

**ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT
MARINE ENVIRONMENT AND WILDLIFE SECTION**

WORLD WETLANDS DAY

February 2, 2010

Activity Report



Background

February 2 is World Wetlands Day. It marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea. Each year since 1997, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and groups of citizens at all levels of the community have taken advantage of the opportunity **to undertake actions aimed at raising public awareness of wetland values and benefits in general and the Ramsar Convention in particular.**

The theme for this year's celebration is "**Caring for Wetlands – an answer to Climate Change.**" Caring about climate change means caring about wetlands, means caring about biodiversity. The theme is looking at the two key areas; **biodiversity** (2010 is declared International Year of Biodiversity) **and climate change**, exploring their relationships and what it all means for wetlands and people. Wetlands are vulnerable to human-induced climate change but, if these are being managed well, wetland ecosystems and their biodiversity can play a vital role in the mitigation of climate change and will be important in helping humans to adapt to climate change through their critical role in water and food security. In short, caring for wetlands is part of the solution to climate change.

In the observance of the World Wetland Day, the Environment Department of Dubai Municipality (DM) is holding an annual event to mark this occasion as a manifestation of its support to the worldwide campaign on wetlands' protection and conservation. This year, DM organized a Forum to gather the concerned sectors from the government, academe, environmental NGOs and other parties to share knowledge and discuss issues relating to the theme of the celebration. The **United Arab Emirates** is a party to the RAMSAR Convention since December 2007, becoming the 156th member of the Convention. In UAE's accession, the **Ras Al Khor Wildlife Sanctuary** was designated as the UAE's first RAMSAR site and the 1,715th around the Globe.

WWD Posters Display/ Information Dissemination

Using the RAMSAR World Wetlands Day (WWD) poster as model, a modified poster design was crafted to add

local flavor and incorporate Arabic translations of the ad material. The posters were displayed at various locations of the Municipal building as part of raising the awareness of the municipal employees including visitors and clients about the annual celebration of WWD.



WWD 2010 Poster

The Environment Awareness Section of the Environment Department posted a PowerPoint presentation at the Dubai Municipality (DM) Outlook portal about the Wetland

Day celebration including basic facts about wetland, wetland biodiversity status and necessary actions for wetland conservation. Moreover, a news article about DM's observance of World Wetland Day was circulated in the DM intranet under the Dubai Municipality events. Likewise, the Khaleej Times, a major newspaper daily in the UAE covered the Wetland Day forum and published two articles about the significance of wetland's protection to human survival.

Environmental information materials like flyers, brochures, leaflets, and other press materials were distributed during the forum to attending participants. Banners and roll-up posters about RAMSAR and the Ras Al Khor Wildlife Sanctuary were displayed at the venue of the forum.

World Wetland Day Forum

The highlight of World Wetland Day was an organized forum held at the Dubai Municipality Club in Al Jadaf on February 2, attended by officials and staff from DM headed by Environment Director Hamdan Al Shaer. Also, participants from the academe, NGOs, media and private sector joined



Participants of the WWD 2010 Forum held in DM Club

the event. The gathering aimed to share information about the occasion and discuss issues on how the various sectors can strengthen the efforts of conserving and managing wetlands as an answer to climate change.

Two outstanding professionals in the field of wetland management and wildlife conservation in the United Arab Emirates served as resource speakers during the forum. Dr. Salim Javed from the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi talked on "Conservation of Wetland and Waterbirds in the UAE." On the other hand, Dr. Christophe Tourenq of Emirates Wildlife Society – World Wide Fund (EWS-WWF), an environmental expert with an extensive knowledge of wetlands and waterbirds ecology and conservation tackled "Wetlands of the UAE: Challenges and Conservation."



Mr. Mohammed AbdulRahman delivers his Welcome Remarks

Addressing the occasion, Mr. Mohammed AbdulRahman Hassan Abdulla, head of the Marine Environment and Wildlife Section narrated the significant milestones that the Municipality has achieved in fulfilling its commitment to the Ramsar Convention. He

highlighted the department's effort in initiating conservation and protective measures to the Ras Al Khor Wildlife Sanctuary. He made accounts of the various

management initiatives, the challenges that confront the integrity of the area and the future plan of the sanctuary to host the Regional Center for Excellence in Communication, Education and Public Awareness.

In his presentation on the “Conservation of Wetland and Waterbirds in the UAE,” Dr. Javed, an authority in the field of wildlife conservation for more than 18 years broadly characterized



Dr Salim Javed shares his experiences and knowledge on the conservation of wetlands and waterbirds in the UAE

the Bird Diversity of the UAE, its status, biodiversity values and its consequence from the impact of climate change. He discussed the integrated approach of the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi's Bird Programme that entails unique methods in conservation and combating global warming such as bird surveys, monitoring of key and threatened species, monitoring of wetlands sites, focused studies and conservation and networking. From these program components, Dr. Javed point out that they were able to establish baseline data for action planning and generate vital information as inputs to protected area management and monitoring of Avian Influenza. Through intensive studies using satellite tracking programme, Dr. Javed bared that they were able to ascertain the movement and migration pattern of Flamingos which forms part of the valuable knowledge database for conservation planning. He added that the conservation and networking component resulted in

partnership development with conservation groups worldwide.



Dr. Tourenq focuses on the impact of climate change to wetlands

For his part, Dr. Christophe Tourenq apprised the participants about the wetlands of the UAE, characterizing their biodiversity, values and protection status. He gave emphasis to climate change and the introduction of invasive species, posing as new threats to wetlands and water

resources in the country. Dr. Tourenq made illustration on the rise in sea level, changes in precipitation patterns and the increased in extreme weather events as among the impacts of climate change. On the other hand, he bared the growing threat from *Prosopis juliflora* and *Gymnodinium catenatum* /*Cochlodinium polykrikoides* which were introduced in the country for beautification and ballast waters, respectively.

In his conclusion, Dr. Tourenq recommended the need for implementation of existing laws, decrees and international agreements/ conventions as well as the integration of wetlands, their resources and their preservation in the development planning process as vital measures for climate change mitigation and adaptation. He also advocated for resource investment on technology and research and the trans-boundary collaborations within UAE, and among GCC countries.

In the closing ceremony, Mr. Mohammed AbdulRahman bestowed the two Speakers with a Certificate of Appreciation, a plaque and a token in recognition of the speaker's gratitude for sharing their knowledge and wisdom to the occasion.



The two Speakers, Mr. Javed (left) and Mr. Tourenq (right), gladly accept the appreciation offered by the Dubai Municipality in recognition of their invaluable support in holding the WWD forum.

Information Dissemination about World Wetlands Day 2010 in various ways

Some of the slide presentation circulated to DM staff about wetlands and invitation for the Wetland Forum

دعوة

بمناسبة اليوم العالمي للأراضي الرطبة
يسر إدارة البيئة دعوتكم
لحضور ندوة بعنوان
العناية بالأراضي الرطبة
خطوة للحد من التغير المناخي
الثلاثاء الموافق 2 فبراير/ 2010
الساعة 10.00 صباحاً
نادي بلدية دبي - قاعة زعبيل

www.dm.gov.ae

اليوم العالمي للأراضي الرطبة 2010

هي مناسبة سنوية تم فيها التوقيع على معاهدة الأراضي الرطبة في مدينة رامسر، وتحتفل بهذه المناسبة المنظمات الحكومية وغير الحكومية، والمواطنون في كل أنحاء العالم. وتهدف المناسبة إلى حماية الأراضي الرطبة والاستخدام الحكيم لمواردها، من خلال التفاعلات المحلية والإقليمية والوطنية بالإضافة إلى التعاون الدولي لزيادة الوعي بأهمية الأراضي الرطبة وفوائدها بشكل عام.

شعار المناسبة لهذا العام "العناية بالأراضي الرطبة.. خطوة للحد من التغير المناخي"، وهو يهدف إلى موضوعين رئيسيين هما التنوع الحيوي (تم إعلان عام 2010 السنة الدولية للتنوع الحيوي) وكذلك التغير المناخي من أجل فهم الترابط بين الأراضي الرطبة والإنسان، حيث إن الأراضي الرطبة تعتبر عرضة للتأثر من واقع التغيرات المناخية ولكن يجب التأكد من صيانتها وإدارتها بصورة فعالة لأن الأنظمة الحيوية في الأراضي الرطبة والتنوع الحيوي فيها يمكنهما أن يلعبا دوراً فعالاً في التخفيف من التغير المناخي والتكيف مع تأثيراته.

gov.ae



Information and press materials distributed during the Wetland day forum

Ramsar

إتفاقية رامسار حول المناطق الرطبة
CONVENTION SUR LES ZONES HUMIDES
CONVENTION ON WETLANDS

ما هي المناطق الرطبة ؟
Qu'est-ce que les zones humides ?
What are wetlands ?

من أعالي الجبال إلى البحار والمحيطات، يوجد مناطق رطبة عديدة في كل مكان من العالم كلها ذات أهمية للإنسان والطبيعة.

De la montagne à la mer, il y a des zones humides partout dans le monde, toutes importantes pour le bien-être des populations et de la nature.

From the mountains to the sea, there are wetlands everywhere in the world, all important for the well-being of people and nature.

www.ramsar.org

RAMSAR poster displayed during the Wetland Day Forum

News article about Wetland Day 2010 circulated in the Dubai Municipality Portal

Dubai Municipality Portal - Windows Internet Explorer

http://emp.dm.gov.ae/wps/portal/!ut/p/c1/04_5B8K8xLLM9M55aPy8xBz9CP0os3hHP19353cfQw...

Protection of Wetlands Key t... Dubai Municipality Portal Google Translate#

Dubai Municipality Portal

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To create an excellent city that provides the essence of success and comfort of living

News

DM observes World Wetlands Day

The Environment Department of Dubai Municipality will join the rest of the world in celebrating the World Wetlands Day, which falls on 2nd February every year, as a manifestation of its support in the worldwide campaign to spread awareness on the significance of Wetlands' protection and conservation. The Municipality has charted out various activities to mark the occasion, which is observed this year with the theme, "Caring for Wetlands – an answer to Climate Change." The UAE is the 156th member of the RAMSAR Convention and the Ras Al Khor Wildlife Sanctuary in Dubai is the 1,715th RAMSAR site around the Globe. The occasion marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on 2nd February 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea. Each year since 1997, government agencies, non-governmental organizations and groups of citizens at all levels of the community have taken advantage of the opportunity to undertake actions aimed at raising public awareness of wetland values and benefits in general and the Ramsar Convention in particular.

Talking about the theme of the year, "Caring for Wetlands – an answer to Climate Change," Eng. Hamdan Al Shaer, Director of Environment Department said that caring about climate change is caring about wetlands, which means caring about biodiversity. "The theme is looking at two key areas; biodiversity (2010 is declared International Year of Biodiversity) and climate change, exploring their relationships and what it all means for wetlands and people," he said.

"The celebration this year is in response to the decisions of the Johannesburg conference in support of the Ramsar Convention. The Convention aims to protect the wetlands around the world, which amounted to about 6% of the Earth's surface represented in more than 1000

Local intranet 100% 11:03 AM

Media coverage of the World Wetlands Day 2010

