



BANO BANDHU

BENGAL SAFARI ZOO NEWS

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QUARTERLY ZOO NEWSLETTER

NORTH BENGAL WILD ANIMALS PARK

From the Director's desk

We are thrilled to introduce the July-September 2024 issue of "BANOBANDHU," the quarterly newsletter from Bengal Safari Zoo. During this period, we welcomed 33,158 satisfied visitors to our facility. To ensure the animals' comfort during the monsoon season, we took various precautionary measures at North Bengal Wild Animals Park. Furthermore, we commemorated significant environmental and animal-related days with school students, NGOs, and visitors alike. As we look forward to the upcoming months, we are excited to unveil more engaging programs and initiatives that connect people with nature.

E. Vijayakumar, IFS

Director, North Bengal Wild Animals Park

History of Bengal Safari

The North Bengal Wild Animals Park, also known as Bengal Safari, was previously a part of the Baikunthapur Forest Division, situated within the Adabari Beat. It existed as Shorea Nature Park, adjacent to the Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary. Subsequently, an area of 299.459 hectares was identified, including the pre-existing park, for the establishment of the North Bengal Wild Animals Park in Siliguri. Due to Siliguri's unique geographic location, with Nepal to the west, Bhutan to the northeast, and China and Bangladesh to the south, as well as its status as a major commercial tourism hub and transit point for air, road, and rail traffic to neighboring countries such as Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh, tourists and residents from other regions of the country develop an interest in observing the wild animals and birds of North Bengal to foster a closer connection with nature. Consequently, the North Bengal Wild Animals Park was designed with consideration for the growth, goals, and maintenance

standards set by the Central Zoo Authority (CZA). On July 17, 2014, the foundation stone of the North Bengal Wild Animals Park was laid by the honorable Chief Minister of West Bengal, Smt. Mamata Banerjee also inaugurated the park's first phase (a mixed herbivore safari) in January 21, 2016.

About Us

The North Bengal Wild Animals Park in Siliguri primarily functions as a safari park, aiming to exhibit various animals in their natural habitats using safari vehicles. It offers a picturesque view of the Himalayan range, adding to its captivating allure. Bengal Safari is situated 8 kilometres away from Siliguri and currently features attractions such as Tiger Safari, Mixed Herbivore Safari, Asiatic Black Bear Safari, Leopard Safari, zoo enclosures housing pl

pheasants, water birds, scavengers, primates, smaller cats, constrictor house, porcupine and reptiles, a Nature Interpretation Centre, a Zoo Souvenir Shop among others.

Vision

The goal is to foster a positive connection between animals and humans, promote conservation, and breed endangered species for display, exchange, and rehabilitation in the wild.

Mission

This Wild Animals Park intends to complement the national efforts in conservation of wildlife through breeding of endangered species of the region and to develop empathy among visitors for wild animals.

Objectives

- Conservation of North Bengal's biodiversity
- Decrease tourist pressure on National Parks
- Foster empathy towards wild animals
- Gather scientific data on animal biology for park management
- Provide recreational and educational activities in a natural setting

GLIMPSE OF IMPORTANT HAPPENING

WORLD ZOONOSSES DAY 2024



On July 6th, to promote awareness about diseases at the human-animal interface, Bengal Safari took a proactive initiative by hosting an informative seminar in honor of World Zoonoses Day. This day commemorates the anniversary of the first vaccination against a zoonotic disease.

Dr. Pralay Mandal, MVSc (Wildlife Science), Assistant Director of ARD, IAH & VB in Kolkata, who also oversees the animals at Alipore Zoological Garden, was the primary presenter at the seminar. He delivered an enlightening session on "Bio-security Measures: A Preventive Tool Against Zoo Animal Diseases."

The event was attended by the Director, Assistant Director, and Veterinary Officer, with all zoo staff actively participating. The program concluded with a warm acknowledgment of the main presenter, by the Range Officer of the park.

WORLD LION DAY 2024

Every year on August 10th, the world observes World Lion Day to honour the "King of the Jungle". The day provides an opportunity to educate people about the challenges lions face and to celebrate their vital role in the ecosystem and cultural heritage worldwide.

North Bengal Wild Animals Park, Salugara, celebrated "World Lion Day". A programme was organised at the Park's Nature Interpretation Centre (NIC). Kendriya Vidyalaya Sevoke Road, Salugara., St. Teresa School, Shiv Mandir, Good Shephard, Bagdogra, Alphansa School, Bagdogra, Indra Maya Primary School, Toribari and Smile Group Welfare, Bagdogra participated in the programme. The day's programme comprised presentation about the species and their importance, Animal attendant talk on their experience with the species, mask making competition, felicitation of the animal attendant, interaction with participants and safari tour. Master Adarsh Chaturvedi of standard X, Kendriya Vidyalaya enlightened everybody with a wonderful talk on Lions. Awards were distributed to the winners of the mask making competition.



WORLD ELEPHANT DAY 2024

North Bengal Wild Animals Park, Siliguri celebrated World Elephant Day on 12th Aug 2024. The day is celebrated to create awareness about the species and their protection, man-animal conflict and their management in captivity. The park had organised different activities such as mask making, stone painting, creative writing, poetry recitation, and talk on elephants pertaining to elephant conservation. A selfie booth was prepared in the zoo premises. The occasion was graced by Shri S Sudhakar, IPS, Siliguri Commissioner of Police in the presence of Director and other staff of North Bengal Wild Animals Park.

The students after the competition were taken for a safari tour and to see the two elephants of the park, Laxmi and Urmila. The delegates and students had a close up with the animal and interacted with the keepers. The day ended by facilitating the respective keepers - Jogesh Barman, Parimal Barman, Kamal Roy, and Satan Narjunary, for their dedication towards the upkeep of the elephants at the park.

The students who won the competition in different categories were also felicitated which are as follows :

Mask making competition

- 1) Lamps Dolma Sherpa , Cosmos Global Pre- Nursery School, Salugara
- 2) Nepal Tamang, Cosmos Global Pre- Nursery School, Salugara
- 3) Tapasya Pratihara, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sevoke Road, Salugara
- 4) Nayonika Jaha, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sevoke Road, Salugara
- 5) Sonam gyatsho lama, Cosmos Global Pre- Nursery School, Salugara
- 6) Jayang Lekkey, Cosmos Global Pre- Nursery School, Salugara
- 7) Tshoyang Tenpo Nadik, Cosmos Global Pre- Nursery School, Salugara

Stone painting

- 1) Debasmita Majumdar, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sevoke Road, Salugara
- 2) Sonali Shekhar , Kendriya Vidyalaya Sevoke Road, Salugara
- 3) Rajshree Bhattachariya, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sevoke Road, Salugara

Creative writing

- 1) Tiana Biswas, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sevoke Road, Salugara
- 2) Simran Owais, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sevoke Road, Salugara
- 3) Anuska Das, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sevoke Road, Salugara

Refreshments were also provided to everybody



GLIMPSES OF WORLD ELEPHANT DAY





CELEBRATION OF INDEPENDENCE DAY OF INDIA

North Bengal Wild Animals Park commemorated India's 78th Independence Day with great enthusiasm through a flag-hoisting ceremony. As the director raised the Indian flag, all staff members joined in singing the national anthem. The Director and Assistant Director delivered important speeches highlighting the significance of the day, which was followed by the distribution of sweets.



INTERNATIONAL VULTURE AWARENESS DAY

North Bengal Wild Animals Park (Bengal Safari), celebrated "International Vulture Awareness Day" to raise awareness about vultures and their vital role in the ecosystem. A presentation on Vulture conservation, Painting Competition, Essay Competition and a tour to see the Vultures were organized by the Research & Education section, NBWAP, included participation from Kendriya Vidyalaya Sevoke Road and Salugara High School.

The vulture Keepers were felicitated by the Director, and Assistant Director of NBWAP. The painting competition and essay competition, Topics included "Vultures – Nature's Clean-up Crew" and "Why Vultures Are Important for the Environment."

Winners:

Essay Competition:

- 1st – Ms. Sudiksha Zalaki, (Kendriya Vidyalaya)
- 2nd – Ms. Kriti Tamang, (Kendriya Vidyalaya)
- 3rd – Ms. Khushboo Pradhan (Kendriya Vidyalaya).

Painting Competition:

- 1st – Ms. Pratyusha Kundu (Kendriya Vidyalaya), 2nd – Ms. Dipa Sharma, (Salugara High School)
- 3rd – Ms. Khushi Adhikari (Salugara High School).

Winners were awarded certificates, mementos, and medals by Range Officer. Teachers received souvenirs, and refreshments were served.



GLIMPSES OF INTERNATIONAL VULTURE AWARENESS DAY



WORLD RHINO DAY 2024

The World Rhino Day 2024 was celebrated by North Bengal Wild Animals Park, Salugara with much excitement and enthusiasm on the theme. “Protecting Rhinos: Safeguarding ecosystem”. The aim for the day was to educate the students on the five species of Rhino and their conservation status. The participants for the programme were students of PM Shri Kendriya Vidyalaya, Salugara and Vidyasagar School, Naxalbari.

The programme started by welcoming all the teachers and students after which they were taken to see the male Rhino “Bhim” in his enclosure. The students were given a very short speech on Rhino where the students actively participated in sharing their information about the species, its habitat and why it is important to save this species. Back at the NIC, a presentation on the different species of Rhinos, their status, dangers like poaching and habitat loss and message to raise global awareness about rhino conservation, and to take action in preserving their natural environments and preventing their extinction.

After the presentation, Quiz competition was held for students from grade V to VIII where they were presented with thirty questions based on the species biology, threats and conservation. The Quiz completion was followed by Extempore where students from grade IX-XII presented short speech on “The Importance of Rhino Conservation, Rhino: Guardians of Grasslands, The impact of poaching on Rhino populations, Why are Rhinos endangered, How Rhinos benefit Ecosystems, Efforts to save the one-horned Rhino,

The role of local communities in Rhino Conservation, Rhino Conservation: Global Perspectives, Challenges in Protecting Rhinos from illegal Wildlife Trade, The Role of Zoos in Rhino Conservation, Rhinos in Indian Mythology and culture, The Significance of World Rhino Day, Rhinos and Biodiversity: why every Species matter, How can we help save Rhinos from Extinction?, The future of Rhinos: Will they survive?”. The participants presented interesting views and facts on the topics provided to them. They understood the ecological importance of the species and realized how important it is to save the species and what each one of us can towards conservation.

The final phase of the programme concluded by distribution certificates and mementos to the winners. The winners are as follows:

Quiz competition:

1st Position: Hiya Mandal, Grade VIII, Vidyasagar School, Naxalbari

2nd Position: Bikram Barman, Grade VI, Vidyasagar School, Naxalbari

3rd Position: Payel Singha, Grade VII, Vidyasagar School, Naxalbari

Extempore

1st Position: Sridhar Sharma, Grade XII (Humanities), PM Shri Kendriya Vidyalaya, Salugara.

2nd Position: Prantik Bhattacharjee, Grade XII (Commerce), PM Shri Kendriya Vidyalaya, Salugara.

3rd Position: Shristi Gupta Grade X Vidyasagar School, Naxalbari

Refreshments were served to all.



GLIMPSES OF WORLD RHINO DAY



MONSOON

Precautionary measures adopted during monsoon season by North Bengal Wild Animals Park Team-2024

The monsoon season in Siliguri, spanning from mid-June to early October, transforms the area into a vibrant, lush paradise with gushing streams and abundant vegetation. This period sees a rich bloom of various plant species and a surge in animal activity. However, the frequent rains also pose significant challenges for zoo infrastructure and animal keepers. To tackle these seasonal difficulties and ensure the smooth operation of the zoo amidst the seasonal beauty, the North Bengal Wild Animals Park (NBWAP) has implemented a range of proactive measures. For convenience purpose, we have divided the management practice under two headings:

1) Animal care and 2) Monsoon-Related Practices for Managing Zoo Infrastructure and visitors.

1. Animal Care

Shelter and shade

- To provide temporary shelter for the animals during rainfall, tarpaulin was used to cover either half or entire portion of the roof at enclosure in various animal shelters and in aviary section.
- Besides this, for birds and pheasants, along with primates, nest boxes or nesting sites were provided for the use of the animal to avoid rainfall and also direct sunlight.
- Apart from this, during heavy rainfall, the animals were not released into the safari area. Instead they were kept inside the display for the visitors to see.



Tarpaulin cover at lion shelter



Provision of nest boxes and shelter for pheasants and primates

Cleaning

- Trees, particularly near night shelters, were pruned, and the enclosures and areas near the enclosures and night shelters, including shades and roofs, were weeded to prevent the growth of unwanted vegetation and to deter wild snakes and other free-ranging animals from entering.
- Regular cleaning also includes clearing outlets to prevent water logging, cleaning and changing pond water, and using absorbent materials to keep the floors of the animal night shelters dry. Besides this, blowers have also been provided to combat moisture and daily temperature fluctuations in night shelters and in the veterinary hospital of the park.
- In addition to this, mosses and algal growth are being controlled by regularly scrapping them off the walls at animal night shelters and enclosures. To prevent infestations of rodents, snakes, and molluscs, the accumulation of rocks, boulders, and standing water inside animal enclosures and night shelters is avoided at all times.



Image of animal attendant weeding areas near the spectacle langur enclosure.



Cleaning and changing pond water at herbivore safari area.

Sealing holes and burrows

- The enclosures are thoroughly inspected, and any holes or burrows found within or near them are sealed immediately to prevent the entry of snakes and rodents.

Fodder collection

- Fodder collection for herbivores is avoided from waterlogged areas to prevent the spread of mold, parasites, and harmful bacteria that thrive in damp conditions. This practice helps maintain the health and well-being of the animals during the monsoon season by ensuring they receive clean and uncontaminated food, thereby reducing the risk of illness and digestive issues.

Disposal of waste

- Faecal matter is removed daily from the enclosures and kraal by the animal attendants. Additionally, organic waste such as vegetable peels, leaves etc., generated daily is collected by the attendants and properly disposed of in the garbage vehicle every morning, and disposed by burning.
- The leftover meat and bones are collected and incinerated daily.

Prophylaxis

- During this season, the zoo management has been specially geared up to employ strict prophylactic measures. Since this season is favourable for parasitic diseases and infections, frequency of stool test for gastrointestinal parasite screening was increased in the zoo laboratory. Further, stool samples of the captive animals were also sent to IAH & VB Belgachia, Kolkata for analysis.
- Soil samples, food samples, animal blood samples, and meat samples of animals was sent to IAH & VB Belgachia, Kolkata for detailed analysis. Treatments and precautionary measures are implemented as required and adapted to meet urgent needs.
- ORS electrolyte have also been distributed in all the night shelters for emergency use.
- To prevent zoonosis, animal attendants are also screened for zoonotic diseases once a year. Vaccination for antirabies and deworming are provided to the animal attendants during this season.

Deworming

- Routine deworming for all animal groups is carried out by the park's veterinary section, as parasitic load and infestation frequency are particularly high during this season. This practice helps prevent unforeseen health issues.

Disinfection

- Disinfection is carried out regularly on a daily basis inside the enclosures, cells, and kraals using Khorsolin, turmeric powder, Virkon, and Virocid. Disinfection is conducted daily.
- Quicklime is applied to prevent algal and fungal growth on the walls outside the enclosure and up to five meters from the immediate vicinity. It is also applied daily at the entry gate of the animal enclosure.
- Diluted carbolic acid is applied up to five meters outside the as a snake repellent as per requirements.
- Additionally, Butox solution is sprayed thrice weekly in the immediate vicinity of the animal enclosures, up to five meters outside, to control ectoparasites such as leeches, mites, and ticks.
- The frequency of burning through blow flame was increased to thrice a week in the enclosure, kraal, and night shelters and daily in the kitchen.
- Additionally, foot dips containing potassium permanganate are installed and regularly refreshed in front of all enclosures, kraals, and the veterinary hospital to prevent the spread of infections.



Disinfection with Virocid spray and lime close to the vicinity of the animal enclosure in Aviary section.



Disinfection using blow flame in the Reptile enclosure

Safety of animal attendants

- Animal attendants are equipped with essential safety gear to protect themselves while performing their duties. This includes using torches, PPE kits, gloves, face masks, shoe cover, head cover, and aprons when handling animals, preparing fodder, and managing biological samples.
- During night shifts, attendants use torches and searchlights to ensure visibility and safety. Additionally, clothed shoes and gumboots are worn as personal safety measures to prevent the risk of snake bites.

2. Monsoon-Related Practices for Managing Zoo Infrastructure and visitors.

Flood prevention measures

- The two streams, Singhijhora and Syamjhora, flow through the western side of the herbivore safari area. During the monsoon season, these streams increase significantly in size and sometimes alter their course. To prevent flooding and potential damage, and to ensure the safety of the safari animals, the water levels are regularly monitored for early signs of overflow. Additionally, desilting and dredging are performed to remove excess sediment and maintain the streams' capacity.
- The banks are reinforced with natural barriers, such as rocks and vegetation, besides sand bags to prevent erosion and any damages caused due to increased water level, and the zoo's drainage system is meticulously maintained to redirect excess water away from enclosures. Emergency protocols are in place for animal evacuation if necessary, and staffs receive training in flood response and animal handling.

Boundary wall and fencing protection

- In order to shield the boundary fencing from damage caused by high water levels, MS joists (ISMB, 150mm) were positioned in a diamond pattern on the riverbeds. Debris carried by the water current is effectively trapped by this design, preventing it from building up against the boundary walls/fencings and causing structural damage.

Nylon nets and sand bags were used to cover vulnerable sections of the fencing to prevent animals from escaping in case of any damage



MS joists constructed across river



Use of nylon nets at herbivore safari

Rapid response team

- A team comprising 10 members has been formed to actively respond to any damage caused due to increased water levels and other monsoon related problems, such as fallen trees, road damage, river-related problems, fencing damage and more.

Generators and Power

- Prior to the monsoon, maintenance of the inventors were carried out.
- Generators are vital in zoos to ensure a continuous power supply for critical operations such as hand-rearing, egg incubation, caring for diseased animals, and maintaining storage facilities for medical supplies and feed. Recognizing this need, NBWAP proposed the installation of new generators in July. The generator line has already been established up to the Asiatic Black Bear enclosure, with the provision of electrical connections currently in progress.



New generator house

Maintenance and Repair

- In the previous years at tiger night shelter, rising water levels have caused backflow from the pits, leading to slippery and dirty conditions. To address this issue this season, a septic tank has been proposed to collect the slurry and keep the shelter dry and clean. Additionally, a strainer will be installed in the connecting drain to capture biological debris and prevent blockages. The collected debris will be regularly removed and properly disposed of to maintain cleanliness and functionality.
- New nozzles were procured for the burning sets used for disinfection.



Use of gunny bags and RBM for road repair

- Fences were cleared and roofs in various enclosures/ night shelters and resident areas were cleaned to prevent debris buildup and address/prevent monkey menace.
- Heavy rainfall also damages the roads in the safari area due. To address this issue, gunny bags were used as a guard wall at both sides of the road to prevent erosion, and the damaged portion of the road was repaired with RBM.
- An artificial highland was constructed in the Black Buck enclosure by covering a base of saal wood with RBM. This raised platform allows the animals to stay dry during rainfall, keeping them above any accumulated water until it evaporates or is cleaned up by zoo management.
- Culvert rectification and renovation (Krishna Culvert) was done near the herbivore safari exit using sand bags and RBM.



Artificial highland at Black Buck enclosure

Clothing and protection

- To ensure the comfort and safety of animal attendants during the rainy season, a variety of essential items were distributed. Each attendant received raincoats and gumboots to protect them from the wet conditions while working outdoors.
- Additionally, oral rehydration salts (ORS) were supplied to help prevent dehydration, especially in the humid environment. Attendants were also given sturdy shoes and long-sleeve T-shirts to provide protection and comfort during their duties.
- Given the high prevalence of mosquitoes in the area, Odomos, a mosquito repellent, was provided to protect against insect bites and reduce the risk of mosquito-borne diseases. These measures help ensure that the attendants can perform their duties effectively while minimizing health risks.

Visitor management

- During episodes of heavy rainfall, visitors are picked up by buses and taken to the NIC building for their convenience. A visitor waiting room has also been established in the souvenir shop for this purpose.
- Additionally, central and mobile microphones are used to announce safari timings to visitors. The safari buses are equipped with basic necessities such as air conditioning and first aid kits for emergency situations.

DIGNITARY VISITS

Insights of our esteemed guests

“Shri Sanjay Mukherjee, IPS
Director General of Police
DG Fire
02.08.2024

We were very well looked after. Bengal Safari is amazing! We even spotted two wild leopards! Thank you, Bengal Safari! ”

“Shri K. Arul Jothi
Inspector General of the Railway Protection
Force (RPF), Guwahati
04.08.2024

We have visited the Bengal Safari park, went around and thoroughly enjoyed. We would see deer, bears, leopards and caged tiger with cubs. It was such a thrilling experience on these wild animals within a short span. Hospitality and professionalism extended were amazing. ”

“Shri D. Anandan, IAS
Principal Secretary
Rural Development Dept.
Govt. of Sikkim
13.10.2024

It was a very fascinating experience to visit this Safari. The Bengal Tiger was the best of today's visit. The Joy Ride was very enjoyable. A well maintained safari. Appreciations to the Director and his team for maintaining this Safari so well. ”

Visitors' during July to September 2024

(Unaudited figure)

Month	Footfall	Ticketing Revenue
July	11290	Rs 3689835.00
August	13032	Rs 3874064.00
September	8836	Rs 2762699.00

Date	Institution/Organization	Visitors
08.08.2024	Muzaffar Ahmed Mahavidyalaya Salar, Murshidabad	34
24.08.2024	BBC International School, Saharsa, North Bihar	60
24.08.2024	Gairkata High School (XII), Jalpaiguri	20

ANIMAL ADOPTION



Bengal Safari (North Bengal Wild Animals Park) is delighted to acknowledge Mr. Sanjibanbrata Maity from Composit Complex, Jalpaiguri, Denguajhar, West Bengal- 735121, for his generous adoption of an Indian Black Turtle for a year, from 31.08.2024 to 30.08.2025.

TRAINING CUM WORKSHOP



Himu Barman, an animal attendant at Bengal Safari, participated in a three-day training and workshop program focused on "Avian Care and Its Captive Breeding." This event was organized by the Tata Steel Zoological Park in Jamshedpur, Jharkhand, in collaboration with the West Bengal Zoo Authority.