

Report of the World Wetlands Day, 2009

World Wetlands Day is celebrated every year on 2nd February to coincide with the signing of international treaty by various countries in the city of Ramsar, at Iran for conservation of wetlands at international level.

2. Each year, all the State Governments are requested to observe this International Day in their respective States for conservation of wetlands. On this Day, the people are sensitized regarding wetland values through declamation contests, panel discussions, painting competitions, slogan competitions through folk lure, street plays, *padyatras* and many other activities for creating awareness in public for wetland conservation ethos. On this Day, material published by Ramsar Secretariat is sent to various State Governments in form of brochures, CDs, posters, stickers, etc., to display the commitment of Ramsar for the cause of wetland conservation at global level. All the State Governments are requested to observe this Day in a very eventful manner.

WWD function at Chilika

3. National level celebrations on this Day are held at one of the wetlands of international importance, which are generally inaugurated at the Minister level. This time, the national level WWD was observed at the Chilika wetland. The Minister could not participate because of some important engagement on that Day.

This year's national event was organized in collaboration with Chilika Development Authority (CDA) at the Wetland Research Training Center, Chandraput where Maharaja Gaajpati Sri Sri Dibya Singh Deb was the chief guest. The Ministry was represented by Director, Dr. S. Kaul and from the State Government, Prof. C.R. Das, ex-Chief Executive, CDA and Dr. Sudersan Panda, present Chief Executive, CDA were present. The main event was addressed by the chief guest Sri Sri Dibya Singh Deb, Dr. S. Kaul, Director and Dr S. Panda. All the dignitaries highlighted message of the Day and asked people to raise awareness about wetland conservation all over the country.

A documentary film on Chilika entitled “Chilika the Symphony” was released. A data book on “The socio-economic survey of fishers research in Chilika”, published under JICA-CDA project was also released alongwith a booklet in english and the recent issue of the quarterly magazine in Oriya ‘Chilika Darpan’. The function was attended by 19 NGOs. A boat race was also organized. Essay and painting competitions were held and the prizes were given to the winners. A bird watcher, Sri Hrudananda Jena, of Nalabana Bird Sanctuary was also awarded a special award for his contribution towards bird conservation.

Some of the pictures of WWD celebrations at national level are given below:



World Wetland Day Celebration at Chilika Lake

WWD function at Kanja

4. 2nd function of the day at the national level was held at Kanja wetland, Nandankanan Biological Park in collaboration with the Ministry. 100 school children from Bhitarkanika and Chlika, two Ramsar sites from Orissa and some adjoining areas, participated in the programme. The basic objective was to sensitize young students about the importance of wetlands and need for their conservation. The Ministry was represented by Dr. S. Kaul and State Government was represented by Special Secretary (Forests), Shri B. Bahera Director, Nandankanan Biological Park, and PCCF, Shri B.K. Pattnaik.

5. A workshop on “Wetland Education” was organized at the lake shore in which more than 100 schools from Orissa participated. A wetland learning trail in the form of promenade along the shoreline of the lake was inaugurated which has been given an appropriate signage about the wetland values, their diversity and need for their conservation. Also facilities have been created for many competitions among school children at the site.

6. In this function, international experts like Prof. T. Tsuji, President, Wetland International-Japan, Prof. Y. Natori of UN University, Tokyo and seven Japanese delegates from Ramsar Centre, Japan also participated. Students from Central and State Government spoke on the values of Wetland Conservation on this occasion. Prizes and trophies were distributed to students who won various competitions organized on this day on various wetland themes. A colourful brochure on Kanja lake alongwith Ramsar 2009 theme was released in Oriya language.





World Wetland Day Celebration at Kanjia Lake

WWD in New Delhi by WWF-India

7. WWD was also celebrated by WWF-India with a two-day seminar on Aquasymphony which invited high school bands from various schools of New Delhi to perform on their original composition on the theme of Ramsar's WWD. Winning teams were given prizes. Wetland quiz was also organized. A visual presentation on WWF's wetland conservation efforts on Himalayan high altitudes wetland work was made and a documentary on Ladakh entitled 'Living with a change – voices from Ladakh' was also shown to the participants on the occasion.

8. Mr. Rabbi Shergill, a renowned musician was the chief guest. He congratulated the prize winning students and encouraged the students to develop their talent for music and interest in the field of conservation.

WWD at Chandigarh Administration

9. Bird survey at Sukhna Wildlife sanctuary was organized in collaboration with NGO – Avian Habitat and Wetland Society. Cleanliness of Sukhna lake was carried out to make Sukhna free from plastics and other litter by students and NGOs. Presentations on many surveys on bird count were given at the Botanical Garden conference hall. Many students participated in different programmes on importance of this day for the normal human beings.
