



## Celebration of WORLD WETLANDS DAY 2011 and 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

These events were celebrated with much fervor in the Republic of Mauritius as it also coincided with the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mauritius acceding to the Convention and Rivulet Terre Rouge Estuary Bird Sanctuary (RTREBS) nominated as our first Ramsar Site.

The National Parks and Conservation Service (NPCS) of the Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security being the National Focal Point for Ramsar organized several events on the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2011.

Various activities were carried out on that day:

A half date workshop on the importance of wetlands was held at the Visitors Centre of RTREBS.



Plate 1: Students of the region, NGO and relevant stakeholders actively participating in the workshop



Plate 2: The Hon. S.V. Faugoo, Minister of Agriculture and Food Security officially launched the event

Plate 1: showing students of secondary schools of the region (16 -18 years old) participating in the workshop at RTREBS

Plate 2: showing the Hon. Satya Veyash Faugoo delivering his opening speech, Mrs T. A. Mudhoo – Chairperson, National Ramsar Committee (second from left), Mr Bhugun – Ag Permanent Secretary and Mr. M. Puttoo – Director, NPCS (on the right)

On that occasion, being given that the theme for this year World Wetlands Day and the United Nation laid emphasis on importance of Forests ecosystem, NPCS organized a special tree planting ceremony at the Ramsar site. A critically endangered endemic plant was planted by the Honourable Minister.



A rare endemic plant namely *Psidium cataractae* planted by the Hon. Minister. This species is critically endangered as per IUCN criteria as less 10 individual exist in the wild.

A poster on migratory birds was also launched by the Hon. Minister. More 600 has been distributed to all educational institutions of Mauritius (Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Institutions).



The Government of Mauritius has shown an increase in commitment towards wetlands protection. Further activities have been planned to be organized throughout the year namely:-

1. Exhibitions, talks and sensitization campaigns on the importance of wetlands to be organized in different schools
2. Opening of the RTREBS to the public during weekends and public holidays
3. Opening of a Craft market and a bird hide at RTREBS under a joint project of Force Vive de Roche Bois, a local NGO and NPCCS, funded by the UNDP/GEF SGP and Shell Mauritius.
4. Declaration of Pte d'Esny as a wetland of International Importance (awaiting a favourable reply from the Convention)

Report edited by: Mr M. Puttoo, Director, National Parks and Conservation Service

Report prepared by: Mr V. S. Gopal, Research and Development Officer (Wildlife), Public Awareness and Wetlands Section, National Parks and Conservation Service

Assisted by: Mr. S. Pandoo, Officer in Charge, RTREBS