

INSONA Changes Thrust and Name to International Society of Naturalists

With effect from 1st April 1989 (the eve of the anniversary of the birth of its late President, Fatehsingh Rao P. Gaekwad of Baroda, who had consistently rendered substantial leadership to Indian and international endeavours for environmental conservation), the Indian Society of Naturalists is renamed the *International Society of Naturalists*. However, the now-familiar acronym of INSONA will continue in official and general use.

The Indian Society of Naturalists (INSONA) was established in the year 1975, with its headquarters in Baroda, to foster the cause of environmental conservation for improving the general quality of life, and with H.H. Fatehsingh Rao P. Gaekwad (then Maharaja of Baroda) and the undersigned as Founder President and General Secretary, respectively. This establishment coincided with the pledging by the Government of India to preserve our forests and unique wildlife heritage. It was a time when we Indians decided to endeavour to prevent the extinction of threatened plants and animals and the desecration of natural ecosystems (Gaekwad, 1976; Oza, 1979).

To our deep satisfaction and gratification, INSONA and its Journal, *Environmental Awareness*, are now being widely cited and appreciated. Thus the impact of INSONA is being vitally reflected at the national level, while *Environmental Awareness*, founded (in the year 1977) and edited by the undersigned, is a quarterly journal devoted to the cause of environmental conservation for human welfare. It is thought to have been the *first* of its kind to become established in any Asian or African country, and is well received among INGOs—international non-governmental organizations (Oza, 1987).

Support for World Campaign for The Biosphere

From the year 1981, we have brought out stickers 'Save Our Biosphere', with a view to lending support to, and promoting in every possible way, the *World Campaign for The Biosphere*—with the objective of making everyone aware of The Biosphere, what it is, and how utterly we and all Mankind depend upon it (Gaekwad & Oza, 1981). We have also issued shirts bearing such large-printed slogans as 'Save Our Biosphere', 'National Environmental Awareness Campaign', 'Environmental Awareness', and 'Guardian of the Trees'.

We brought out these stickers and T-shirts in the ardent hope that these and other, continuing endeavours will go a long way in attracting the attention of the world's population to the fragility of The Biosphere and the paramount requirement of preserving the habitats of the world's most diverse ecobiomes and ecosystems. Having so released such stickers and shirts, linking trees with The Biosphere, we feel just a little more optimistic about getting a positive response towards saving some of the remaining tropical forests for posterity and, with them, habitats for our animal wildlife and of course human survival (Oza, 1982).

World-wide Concern Imperative

Through the stickers campaign, INSONA has endeavoured—also through its journal *Environmental Awareness* and such allies as *Environmental Conservation*—to help sound the alarm on behalf of wildlife and its habitat at the global level. Yet wildlife has continued to be slaughtered for economic gain or selfish 'sport' all over the world, and so INSONA launched another campaign by bringing out greetings postcards requesting people not to encourage trading in its skins and other products. We wish to convey

to the world due realization that, whereas the trees and wildlife can live without Man, the latter cannot well continue without them. It is much to be hoped that these modest attempts, initiated through INSONA, will not only meet with success at the local and national levels but also be most welcome in all the countries involved, as wildlife knows no geographical frontiers. Our activities to save threatened wildlife should also render service to the great general cause of saving The Biosphere for Man's and Nature's well-being (Oza, 1986a).

On 1st June 1986, INSONA and the Baroda Municipal Corporation jointly organized a function whereat the undersigned requested the religious leaders of five different faiths to consider 'Environment and Peace' for their sermons for human welfare. This was in concert with the year 1986 being designated by the United Nations General Assembly as the International Year of Peace and an integral part of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (Oza, 1986b). Constructive conservation actions were also initiated with a view to nourishing UNEP's message for 1986 World Environment Day and encouraging the peoples of the world to take care of trees for peace.

Earlier, to celebrate Earth Day and World Forestry Day (both on 21st March 1985), INSONA took the lead among South-east Asian countries in naming schoolchildren as 'Guardians of the Trees'. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) had announced 1985 as the International Year of the Forest, but we felt that particular responsibility to protect trees should rest with the 'Guardians', who should bring cases of threats to the notice of INSONA and concerned authorities—especially the official Conservators of Forests—while noting that the 1985 World Environment Day (June 5th) theme was 'Youth, population, and environment'.

It is hoped that INSONA's initiative, in concert with its allies, will encourage people on other continents to respect trees for human survival. Fortunately, INSONA's Fellow and sticker-distributing 'ambassador' Dr John R. Vallentyne ('Johnny Biosphere'), Vice-President of the World Council For The Biosphere, and Senior Scientist, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada Centre for Inland Waters, P.O. Box 5050, Burlington, Ontario L7R 4A6, Canada, and Professor Nicholas Polunin, INSONA's Fellow and President of the Foundation for Environmental Conservation and also of the World Council For The Biosphere, have rendered paramount services to promote our activities and especially to encourage and help our journal *Environmental Awareness* (Vallentyne, 1982; Oza, 1985; Polunin, 1988).

Ultimate Objectives of INSONA

Thus, INSONA is educating the educated (and through them others) to realize that the well-being of Mankind depends upon the well-being of Earth. 'Conserve Today and Save Tomorrow' is now well-established, and a most welcome slogan of INSONA's Conservation Movement; for we have a solemn obligation to save not only humans but also other living creatures of the Earth (Oza, 1983). The INSONA symbol stands for the Society's motto: *The Lord in his Grace created this beauteous Universe; the bounden duty to preserve it rests heavily on us.*

We have long been carrying on a crusade to save natural habitats, ecosystems, forests, threatened plants, and animal wildlife. To carry through our goals to a successful conclusion, our main allies sought for help are the schoolchildren, university staff and students, and everywhere the

decision-makers. INSONA spreads the message of conservation, as envisaged *inter alia* by UNEP, the Nairobi-based ELC (Environment Liaison Centre—International), UNESCO, FAO, IUCN, WWF, CITES, WCB (World Council For The Biosphere) and allied ISEE (International Society For Environmental Education), and IEEF (International Environmental Education Foundation), and has established particularly close reciprocal links with the globally-oriented Foundation for Environmental Conservation (situated near the International Airport of Geneva, Switzerland).

INSONA will cooperate with other institutions and societies having similar objectives*, and will seek affiliation to national and international bodies to promote advancement of study and research in natural and applied sciences. It will also provide opportunities for field observations and study to the younger generation, and will create an awareness about appreciation of Nature and its conservation. Moreover, it will endeavour to bring together the 'common man' (or woman) and scientists from various disciplines, towards improved understanding of Our Biosphere. That the general public and the scientist should work together to regulate disturbed environments is a cry of time; to the extent that we achieve this, it will contribute significantly to the lasting welfare of Mankind (Gaekwad, 1976).

We need support from an army of Patrons, well-wishers, and volunteers, in combating the tremendous menace to the endangered global environment and wildlife. We appeal to the legion of Nature-lovers and prosperous Charitable Trusts, Foundations, and INGOS, to establish effective partnerships and extend generous funding support for our task to eradicate environmental illiteracy, through *Environmental Awareness*, in all the world's normally-inhabited continents. These environmental aspects were dear above all to INSONA's late President, who passed away on 1st September 1988 (see the 'Fond Tribute' of Oza & Polunin, 1988), and we share his aspirations for an ongoing world in which Mankind and Nature live in harmony as parts of an ever-viable Biosphere.

* Including, we would hope, the recently-established International Vernadsky Foundation and its likely offshoot the strongly-recommended International Centre for Biosphere Studies, see *Environmental Conservation*, 15(2), pp. 177 & 187–9, 1988, and in press.—Ed.

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GUNAVANT M. OZA, *Reader in Botany*
The Maharaja Sayajirao University of
Baroda;
General Secretary of INSONA & Founding
Editor of *Environmental Awareness*
Oza Building
Salatwada
Baroda 390 001, India.

Appendix: INSONA Membership

Any person who is interested in the activities of the Society shall be eligible to be a Member, the categories of Membership being as follows:

- Patrons*: Any individual or institution contributing Rs5,000 (US \$500 or £250 for individuals in other countries) or more to the Society.
- Life Members*: Any individual who pays an entrance fee of Rs25 (US \$2 or £1) and a life membership of Rs500 (US \$200 or £100 for individuals in other countries) or more to the Society.
- Ordinary Members*: Any one who pays an entrance fee of Rs25 (US \$2 or £1) and an annual subscription* of Rs50 (US \$20 or £10 for individuals in other countries) or as decided by the Executive Committee of INSONA from time to time.
- Institutional Membership*: Any institution or association that is interested in promoting the aims and objectives of the Society and pays an entrance fee of Rs25 (US \$2 or £1) and a subscription of Rs200 (US \$100 or £50 in other countries) annually*.

Besides the above categories of Membership there is the purely honorific one of Fellow of INSONA, which is decided by election by the Executive Committee of INSONA sitting in full session, the quorum being a clear majority of the Board members.

* Annual subscriptions to INSONA should be received at the above address by the middle of April.

Environmental Impact of Dutch Military Activities (Correcting Note)

We regret that, in the above-mentioned paper by Paul J.M. Versteeg (of Haarlem, The Netherlands) which was published in our Spring issue of this year (16(1), pp. 54–64), on page 59, in the heading to Table IV, the second source

after Jong (1986) was inadvertently omitted. This 'second source', Netherlands (1988b) — correctly cited in the References on page 64 — was the one from which the 1987 figures were derived. — Ed.