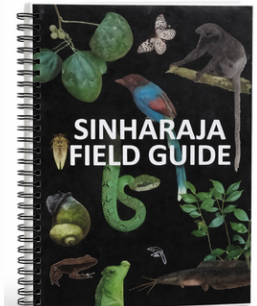


Creating Ambassadors for Conservation - Through Nature Education



Field report - Inaugural Programme

Thank you! BirdLife Tokyo - Osaka Gala, Japan: Nurturing a Love for Nature in Young Minds - Ambassadors for Conservation - Through Nature Education

Field Ornithology Group of Sri Lanka (fogsl) extends heartfelt gratitude to Osaka Gala - Tokyo, Japan for the generous funding that made fogsl four-day environmental workshop for school children possible.



Prof. Dayawansa delivering his lecture



Students getting hands-on experience in animal - handling



Collaboratively developing the inspirational tree



The inspirational tree

Friday, February 27

Day 01 - At University of Colombo

The first program was successfully conducted from the 27th of February to 2nd of March 2026 at the University Colombo and the Sinharaja Man and Biosphere Reserve. A total of 21 students, 2 teachers, and 2 parents participated in the programme.

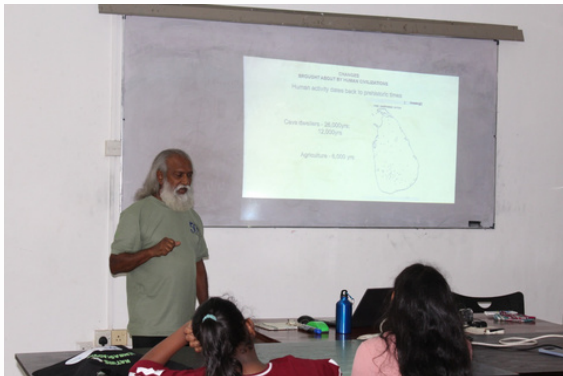
The group was provided with transport to reach the University of Colombo, and then the Sinharaja forest and return journey to Colombo. Accommodation arrangements were made at Martin's Lodge, Sinharaja. Throughout the programme, participants were provided with all meals and refreshments. A trained guide (trekker) from the Department of Forest Conservation was chartered to ensure the safety of the crew during the forest trails. The funding was used effectively to deliver a comprehensive educational experience that combined theoretical learning with hands-on experience to craft nature ambassadors for conservation. The program proceeded exactly as planned. An orientation session was conducted at the Field Ornithology Group of Sri Lanka, Smart Classroom and the Natural History Museum of the Department of Zoology and Environment Science, University of Colombo. This session prepared the students for the biodiversity they would encounter and outlined the conservation goals of the mission. An introductory session was conducted by Professor Nihal Dayawansa (President, fogsl).

Thereafter, a tour of the Natural History Museum was conducted by Dr. D. M. Surathissa, Curator of the Natural History Museum and Life Member of the Field Ornithology Group of Sri Lanka (FOGSL), during which he emphasized the importance of biodiversity conservation.



Dr. Surathissa sharing insights during the Natural History Museum tour.

Before departing to Sinharaja Emeritus Professor Sarath Koatagama (Patron, fogs) delivered an inspirational lecture giving an insight to Sinharaja forest and emphasizing the need of Ambassadors for conservation.



Emeritus Prof. Kotagama sharing knowledge during the lecture.



In the afternoon the students departed to Sinharaja forest and in the evening they received a briefing about the programme by Professor Koatagama.



Saturday, February 28th :

Day 02 - At Sinharaja Forest Reserve

The second day was started with a mindfulness session followed by listening to jungle noises, bird calls and dawn chorus of Sinharaja. Students were engaged in group activities forming vegetation dynamic plots in the unlogged forest and the logged forest to gather information about diversity, adaptations and ecology of plants. Then some individual activities were conducted in the late afternoon hours within the forest. Upon completion of the field work, data assimilation was done followed by an interactive session about endemic pitcher plant *Nepenthes distillatoria* by Mr. Susantha Sanjeewa. Experienced educator Mr. Aruna Padmaperuma had an interactive session about importance of rainforests and biodiversity related to folklore etc. to inspire the students. After the late evening break, students were engaged in discussions with resource persons, completing their field notes. After the dinner, they were able to listen to an interesting lecture about fascinating mixed species foraging flocks of birds in Sinharaja by Professor Kotagama.



Students participating in a mindfulness session.



Morning birding session.



Students engaging in group activities



Session conducted by Mr. Aruna



Sunday, March 1st :

Day 03- At Sinharaja Forest Reserve



Knowledge sharing during guided trail tours



Students working on completing their workshop booklet

The day started with a mindfulness session, listening to jungle noises and the morning chorus of birds. Students conducted active bird watching up to the Research, Education, Ecoourism Centre (REEC) where they did bird sketches and environment condition record keeping. Students participated in guided nature walks, bird watching exercises, and ecology lessons led by fogsl resource personnel and a guide from the Department of Forestry. After that students were engaged in creating their booklet as the major exercise utilizing the stationary that has been provided to them.

Monday, March 2nd:

Day 04 - At Sinharaja Forest Reserve

During the previous night, the budding nature ambassadors representing five groups were working late into the night to prepare the workshop educational booklets. This process was well facilitated by the resource persons and the coordinator of the programme. The prepared workshop books by were submitted for review by Prof. Kotagama and the panel of Resource persons.

The final mission was a hike to Mulawella, a nice and popular Nature Trail available in Sinharaja where the budding ambassadors of conservation got an opportunity to study typical rainforest characters and functions while crossing the virgin forest, ridge forest at the top, and reaching the third highest peak of Sinharaja (Mulawella). They were delighted to make this hike and proud of doing it. The view from the top of Mulawella gave them a chance to watch the fascinating colourful canopy of the Sinharaja forest. They were also watching the natural forest and forest cleared areas outside the reserve boundaries, which made them feel that conservation is mandatory. This hike changed their attitudes in a positive manner, giving them an opportunity to experience many things that they have learned from the inception of the programme and made them Nature Ambassadors of Conservation.

The program of creating Ambassadors for Conservation was confirmed by delivering certificates and Nature Ambassador badges. Their genuine enthusiasm and effort were appreciated by the fogsl resource team. The group then departed Sinharaja and returned safely to Colombo, concluding the workshop.



Students visiting the Giant Navada Tree



· Awarding certificates and badges to students.



Students exploring the Mulawella peak, enjoying the view



Group photo of the first Young Nature Ambassadors batch with resource persons

The impact of this experience on the students was invaluable. For many, it was their first visit to a tropical rainforest. Your support was greatly appreciated in providing these young minds with a firsthand connection to nature, fostering a sense of responsibility toward conservation that they will carry for a lifetime.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude once again for your trust in fogsl and your commitment to environmental education in Sri Lanka.

Annexures:

Resource Persons:

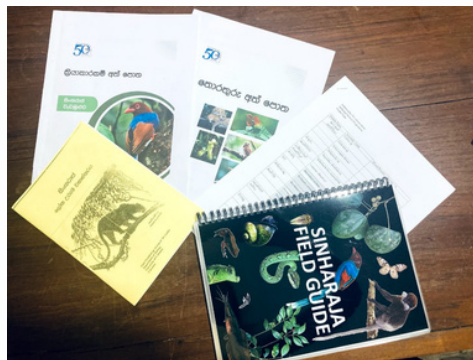
- Emeritus Professor Sarath Kotagama (Patron /fogsl)
- Professor Nihal Dayawansa (President/fogsl)
- Dr.Surathissa Dissanayake
- Mr. Susantha Sanjeewa
- Mr.Aruna Padmaperuma
- Mr.Thusila Edirisinghe

The following are the packages that has been provided for students:

- Package one: T shirt and bag, a field note book and a pencil
- Package two: Activity Book, 3 Information guides, and a pictorial guide (Sinharaja Field Guide)
- Package three: A pair of Leech socks and a field jacket, a pair of binoculars (They were asked to return this upon the completion of the field work)
- Awards: A certificate and a badge



Package one



Package two



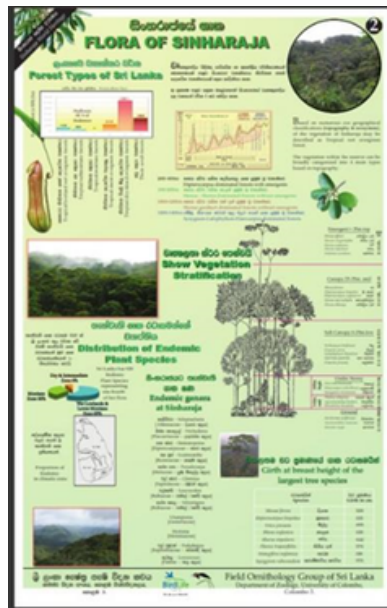
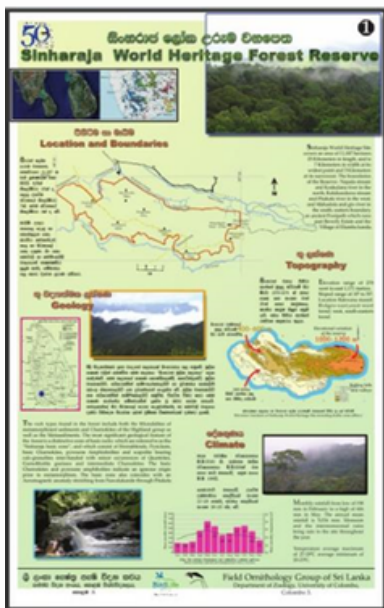
Package three



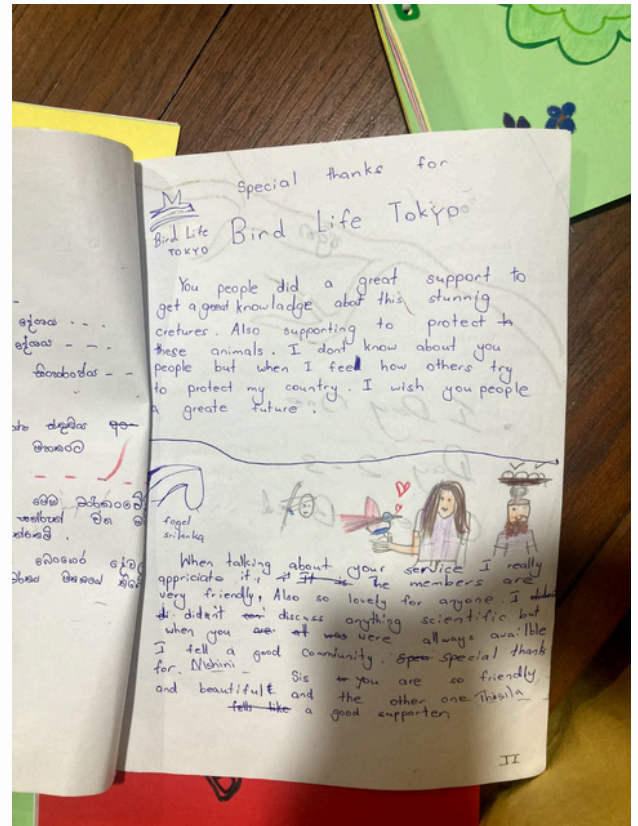
Package four

Students were divided in to 5 groups. Each group was given with a tool box to utilize. Including all necessary stationary, field tools etc.

A small portable library was set up at the lodge for students to access reading material during their stay. Moreover, informative posters (Banners) about Sinharaja Rainforest were displayed at the lodge for the students. Given below are the soft copies of the above-mentioned posters.



Students were asked to create a booklet based on the activity book given, incorporating their own observations.



Booklets and students' feedback

List of names of participants

Students

1. Suchali Thanulya
2. Matheesha Kalinga
3. Kaveesha Denuwan
4. Thisal Kumanayake
5. A. Pahan Sasanka
6. Sanduni Thathsarani
7. Osanda Kasthuriarachchi
8. Arunalu Yahampath
9. Abhiru Vidanapathirana
10. Nisini Sadewma R.
11. Minara Sachini
12. Nulara Nethini
13. K.D. Dinula Fernando
14. Chanumitha Wijesuriya
15. A.D. Sakya Wijewardene
16. Amodi Saranya
17. H.M. Thides Mandara
18. H. Thisali Randani
19. H. Samindi Silva
20. Nethula Pahasara Manage
21. Sandali Divyangana

Teachers & Parents

1. Chandani Udeshika
2. Janaki Kukulawala
3. Jeewa Chathurangani
4. Subadra Amarasinghe
5. Ruwani Vihanga

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