



## **OBSERVE WORLD ANIMAL DAY & CELEBRATE LIFE**

**DR LALIT SHARMA**

Be it a single day or week-long event, there are number of activities that one can undertake. For the sake of convenience we'll club these activities under two target groups; (i) educational institutes and science/eco-/environment clubs, and (ii) general public.

**The first group that comprises of school / college students and staff, members of science / eco- / environment clubs, needs both sensitization and awareness creation about the issues related to animals. Hence some of the activities could be;**

- Organizing fancy dress and / face-painting exhibiting animals' competition for children, who would be dressing up / face-painting as all sorts of animals including monkeys, lions, tigers, frogs, gorillas, giraffes, kangaroos, cats and dogs. Judging panel may ask questions about the animal represented.
- Arranging animal art competition, drawing, painting and poster making: Teachers can give to each child an animal picture to color / paper to draw and color / paint depending upon the age or standard in which they are studying.
- Slogan writing, poetry recitation, dances, skits, story writing and telling, essay, and quiz competitions.
- Taking students or club members to visit the livestock premises, animal shelters, and veterinary clinics and local zoo. During these visits there could be talks and demonstrations, participatory enrichment workshops on understanding and caring of domestic and wild animals, as the case may be.
- Taking a procession from the school with banners and placards, the children wearing animal masks attracting people's attention. The placards can have slogans written about the care and welfare of animals.
- Selling copies of informative booklets with the objective of promoting awareness of animal welfare issues and responsible pet ownership. These books can include

true stories from the animals' perspective, and valuable information about caring for a pet, fun quizzes, interesting facts, and also interviews with celebrities who have pets.

- Taking advantage of this day, we can campaign for sterilizing stray and community dogs, raise awareness about responsible dog ownership, and make a presentation focused on rabies control, in particular emphasizing the importance of having a stable population of vaccinated dogs.

**For the second group comprising of general public, who needs more of awareness about animals than sensitization, some of the activities planned could include;**

- Publishing articles in all local newspapers about the animal and their importance, care and management.
- Organizing lecture on wildlife from local wildlife experts, showing films on wildlife, and / or PowerPoint presentation about reptiles (snakes and lizards) highlighting the differences between common and poisonous snakes, what to do in case they have bitten, how to recognize them and so on.
- Creating a public forum to raise public awareness about animal welfare issues, law enforcement, stray management, pet ownership and euthanasia.
- Arranging for a radio talk show for farmers and the rural community covering the welfare of farm animals, wild animals and conservation as well as highlighting the important role animals play in our lives.
- Holding special events based on the therapeutic effect of animals for people with special needs.
- Instructing and demonstrating, taking health and safety into account, the correct way to approach and handle animals and, carefully supervised by the team of adults who accompanied the children.

Having organized these programs successfully, we expect that the sensitization particularly, of the intended target group would lead to a better understanding about the role of animals in our life.