

Lake Salute and Wetlands Day celebration by Fisher folks on International Wetlands Day

Organized by

Samyukta Kayal Samrakshana Samithy

Vembanad Nature Club

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Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE)

2 February each year is celebrated as World Wetlands Day. It marks the date of the signing of the Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea. With a view to embrace the lake on the International Wetlands day, the Lake Protection forums paid homage to the lake, which provide them food and income for their subsistence. Competitions like Swimming and breath holding under the water, was also organized as part of the celebrations.

The Event was organized in Shraithode in Muhamma Panchayath, beside the lake side. Members of the lake Protection forums close to 150 numbers from various places and locals comprising fisherman and their families attended very actively in the program. . Sri. E.M. Manoharan, President, Samyukta Kayal Samrakshan Samithy (Federation of LPF) , presided in the function and Smt. Deepa Ajithkumar ,President Muhamma Grama Panchayath inaugurated . prizes to the winners of the competition were given away by M. Chandra Gramapanchayth.

The event started at 4:00 p. m with the Swimming competition in which two categories of men- Young and middle aged men- participated. Kirankumar of Ambalakadavu LPF got the first price in Young Group category followed by Lal of Shraithodu. Among the middle age group ,Shri. Thilakan of Anjuthaikkal and LPF and Shri. Nateshan of Anjuthaikka, l LPF got the first and second price. There were 8 participants in the breath taking under water competition and N.K. Ravi of Anjuthaikkal LPF got the first price.

In the public meeting that held, Sri. Jojo T.D ,Programme officer of ATREE explained the significance of wetland day . Muhamma Panchayth president Smt. Deepa Ajithkumar inaugurated the function and congratulated the members of Lake Protection forums for organizing and participating in this event. She distributed the working fund and fund for construction of two fish sanctuaries in the lake to the federation of Lake Protection forums, as provided by ATREE and also offered all necessary support from the panchayat for further activities. Shri. K.V. Dayal , noted Environmentalist delivered the ‘wetland message” to the participants. He urged the participants for protecting this magnificent wetland for their future generations.

Ward member Smt. M. Chandra cherished her golden memories about the Vembanad Lake and shared her concern on the present situation of the lake.

At the dusk, all participants gathered near the shore and lighted lamps were floated in the lake, paying their salute to the lake, as in the previous year and took oath that they will protect the lake which is the source of their livelihood. The event came to an end by a sumptuous feast with wetland delicacies like tapioca and clam meat, cooked by the federation members, especially women.

