

**Upstream Downstream Wetlands connect us all
World Wetland Day
2 February 2009**

***Proceedings of activities organised by Bardia National Park on the occasion of
world wetland day***

Nepal being a signatory of Ramsar Convention has been organising activities on the world wetland day at various levels (central level to local level). On the occasion, Bardia National Park has also organised following activities.

1. Interaction workshop
2. Art competition
3. Field monitoring and observation by high level officials

1. Interaction workshop

Bardia National Park (BNP) organised **one-day interaction workshop** in coordination with Western Terai Landscape Complex Project (WTLCP), Field Office Bardia. The general aim of the workshop was to inform community people about Ramsar Convention and importance of wetlands. More importantly, the main objective of the workshop was to instigate a discussion and to start preparatory work as to incorporate Bardia National Park (or its associated floodplains) into Ramsar list. The interaction workshop was pronged into two sessions (i) presentation session and (ii) interaction session. 34 people from various backgrounds (teachers, students, BNP personnel, project staffs, users community members, nature guides, etc) showed their active participation (name list of participants is presented in the *annex 1*).



(i) Presentation session

Mr. Jhamak B. Karki, Under Secretary (Technical), BNP highlighted on the importance of wetlands and also disseminated information regarding the theme of the World wetlands day 2009 based on the information posted in the web by Ramsar Secretariat. During his presentation, Mr. Karki emphasised on the need and necessity to incorporate Bardia National Park into the wetlands of international importance commonly known as Ramsar site. In his presentation, Mr. Karki presented and explained briefly about **Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS)**. Mr. Karki in his presentation remarked that BNP holds more than 400 species of avian fauna amongst which 7 species falls under the category of globally threatened and 6 species falls under the National protected list. Likewise, BNP also harbours more than 25 species of herpetofauna, amongst which 3 species falls under National protected list. Mr. Karki said "because of such indispensable features, BNP could be included into Ramsar Site". Mr. Karki also emphasised the procedures to incorporate BNP in Ramsar List. He said, "first it is essential to have consensus with appropriate discussion; second it is prerequisite to prepare Ramsar Information Sheet. Once the RIS is forwarded then Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) and Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MoFSC) has to play crucial role in the process".



(ii) Interaction session

After short presentation, floor was opened for interaction. Participants highly appreciate the idea of incorporating BNP into Ramsar Site. However, they doubted on whether or not BNP could fulfil the criteria that are prerequisite to incorporate it as a Ramsar Site. The doubt was clarified from the floor itself, some of the community people who have year long experiences in birding, remarked that BNP is one of the important habitat for both migratory and resident birds. After brainstorming and interaction, the floor came to a consensus and made a decision which is articulated hereafter.

Decision made by the floor

The floor came to the conclusion that **"under the leadership and with technical backstopping from BNP, a preliminary report as per the criteria articulated in Ramsar Information Sheet will be prepared. The report will be further discussed and finalised through interaction with community people and will be forwarded to the DNPWC for necessary actions"**.

Note: The programme was further ornamented by the presence of Secretary of Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, Dr. Uday Raj Sharma. Dr. Sharma remarked that it is inspiring idea to incorporate BNP in Ramsar Site as to implant important milestone in conservation field. However, he said that "it is necessary to think whether or not BNP and community people could fulfil the obligation". He further remarked that if BNP forward required documents as per the Ramsar requirements, Ministry will proceed further for necessary action.

2. Art Competition

Thirty students of class 6 and 8 of Nepal Rastriya Lower Secondary School, Thakurdwara participated in the art competition organized in the visitor centre of Bardian National Park. Prior to the art, students were shown the arts and pictures of the endangered and threatened wildlife with description and discussion in visitor centre to familiarize them. Stone collected from the nearest Khouraha River were used to draw the paintings of the tiger, elephant, dolphin, gharial, vulture, etc by these students. These pictures are kept in the centre for demonstration to the other students and visitors.

3. Field monitoring and observation by high level officials

A team led by Dr. Uday Raj Sharma, Secretary of Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation observed activities of BNP and activities supported by WTLCP (name list of monitoring team is given in the box to the right).

Monitoring team

1. Dr. Uday Raj Sharma, Secretary, MoFSC
2. Mr. Rajendra Kumar Dhungel, Joint Secretary, MoFSC
3. Mr. Deepak Kumar Kharal, Under Secretary, DoFRS
4. Dr. Jagadish Chandra Baral, Under Secretary, MoFSC
5. Mr. Bikram Raj Tuladhar, National Project Coordinator, WTLCP
6. Ms. Madhu Ghimire, Assistant Planning Officer, MoFSC

Major highlights

- The team interacted with BNP staffs working at Elephant rearing centre (Hattisar). Chief Conservation Officer, Mr. Puran Bhakta Shrestha, Under Secretary Mr. Jhamak B. Karki and other staffs of Hattisar put forward the pertinent issues that BNP is trying to address continuously. Chief Conservation Officer said that inadequate staff in Hattisar is one of the main challenge for BNP to manage existing elephants of BNP. At present there are 16 elephants (10 adults and 6 calves) and there is a provision of recruiting three staffs to each elephant. However, at present there are only 07 staffs at Hattisar.



- *Joint Secretary Mr.Dhungel suggested that BNP should dispatch letter stating the present status of staffs of Hattisar. He suggested that the vacant position could be fulfilled by hiring staffs on contract as per the existing government policy. He further assured that all the legal provisions will be handled in favour of BNP after receiving the letter from BNP through DNPWC.*
- The team monitored and observed some of the activities that were supported by WTLC. The team observed electric fence, NTFP (*Mentha* sp.) processing plant and bio-briquettes that were supported to the Buffer Zone User Committee of Thakurdwara VDC from the WTLC project.
 - *Dr. Sharma after observing the process of making bio-briquettes remarked that practice of making coal in the forest should be discouraged because of risk of fire. He suggested to the group to prepare coal of Banmara (*Eupatorium* sp) in the premises where they are making briquettes.*
- The team also visited tiger tops hotel, its tented camp and Lalmati complex. Team has observed other hotels situated in the fringes of BNP in private area of Buffer zone. They enquired the current status of Eco-tourism in BNP.
 - *Dr. Sharma after observing and receiving information mentioned that government is trying to help grow eco-tourism in Bardia NP. In the meantime, a team to review the status of the tented camp of West Nepal Adventure (run by Tiger Tops) have already been formulated under the coordination of MoFSC. Government will take appropriate decisions and policy measures to help grow the eco-tourism in BNP without jeopardizing its conservation.*

Annex 1. Name list of participants of interaction workshop, Bardia National Park, Thakurdwara, Bardia.

SN	Name of Participants	Organisation/Address
1	Chot Ram Chaudhary	Nepal Rastriya L.S. School, Thakurdwara
2	Bhoj Raj Pandit	Tribhuvan S. School, Suriyapatuwa
3	Thakur Prasad Chaudhary	Thakurdwara VDC
4	Ram Bahadur Shahi	Nature Guide Association (NAGA), Thakurdwara
5	Khadak Prasad Upadhaya	Shree Janjyoti S. School, Bakuwa
6	Bal Krishna Acharya	Shree Janjyoti S. School, Bakuwa
7	Pradeep Regmi	Eco-Club Network, Bardia
8	Khadga B. Khadka "Premi"	Bardia Jungle Cottage, Bardia
9	Tulshi Ram Gautam	NAGA, Thakurdwara
10	Hukum B. Shahi	Eco-Tourism Development Forum, Bardia
11	Puspa Yogi	Female Environment User Committee
12	Aabiskar Humagain	Shree Janjyoti S.School, Bakuwa
13	Indra Bist	Youth Environment Group, Shree Jagdamba S. School
14	Pradeep Rijal	Youth Environment Group, Shree Jagdamba S. School
15	Sunil Baduwal	Youth Environment Group, Shree Jagdamba S. School
16	Deepak Tharu	Community Ranger, Tarai Area Landscape (TAL), Bardia
17	Meen Raj Paudyal	WTLCP-Field Office, Bardia
18	Uttam Kr. Chaudhary	Ranger, BNP
19	Sankar P. Bhattarai	Eco-Tourism Development Forum, Bardia
20	Jit Bahadur Khadka	Senior Gamescout, BNP
21	Kabita Shree Nepal	Nepal Rastriya L.S. School, Thakurdwara
22	Unnati Sarma	Ranger, BNP
23	Anita Khadka	WTLCP-Field Office, Bardia
24	Yamuna Thapa	Shree Jagdamba S. School, Madhela
25	Kiram Sarma (Pokhrel)	Betahani-5, Thakurdwara
26	Ramesh Kr. Thapa	Assistant Conservation Officer, BNP
27	Nima Pariya	Nature Guide Association(NAGA), Thakurdwara
28	Sita Chaudhary	Nature Guide Association (NAGA), Thakurdwara
29	Krishna P. Bhattarai	Eco-Tourism Development Forum, Bardia
30	Shyam Kr. Thapa	WTLCP-Field Office, Bardia
31	Shree Ram Ghimire	NTNC-BCP, Bardia
32	Jhamak B. Karki	Under Secretary (Technical), BNP
33	Bimal Kr. Sarma	Professor, Trichandra College, TU, Kathamndu
34	Dinesh Chandra Gautam	Headteacher, Shree Jagdamba S. School, Madhela