Wular Lake Ramsar Site set as an eco-tourism destination

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Situated in north Kashmir's Bandipora, India, the Wular Lake Ramsar Site will be developed as eco-tourism destination to attract the tourists to the India's largest fresh water body.

Jammu and Kashmir government is considering establishing 34.58 kilometres boulevard coming up along the periphery of Wular Lake to revamp the picturesque Ramsar Site.

Official figures reveal that total perimeter of Wular boundary is 83.6km and the proposed boulevard project will begin from Garoora to Sopore, covering around 34.58km of its periphery.

The project will be completely eco-friendly and only battery driven cars would be allowed to ply on the road. Under Eco-Tourism plan, various look-out points, wooden ghats, tourist information centres, parking areas, besides many other initiatives would be undertaken and developed around the lake.

Massive slitting, rampant plantation, unabated encroachment, untreated sewerage and solid waste dumping have adversely affected the eco system of the lake; it is dying a silent death.

Official figures reveal that the area of the Wular Lake was 217.58 sqkm, including 58.37sqkm of associated marshes in 1911. As per the new revenue records of Jammu and Kashmir, the actual lake area excluding the associated marshes has now shrunk to 130 sqkm.

Given the huge biodiversity values, the lake was declared Ramsar Site in 1990. But the conservation process started only in 2011 when the centre agreed to pay Rs 120 crore in four instalments for preserving the lake from becoming extinct.

"Conservation of Wular and other lakes in the state is the top priority of the Government and all necessary measures will be taken in this regard," said Chaudhary Lal Singh, Jammu and Kashmir minister for forests, environment and ecology.

Source: DNA India