

WORLD WETLANDS DAY 2008

(Healthy Wetlands, Healthy People)

WWD'08 was celebrated and organized by **Rajputana Society of Natural History (RSNH)** at two places, *viz.* **Udaipur** and **Dholpur** of the largest state of India, *i.e.*, Rajasthan.

Program Days

Udaipur: 30-2 February 2008

Dholpur: 31-2 February 2008

Program Supporters

Udaipur: Department of Forest, Government of Rajasthan

Dholpur: Jan Shikshan Sansthan and Sharde Vidyapeeth

In Udaipur four days program was prepared for this event. In the Udaipur event, Department of Forest, Govt. of Rajasthan also associated as a program partner whereas in Dholpur, Jan Shikshan Sansthan and Sharde Vidyapeeth were the program partners.

Program Details

RSNH-Udaipur Chapter

30-31 Jan 08: Drawing Competition & Quiz Competition

More than 600 students from five major schools of Udaipur, participated in the two competitions. The aim of these competitions was to make young generation think about the importance of wetlands as well as other water bodies of their area.

1 Feb 08: Birdwatching

Around 80 students from Central Academy Sr. Sec. School, Sardarpura, Udaipur along with nature lovers of the City took part in the birdwatching at Kalka Mata Nursery, Udaipur. The specialists of the birdwatching camp were forest officers, *viz.*, Dr Satish Kumar Sharma (RO, Udaipur) and Mr. V. S. Rana (ACF, Pratapgarh).

2 Feb 08: Main celebration and Award Function

The winners of the competitions were awarded on this occasion. The specialists who delivered lectures on the WWD'08 were as following:

Prof. Kamal Kapoor (Algae specialist) delivered the lecture on the healthy wetland ecosystem and role of algae. He highlighted conservation issues related with the aquatic bodies of the City of Lakes - Udaipur.

Dr. B. R. Bamaniya (Environmental Scientist) highlighted role of youth in making mass awareness. He threw light on the global scenario of the water and importance of the theme "Healthy Wetlands, Healthy People".

Mr. V. S. Rana (Forest Official) delivered talk on the role of forest officials in promoting such events. He gave examples of many wetland ecosystems that are being protected by the public.

Mr. Raza H. Tehsin (Naturalist) highlighted the role of Udaipur wetlands with respect to aquatic fauna especially avifauna.

Vote of thanks was given by **Mr. G. K. Mehra** (President, RSNH).

Program was anchored by **Ms. Sonali Singh**

RSNH-Bharatpur/Dholpur Chapter

It was for the **first time in Dholpur** that any International event related to nature & environment was organized involving general mass and students.

31 Jan - 1 Feb 08: Surveys of Wetlands of Dholpur

Dholpur is one of the most backward districts in terms of environmental activities involving common man. RSNH Bharatpur/Dholpur team under the leadership of Mr. Haribabu Saini and Mr. Jaikant Saini surveyed for 10 days to finalize important wetland areas and took team to limited sites only. Mrs. Sarita Mehra who is State Secretary, RSNH and Environmental Scientist was specialist in the team. Mr. Deepak Saini, Mr. Ravi Saini and Mr. Udai Bhan Singh joined the team from Bharatpur.

Most striking observations:

1. Sighting of Greater White-Fronted Goose *Anser albifrons* at Urmila Sagar (2nd authentic record after 1948 in Rajasthan)
2. Distribution of River Lapwing *Vanellus duvaucelii* (not very common in Rajasthan).
3. Overall documentation of avifaunal composition of Dholpur.

2 Feb 08: Main celebration

Mr. Deepak Saini (Vice-President, RSNH-Bharatpur/Dholpur Branch) introduced the background of WWD. Mr. Jaikant Saini highlighted the importance of wetlands of Dholpur. The specialist who delivered lectures on the WWD'08 was **Mrs. Sarita Mehra** (Environmental Scientist) who delivered lecture on the importance of wetlands for common man. The thematic description was given to the youth through WWD Posters. Vote of thanks was given by Mr. Haribabu Saini. Program was anchored by Mr. Ravi Saini and Mr. Udai Bhan Singh.

In the morning hours (10.00 am -2.00 pm), Sharde Vidyapeeth hosted the program. More than 200 students of the venue school and nature lovers from Dholpur participated in the program. The queries on WWD'08 were solved in the later half of the morning program.

In the evening hours (3.00 pm - 5.00 pm), Jan Shikshan Sansthan hosted the program. Around 50 candidates, who are the Resource Persons for the younger generations, took part in the program.

Hindi pamphlets (hand outs) giving description of WWD along with its background history and importance were distributed to raise awareness among the target audience.

Special Acknowledgements:

1. Dr. C. P. Sharma, Sr. School Teacher, Udaipur
2. Mr. Pradeep Kaushik, Nature Lover, Udaipur
3. Ms. Sonali Singh, Research Scholar, MLS University, Udaipur
4. Ms. Hemlata Lohar, M. Sc. Environmental Sciences
5. Ms. Neha Bhavsar, M. Sc. Environmental Sciences
6. Ms. Bhavna Thadhaney, Scholar
7. Mr. Santosh Saini, Forest Official, Bharatpur
