

STATE LEVEL CELEBRATION OF WORLD WETLANDS DAY 2011

Satapada village along the shoreline of Chilika and in Sarandhagarh village of Ansupa Lake

To commemorate the 1st meeting of the convention on wetlands on 2nd February 1971 in the Iranian city of Ramsar, World Wetlands Day was celebrated on 2nd February at Chilika lake. This day presents us with a welcome opportunity to join together in acknowledging the benefits that we all receive from the wetlands, as well as to raise the awareness of the local communities who derive their livelihood about the importance of these vital ecosystems for our common future. The Ramsar Bureau (Secretariat) took a decision to observe the World wetland day on 2nd February from 1997. Chilika Development Authority have been observing WWD in and around Chilika Lake with the active participation of local communities, NGOs, CBOs, school children, local intellectual, eminent dignitaries, religious leaders, political leaders, foreign delegates etc. since from 1997.

This year being the Ramsar Convention's 40th anniversary it was observed in a befitting manner at Chilika Lake. The theme of this year was "Forests for water and Wetlands", considering 2011 is the UN International Year of Forests. 2011 being the 40th year of Ramsar Convention, WWD is celebrated all over the world with the theme "Forests for water and Wetlands" captured the sense of urgency about the need to address the potentially of forests followed by wetlands to emphasizes the belief that the role of wetlands and forest played for the lifeline of the local stakeholders.

Chilika Lake

Considering the importance of the theme of the WWD 2011 major thrust was given to associate the school children in and around Chilika in a big way. To create awareness among them essay and drawing competitions on the theme of WWD-2011 i.e. "Forest for wetland and water" was conducted in all the sectors of Chilika Lake. The preparatory work began from December 2010 and 13 grass root level NGOs worked hard to sensitize the students on the theme of the WWD-2011 and facilitated to conduct the essay and drawing competitions. The competition was organized in ninety two high schools in and around Chilika lake.

After the zonal level competition was over in the first phase the winners of zonal level competitions (12 each in drawing and essay) were selected for the state level competition. The completion was held on 28.1.2011 at Wetland Research and Training Center(WRTC) at Chandraput. Out of the 24 students from 4 sectors, three students from each category were selected from the above competition who received the prize from the chief guest on 2ndFebruary 2011.



The winner of the essay competition addressing the gathering

The WWD-2011 was observed at Satapada one of the gateway to Chilika. More than 0.4 million tourists come to Chilika annually for dolphin watching. Ecologically this is the most sensitive area as the inlet of the lake is located in this zone. The rich fishery resource also supports the livelihood of fishers from more than 30 villages located in and around Satapada.

Sj.Sanjay Das Burma, Hon'ble Member of Legislative Assembly of Orissa of Brahmagiri constituency was the Chief Guest of the function and Chairman of the Krushna Prasad Block was the guest of honour. Hundreds of local communities, women SHG members and school children, teachers, boat men, local leaders and Nominees, NGO personnel,



Release of 'Chilika Darpan' newsletter by the Chief Guest

Government Officials, Scientists and experts participated. On this occasion a quarterly news letter in Oriya(local) language "*CHILIKA DARPAN*" was released. The thematic WWD-2011 poster developed by the Ramsar secretariat was dubbed in local language and was printed in bulk and distributed. Flyers with the theme "**Forests for water and Wetlands**" in local language was developed and distributed among the participants to sensitize the local communities.

An exhibition was set up near the venue exhibiting the Chilika ecosystem, biodiversity, Ramsar principles of management was opened for the local community to sensitize them about the wise-use and sustainable management of the lagoon. The different species of birds and fishes attracted the attention of school children.



The winner of essay competition receiving the prize from the Chief Guest

The Chief Guest appreciated the initiatives of Chilika Development Authority for sensitizing the school children about the values and functions of wetlands. The Chief Executive Chilika Development Authority in his address appreciated the active participation of the school children in huge number to make the celebration a grand success. He also appreciated the presence of local representatives to encourage the school children. This was a eventful day for the locality.



Students participating in the celebration

Ansupa Lake

Ansupa lake is one of the largest natural fresh water lake of the state (Cuttack district), covers an area of 170 ha. It is an important site for birds, indigenous riverine fishes and supports the livelihood of local communities. Like Chilika lake to sensitize the school children essay and drawing competitions was organized around the high schools of the Ansupa lake on the theme “**Forests for water**



Students participating in the celebration

and Wetlands” of the WWD 2011. The WWD was celebrated at the foot hill of historical Sarandha hill. The Divisional Forest Officer, Athagrah Forest Division was the Chief Guest. He gave away the prizes to the winners of the essay and drawing competition.