

## ECOTRAIL- ECOLOGY & CONSERVATION FIELD TRAILS



### A Bird Watching/ Intertidal walks/ Mangrove walk and Environment Awareness Program for Students

#### **Summary**

**EcoTrail** is a program designed to introduce high school students to the world of wildlife, environment and conservation of flora and fauna around them. It involves understanding the research methods involved in assessing biodiversity, the ways in which ecosystems sustain themselves, and the consequences of human impact. Students learn about biodiversity and the distribution of organisms in Terrestrial & coastal habitats and the factors that threaten these fragile systems.

Through this program in and around Mumbai, students learn about various methods of conservation of the environment, intertidal zones and mangroves. They study the relationships between these ecosystems and culminate their projects with essays and data collected on field trips.

**EcoTrail** is a whole and sole effort of Reefwatch Marine Conservation, described in detail below, to engage students in a very unique program. Students will also emerge from the program as aware citizens with improved knowledge of understanding Nature.

#### **A) Organization Involved**

**Reef Watch Marine Conservation (RWMC)** is a Non-Government Organization (NGO) with an Education and research-based agenda on **marine conservation and environment**. Established in 1993 as an education and research organization, RWMC is dedicated to the protection of India's marine heritage. RWMC's efforts have put many coral species and marine fauna under the Wildlife Protection Act. In May 2007, Reefwatch was nominated as a **Member of the National Board for Wildlife, Government of India**.

## **B) Brief Program Description**

EcoTrail's mission is

- To encourage marine conservation awareness and education about our ecosystems
- To introduce students to field and encourage them to think analytically about data and conservation issues
- To encourage a sense of adventure and curiosity among students
- To enhance team building and leadership and collaboration among students

The program involves Students and RWMC team members visiting the fields around Mumbai Area. Here students undergo Nature trail lessons that require them to acquire high degrees of conservational strategies. This will help develop a sense of team spirit and leadership. Students will learn about ecology, mangrove ecosystems, bird nestings, tide patterns and global warming.

### **Advantages of EcoTrail**

- 1) Understanding the various ecosystems
- 2) Relationships within organisms
- 3) Understanding adaptations required to survive the intertidal environment
- 4) Identifying flora and fauna

### **Bird Watching**

Bird Watching is actually about observing and identifying birds around us. Birds are the most popular form of wildlife. This is because they are so attractive and most conspicuous wild creatures. Maharashtra itself serves a wild variety of bird species.



## **Intertidal Walk**

A walk on the sea shore can always encourage students to know the marine environment superficially. There is a wide variety of shells found on the coastline of Maharashtra. Not only shells but some places like Ratnagiri or Ganpati Pule show presence of Echinoderms like star fishes, holothurians, etc.



## **Mangrove Walk**

Mangroves are woody plants that grow at the interface between land and sea in tropical and sub-tropical latitudes where they exist in conditions of high salinity, extreme tides, strong winds, high temperatures and muddy, anaerobic soil

Their unique features also make them ideal sites for experimental studies of biodiversity and ecosystem function. This knowledge will help students develop strategies to promote better rehabilitation of degraded mangrove habitats the world over and ensure that these unique ecosystems survive and flourish.



## **Program Activities**

- The two day program involves the classroom presentation on the first day and the excursion to the respective areas on the second day.
- The presentation includes detailed description of the excursion and the information on probable species to be observed on the field area.
- The Excursions will be carried out in the group of 50 students per day.
- Students will be made aware of the flora and fauna found on the excursion.
- An excursion report should be submitted by each student within 6 days on the basis of species observed.

***We look forward to your participation in EcoTrail..!!***

