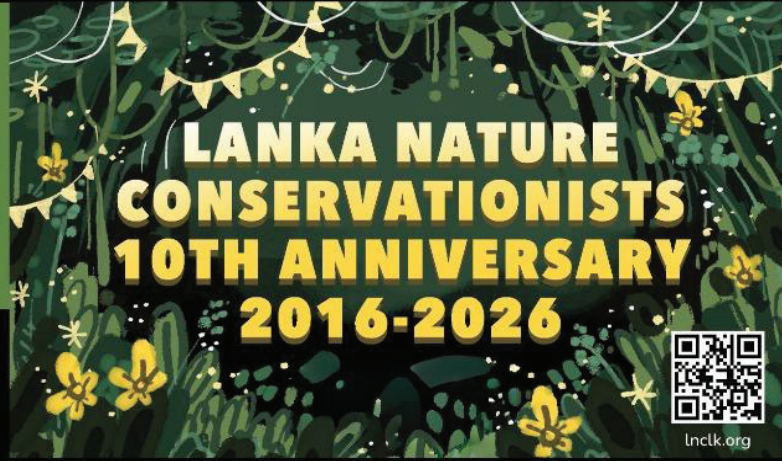




Lanka Nature Conservationists



10TH Anniversary Special Edition

A decade of efforts in the conservation of biodiversity of Sri Lanka

Over the years we have created awareness, inspire action, to protect the environment through a collective effort. A dedicated team with commitment have taken small steps for greater impact in the future, beach cleaning, tree planting, forest restoration, turtle conservation and habitat restoration are some of them. We continue to engage in advocacy role to educate and create awareness among the public, and other interest groups for the protection and conservation of biodiversity in Sri Lanka.

Message from the incumbent President of Lanka Nature Conservationists – Mr. G. L.S Perera

A LOOK BACK ON THE INITIAL 10 YEAR JOURNEY OF LANKA NATURE CONSERVATIONISTS



It certainly is a divine blessing to be a member of a group, a congregation of friends and associates, with whom the relationships date back beyond half a century, starting from the early teens. It is particularly so, when the congregation is for a noble cause, devoted to preservation of the nature of our beloved motherland and determined to do the utmost towards achieving this objective.

It gives me immense pleasure to be the incumbent President of Lanka Nature Conservationists on this auspicious occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the Association, launched with the motive of continuing the good work paused by our intervening phase of life after “Graduating” from our mother body, the beloved YZA (Young Zoologists Association). The regrouping did not happen by accident, but by the perseverance of a couple of individuals who kept the links and love originated during the early youth, and very much alive through the phases of life.

The key figure was our beloved friend, the Late Ravi Sivasambu without whom this Association would not have seen the light of day. Another prominent character in the annals of the Dehiwela Zoo’s recent history, Vasantha Nugegoda, was the sole instigator who pushed Ravi to round up all the former seniors to come together, mostly as an

influencer body to guide the Zoo personnel in the development of the Zoo. As we all know Ravi had live links with most of the Founders and seniors of the YZA spanning several years of the body, with whom he promptly got in touch and efficiently rounded up around twenty former YZA members for a meeting at a Beach Restaurant in Dehiwela, with the Compliments of Samantha Costa and colleagues. This semi-formal meeting tentatively finalized the Inaugural Ex-Co with Asoka Kularatne as the President, Jayantha Munasinghe as the Secretary, Lalin Gunawardana as the Treasurer, several Vice Presidents and other key positions. The Ex-Co, supported by some of my personal friends, decided on 30th January 2016 as the day for the Inaugural General Meeting to be held at Fingara Town & Country Club, Rattanapitiya, Boralesgamuwa.

A frenzy of activity followed, linking up past YZA members, inviting them to join and the fund raising for the after party celebration for friends meeting nearly after four or more decades. The event was well attended and yielded a decent surplus of funds which helped in no small way in the initial stages of the Association.

After the first year of operations, the First President Asoka Kularatne stepped down from the post for personal reasons and the vacancy was filled by Samantha Gunasekara, a former president of the YZA. The Treasurer Lalin Gunawardana was succeeded by Ranjan Gunewardena who serves to date. Jayantha Munasinghe too stepped down on health and other commitments and was succeeded by Udayantha Liyanage. The initial and subsequent Executive Committees were well served by eminent personalities such as our veteran Ms. Indrakanthi Perera, Prof Indira Nanayakkara Silva, Dr Nirmali Pallewatta, Dr Neelamani Rajapaksha, Dr Ranjan Jayaratna, Avanthi Jayathilaka, and many more too numerous to mention individually. Many past members greatly supported us in the many events. A few prominent events organized by LNC were the felicitation of the former Director of the Dehiwela Zoo Deshabandu Lyn De Alwis on his 10th Death Anniversary, with special support from Prof Lalith Jayawickrema, and the YZA 50th Anniversary cosponsored by LNC together with the Zoo Officials with Nalin Kamaragoda, Rohitha Aadasuriya, Udaya Liyanage, Dr. Neelamani Rajapakshe, Sisira Makalanda and Ranjan Gunawardane taking the lead in this project.

After the completion of an extended term due to the COVID impact, Samantha Gunasekara resigned to accept national level responsibilities. In the recently concluded AGM our present Executive Committee was appointed under my stewardship, ably supported by Ms Manoja Weerakkody as the Secretary and a strong team of Vice Presidents, viz Major General Ajith Rupasinghe, Prof Indira Nanayakkara Silva, Lalith Gamage, Premanath Rathnaweera, Nandana Balasuriya. Special mention must be made of our dedicated event planners comprising Charitha Devapriya, Ianthi Gunawardana, Neelangani Hidallarachchi, Amitha Munasinghe, Rohitha Perera, Rohitha Adasuriya, Jayantha Suwadarathne, Parakrama Fernando, Lucky Warnapura, Dr. Ranjan Jayarathne, Diluk Chandanimal, Nalin Kamaragoda, Ranjan Gunawardana and Ashok Bandara.

I am proud to mention that several events organized by LNC during this 10 year span were of great success, motivating us to strive for more projects with greater participation from current members and new recruits for the purpose. Amidst all these projects and events we are also blessed to be able to maintain our long haul

friendships for many more years whilst continuing to contribute meaningfully to our society and nation.

Wishing everyone many more years of continued membership and participation with LNC, I extend my blessings for successful and memorable celebrations on the occasion of the 10th Anniversary of LNC.

May the LNC grow from strength to strength!



MESSAGES FROM FORMER PRESIDENTS OF LNC

MR. ASOKA KULARATNE

It is a great pleasure to pen a few words to this special news bulletin of LNC at its 10th anniversary. The idea of forming a society for senior YZA members to get together and share our knowledge for the betterment of the country was initiated ten years ago by Mr. Ravi Sivasambu, a Founding member of the YZA. I extend my wishes to the President and the team to continue the good work for decades to come. All the Best.



MR. SAMANTHA GUNASEKARA

It is my pleasure to send this message on the special occasion of the tenth anniversary of Lanka Nature Conservationists. The LNC is unique among environmental conservation organizations in Sri Lanka for initiating a threelayer generational structure of societies: Junior YZA, YZA, and LNC. I wish you success in environmental conservation for centuries to come.



A DECADE OF PURPOSE

The Lanka Nature Conservationists (LNC) was established on 30th January 2016 as a voluntary, non-profit Association for wildlife and nature at a time when environmental awareness was rapidly evolving in Sri Lanka. The LNC believed that protecting nature was not only a responsibility but a calling, and established the core mission of environmental protection and sustainability. It also mobilized volunteers and built strong community networks, raising awareness on biodiversity, wildlife protection, and eco-friendly practices.

LNC is comprised of past members of the Young Zoologists Association (YZA) of Sri Lanka who became life-long friends. After a lengthy gap, many of us from the academia, the public service and the private sector, gathered for the Inaugural Meeting at Fingara Town and Country Club, Borelasgamuwa, to formally launch the LNC. Today, LNC is known in Sri-Lanka for its deep love for nature, forests, rivers, wildlife and ecosystems. We believe that conservation begins with personal responsibility and ends with collective action. LNC through workshops, field projects and public awareness campaigns, inspire countless individuals to care for their environment.



The inaugural General Meeting of the newly formed Lanka Nature Conservationists was held on January 30, at Fingara Town and Country Club, Borelasgamuwa. Lanka Nature Conservationists is an association intending to actively work towards the preservation of the fauna and flora of Sri Lanka essentially needed for the sustenance of future generations of this country. The association is a regrouping of the founder and early members of the Young Zoologists Association, an affiliated body of the National Zoological Gardens of Dehiwela, formed in 1972 under the patronage of the then director, the late Lyn de Alwis. Over the years the YZA has produced many wildlife and nature conservationists, professionals, academics and enthusiasts and many of them from the batches of the first decade have now come together to continue with the good work as experienced seniors, organising themselves as Lanka Nature Conservationists. The picture shows Dr Heelamani Rajapaksa, a Vice President of the new association LNC and M Malin Kamaragoda, Ex Co Member, lighting the traditional oil lamp at the inaugural General Meeting, with G.L.S. Perera, Senior Vice President (extreme right) looking on.

The Island - Saturday 20th February 2016



Angel Aquarium (Pvt) Ltd.

First Class Golden Award Winner entrepreneur
Rohan L Fernando





**The first sitting for the official photo of the inaugural committee of office bearers
Seated from Left -**

Rohitha Perera (Asst. Secretary), Dr. Nirmalie Pallewatta (Vice President), GLS Perera (Senior Vice President), Lalin Gunawardena (Hony. Treasurer), Asoka Kularatne (The President) Jayantha Munasinghe (Hony. Secretary), Dr. Neelamanie Sandya Rajapaksha Hewageegamage (Vice President), Ms. Indrakanthi Perera (Vice President), Ranjan Gunawardena (Asst. Treasurer).

Standing from Left -

HL Anura, Amitha Munasinghe, Premnath Rathnaweera, Ms. Charitha Devapriya, Late Ravi Sivasambu (National Organizer), Ms. Sarina Athukorala & Ms. Asha Jayakody

Some in the photo were also office bearers at the YZA inaugural meeting in 1972. We sadly miss our dear departed - the first President Frederick Gunewardena (Lulu) and the first Secretary Bodhi Ranasinghe.



Young Zoologists - 1973

The Late Mr. Ravi Sivasambu – Founding Member of LNC



In the year 2016 LNC was founded by the late Mr. Ravi Sivasambu, a visionary and a pillar of support to the Association,. He was also a founding member of the YZA. In 2016, he approached a few former members of the YZA to form an association for nature conservation. The idea was brought by him at an informal get together of former members of the YZA, at a beach front restaurant in Dehiwela. This was accepted enthusiastically by those present and a committee was formed to develop the initial Constitution and guiding principles. Thereafter, committee meetings were held at his residence in Dehiwela and later at the residence of Mr. G.L.S. Perera

the then Senior Vice President. Ravi's unwavering commitment and perseverance played a major role in establishing and shaping L.N.C into what it is today. Though Ravi is no longer with us, his contribution remains firmly woven into the identity of the association.



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Our Milestones

- Guidance in selected critical Biodiversity issues threatening Sri Lanka
- Contributions on awareness and education programs to stakeholders on the urgent need to protect Sri Lanka's natural environment, via public lectures, field events, public awareness campaigns, beach cleaning programs and field research visits.
- Expertise on capacity building programs for the public including school children.
- "Earth is Calling Are you Listening" monthly public lecture series (2021-2022) in collaboration with SLT Mobitel on important environmental topics conducted by national and world renowned speakers and leading experts in respective fields.



Past Members Reunion Organized by LNG

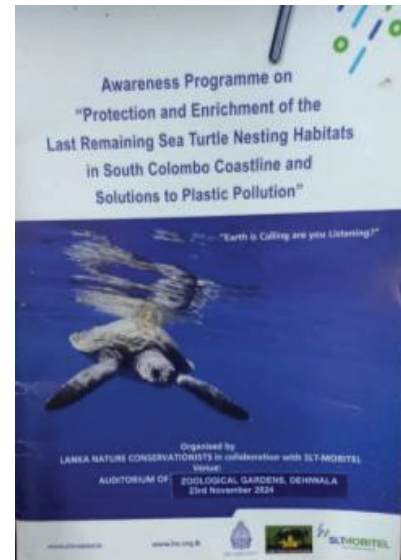


- Co-sponsored the YZA 50th Anniversary reunion of the past members (2022).

- Conducted the National Workshop on "Protection & Enrichment of the Last Remaining Sea Turtle Nesting Habitats in South Colombo Coastline, and Solutions to Plastic Pollution" (June 2023) at Navel Headquarters, Colombo.

- Formation of the Turtle and Coastal Health United Programme (TACHUP) (2024) as a dynamic partnership with dedicated and committed members from the Wildlife and Nature Protection Society (WNPS), AQRES of Wayamba University, and the Nature Beyond Horizon organization of the Horizon Campus. TACHUP is approved by the Department of Wildlife Conservation and the Sri Lanka Coast Guard as a program protecting the last remaining turtle nesting sites along the South Colombo coast and the management of coastal vegetation.

- Formation of an Environmental Task Force (ETF) (2025) with the objective of bridging the gap in collecting data and information on environmental issues, as well as having on-site registered volunteers, in emergency situations for fast action, across all districts.



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This initiative aims at engaging young individuals, who are not formal members of the organization but are interested in environmental conservation and biodiversity protection. They will serve as vigilant observers of environmental degradation, harm to wildlife, or habitat destruction within their local communities, and will be empowered to undertake immediate remedial actions, when necessary, thereby fostering community involvement and environmental stewardship. The overseeing of the formation and operational activities to be facilitated by the District Coordinators in their respective regions.



Our Web Page to be launched soon -<https://lnclk.org/>

Our energetic LNC Web Design Group –

Ms. Neelanganie Hidellarachchi, Ms. Manoja Weerakkody, Ms. Ianthi Gunawardana, Amitha Munasinghe, Gihan Nadeera, Pramith Rupasinghe (Web Development Specialist), with the guidance of Prof. Indira Nanayakkara Silva.

Compiled by the LNC Public Relations Committee –

Professor Emeritus Indira Nanayakkara Silva

Ms. Neelanganie Hidellarachchi

Ms. Ianthi Gunawardana

Mr. Amitha Munasinghe