



14th August 2012

Media Release

This AUGUST 15TH INDIA RISES FOR THE SPARROWS – House Sparrow declared State Bird of Delhi

New Delhi, August 14th

Launching the "Rise for the Sparrows" campaign, India's largest conservation movement to save sparrows, Hon. Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dixit declared the sparrow as the "State Bird of Delhi," a decision that is expected to go a long way in raising awareness and attention on the species. Mrs Dixit expressed concern over the lack of attention and recognition the bird has received from one and all. Mohammed Dilawar from Nature Forever Society informed that society had been working on this for more than a year and thanked the Hon. CM for making House Sparrows the State Bird of Delhi.

Mrs Dixit was presented with an art work prepared by famed international illustrator Kim Rosen on the Common Bird Monitoring of India.

She urged the citizens of the country to monitor the Sparrows and other common birds on August 15th for 15 minutes during any time of the day across the country as it will help in collection of vital data on sparrows and other common birds.

She also urged the citizens to register on www.cbmi.in to monitor the sparrows and other common birds in around their homes, offices and schools, while calling on corporates, NGOs and educational institutions to become official conservation partners of the Common Bird Monitoring of India.

"Rise for the Sparrows" is a project aimed at empowering and inspiring citizens, corporates and educational institutions to actively get involved in sparrow conservation, monitoring and creating awareness with regard to the conservation of house sparrows and other common birds of India.

"Rise of the Sparrow" is seen as a major step towards functional conservation, taking a 360° approach from monitoring to habitat creation.

Speaking on the occasion, Mohammed Dilawar, founder-president of Nature Forever Society, said the "Rise for the Sparrow" campaign would become a citizen movement like the World Sparrow Day.

The project seeks to reach out to people across the Indian Subcontinent and aims to empower them with simple solutions which will not involve a lot of time and resources but at the same time will have a significant impact on sparrow conservation of India.

The resources created will be useful to teachers, parents, students, organisations, policy makers, NGOs and citizens who are not professional researchers and anyone who is interested in conservation of house sparrows and common birds, said Dilawar.

The format of the project is both dynamic and interactive, and resources will be continuously added to it over a period of time.

It aims to compile and capture important observations that citizens have made or their recollections about sparrows.

He urged the Delhi Government to incorporate the Common Bird Monitoring in the school curriculum and make the schools and other organisations sparrow and bird friendly. Nature Forever Society will be providing all the help and resources to the Delhi Government in this regard.

This will help in the long term collection of data from the NCR region. Delhi being one of the greenest cities in the world, it has a tremendous scope for urban conservation of which sparrow is the mascot and bio-indicator.

Nature Forever Society is looking for a long term conservation partner for funding its conservation measures as the lack of resources and manpower are slowing the pace of conservation measures.

The project is being launched on Independence Day when the air is ripe with the theme of patriotism and caring for the environment around us is also a vital part of caring for the country.

August 15th being a national holiday, everyone can certainly devote 15 minutes for the birds on our Independence Day. This should be one of the things that everyone should do after flag hoisting at their colonies and offices.

Nature Forever Society

Nature Forever Society (NFS) has been working for the conservation of House Sparrows and other common flora and fauna for the past seven years. NFS was founded by Mohammed Dilawar and was registered on January 13, 2008.

The mission of NFS is to involve citizens in the conservation movement of India. To achieve this, NFS has been launching initiatives which are simple but have far reaching conservation value.

NFS has also initiated Sparrow Awards to honour citizens doing exemplary work in conservation and BiodiverCity Photo Competition to get citizens involved in nature photography.

The below mentioned are some of the initiatives which Nature Forever Society has initiated.

Adopt Nest box and bird Feeders

To involve the citizens in the conservation movement and get them emotionally attached to the cause of conservation, Nature Forever Society initiated a campaign where people can adopt a nest box and bird feeder. By doing this, they are not only providing a habitat for the birds to nest in their homes, but are also getting attached to the cause. So far, a large number of nest boxes and bird feeders have been adopted across the country.

Taking inspiration from NFS, numerous organisations and individuals have initiated this across the country.

World Sparrow Day

World Sparrow Day celebrated on March 20th is also an initiative of NFS and in less than three years, the event has become very popular and is celebrated in more than 30 countries across the world, including in Europe and parts of South Asia.

Nature Forever Society has created a dedicated website to spread awareness in regard to WSD, www.worldsparrowday.org.

Mohammed Dilawar

Mohammed Dilawar is one of the 30 Heroes of the Environment chosen by Time magazine in 2008. He is a crusader for the almost ignored bird - the common sparrow. His efforts for the conservation of House Sparrows are recognized both at the National and International level.

He is the founder and president of Nature Forever Society and the brain behind World Sparrow Day, Adopt a nest box and bird feeder campaign, BiodiverCity Photo Competition, Secondhand Binocular Scheme and Help Birds in Summer Campaign.

He is a member of the International Working Group on Urban Sparrows and represents the Afro-Asian Region. He attended a conference in 2009 in the UK for devising a methodology of monitoring house sparrows in urban settings..

He has travelled widely across various protected areas of the country to observe and photograph the wildlife and monitor conservation issues.

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Nature Forever Society

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