

**A Brief on "8<sup>th</sup> Annual Save The Frogs Day" Celebration at GUIDE, Bhuj, Gujarat, on  
30<sup>th</sup> April 2016**

8<sup>th</sup> National "Save The Frogs" Day was celebrated by Gujarat Institute of Desert Ecology (GUIDE), Bhuj, Gujarat, in its campus on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2016. This event was the first of its kind in the state of Gujarat on frog conservation. Professor K. K. Sharma, former Vice Chancellor of MDS University, Ajmer, who has been in the Advisory board of "Save The Frogs" suggested to organize an event on frog conservation in GUIDE, since no such event was organized till date in Gujarat. Thus, GUIDE promptly accepted to organize this event, which was aimed at sensitizing different stakeholders on the ecological roles of frogs, and the need for their conservation. The event was coordinated by Dr. B. Anjan Kumar Prusty, Senior Scientist, Environmental Impact Assessment Division, with the consent of Dr. V. Vijay Kumar, Director, GUIDE. The event was attended by participants from different segments of the society, viz., researchers, academicians, Post Graduate Students, school teachers.

The event was initiated by a brief welcome by Dr. Prusty, followed up by a Welcome Address by Dr. Vijay Kumar, who described the importance of frogs in ecosystems, their invisible services to ecosystem and humanity, and the need for public sensitization. He also emphasized the importance of frog conservation in dryland habitats, where their survival has been at stake for various reasons. Dr. Vijay Kumar welcomed the participants and advised all to give serious attention in conserving frogs in general and biodiversity at large. Subsequently, Dr. M. G. Thakkar, Dean, Faculty of Science, KSKV Kachchh University, Bhuj addressed the participants by emphasizing the importance of conservation of biodiversity, and the need for inculcating the conservation science related issues in university curriculum, so that the message of conservation reaches to grassroots level widely. He briefed the initiative undertaken by University Grants Commission (UGC), New Delhi in this regard.

The first technical talk was delivered by Dr. Prusty on "***Save The Frog" initiative, Ecological Roles of Frogs, and External Forcing on Population Decline***". Dr. Prusty started his talk in remembrance of two ardent conservationists late Dr. Ravi Sankaran and late Dr. S. Bhupathy, former Director and former Principal Scientist at Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History, Coimbatore, respectively. He briefed about the "Save The Frogs" organization, the initiative, and a brief history of such events since the year 2008. He described the event in the present day context, and the role being played by various organizations across the globe. He further described the general ecological role of frogs, and emphasized on the role of frogs as biological indicators, and their specific roles in controlling vector population and useful services in containing diseases such as Malaria and Dengue. Dr. Prusty's talk also included issues such as external forcing on frog population declines, and the role of chemical contamination of natural habitats as bottlenecks for the population. He further described the role of hydro-period in wetlands in maintaining the

frog population, and role of water availability in supporting amphibian population in general. He further emphasized the need to conserving frogs in each of their life stages, and urged the participants to take corrective actions and to have self determination in conserving the frogs and other biodiversity.

The second technical talk entitled "***Jumping Around: Why frogs need conservation?***" was delivered by Dr. Arun Kumar Roy Mahato, Scientist, Terrestrial Ecology Division of GUIDE. Dr. Mahato briefed about the zoological classification system, and ecological evolution of amphibians, and described the level occupied by frogs in trophic levels. He stressed on the issue of climate change and dangers faced by amphibians. The role of frogs in ecosystems, and anthropogenic factors impacting the survival of frog population was detailed through his talk. He further briefed the impact of climate change on frog's population, and the need for public sensitization.

Later Dr. Prusty briefed about the importance of self determination and an undertaking to conserve frogs. This was done through an *en-mass* pledge by reading a 04 point pledge statement that reads "(i) I solemnly pledge to conserve frogs, their habitats, and contribute in conservation of amphibians in general and biodiversity at large, (ii) I shall convey the message of need for conservation of frogs to my neighbours and native denizens in our locality, (iii) I shall honour the rich biodiversity of India and shall put every single effort to conserve the frogs, and (iv) To conserve the frog diversity of our country, I pledge my dedication". Further, the event was concluded by a group photo by all the participants.



Plate 1. Dr. Prusty welcoming the participants



Plate 2. Participants taking oath and reading the pledge statement to conserve frogs



Plate 3. Group Photo by participants at GUIDE, Bhuj