

CELEBRATION OF WORLD WETLAND DAY- 2007 AT KANJIA LAKE IN NANDANKANAN BIOLOGICAL PARK

Nandankanan Biological Park is one of the finest large Zoo of India with a Botanical garden. Kanjia Lake like the jewel in crown has been the star of attraction for the visitors of Nandankanan. Kanjia Lake is spread over 75b hectares. Kanjia lake popularly known as Nandankanan lake is situated between 85° 48' to 85° 50' East longitudes and between 20° 23' to 20° 25' North latitudes . It is designated as a wetland of national importance by the Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of India with effect from December 2006. It has immense potential for promoting the wetland education as more than 1.5 million visitors throng in to the Nandankanan Biological Park annually. With its rich biodiversity and strategic location it would serve as an excellent site for the wetland education. It's rich shoreline flora and fauna, it can serve as a living laboratory for the wetland education programme for the schoolchildren. It is proposed to implement an ambitious wetland education programme taking advantage of the large number of visitors and the school children who visit the Park. To launch the wetland education programme the Park Authorities decided to celebrate the World Wetland Day 2007 in a befitting manner on 2nd February 2007 in collaboration with the local NGO and the School Children.

Prior to celebration of the WWD 2007 an Essay competition was organized amongst the students from Standard VII to X. There was an overwhelming participation and the topic for the Essay competition was "Wetlands for a better life".



A village pond teeming with fish in the imagination of a young artist

A drawing competition was organized amongst the students of Standard VIII to VI. The theme for the Drawing competition was “Wetland & Fish”. More than 200 students participated in both the competition. Fish fauna of Kanjia lake is very rich. There were 41 species of fishes and 3 species of prawns recorded from the lake during the survey. Due to the riverine influence a number of riverine fishes were recorded from the lake. During monsoon, fishes from Kuakhai river migrate to Kanjia lake for breeding and feeding purpose.



Wetland ecosystem visualized by a young artist

On 2nd February'2007, the World Wetland Day was celebrated with great pomp & Joy with the students from different school by the Nandankanan Park Authority in collaboration with the Pallishree a local NGO. A customized banner was designed by “Pallishree” was displayed at the gate complex to attract the attention of the visitors. This served the purpose as the inquisitive visitors wanted to know about WWD at the information center. Keeping this in mind the Ramsar resource material on WWD and this year's theme were translated in to local language with the help of a professional script writer. 5,000 copies of the resource materials were distributed to the visitors and students. 6,893 numbers of visitors and 314 school children visited the park on 2nd February 2007. Another banner was also fixed at the bank of the Kanjia Lake at a strategic location to attract he attention of the visitors.



WWD 2007 meeting with the School Children

A special programme started at 2PM which the peak visitors time. In a special programme for the School children Mr. Durga Prasad Das, Secretary "Pallishree" gave briefed the Children about the significance of observation of the WWD and he also explained to them about the values and functions of wetlands and the need for their conservation. Mr. Harish Chandra Bhuyan, Retired Deputy Director, Agriculture Department and Consultant to CDA graced the occasion as Chief Guest, he spoke to the Children highlighting the role of wetland in livelihood security and poverty reduction. Mr. Kunja Mohan Mohanty, Retd. Deputy Director, Agriculture Department was the Guest of Honour who explained to the students about the role of wetlands in production of fish which is the major source of protein and livelihood of large number of local communities. Mr. A. C. Dinakar, Deputy Director, Nandankanan presided over the function and spoke to the children on the role of the outreach programme on the conservation of wetlands.

After this an animated documentary film titled "Wet wonderland" in local language was screened. "Wet wonderland" is an animated documentary produced by the Ramsar Center Japan, Pallishree have dubbed it in local language under JFGE programme. It is a film of 1 hour duration and is quite useful for the wetland education programme particularly for students. After the film show the winners were awarded prizes and certificates. Mr. A.K. Mishra, Assistant Director, Nandankanan gave the vote of thanks.



School Children at WWD 2007 rally at Nandankanan

After the meeting the student proceeded to the Kanja Lake in a rally with the WWD flags in their hand which again attracted the attention of the visitors. The students were explained about the biodiversity of the lake number of fish species in Kanja Lake and about the shore line ecosystem by the experts. The students also explored the shoreline of the lake.



School Children explained about the lake ecosystem

After that there was a quick question and answer session. The students were also explained why they should take care of the wetlands. Kanjia Lake has been declared as the Wetland of National importance, the students were taught regarding aquatic flora & fauna including various species of fishes found in the lake. The function was very successful as it generated great interest particularly amongst the visitors and the students. The Park Authorities would carry forward the Wetland Education programme in collaboration with the local NGOs and the Schools.