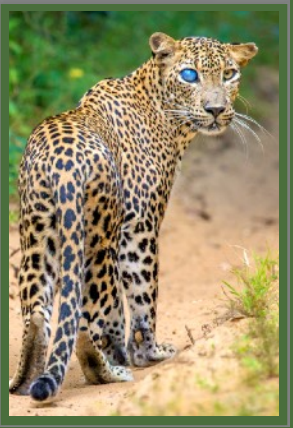
Empowering Youth for Conservation



25th ANNIVERSARY

Faculty of Applied Science
University of Vavuniya

Organised by the Department of Bio-Science & ENSOC at the University of Vavuniya in association with the Department of Wildlife Conservation under AHEAD ELTA ELSE DP of Faculty of Applied Science.

Hospitality Partners: Palm Garden Village & Jetwing Jaffna

Empowering Youth for Conservation

Introduction "Empowering Youth for Conservation"

Sri Lanka is among the 36 biodiversity hot spots in the world and boasts of the highest biological diversity per unit area in Asia. We are a biodiversity hot spot not only because we are biologically rich, but also because our biodiversity is deeply threatened. We have to realize that biodiversity is intrinsically linked to development, which depends on ecosystem services and biodiversity boosts ecosystem productivity and services. So for our own sake, we as a nation, must work towards protecting Sri Lanka's biodiversity.

Youth play a special role in the evolution of a nation, because the evolution of any nation lies in its future generation. Youth being the backbone of a nation, have a special role to play in conservation. If their enthusiasm and energy can be harnessed, Sri Lanka's youth can be the ambassadors of conservation in their communities, eventually leading towards a conservation ethic which emerges from the grassroots. This could well be the most effective, or even the only way to reduce the on-going destruction of our ecosystems and will conserve our wild species for future generations. Young people from diverse backgrounds should have the opportunity to experience and connect with nature, so that Sri Lanka is able to nurture the next generation of conservationists.

"Empowering Youth for Conservation" is a program designed to do just that. It is a series of conservation awareness and education sessions in the universities of the northern and eastern regions of Sri Lanka. The sessions are conducted voluntarily by an eminent group of conservationists of national and international repute.

Message from Dr.(Ms).A.Nanthakumaran - Dean/Faculty of Applied Science

It is my great pleasure to deliver this message at the inauguration of Empowering Youth for Wildlife Conservation, a program which is scheduled to be conducted in the northern, north and eastern provinces in collaboration with the University of Jaffna, the University of Vavuniya, the South Eastern University and the Eastern University. The board of the Faculty of Applied Science of the University of Vavuniya wanted to have this event to celebrate the Faculty's silver jubilee this year 2022.

Since its establishment in 1997, the Faculty of Applied Science, as one of the pioneer faculties of the Vavuniya campus of the University of Jaffna which was recently elevated as the University of Vavuniya, has earned a reputation for academic dynamism. At the beginning, it offered two bachelors' degree programs in Environmental Science and Applied Mathematics and Computing. Later, it expanded its academic program and it currently offers six-degree programs. In 25 years, the Faculty expanded its activities in a way to encourage and motivate the younger generation to engage in environmental conservation.

This endeavor which is being initiated by the Department of Bio-Science, Faculty of Applied Science in collaboration with the Department of Wildlife Conservation will create a good rapport among academics, field experts, undergraduates, school students and the community. For wildlife conservation to be successful it needs community participation. Starting the activity in the year of the silver jubilee will definitely be a milestone for the Faculty.

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DATE : 5th April 2022
VENUE : University of Vavuniya

AGENDA

Schedule	Topic	Name (Resource Personnel)	Duration
8.40 am	Lighting the traditional oil lamp	- VC, Dean(s), HOD(s) and Special Invitees	10 min
8.50 am	Welcome Address	- Dr.(Ms).J.Nimalan Head/Department of Bio-Science	10 min
9.00 am	Introduction to the "Empowering Youth for Conservation"	- Dr. S. Wijeyamohan Senior Lecturer, Biology	10 min
9.10 am	Speech by Special Guest	- Dr.(Ms).A.Nanthakumaran Dean/Faculty of Applied Science	10 min
9.20 am	Speech by Chief Guest	- Dr. T. Mangaleswaran Vice Chancellor - University of Vavuniya	10 min
9.30 am	Conservation Mandate of the Department of Wildlife Conservation	- Mr. Ranjan Marasinghe Director Operations Department of Wildlife Conservation	40 min
10.10 pm to 10.40 pm Refreshments (30 min)			
10.40 am	Migratory Birds & Important Breading grounds in North & East, Conservation	- Professor Sampath Senevirathne Senior Lecturer, Zoology University of Colombo	40 min
11.20 am	Ecological and Social Resilience of Mangroves [ONLINE]	- Dr. Mathivanthan - Research Scientist Senior Lecturer Botany, Eastern University	25 min
11.45 pm	An inspirational Story "Slender Loris Conservation" Project	- Mr. Chaminda Jayasekara Resident Naturalist at Jetwing Vil Uyana	20 min
12.05 pm to 1.00 pm Lunch Break			
1.00 pm	Sri Lankan Leopard Behaviour, Conservation Challenges, Conflict Mitigation Measures	- Professor Enoka Kudavidanage Research Scientist, Senior Lecturer Ecology and Conservation Biology, University of Sabaragamuwa	40 min
1.40 pm	Sri Lankan Elephant Habitat, Behaviour, Great Elephant Gathering HEC & Mitigation challenges	- Dr.Sumith Pilapitiya - Research Scientist Former DG Department of Wildlife Conservation - Dr. S. Wijeyamohan- Research Scientist, Senior Lecturer, Biology	60 min
2.40 pm	Srilankan Endemic Reptiles and Amphibians (Herpetofauna)	- Dr. Kanishka Ukuwela - Research Scientist Senior Lecturer in Zoology Rajarata University	40 min
3.20 pm to 3.40 pm Refreshments (20 min)			
3.20 pm	Inspiring Story How I became a Wildlife Photographer cum conservationist	- Mr. Riznad Hussain (Trilingual) Naturalist / Nature Photographer	20 min
4.00 pm	Award Winning Wildlife Documentary Film "The Great Elephant Gathering of Asia" on Minneriya Elephant Gathering	- Mr. Dilum Alagiyawanna Director/Producer Wildlife Documentary Filmmaker Nature Photographer	30 min

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Dr. Sumith Pilapitiya is an Environmental Scientist and has a PhD in Environmental Sciences from Rutgers University, in New Jersey, and was a Lead Environmental Specialist for the South Asia Environment and Natural Resources Unit of the World Bank. He has led Biodiversity and Wildlife Conservation Projects in South Asian countries, strengthening the institutional capacity of the relevant statutory conservation organizations, including the Department of Wildlife Conservation in Sri Lanka.

Mr. Marasinghe - Director Operations at the Department of Wildlife Conservation holds a M.P.A., University of Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka; M.S. (Forestry and Environmental Management), University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka; M.B.A. University of Peradeniya; Postgraduate Diploma Wildlife Management, Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, India; LL.B. Open University of Sri Lanka; He is the authorised officer of the Management Authority of CITES in Sri Lanka.

Dr. S. Wijeyamohan is a Research Scientist, Senior Lecturer at the Department of Bio-Science University of Vavuniya. He holds a PhD – In Zoology from University of Peradeniya Sri Lanka, titled "Body Condition and its impact in the management of Asian elephants (Elephas maximus)", B.Sc (Zoology) Hons. 1994, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka. Area of Specialisation "Wildlife Ecology, Conservation & Management". AffiliationsAdjunct/Faculty, Department of Agriculture, Missouri State University Member of the IUCN Asian Elephant Specialists Group Member of the IUCN Crocodile Specialists Group.

Professor Enoka Kudavidanage is the Head of Department & Senior Lecturer Ecology and Conservation Biology at the Sabaragamuwa University Sri Lanka. Professor Enoka graduated from University of Colombo with a BSc honours degree in Zoology and MSc in Environmental Sciences. She has a PhD in Conservation Biology from National University of Singapore. Her most recent research was on wildlife crimes, a population assessment and conservation of montane leopards and a status assessment of the National park system.

Professor Sampath Seneviratne has a Ph.D. in Evolutionary Ecology from the Memorial University in Canada. He is a Senior Lecturer in Zoology, Department of Zoology and Environment Sciences, University of Colombo. He is also the President of the Field Ornithology Group of Sri Lanka and the Sri Lanka Ecological Association. He is a Consultant Biologist (Evolution | Conservation Genetics | Ornithology). He has been carrying out research at the Avian Evolution Node Laboratory, Sri Lanka on Sri Lankan endemic birds using phylogenetic sister pairs, and has been credited with the discovery of four new species to science.

Dr Mathiventhan Thavanayagam - Senior lecturer at the Department of Botany, Eastern University, Sri Lanka. Mathiventhan does research in Botany, Ecology and Marine Biology. He is a NORAD Scholar and completed his MSc in Management of Natural Resources and Sustainable Agriculture, at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Norway. He is an expert on Climate Change; Environmental Impacts Assessment; Community-based Natural Resource Management and Conservation; Coastal Resources; Resilience and Management; Socio-ecology of Mangroves.

Dr. Kanishka Ukuwela is a Research Scientist and Senior Lecturer in Zoology at the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. He holds a BSc in Zoology and a PhD in Evolutionary Biology from the University of Adelaide, Australia. Kanishka has published many research papers on the reptiles and amphibians of Sri Lanka, and is also a member of the IUCN Amphibian and Sea Snake Specialist Groups. He has received the President's Award for Scientific Publications.

Mr. Chaminda Jayasekara holds a B.A. Travel and Tourism Management from Rajarata University, He has a PgDip in Environment and Regional Development from University of Colombo. Chaminda is a passionate resident naturalist at Jetwing Vil Uyana. One of his favourite creatures is the rare Grey Slender Loris and Chaminda is passionately involved in the Loris Conservation project, keeping a watchful eye and diligently recording their activities. Chaminda has published a book on the species - 'Dry Zone Slender Loris – A Photographic Educational Guide' and has also been featured on the BBC and National Geographic.

Mr. Riznad Hussain, is an avid wild-life enthusiast and has spent the past 12 years, in absolute patience, to capture stunning wildlife/nature photographs. Although a Marketer by profession, Riznad is happiest in the jungle with a camera in hand, indulging in and capturing natural wildlife in all its glory. He sees his photography as a medium to raise awareness on the importance of conservation; "Most of us are so caught up with our busy, urban lives that we often forget the magnificence of the nature around us. Worse, there are so many things we do to destroy nature, without even realizing it".

Mr. Dilum Alagiyawanna is an environmental and wildlife conservationist cum wildlife documentary filmmaker. Dilum's recent documentary film "The Great Elephant Gathering of Asia" was instrumental in convincing the Ministry of Mahaweli Development to change the water-diversion of the Moragahakanda/Kaluganga Project to safeguard the annual elephant gathering at the Minneriya/Kadulla National Parks. His film won the "Best Animal Behaviour Award" at the Japan Wildlife Film Festival 2018 and he was awarded a Blue Green Era Presidential award in 2019.

Empowering Youth for Conservation

PHASE 2

FIELD TRIP TO WILPATTU NATIONAL PARK

The department of bio-science of the University of Vavuniya in association with the Department of Wildlife Conservation will be organising a **3 Days / 2 Nights** field trip to Wilpattu national park.

Under this program 24 students from the department of bio-science in the universities of Vavuniya, Jaffna and Rajarata (8 students from each university) will get an opportunity to learn about wildlife conservation and wildlife/nature photography from eminent groups of conservationists and naturalists of national and international repute.

Phase 2 of this program will be organised by:
The Department of Bio-Science at the University of Vavuniya in association with the Department of Wildlife Conservation under AHEAD ELTA ELSE DP of Faculty of Applied Science.