

World Wildlife Day Regional Youth Symposium 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The third World Wildlife Day Regional Youth Symposium was held physically in Singapore from 23-25 February 2024. The event was organised by 25 youth stewards under Singapore's National Parks Board (NParks) Youth Stewards for Nature (YSN) programme, with generous support from NParks, Mandai Nature, the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) and other key partners. Over the course of three days, the event featured 12 speakers and guests, involved 61 youth facilitators from the nature community around the ASEAN region and invited 16 workshop partners to curate 10 hands-on conservation workshops. The symposium also saw the debut of a new segment, Youth Showcase, where 14 youth-led project teams from seven ASEAN Member States were given the opportunity to share about their conservation efforts in their home country with attendees and members of the public. The event successfully brought together a diverse group of over 300 youth attendees representing 15 countries (including all 10 ASEAN Member States), to engage in discussions, workshops, and networking opportunities focused on youth involvement in wildlife conservation and environmental stewardship.

WWD24 at a glance



500 in-person attendees
12 speakers and guests
10 workshops
14 youth showcase groups
15 countries including Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam, India, France, Korea, United Kingdom & United States



OBJECTIVES

The event took inspiration from the global World Wildlife Day theme determined by CITES* - 'Connecting People and Planet: Exploring Digital Innovation in Wildlife Conservation', and was planned with five main objectives in mind:

1. Anchor and grow Southeast Asia's youth conservation network
2. Connect Southeast Asian youth with mentors and role models in the wildlife conservation sector
3. Raise international awareness of innovative practices for nature conservation in Southeast Asia
4. Spotlight creative and novel use of digital solutions and technology for monitoring and protecting wildlife
5. Encourage environmental stewardship, protecting nature for future generations

* Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

PROGRAMME

On 23 February, Day 0, facilitators and Youth Showcase project teams attended the Cultural Exchange, an informal networking session consisting of games, trainings and briefings, to form connections with peers and prepare for the upcoming Focus Group Activity (FGA) on Day 1 and Youth Showcase segment on Day 2, respectively.

On 24 February, Day 1, some regional attendees had the opportunity to attend a nature walk at Coney Island, jointly organised by the WWD 2024 Organising Team and Punggol Coast Nature Kakis, before the commencement of the event. Following the walk, local and regional attendees gathered at the event venue, One Punggol, for the inception of the symposium. Messages and addresses by Mr Desmond Lee (Minister for National Development and Minister-in-charge of Social Services Integration, Singapore), Dr Janil Puthuchery (Advisor of Punggol Coast and Senior Minister of State for Communications and Information, and Health), Ms Ivonne Higuero (Secretary-General, CITES), Dr Theresa Mundita Lim (Executive Director, ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity), Dr Sonja Luz (CEO, Mandai Nature) and Ms Sophianne Araib (Group Director, National Biodiversity Centre and Horticulture and Community Division, National Parks Board, Singapore) kick-started the day.



Subsequently, in line with the global theme of World Wildlife Day - 'Connecting People and Planet: Exploring Digital Innovation in Wildlife Conservation', the symposium featured two thematic tracks, namely 'Technology and Innovation' and 'Leadership and Community Engagement', to spotlight and celebrate the efforts of practitioners in Southeast Asia, that utilise technology and actively involve communities in wildlife conservation. Six speakers from across the ASEAN region took the stage to share their knowledge and experiences. Each track was followed by a panel discussion, moderated by youths, in which speakers addressed attendees' questions and provided further insight into the challenges they faced in their work. Attendees then ended the day by taking part in the FGA which posed a hypothetical land-use challenge. Attendees took on personas of various stakeholders who collaborated, negotiated and together, navigated the complexities of the challenge that mirrored real life biodiversity conservation in-practice.

On 25 February, Day 2, attendees engaged in hands-on conservation activities by attending one of 10 workshops held in multiple locations across the island in the morning:

- 1. ArtScience Museum Workshop: Understanding Nature Through Technology**
Held in partnership with the ArtScience Museum.
- 2. Bird Paradise Workshop: Soaring into Ex-Situ Avian Conservation and Sustainability**
Held in partnership with Mandai Nature and Mandai Wildlife Group.
- 3. Ethnobotany Workshop: Connecting People, Plants and Culture**
Held in partnership with the Singapore Botanic Gardens.
- 4. GYBN SEA Workshop: Mapping ASEAN Youth Contributions to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework**
Held in partnership with the Global Youth Biodiversity Network Southeast Asia.
- 5. Illegal Wildlife Trade Workshop: Caught in the Act! From Crime Scene to Lab/Rehab**
Held in partnership with Centre for Wildlife Forensics, Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation, and Wildlife Trade, National Parks Board.
- 6. LKCNHM Workshop: Revealing Conservation Narratives through Taxonomy**
Held in partnership with the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum, National University of Singapore.
- 7. Mandai Conservation Workshop: Innovations Behind Singapore Zoo's Conservation Efforts**
Held in partnership with Mandai Nature and Mandai Wildlife Group.
- 8. Marine Conservation Workshop: A Deep Dive into SJINML's Cutting-Edge Research**
Held in partnership with the St. John's Island National Marine Laboratory.
- 9. Nature Storytelling Workshop: Crafting Compelling Content to Engage Audiences**
Held in partnership with Kong Man Jing (Biogirl MJ) and Jayaprakash Joghee Bojan.
- 10. WWF-Singapore Workshop: Capturing Citizen Science for Conservation**
Held in partnership with World Wide Fund for Nature (Singapore).

In the afternoon, attendees gathered at One Punggol for the Youth Showcase segment. Attendees and members of the public had the opportunity to visit up to 14 project booths featuring youth-led conservation efforts. Attendees could earn a sticker for participating in unique booth activities with those managing to collect up to eight stickers being able to claim prizes as part of the ongoing sticker rally activity. The event was brought to an eventual close by a series of closing remarks from the WWD Regional Youth Symposium 2024 organising committee.

Overall, the event was well received by all attendees, with an average of 89% expressing interest in returning for the next rendition of the WWD Regional Youth Symposium. The event's success is owed to numerous partnerships formed along the planning journey and the support of countless individuals who volunteered their time to bring this event to fruition. A post-symposium report was shared with all attendees and partners to celebrate the efforts and pass on important links and resources that the youths may access to share with peers and forge their careers in conservation.

