

## **World Wetlands Day 2009 observed**

World Wetlands Day 2009 was observed with the participation of 150 students from different educational institutions at NSS College, Cherthala on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2009. The event was organized jointly by WWF-India, Kerala State Office and NSS unit of the college with the support of Thenmala Ecotourism Promotion Society (TEPS). The awareness programme was inaugurated by Sri.A.Thilothaman MLA in the function that was presided over by Prof.K.V.Surendranath, Principal of the college. Sri Thilothaman in his inaugural address quoted a recent study which highlighted the reduction in depth and extent of the Vembanad wetlands. He also elaborated on his concerns regarding the local wetlands and emphasized the need for conservation to ensure food and water security. Sri. Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director of WWF-India introduced the programme. Sri.T.P.Narayanankutty IFS, Ecotourism Director spoke on the occasion and released the sticker set on "wetlands", "wetlands birds" and "wetlands and food security" published in connection with the programme. Sri.Sakthibabu R.L., NSS Programme Officer and Sri.A.K.Sivkumar, Education Officer from WWF-India also spoke on the occasion.

Following this A.K.Sivakumar, Education Officer from WWF-India conducted a Quiz Competition on Wetlands. Peet Memorial Training College, Mavelikara Dept. of Environmental Sciences, NS College, Cherthala and Govt. Girls High School, Cherthala bagged first, second and third prizes respectively. Dr.Vinod M., Senior Coordinator, Marine Division of WWF-India and Sri. Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director of WWF-India led the technical sessions on Wetlands of India and Issues and Concern on Wetlands.

The activity session on understanding our wetlands also was done with the active participation of the participant student community. Various topics like wetlands as source of drinking water, food, wetland pollution, habitat for flora and fauna and stakeholders of wetlands were discussed and presented by the student teams during this session. They presented posters, skits and mini dramas. It was a self study event and a knowledge sharing programme.

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