Organic farming practices should be encouraged.
- Celebrate World Sparrow Day in your schools/colleges or in your colony.
- Go for a sparrow picnic for bird-watching or organise a sparrow party. This will help in spreading awareness about house sparrow conservation.
- Spread awareness through your social networks.
- Be part of the Rise for the Sparrow Campaign. Teenagers can be a Sparrow Hero, Voice of the Sparrow, Sparrow Supporter or Sparrow Citizen Scientist. Visit www.save.natureforever.org

Today's teenagers are not only extremely tech savvy, they are also much more aware about causes and issues. If all the teenagers across the country give a little help to this beautiful little creature, it would be a humongous step towards their conservation.

For more ideas on how to celebrate World Sparrow Day go to worldsparrowday.org/how.html

World Sparrow Day observed

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World Sparrow Day was observed by the Srinivasan Services Trust (SST) of TVS Group near Hosur on Wednesday.

A release said that following the efforts made by SST to conserve sparrows at Kothagondapalli from last year, its population had increased multi-fold in 20 villages.

Competitions were conducted for school children in drawing, essay and elocution at Panchewaram.

Sub-Collector Praveen P. Nair gave away prizes to the winners. A procession was taken out by the school children and members of SHGs in Panchewaram, Vanamangalam, Saragapalli and Koratagiri villages.

DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES

On a wing and a prayer on World Sparrow Day

19 Mar. 2013, 02:42 hrs IST, TNN



MUMBAI: On the occasion of World Sparrow Day, which falls on March 20, Nature Forever Society (NFS) has decided to start a campaign and take it to college campuses and citizens' groups across the city and state. Addressing the declining population of sparrows in the world, NFS will work around the theme of 'Rise for the Sparrows'.

"We are urging people to participate in this campaign in their own little way. Since people have very little time for the environment these days, our campaign will give them the opportunity to participate by spending less than 15 minutes on our website or on any social networking website to spread awareness about the same," said Mohammed Dilawar of NFS, who has been working on this project for the past seven years.

What makes the campaign special this year is the financial aid provided by a corporate to boost the enthusiasm and work of the activists as well as the common people. "This aid will boost our work towards Nature Forever Society Sparrow Awards where the winners will be awarded cash prizes of Rs 50,000. The funding will help winners carry out vital conservation work undertaken by them and also inspire others to get involved in the movement," added Dilawar.

NFS is also taking the awareness drive to other cities, including Ahmedabad where an event has been organized for citizens to come and enquire about conservation methods.

The park naturalist Carina Lovell and the park welcomes donations of trapped bird seed.

BiodiverCity in our backyards

Special Correspondent

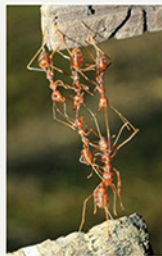
The objective of the competition was to raise awareness about the rich flora and fauna found in urban areas

The Nature Forever Society has announced the winners of the BiodiverCity Photo Contest that was a resounding success having attracted a large number of entries.

The objective of the contest — to raise awareness about the rich flora and fauna found in the backyard of people — has indeed been met.

Armed with whatever cameras they had, people captured images that ranged from ants to reptiles and helped in the mission of photo documentation.

It was a challenging task for ace photographer Sudhir Shivaram to go through so many photographs and choose the winners. "The idea was not to look at these photos from a mere technical angle but how these little creatures pushed to the corner were adapting to the new challenging urban environment," said Mohammed Dilawar of NFS.



Winners

Three were chosen winners and two for special mention.

The first prize was won by Thangaraj Sakthivel for the photo "Pelicans on transmission tower".

It is rated as a good example of how the birds have adapted to urbanisation, perfectly depicting the theme of the competition, says Mr. Dilawar.

The photographer has composed the image well showing the roosting of Pelicans on the wire and the transmission tower in the background. The second prize was won by Michale Nongthombam for the "pretty crisp and sharp image" of ants, focussing on their behavioural aspect. The third spot was taken by Lakshmi Anamalai, for the photo "Birds beside apartments".

It was treated as another example of how the birds have adapted to new developments in the cities. Finding four different species on the same tree is not something we get to see regularly, Mr. Dilawar added. Dr. K. Rajesh and Niraj Mani Chaurasia earned special mentions.

Sparrows lose homes in urban jungle

Chinmayi Shalya, TNN | Mar 21, 2013, 01:40 AM IST

MUMBAI: Sparrows seem to be flying out in search of another habitat. The house sparrows, the most commonly sighted bird in the country, is gradually losing its presence in the urban landscape.

According to the Common Bird Monitoring of India (CBMI), a year-old initiative of environment organization Nature Forever Society, the sparrow is now the fourth most common bird in the country.

The CBMI identified 794 locations in the country where rock pigeons are found, 822 locations where crows were often spotted, 743 where the common myna were spotted, and only 494 locations where the house sparrow were seen in the last one year.

CBMI observations also showed that Mumbai has the highest number of pigeons and crows in the country, while the presence of sparrows is almost half of their numbers.

The observations can be extended to major cities, including Mumbai, where the population of more resilient birds like pigeons and crows has grown despite rapid urbanization, but small birds, like sparrows, have faced a loss of habitat.

On World Sparrow Day, on Wednesday, ecologists and nature lovers lament this change. Others feel that the bird's stint with humans might be over now.

"The city has many kabutarkhanas where abundance of grain has given an artificial boost to the number of pigeons. And, the open garbage provides a lot of food for the crows. Pigeons can subsist on grain and produce pigeon milk to feed their young ones. But it is not the same with sparrows," said Mohammed Dilawar from the Nature Forever Society.

Sparrows feed insects to their young. But the loss of green cover and open grounds in the city has modified the ecology and led to a decline in number of insects on which young sparrows feed.

Also, sparrows need nests, unlike pigeons. Sparrows require sheltered corners and trees to make a home. "There has been a fall in the number of nesting sites and loss of small prey due to loss of green patches. We must remember that until sparrows and other small birds have little green patches, even derelict and overgrown little corners, where they can catch insects, it would be difficult for them to survive," said naturalist, writer and photographer Sunjoy Monga. Ecologists believe that the sparrows represented a different world where houses were more open, and there were many nooks, crevices and green patches which made it easy for sparrows to co-habit with humans.

The change in urban architecture, characterized by small enclosed houses, wire meshed windows and lack of green space has left very little shelter for sparrows to nest.

"I feel the sparrow may have reached the peak of having made the most of its association and commensalism on humanity and will possibly stabilise to a different level under a different set of conditions now," added Monga. He added that we cannot re-create the situations of the past.

On World Sparrow Day, the Nature Forever Society launched a campaign where people can observe sparrows in their area for 15 minutes and report it on their website. People can also report if they do not spot the bird.

Sparrow watch gets better, but eco experts say more efforts required

Darpan Singh, Hindustan Times New Delhi, March 20, 2013

First Published: 01:08 IST(20/3/2013) | Last Updated: 02:34 IST(20/3/2013)

Before rushing to the Delhi Assembly to present the annual budget, Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit will make time and present specially created nests to a group of students on Wednesday morning to mark World Sparrow Day. The children will put these nests in schools. They will also adopt

parks to monitor the hardly seen perky sparrows.

Environmentalists feel the Delhi government, which notified the sparrow as Delhi's state bird in October last year, needs to do much more. "The bird is a bio-indicator in the food chain. The disappearance of fields, bushes, trees, marshes and water bodies is triggering the extinction of species," said TK Roy, a bird expert.

A common bird monitoring project has completed a year. Mohammed Dilawar of Nature Forever Society said, "Monitoring was done across states and data was submitted by citizen scientists. Delhi registered monitoring at 170 locations, which is the highest in the country. It's encouraging, but more needs to be done."

"We're sensitizing RWAs and schools through posters and calendars. We're creating special 'sparrow corners' in about 2,000 schools and holding expert lectures for students. We provide grants to NGOs in their conservation efforts," said BC Sabata of Delhi's environment department. "People's interest has gone up in sparrow conservation. Monitoring has allowed us to compile data which was not possible earlier," he said. There is an online portal (www.cbmi.in), where people can register themselves and monitor these birds. Through this, the government will have a distribution map which will help promote kitchen gardens and artificial nesting.

Loss of habitat due to rapid urbanisation is the main reason behind the absence of the sparrow, which was earlier often seen feeding on foodgrains, insects and worms. Radiation from cell phone towers, vehicular emission and lack of vegetable production along the river are other reasons.

The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) will also monitor 40-50 common birds such as sparrows to know their population and area-specific distribution before it starts a conservation project.



Spreading message with brush

Children paint house sparrows to highlight need to protect them



NSM School Arts teacher Allu Rambabu training students of Spoothi Creative Art School on the different ways to paint sparrows and other birds. Photo: Special Arrangement

The best way to make children observe and love nature is to make them paint or draw it. Students of an art school here were asked to paint house sparrows. Many of the children said they could not paint the bird because the small birds that were so common once have almost disappeared.

Several international organisations have come together and designated March 20 as World Sparrow Day to raise awareness about not just the house sparrow, but many other birds that were once common in urban environment. These birds that were part of our urban environment were fast disappearing.

The idea of marking a World Sparrow Day came up during an informal discussion at the office of the Nature Forever Society, founded by Mohammed Dilawar, an Indian conservationist, who networked with several international organisations. The idea was to earmark a day for the house sparrow to convey the message of conservation of the sparrow and other common birds and also mark a day of celebration to appreciate the beauty of the common biodiversity which was taken so much for granted. The first World Sparrow Day was celebrated in 2010 in different parts of the world.

The day was celebrated by carrying out different kinds of activities and events like art competitions, awareness campaigns, and sparrow processions.

Poem on House Sparrow

World Sparrow Day

Hindi Poetry by praveen gola published on Mar-22-2013

Hindi Poem – World Sparrow Day

Photo credit: juditu from morguefile.com



वो चिड़िया कहाँ गयीमेरे आँगन की ?
जो मेरे बचपन में फुदक कर आती थी ,
बैठ मेरी छत की मुंडेर पर ,
वो ची -ची का शोर मचाती थी ।

कुछ सालों तक वो मेरे साथ उड़ी ,
कुछ सालों तक मैं उसे तकती रही ,
और फरि अचानक बरकत की उलझनों में ,
मैं उसे भूल कर ...अपनी दुनिया में ब्यास्त रही ।

अपनी जदिगी के चालीस सालों तक ,
मैंने रोज़ आकाश को निहारा ,
सुबह पंखियों को चहचहाते हुए पुकारा ,
और रोज़ की ही भाँतिआँगन में आये कबूतरों को दाना डाला ।

मैं तब भी न समझ सकी
कि कोई हमारी दुनिया से लुप्त हो रहा है ,
इस बढ़ती हुई जनसंख्या में ...
कोई अपना अस्तित्व ऐसे खो रहा है ।

और कल रोज़ की ही तरहजब मैंने अखबार को उठाया ,
उसे पढ़ने के लिएउसके पृष्ठों को पलटाया ,
तो उस नन्ही सी चिड़िया की तस्वीर को वहाँ पाकर ,
अपनी खोई हुई याददाश्त कोसालों पीछे दौड़ाया ।

अचानक से तभी मुझे याद आया ,
कि हुआ करती थीएक छोटी चिड़िया आकाश में ,
जिसकी गुमशुदगी छपी थीउस दिन के अखबार में ,
जिसे बचाने की गुहार लगाई थीराज्य सरकार ने ।

मगर अब वो घोषित हो चुकी थी”State Bird Of Delhi”,
और मना रहे थे अब हम उसका ... “World Sparrow Day”,
कह रही थी सरकार अबकि बचा लो उसकोअब इन Urban हवायों से ,
जहाँ खो गयी हैवो ना जाने कहाँइन खूबसूरत फिज़ायों से ।

दो अश्रु मेरे भी बह गए
उसको इस तरह से अखबार में देखकर ,
जो कभी उन्मुक्त गगन के पंखी थे
उनकी लुप्त होती प्रजाति को सोचकर ।

हाँ वो चिड़ियायाद आई मुझे अचानक,
जी चाहा उसको थाम लूँ ,
कैसेकहाँकब ...खो गयी वो ,
जिसे “State Bird” से अब सम्मान दूँ ॥

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