

## Wetlands Day Celebrations 2012: Vembanad Lake

Ashoka Trust for Research for Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) CERC celebrated the World Wetlands Day along with Vembanad Nature Club, Kuttanad Samyuktha Samithy, Various Black Clam Societies and Lake Protection Forums at Thanneermukkom Barrage, Alappuzha. Around 200 fishermen, clam collectors and farmers came together at Centre point of Thanneermukkom Barrage to form the Human Chain showing the unity of fishermen and farmers. The barrage built in 60's to prevent saline water intrusion into the paddy growing southern sectors is considered to be the major adverse factor for the deterioration in water quality and the habitat destruction of many species. It was first of its kind human chain in the area demanding the scientific operation of the barrage. The uneven operation of the barrage has affected the lake ecosystem adversely. One of the worst affected communities is the fishermen and clam collectors. The farmers also started to realise the importance of salinity in keeping the ecosystem health. They also came and participated in the event supporting the cause. The event attracted wide media attention.



“March by the Fishermen, Clam Collectors towards the centre point of Thanneermukkom Barrage to form the Human Chain along with the farmers”



“200 Fishermen, Clam Collectors, Farmers and local community people forming Human Chain at the Centre point of Thanneermukkom Barrage for implementation of agriculture calendar in Kuttanad and also opening and closing of the Barrage”



“The entire community came together for the Human Chain including Men, Women, Young, and Old”



A public gathering was held afterwards which started with a community pledge which was read by Mr. Jojo T.D Project Coordinator ATREE CERC. Dr. K.G Padmakumar, Director, RARS Kumarakom gave the wetlands day message. Mr. K.V Dayal, Dr. John Mathai, George Mullakkara, Mr. Salim gave the facilitations. Mr. K.M Poovu thanked the audience. The program came to a close with the lighting of traditional lamps near the lake side. The event was an enormous success owing to the great community participation and wide media coverage.