

Unique Symposium
The SEAmposium

organised by

**Ecofolks, Veermata Jijabai Bhosale Botanical Udyan & Zoo and
ICAR-Central Institute of Fisheries Education, Mumbai**

Date: 2nd September, 2023

Venue: 3 D auditorium of the VJB Udyan & Zoo, Byvulla, Mumbai

In a harmonious convergence of scientific inquiry and eco-conscious zeal, an unique symposium “[The SEAmposium](#)” was jointly organised by Ecofolks, Mumbai, The Veermata Jijabai Bhosale Botanical Udyan & Zoo, (VJB Udyan & Zoo), Byculla and ICAR-CIFE, Mumbai on 2nd September, 2023 in the 3 D auditorium of the VJB Udyan & Zoo. The objective of the event was a call to action for ocean conservation, a cause that resonates through the very heartbeat of our planet.

The [SEAmposium](#) was a bustling congregation of fisheries experts, social scientists, ocean advocates, marine biologists, environmental enthusiasts and the audience comprised of young kids to senior citizens. CIFE students from each division participated in this [SEAmposium](#) making it a grand success. CIFE team also got the opportunity to see the Humboldt Penguins (*Spheniscus humboldti*).

The participants were bound by a common thread of reverence to for forge a deeper understanding of the environment and oceans, discuss the pressing issues at hand, and explore innovative solutions to safeguard the seas that sustain us. It served as an important platform for bringing together the stakeholders related to the ocean.

Starting the programme, Shri. Paresh Pimpale, the founder of Ecofolks, introduced the audience to the second edition of “[SEAmposium](#)”. Shri. Pimpale articulated that the genesis of [SEAmposium](#) was done in 2022 with the inspiration from revered *Girimitra Samelan* and the Himalayan Club. He mentioned that this was the birth of a vision, a vision that has now become an annual event of paramount importance, one that nurtures and celebrates the intricacies of oceanic life.

After this, the Keynote speaker Dr. Sanjay Tripathi, Director of VJB Udyan & Zoo, addressed the session with the fundamental principles of “O-Ocean conservation, C-Community, E-Edutainment, A-Art and Adventure, N-Native people”. He mentioned that all are interconnected like the oceans creating synergies that can mitigate the human impact. In his address, Dr. Sanjay Tripathi mentioned that this zoo is one of the oldest zoos in the country established in 1862. He was proud to mention that this is the only zoo in the country to have successfully introduced Humboldt Penguins (*Spheniscus*

humboldti) and the number of penguins is now doubled by captive breeding, following the international protocols. He added that this has become a major attraction for all visitors.

Importance of ICAR-CIFE in the human resource development of the fisheries sector being done under the leadership of Dr. Ravishankar C.N. Director, CIFE and Dr. N.P, Sahu, Joint Director, CIFE was explained in the address by Dr. Arpita Sharma, Organising Secretary of SEAmposium and Head of FEES Division, ICAR-CIFE.

Thereafter, Dr. Arpita Sharma, Head of FEES Division, Dr. Kedar Nath, Head of FNBP Division and Dr. Swadesh Prakash, Principal Scientist/DSW along with CIFE team Dr. Paromita B. Sawant, Dr. Vinod K. Yadav, Dr. Madhuri Pathak, Dr. Neha Qureshi, Dr. Karan Ramteke and Shri. Abuthagir felicitated Dr. Sanjay Tripathi, Director of VJB Udyan & Zoo and Shri. Paresh Pimpale, the founder of Ecofolks with a shawl.

Proceeding further, Ms. Prachi Hatkar took the floor as the first speaker. Ms. Hatkar, a researcher pursuing a Ph.D. in seagrass-associated fauna at MS University, Vadodara and her focus was on conservation of Dugongs, the elusive sea mammal. Notably, she's been awarded a dive grant by the Women's Divers Hall of Fame and is an active member of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) and the Commission on Education and Communication (CEC). Ms. Hatkar's presentation was on "The Gongs of the Ocean: Studying the most elusive sea mammal." She shared valuable insights into Dugongs, including their conservation status, distinctive characteristics, geographical distribution in areas like the Palk Bay, Gulf of Kutch, and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Furthermore, Ms. Hatkar discussed the conservation strategies aimed at Dugong recovery through participatory management. To set the stage, she shared interesting videos shedding light on the intricate ecosystem of the underwater world.

The second speaker, Shri. Abuthagir Ibrahlim, Scientist, CIFE, Mumbai offered an enlightening presentation titled "Rainforest of the Ocean: Enter the World of Corals." He delved into the realm of corals, elucidating the intricacies of coral formation, the different types of coral reefs, their distribution within India and the formidable impact of climate change on these delicate ecosystems. Additionally, he shared insights on the diverse levels at which corals can be safeguarded.

The third speaker, Shri. Mario Fernandes, captivated the audience with his presentation titled "The Deepest Breath: Free diving as a sport." He started his talk with an exercise on breath-holding capability encouraging the audience to free diving and also mentioned how Yog is of immense help. He holds the title of Indian Free diving Champion and being the sole Level 3 Freediving Instructor & Instructor Trainer in India. In the year 2022, he achieved an impressive feat by breaking four national

records in free diving. During his presentation, Shri. Mario delved into the rich history of free diving and its deep-rooted connection with various human tribes, such as the BAJAU from Indonesia, the AMA Divers from Japan, and the Seaweed divers of Tamil Nadu.

The fourth speaker, Ms. Lisbon Ferrao, addressed the audience with a presentation titled "The Sea Monster: Tackling the trash." She explained that this endeavour is a family work, as both Ms. Lisbon, Zsuzsanna and their kids residents of Vasai, have been leading beach clean up initiatives along the Vasai coast since 2017. Their unwavering dedication, along with their committed team, has resulted in the removal of over 700 tonnes of plastic waste from the shores over six years. Nevertheless, they acknowledge the persistent challenge of properly disposing of the collected waste. Ms. Lisbon presentation showcased the transformative impact of beach clean up efforts on various beaches. To make the session interactive the young kids went around the audience holding plates having components of waste found on the shores, including plastics, medicine bottles, syringes, footwear, and toothbrushes showing the trans boundary movement of these plastics.

After the lunch break, the prizes of the competition PHOTOTHON were distributed.

Following that, Dr. Paromita Sawant, Principal Scientist in the Division of Aquaculture at ICAR-CIFE, Mumbai, painted a vivid picture of "The Colourful World of the Sea." With a mesmerizing focus on marine ornamental fishes, she illuminated the audience about the economic importance of these aquatic gems. She not only introduced the audience to the dazzling diversity of ornamental fish species but also the fascinating biodiversity of these marine treasures within India. In her presentation and videos the vibrant and enchanting world of ornamental fishes came alive.

Thereafter, Ms. Zia Hajeebhoy presented "The Magical World of Sailing". She explained about the Aquasail brand through a captivating video and the sailing facilities which has a goal of creating eco-friendly leisure and athletic activities to raise awareness about the waters and the world. She mentioned that as a result, almost 130000 people have had the opportunity to sail. She described sailing and its types like the Ketch, Cutter, and Catamarans, and also talked about the Golden Globe Race France motivating the participants for sailing.

Dr. Madhuri S. Pathak, Scientist, Division of Aquaculture, ICAR-CIFE, Mumbai presented her talk "The Useful Weed - Sea Weed" which included importance of seaweeds, different products which are and can be developed and their classification and distribution around the world. She also talked about seaweed integration with shrimp farming.

This was followed by a talk by Dr. Karankumar Ramteke, Scientist from Fisheries Resource Management Division, CIFE. In his presentation, which was a collection of various videos he explained the "The Science and Art of Biodiversity Conservation". He explained various facets of biodiversity, encompassing genetic biodiversity and species biodiversity. He explored the diversification of productivity in upstream and coastal zones, highlighting the critical role of rivers and seas in this context. He elaborated on different conservation strategies, particularly emphasizing efforts aimed at preserving juvenile fish populations and mitigating the adverse impacts of overfishing on growth. In his talk, he masterfully blended the realms of science and artistry, offering insights into the conservation of our precious biodiversity.

After a small tea break, Ocean Film Festival was held. A video of ICAR-CIFE was shown highlighting the achievements of CIFE. Two Documentary films were also shown. The first film by This Film was directed by Akansha Tiwari conveyed the views of different stakeholders and awareness creation on ocean conservation, small-scale fishers. It also show cased grass root solutions to ghost fishing by collaboration with fishers and regular net maintenance. Diya Kamad-Co-founder of Insearch Fish, talked about the impact of large-scale fishing gear on the bottom fauna and flora of the ocean. Next film was about the Portuguese Man of War (Physalia) in which the marine habitat and general introduction were covered.

After this, the Ecofolks group felicitated all the speakers and thanked ICAR-CIFE, Mumbai, VJB Udyan & Zoo and all the other organisations for a successful [SEAmposium](#).



