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Celebrating Earth Day: BNHS organises painting competition for underprivileged children

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Khanjan Ravani



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Celebrating Earth Day: Painting Competition for underprivileged children *RNA Research & Archives*

Nature has enough to satisfy man's needs but not to satisfy his greeds
– Mahatma Gandhj.

Today, man has exploited natural resources to a great extent just to satisfy his luxury and his greeds. However, many efforts are being taken lately to spread awareness

about and take measures for the conservation of our environment. One such step in support of environmental protection is Earth Day. Every year, April 22 is celebrated as Earth Day all over the world. Various activities and events are held across the globe to contribute some bit towards the green cause.

This year, to mark Earth Day, the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) organised a painting competition for underprivileged children at its Conservation Education Centre (CEC) in Mumbai on Tuesday, April 22. The theme for the competition was 'Sparrow, my friend'. Around 45 children from localities near the centre in Goregaon, living in slums, participated in the competition. They were divided into two groups: 5th to 7th standard children, around 20 of them, comprised the first group, and 25 children from 8th to 10th standards formed the second. the competition was two hours long and all the materials required, like paper, paints, reference material, etc., were provided to them by the organisers.



The young artists were seen completely engrossed in their art works centred around their winged friends – sparrows. Their canvases were soon adorned with colourful images straight from their imaginations and the innocent interpretations of the theme. Trees, mountains, butterflies, birds, and everything else from nature found place on their drawing sheets, along with messages like 'Save Sparrows'.



An artist from Mumbai, [Chitra Vaidya](#), was the judge for the event. She is an avid painter and a popular

[art teacher](#)

. Appreciating the initiative by BNHS, she said, "Organising such a competition will provide these children with a good opportunity to do something in their summer vacations. The theme being so easy and simple, will enhance their observation and liking towards the humble bird, which can easily be seen around our homes. The only thing I expect from them and I would like to see is how well they express their observations on paper."



The prizes for the winners included binoculars, sparrow-nests, kids birds' books, BNHS caps and badges and other exciting gifts. However, the enthusiasm and the happiness of the children was in itself rewarding. Riya Shinde, a 10th standard girl, speaking about the sparrows said, "The number of sparrows is reducing now-a-days because of the pollution caused due to industries. To save sparrows, we have to decrease the number of industries." Such innocent thoughts lay the foundation for big ideas. "Earth Day is celebrated to save our planet Earth as all the things – trees, birds, animals – are declining in numbers. Something needs to be done about it."



Sparrows were one of the most common birds in Mumbai, but now its population is dwindling. The BNHS event was their way to demonstrate their concern towards the feathered little neighbours. While green lifestyles need to be imbibed for all the 365 days of the year, occasions such as Earth Day can be a good chance to embark on such a journey. If each one of us takes the responsibility to contribute towards making a difference, however small it be, the Earth would be a better place to live in.

About BNHS-CEC:

The BNHS-CEC, in Goregaon (East), built on 33 acres of forested land, next to Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP), is truly a delightful place amidst much green cover. Several innovative programmes are held to achieve environmental awareness among target groups ranging from students, teachers, government officials and corporate groups. Through the CEC, the BNHS aims to support biodiversity conservation in and around protected areas as well as around human habitations.

[Earth day 2014 Earth Day Bombay Natural History Society \(BNHS\) Web Exclusive](#)