



World Wetlands Day 2007 was one of the most successful yet for the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, with a host of activities across all of our nine wetland centres: Arundel, Caerlaverock, Castle Espie, London Wetland Centre, Martin Mere, Llanelli, Slimbridge, Washington and Welney.

Activities focussed around the international theme on wetlands and fisheries – ‘**A fish for tomorrow**’ - set by the Ramsar Secretariat, and raised the profile of WWT’s international work in Nepal where we are working with local community groups to promote sustainable livelihoods from buffer-zone wetlands, whilst helping to preserve wetland biodiversity.

World Wetlands Day is WWT’s annual Open Day, offering free entry across all nine wetland Centres and a chance to showcase what WWT offers – raising the profile of wetlands by engaging new members of the public in our work. World Wetlands Day has been sponsored nationally by NFU Mutual for the past three years.

Activities across the centres included

- ‘Wellies for Wetlands’ – a campaign to promote awareness of World Wetlands Day by volunteers and staff wearing wellies to work on Friday 2 February
- Guided tours using messages around Nepal
- The ‘Guide in a Hide’ enabling visitors to gain a greater appreciation of wetlands
- Wide range of arts and crafts activities – including using the fish templates provided

Other popular activities around the Centres included: birdwatching walks, curlew watching and swan feeds. Wetland themed foods were very popular in the Arundel restaurant.

Having a key message, and communication handled centrally, was a great improvement on previous years. PR worked well and the press release template was really helpful. Activities and events were promoted nationally and received a huge amount of both national and local press interest: there were numerous radio and television slots, and great coverage through different websites.

Visitor numbers increased at nearly every centre, with WWT Washington gaining a 130% increase over last year’s World Wetland Day!

Best quote was from WWT Llanelli: “*Our best World Wetland Day so far!*” That is, until 2008, where we shall be looking at a much more high profile event – watch this space!

Koshi Tappu, Nepal

Managing wetlands for sustainable livelihoods



WWT is working on a three year community project in Nepal in collaboration with five Nepalese and two British partner organisations.

The project will work with local community groups to identify barriers to making a sustainable livelihood from buffer zone wetlands, and train staff from local organisations to enable them to pass on best-practice wetland management advice to local people.

A small wetland centre will also be established by enhancing existing facilities, which will provide a focus for education and information exchange.

Through this project WWT will provide some of the expertise and resources that are lacking, and embed a system of management that provides sustainable livelihoods well into the future.

The people who live around Koshi Tappu have the most intimate understanding of their wetland resources, but might lack the technical expertise and resources to manage them for the long term. Through this project WWT will provide some of the expertise and resources that are lacking, and embed a system of management that provides sustainable livelihoods well into the future.

Background

The Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve in the lowlands of eastern Nepal was declared a Ramsar site in 1987, and is the most important wetland for migratory waterbirds in Nepal, and one of the most important in Asia. It is also home to the last remaining wild Asiatic water buffalo in Nepal, as well as Gangetic dolphins and Gharial crocodiles.

The site is surrounded by a buffer zone in which over 100,000 people live, most of whom are dependent on the natural resource base for their livelihoods. Fish is the main source of protein and the Koshi River is a significant means of transportation. Wetland plants provide fodder for farm animals, as well as a source of vegetables for people, and houses are constructed using wetland plants and riparian trees.

