



WWF

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Conservation Highlights of WWF-India, Kerala State Office

FROM THE STATE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Environment Education – Is it a losing battle? Some years back, environment education was not a subject or even a topic at all. Since the 1972 Stockholm Conference, titled 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE), 1986 Brundtland Commission brought out “Our Common Future” which defined Sustainable Development, and the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) titled Rio Conference or Earth Summit, Environment Education (EE) has gained much significance, globally, nationally, and locally. Some of the common phrases that have evolved over the years are “think globally, act locally” and “catch them young”.

Environment Education in India was started by WWF-India with its flagship program, Nature Clubs, mainly at the school level, way back in 1969. It was rolled out as a national program. Education Officers of WWF-India were entrusted with the task of visiting schools, talking to and convincing the authorities to initiate Nature Clubs in their schools, and engaging teachers and students towards awareness and action-oriented activities. The individual Nature Clubs were clubbed under the Nature Clubs of India (NCI) network with national, state, and local gatherings called Green Gatherings. This was received very well, in spite of the fact that there was a nominal registration fee from the school and individual membership fee from the students. This program ran well for many years, with Nature Clubs renewing their memberships because of the good service that was done throughout the academic year.

Another feather in the cap for WWF-India was its Nature Education Camps, 2-3 days outdoor camping events in forest areas, mainly National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries, with a group strength of 25-30 participants. The camp used to provide a unique learning experience for the participants with a wide range of activities like classroom sessions, early morning meditations titled “Waking Up with Mother Nature”, field treks, outdoor team activities, fun games, experience sharing, campfires, etc. The Nature Education Camps of WWF-India was one of the most sought-after programs for many years.

Down the line, many new Clubs have evolved, mainly Eco Clubs under the National Green Corps program of the then Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF) later on renamed MoEFCC by adding Climate Change also to their mandate. The stark difference was that MoEFCC provided funding annual financial support to the Eco Clubs starting with Rs. 2500 in the initial years and now up to Rs 25000. Further on, everyone, Government or Non-Government, opted for the formation of Clubs as an operational unit and ultimately in a school or college, there are more than 10 Clubs – Eco Clubs, Nature Clubs, Tourism Clubs, Adventure Clubs, Fitness Clubs, Energy Clubs, Science Clubs, Literature Clubs, Math Club, Boomitra Sena, etc.

Subsequently, WWF-India moved on to other things, mainly Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), especially in the background of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. If EE was considered a subject as such; much different from that, ESD was more of a pedagogy or methodology which could be adopted in all subjects to teach about nature and environment, irrespective of language, science, history, or geography. Hence the target audience was Teacher Trainees. WWF-India widely conducted Teacher's Training Workshops on ESD across the country in partnership with other like-minded organizations like C.P. Ramaswami Environment Education Centre (CPREEC), Chennai, and Centre for Environment Education (CEE), Ahmedabad. The Handbook on ESD titled “Methodologies for the Future – a Guide to developing Education for Sustainable Development” was printed, distributed, widely used, and accepted in English-speaking schools, whereas, for the other parts of the country, the handbook was translated and published in select regional languages.

Further on, WWF-India reformulated its Environment Education Vision Statement and Strategy a few years back with five solid pillars (1) One Earth, One Home – a long-term engagement, whole school approach towards creating green schools, green citizens, and green homes (2) Wild Wisdom Quiz as known in its initial years when it was in India, and later on, after going globally, now known as the Wild Wisdom Global Challenge – the biggest international quiz on biodiversity and wildlife (3) One Planet Academy – a digital learning platform created in partnership with CapGemini on learning and resource materials on biodiversity, climate change, pollution, etc. (4) Eco-Trails – a platform for providing outdoor experience to learn from the lap of Mother Earth, and (5) Volunteers as known initially, and now rebranded as People4Planet which provides a platform for every citizen to do his or her own bit for nature and environment irrespective of age, gender, caste, class, creed, etc.

More than 50 years, the journey still continues Some people say what cannot be measured, cannot be evaluated, and hence we cannot say whether it has been a success or failure. Yes, Environment Education cannot be measured exactly, because it is too high and deep, wide and long. But we can say for sure that it has made its impact. Many environmentalists of today have grown through this journey.

Not that we have accomplished or attained. Much more needs to be done, and many new challenges lie ahead. Let us move forward in full steam, further on, creating the green citizens of tomorrow.

Renjan Mathew Varghese
State Director

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN NATURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Global

Climate change and nature loss pose the greatest risks for humanity: WEF Global Risk Report 2024

The World Economic Forum (WEF) Global Risks Report 2024 counts extreme weather events and critical changes to Earth systems as the greatest concerns facing the world over the next decade. While misinformation and disinformation are seen as the biggest short-term risk over the next two years, environmental risks dominate over ten years. The report found the top four most severe risks over the next ten years to be extreme weather events, critical change to Earth systems, biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse, and natural resource shortages. Pollution also features within the top ten most severe risks. Concerningly, the report argues that cooperation on urgent global issues could be in increasingly short supply, underlining the importance of concerted action and collaboration to address the climate and nature emergencies. *“The interlinked crises of climate change and biodiversity loss are among the most severe risks the world has to contend with and cannot be tackled in isolation. We’ve just lived through the hottest year on record, with lives and livelihoods devastated by searing heatwaves and catastrophic floods, and storms. Unless we take urgent action, the threat is only set to intensify, pushing us closer to inflicting irreversible damage on society and ecosystems,”* said Kirsten Schuijt, Director General of WWF International. (Source: WWF Europe, 1 January 2024)

‘Nature Knows No Borders’: UN Conference on Migratory Species Concludes with Landmark Agreements

The 14th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the CMS took place in Samarkand from 12 to 17 February, 2024, making it the first ever UN COP to be held in Central Asia, a region that is home to many of the world’s migratory species. This global summit was also the first CMS COP since the Covid-19 pandemic, and the first major biodiversity meeting since the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) in 2022. COP14 thus represented a historic moment for the conservation of migratory species and their habitats. The conference, convened under the slogan “nature knows no borders”, brought together 470 delegates from 122 countries, along with hundreds of representatives of non-governmental organisations, intergovernmental organisations, and UN agencies. In total, over 2,000 people attended COP14 and worked together to address the challenges faced by migratory animals with concerted actions and guidelines. The conference in

Samarkand opened with the launch of the first ever UN report on the State of the World’s Migratory Species, which provides an overview of the conservation status of migratory animals, the pressures they face, and the actions that need to be taken to support their recovery. The report revealed that 22% of all migratory species listed under the CMS – over one in five – are threatened with extinction, and 44% of them are showing declining population trends. According to the UN report, the decline of migratory species is primarily driven by human activities. One of the main threats to these animals is habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation, induced, for instance, by urban sprawl, infrastructure development, or agriculture. Migratory species are also threatened by overexploitation, such as excessive hunting or overfishing. On top of these two main causes, climate change, pollution, invasive species, and diseases also greatly affect migratory animals. (Source: Earth.org, 28 February 2024)

National

India, four other nations plan coordinated crackdown on wildlife traffickers using Interpol channels

India, Bangladesh, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia have planned coordinated crackdowns on wildlife trafficking kingpins operating through their jurisdiction by sharing criminal intelligence and breaking down their financial flows, officials said. During the two-day Regional Investigative and Analytical Case Meeting (RIACM) on Exotic Species Trafficking organised by the CBI and Interpol here recently, experts deliberated on four crucial routes used by the traffickers to transport exotic species. During the information-sharing session, four key trends of routes undertaken by smugglers were spotted. These are from Africa to Southeast Asia to Bangladesh as “mis-declared” air cargo, from Malaysia and Indonesia to China through land borders with Thailand and Myanmar, reptiles like snakes, turtles, and iguanas sourced from Malaysia taken to Thailand and then to India through airlines and from Thailand to India using land borders with Myanmar, they said. Over 50 seizures, including Hoolock Gibbons, exotic turtles, lizards, beavers, Moor Macaques, dwarf mongooses, pygmy marmosets, dusky leaf monkeys and ball pythons were made in India by various agencies in 2022, the officials said. (Source: The Hindu, February 25, 2024)

Tamil Nadu gets two more Ramsar sites; tops the country with 16 sites

With two more places declared Ramsar sites, Tamil Nadu now has the highest number of such sites in the country. The State government had submitted proposals for the Longwood Shola Reserve Forest in The Nilgiris and the Karaivetti Bird Sanctuary in Ariyalur. The Union Ministry of Environment and Forests and the Ramsar Sites Secretariat

accepted them, and both places were designated as Ramsar sites on January 31. The total number of such sites in the State now stands at 16, the highest in the country, Supriya Sahu, Additional Chief Secretary, Environment, Climate Change, and Forests, said in a press release. (Source: *The Hindu*, 1 February 2024)

State

Kerala brings out 'Environment Budget' as a separate document for the first time

In a first, the Kerala government has introduced an Environment Budget as a separate document along with the State Budget. The document highlights 81 schemes in nine sectors and their Budget allocations in environment-related areas. The sectors selected for the first Environment Budget are agriculture, livestock, fisheries, forests and wildlife, environment, water resources, cooperation, soil survey, and the energy sector. The total outlay for environment-related schemes in the Budget allocations for these sectors is approximately ₹668.88 crore for 2024-25. "This is a novel initiative towards the State's commitment to integrating environmental concerns in its planning and implementation and it will be refined in the coming years," Finance Minister K. N. Balagopal said in his preface to the Environment Budget, a 59-page document. (Source: *The Hindu*, 5 February 2024)

Eleven year-old's documentary calls for steps to combat climate change

Arshaan Ameer's *Generation Green* got him listed in Australian and Universal books of world records, The 11-year-old from Gold Coast, Australia, with his roots in Kerala, is arguably the youngest documentary filmmaker in the world with entries in The Australian Book of Records and The Universal Book of World Records. Arshaan was honoured at an event in Kozhikode on Tuesday, in which his six-minute-long documentary *Generation Green* was screened. Arshaan was drawn into filmmaking through a series of workshops and training programmes conducted by the Queensland Division of the United Nations in Australia. *Generation Green* delves deep into the issue of climate change, highlighting the urgent need for environmental conservation. (Source: *The Hindu*, 2 January 2024)

SPECIES OF THE ISSUE

Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*)

Large and strongly migratory wader with a long bicolored bill. Often in flocks feeding on mudflats and in brackish



coastal lagoons, roosting in adjacent freshwater habitats. Feeds on worms and shellfish by probing its long bill into the mud. The migration of the subspecies *Limosa lapponica baueri* across the Pacific Ocean from Alaska to New Zealand is the longest known non-stop flight of any bird, and also the longest journey without pausing to feed by any animal. The round-trip migration for this subspecies is over 29,000 km (18,020 mi). The status of the bird is Near Threatened, and the population is declining.

CHILDREN'S CORNER

Quiz

1. More than 70% of our Planet is covered by the ocean. But, do you know what percentage of the ocean is designated as Protected? (4%)
2. How many people depend on forests for their livelihoods? (1 billion)
3. Can you guess how many gorillas are walking the Planet in 2018? (1000)
4. If global temperatures rise by 1.5%, can you guess what percentage of the world's wildlife will be at risk of extinction? (20-30 %)
5. What covers one-third of the land's surface, and helps to keep our planet healthy by storing carbon and producing oxygen? (Forests)
6. More than half of the breathable oxygen in the world comes from where? (Oceans)

EXPERT TALK

തണ്ണീർ തടങ്ങൾ സംരക്ഷിക്കുക

ഡോ. വി. സുഭാഷ് ചന്ദ്രബോസ് 9847547881

ഫെബ്രുവരി 2 ലോക തണ്ണീർതട ദിനം

മാനവ സംസ്കൃതിയുടെ വളർച്ചയ്ക്കും വികാസത്തിനുമെല്ലാം ജലാശയ പ്രദേശങ്ങളെ അടിസ്ഥാനമാക്കിയാണ് രൂപപ്പെട്ടത്. തണ്ണീർ തടങ്ങളും മാ



നവക്ഷേമവുമെന്നതാണ് ഈ വർഷത്തെ ലോക തണ്ണീർത്തട ദിനാചരണ വിഷയം. 1971 ഫെബ്രുവരി രണ്ടിന് കാസ്റ്റിൻ കടൽത്തീരത്തെ ഇറാനിലെ റാംസർ സിറ്റിയിൽ നടന്ന അന്താരാഷ്ട്രസമ്മേളനത്തിന്റെ ആഹ്വാനം അനുസരിച്ചാണ് ദിനാചരണം ആരംഭിച്ചത്. കടൽ, കായൽ, നദികൾ എന്നിവ പോലെ തന്നെ സ്ഥിരമായി വെള്ളം കെട്ടിനിൽക്കുന്ന പ്രദേശങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ട്. ഉൾനാടൻ പ്രദേശങ്ങളിലും തീരപ്രദേശങ്ങളിലും മനുഷ്യനിർമ്മിത രൂപത്തിലും തണ്ണീർതടങ്ങൾ കാണപ്പെടുന്നു. സ്വാഭാവികതണ്ണീർതടങ്ങളെ ഭൂമിയുടെ കിഡ്നിയായും കണക്കാക്കപ്പെടുന്നു. കരഭാഗങ്ങളിൽ രൂപപ്പെടുന്ന മാലിന്യങ്ങളെ ശുദ്ധീകരിക്കുന്നതിൽ തണ്ണീർത്തടങ്ങൾക്ക് വലിയ പങ്കാണുള്ളത്.

അഴിമുഖങ്ങൾ, തടാകങ്ങൾ, നദികൾ, അരുവികൾ, അഴിമുഖങ്ങൾ, ഡൽറ്റകൾ, കണ്ടൽക്കാടുകൾ, പവിഴപ്പുറ്റുകൾ എന്നിവയോടൊപ്പം വയലുകളെയും ഈ വിഭാഗത്തിൽ ഉൾപ്പെടുത്തുന്നു. പത്ത് സെന്റ് വയൽ 1,60,000 ലിറ്റർ മഴവെള്ളത്തെ ഉൾക്കൊള്ളും. ജല ശുചീകരണം, വെള്ളപ്പൊക്ക് നിയന്ത്രണം, തീര സംരക്ഷണം, ജലലഭ്യത ഉറപ്പാക്കൽ തുടങ്ങി നിരവധി കാര്യങ്ങളാണ് തണ്ണീർതടങ്ങൾ ചെയ്യുന്നത്. 1997 ലെ ഒരു പഠനം അനുസരിച്ച് ഒരു വർഷം ഒരു ഹെക്ടർ തണ്ണീർതടം 60, 80, 110 രൂപയുടെ സേവനമാണ് നൽകുന്നത്. 2007 ലെ കണക്കനുസരിച്ച് 157.97 കോടി രൂപയുടെ സേവനമാണ് വർഷംതോറും കേരളത്തിൽ ഉണ്ടാകുന്നത്. വയലുകളുടെ കൂടി ചേർത്താൽ 231.15 കോടി രൂപയും വരും. മത്സ്യ സമ്പത്തിന്റെ നല്ലൊരു ഭാഗവും ഇത്തരം പ്രദേശങ്ങളാണ് നൽകുന്നത്.

തീരദേശത്തിന്റെ ഉപ്പുവെള്ളത്തിന്റെ കരയിലേക്കുള്ള തള്ളിക്കയറ്റം കുറയ്ക്കുന്നത് തണ്ണീർത്തടങ്ങൾ കൂടിയാണ്. മഴവെള്ളത്തെ ധാരാളമായി സംഭരിച്ച് ഭൂചലമാക്കി മാറ്റുന്ന ഭൗമഘടനയാണ് ഇവയ്ക്കുള്ളത്. ജലത്തിൽ അലിയുന്ന എല്ലാ ഖര ദ്രവ മാലിന്യങ്ങളെയും അരിച്ചും അഴുകിയതാക്കിയും ശുദ്ധീകരണം നടത്തുന്നത് പ്രധാനമായും തണ്ണീർ തടങ്ങളാണ്. സൂക്ഷ്മജീവികൾ മുതൽ മത്സ്യങ്ങൾ വരെയുള്ള കോടിക്കണക്കിന് ജീവവർഗ്ഗങ്ങളുടെ ആവാസവ്യവസ്ഥ കൂടിയാണ് തണ്ണീർ തടങ്ങൾ. ഭക്ഷ്യ ഉൽപാദനം, പ്രകൃതി സംരക്ഷണം, പരിസ്ഥിതിയുടെയും ആവാസവ്യവസ്ഥയുടെയും നിലനിൽപ്പ് എന്നിവയ്ക്ക് തണ്ണീർത്തട സംരക്ഷണം പ്രധാനമാണ്.

കേരളത്തിൽ 2008 ൽ വയൽ തണ്ണീർതട സംരക്ഷണനിയമം നിലവിൽ വന്നു. 2015 ന് കേരള സംസ്ഥാന തണ്ണീർതട അതോറിറ്റി രൂപീകരിച്ചു. കേരളത്തിലെ തണ്ണീർതടങ്ങൾ വ്യാപകമായി നശിപ്പിക്കുകയും മലിനീകരണപ്പെടുത്തുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നുണ്ട്. 30 വർഷത്തെ കണക്കെടുത്താൽ പോലും 6.25 ലക്ഷം ഹെക്ടർ വയലാണ് നഷ്ടപ്പെട്ടത്. 1955- 56 കാലഘട്ടത്തിൽ 7.60 ലക്ഷം ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നത് 1970- 71 ൽ 8.80 ലക്ഷമായി ഉയർന്നുവെങ്കിലും ക്രമാനുഗതമായി കുറഞ്ഞു. ഏകദേശം 2000 ആയപ്പോൾ 2.05 ലക്ഷം ഹെക്ടർ ആയി തീർന്നു. 2016 ആയപ്പോൾ 1.92 ലക്ഷം ഹെക്ടറായി തീർന്നു. നെൽകൃഷിക്കുമപ്പുറം കേരളം എന്ന ആവാസവ്യവസ്ഥ കാലാവസ്ഥ നിലനിർത്തുവാനും കാലാവസ്ഥാ മാറ്റ

ത്തെ പ്രതിരോധിക്കുവാനും പരമാവധി വയൽ പ്രദേശങ്ങൾ സംരക്ഷിച്ചു കഴിയുകയുള്ളൂ.

സംസ്ഥാനത്തെ കായലുകൾ ഉൾപ്പെടെ വ്യാപകമായി കയ്യേറ്റം ചെയ്യുന്ന സ്ഥിതിയാണുള്ളത്. ജലാർദ്ര മേഖലകളെല്ലാം മലിനീകരിക്കപ്പെടുന്ന സ്ഥിതിയും രൂക്ഷമാണ്. മാനവരാശിയുടെ ക്ഷേമം നിലനിർത്തുന്നതിൽ തണ്ണീർ തടങ്ങൾക്ക് വലിയ പങ്കാണുള്ളത്. അന്തരീക്ഷത്തിലെ താപനില ക്രമീകരിച്ച് നല്ല കാലാവസ്ഥ രൂപപ്പെടുത്തുന്നതിൽ തണ്ണീർ തടങ്ങൾക്ക് നിർണ്ണായക സ്ഥാനമുണ്ട്. ആരോഗ്യം, ജല ദുരിസം, പരിസ്ഥിതി സംരക്ഷണം, ഭക്ഷ്യം, ശുദ്ധീകരണം, ജലസുരക്ഷ, തുടങ്ങിയ വിവിധ മേഖലകളുടെ നിലനിൽപ്പിനായി തണ്ണീർ തടങ്ങൾ സംരക്ഷിച്ചു കഴിയുകയുള്ളൂ. മഴക്കാലങ്ങളിലെ വർദ്ധിച്ച മഴയെ സംരക്ഷിച്ച് വേനൽ കാലങ്ങളിലെ രൂക്ഷത കുറയ്ക്കുന്നത് തണ്ണീർ തടങ്ങളാണ്.

കേരളത്തിൽ സ്വാഭാവിക ജലസംഭരണികളും ജലാർദ്രപ്രദേശങ്ങളും കുറയുകയാണ്. വർദ്ധിച്ചു വരുന്ന ജലഭക്ഷ്യാവശ്യങ്ങൾക്കായി നിലവിലുള്ള ആവാസവ്യവസ്ഥകൾ പരമാവധി നിലനിർത്തേണ്ടതാണ്. തീരദേശങ്ങളിലെ പ്രകൃതിദുരന്തങ്ങളുടെ ആഘാതം ലഘൂകരിക്കുന്നതിൽ തണ്ണീർ തടങ്ങൾ മുഖ്യ പങ്കാണ് വഹിക്കുന്നത്. സംസ്ഥാനത്തെ മേൽമണ്ണിന്റെ ആഴവും വ്യാപ്തിയും കുറവായതിനാൽ ഒരേ സമയം ധാരാളം



മഴവെള്ളം കരുതാനാവില്ല. അതേസമയം വലുതും ചെറുതുമായി തണ്ണീർതടങ്ങളിൽ കോടിക്കണക്കിന് ലിറ്റർ മഴവെള്ളത്തെ ഉൾക്കൊള്ളുവാൻ കഴിയും. അവയിൽ നല്ലൊരു ഭാഗം ഭൂജലമായി മാറുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നതാണ്.

പ്രകൃതി വിഭവങ്ങളായ മണ്ണ്, ജലം, ജൈവസമ്പത്ത് എന്നിവ വളരെ പ്രധാനമാണ്. ഇവയിൽ ഏറ്റവും ചലനാത്മകമായ ജലത്തിന്റെ സാന്നിധ്യമാണ് മാനവരാശിക്ക് ഭൂമിയിൽ ജീവനും ജീവിതവും സാധ്യമാക്കിയത്. വർദ്ധിച്ചുവരുന്ന ജനസംഖ്യയും വിവിധ വികസനാവശ്യങ്ങളും കൂടി തണ്ണീർതടങ്ങളുൾപ്പെടെയുള്ള ആവാസവ്യവസ്ഥകളെയും പ്രകൃതിവിഭവങ്ങളെയും കൂടുതൽ നശിപ്പിക്കുകയാണ്. എത്രതന്നെ ശാസ്ത്രം മുന്നോട്ടുപോയിട്ടും വെള്ളം ഉൾപ്പെടെയുള്ള ഘടകങ്ങൾക്ക് പ്രകൃതിതന്നെ ആവശ്യമാണ്. ഇല്ലാതാവുന്ന തണ്ണീർതടങ്ങൾ ഭീഷണിയാവുന്നത് മാനവരാശിയുടെ നില നിൽപ്പിനെ തന്നെയാണ്. കേരളത്തിൽ ലഭ്യമായിട്ടുള്ള വയലുകൾ ഉൾപ്പെടെയുള്ള തണ്ണീർ തടങ്ങൾ പരമാവധി മലിനീകരിക്കാതെ സംരക്ഷിക്കപ്പെടണം. കയ്യേറ്റം ഉൾപ്പെടെയുള്ളവ ഇല്ലാതാക്കുവാൻ നിലവിലുള്ള കായലുകളുടെയും തടാകങ്ങളുടെയും പ്രദേശങ്ങൾ സർവ്വേ ചെയ്ത് വേർതിരിച്ച് സംരക്ഷിക്കണം. വെള്ളായണി കായൽ ഉൾപ്പെടെയുള്ള പ്രദേശങ്ങളിൽ കുറെ ഭാഗം പട്ടയം നൽകിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. അവയ്ക്കുള്ള തുക കർഷകർക്ക് നൽകി തിരിച്ച് കായലിന്റെ ഭാഗമാക്കപ്പെടണം. കായലുകൾക്ക് ചുറ്റും ജൈവവേലികൾ കെട്ടി സംരക്ഷിക്കേണ്ടതാണ്. പരിസ്ഥിതി ജല സൗഹൃദ ദുരിസം മാത്രമേ അനുവദിക്കുവാൻ പാടുള്ളൂ.

മാനവ ക്ഷേമത്തിനായി നല്ല വായുവും നല്ല വെള്ളവും നല്ല ഭക്ഷണവും ആവശ്യമാണ്. ഇവയുടെ അടിസ്ഥാനം ശുദ്ധമായ പ്രകൃതി വിഭവങ്ങളാണ്. അവയിൽ ഏറ്റവും പ്രധാനപ്പെട്ടതാണ് തണ്ണീർത്തടങ്ങൾ.

ACTIVITIES OF WWF-INDIA KERALA STATE OFFICE

Environment Education

Dragonfly Festival Mini Mela

WWF-India Kerala State Office and the Society for Odonate Studies (SOS) organized a three-day Dragonfly Festival - Mini-Mela in Thiruvananthapuram from the 19th to the 21st of January 2024. The Department of Museums and Zoos, Thiruvananthapuram, and AMAS Kerala were the partners. The event commenced with an Awareness Workshop for the targeted audience on the 19th January and was inaugurated by Dr. V. Balakrishnan, Member Secretary, Kerala State Biodiversity Board.



Many other programs were also conducted as part of the Mini Mela like workshop on Odonate Photography & Videography, dragonfly walk, Photography Exhibition, Documentary screening, Dragonfly Stone Art, Public Interactive Quiz, Painting Competition for School Students and Creative Writing Competition for School and College Students.

A **three-day Photography Exhibition** was arranged at the Museum Premises to attract public attention and the event was well appreciated. There were 40 stunning photographs of the dragonflies and damselflies.



Documentary screening on large LED TV was conducted on all three days in front of the Art Gallery to convey the basic facts on these lesser-known to the public. Three documentaries prepared by SOS - Introduction to Odonates, Odonate Evolution & Ecology, and Odonate Behaviour were screened.



The second day started with the **Dragonfly Walk** at Punchakkari Wetlands, which was attended by 22 Odonate enthusiasts. The whole team was divided into two groups led by experts and went on a trail along two different transects and noted around 20 species.



Simultaneously, another team coordinated the **Dragonfly Stone Art** in the Thiruvananthapuram Museum and Zoo Compound with the support of experts from AMAS-Kerala. It was a very interesting session in which the public took part and painted the Dragons and Damsels.



The team held a **Public Interactive Quiz** amongst the visitors to the Museum & Zoo with simple questions on the theme and gave attractive prizes. It was an interaction with the public and the fact that the Dragonflies and Damselflies are carnivorous was a new knowledge for 99% of the people we met with.



The Painting Competition for School Students and Creative Writing Competition for School and College Students were held on 26th January at Christ University Nodal Office, Vazhuthacaud, with the participation of around 100 students ranging from UKG to 12th Standard. The theme was “A Day in the Life of a Dragonfly”.



First Prize

തുമ്പിയുടെ ഒരു ദിവസത്തെ ജീവിതം മുത്തുകനി എം.

Std. 8 B, ഗവ. ഗേൾസ് ഹയർ സെക്കന്ററി സ്കൂൾ

തുമ്പി തുമ്പി എന്താണ്
കാവിനു ചുറ്റും പാറണത്
പതിവില്ലാതെ പാറുമ്പോൾ
എന്തോ കാര്യമുണ്ടല്ലോ.
മഴപെയ്യാൻ പോകയാണു
കാലം തെറ്റി കിടക്കയാൽ
വേനൽക്കാലം പോലും വർഷകാലമായിത്തീരുന്നേ!
മഴപെയ്യുമ്പോൾ ഞാനെവിടെച്ചെല്ലാം
എന്റെ പാർപ്പിടം പോലുമില്ലല്ലോ!
പാർപ്പിടമെല്ലാം മനുഷ്യരായ
ക്രൂരമൃഗങ്ങൾ നശിപ്പിച്ചില്ലേ.
എന്തിനുമേതിനും ഞങ്ങളെക്കൊന്ന്
ജീവിക്കാനു കരുതണ്ട
ഞങ്ങൾ പോയാൽ നിങ്ങളില്ല

എന്ന കാര്യം ഓർത്തിടുക
ദൈവമേ നിന്നുടെ പക്കൽ
പ്രാർത്ഥിച്ചിടാം,
വർഷങ്ങളോളം ജീവിച്ചിട്ടും
ഇങ്ങനെയൊരനുഭവം ഉണ്ടായിട്ടില്ല.
എന്തെന്നറിയില്ല എന്തുകൊണ്ടെന്നറിയില്ല
പൂർവ്വജന്മത്തിൽ ഞാൻ ചെയ്ത
പാപമാണെന്നും അറിയില്ല.
ഇങ്ങനെയൊരു ജീവിതം ഇനിയെനിക്കു വേണ്ട
ഞാൻ പോകുന്നേ ഞാൻ പോകുന്നേ
മനുഷ്യരില്ലാത്തൊരിടം തേടി
ദൈവമേ മനുഷ്യർക്കൊരു പാഠം
പഠിപ്പിക്കേണമേ!
വരും തലമുറയായ എന്റെ
പേരക്കുട്ടികളെങ്കിലും
സന്തോഷമായി ജീവിക്കട്ടെ!
ഞാനെന്നിനിനി ജീവിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു
പൂക്കളില്ല മരങ്ങളില്ല
കുടിക്കാൻ ശുദ്ധജലമില്ല
പൂങ്കാവനത്തിൽ പാറിനടന്ന
പൂമ്പാറ്റയുമില്ല! പൂമ്പാറ്റയുമില്ല.

Second Prize

തുമ്പിയും ഞാനും

ആയിഷ ഗസൽ കെ.

Std. 6F, ജി.എം.എച്ച്.എസ്.എസ്. സി.യു. കാമ്പസ്,
കാലിക്കറ്റ് യൂണിവേഴ്സിറ്റി

നേരം പുലർന്നപ്പോൾ മിഴി
തുറന്നപ്പോൾ അങ്കണത്തിൽ
കണ്ടത് നിന്നെയല്ലോ.

നിൻ ചിറകുണ്ടല്ലോ മിന്നിത്തിളങ്ങുന്നു
സൂര്യപ്രകാശത്തിൽ വർണ്ണത്തിൽ
നേരത്തെണീറ്റിട്ടു പാറി നടക്കുന്നു
പൂല്ലിൽ നിന്ന് മറ്റു പൂല്ലിലേക്ക്.

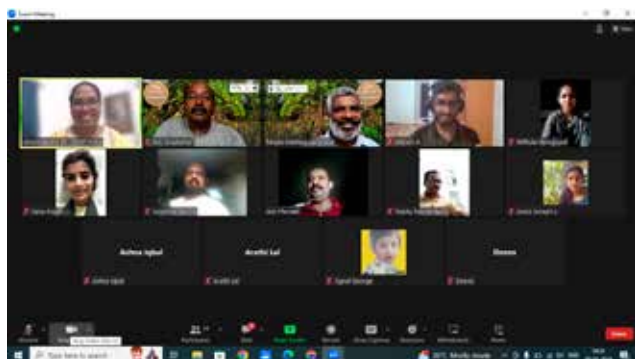
നിൻ അഴകു കാണാൻ നിനടുത്തെത്യാലും
നീ പറന്നുയരുന്നു ആകാശത്തിൽ.
നിൻ കൂടെ പോരുവാൻ മോഹമുണ്ടായാലും
എല്ലാമൊതുക്കി ഞാൻ നിന്നിടുന്നു.

സന്ധ്യനേരത്തും ഞാൻ നിന്നെ
ഓർത്തിട്ട് മുറ്റത്തു കൂടു നടന്നുവല്ലോ
രാത്രിയിൽ നിന്നെയോർത്തിട്ടു കിടന്നു
ഞാൻപറഞ്ഞു നിൻകഥ

സ്വപ്നത്തിൽ നിൻകൂടെ കൂത്താടി ഞാനും
നിൻ പടവും വരച്ചുവല്ലോ

Magical Mangroves

Online Orientation Session for Magical Mangroves 2023-24 was conducted for the Volunteers from Kerala State on 8th January 2024 on the Zoom Platform. Dr. Jain J. Therattil, Assistant Professor, Department of Zoology, St. Aloysius College, Elthuruth, and a WWF-India Volunteer led the session specially mentioning the Mangroves of Kerala and their importance.



Magical Mangroves Trail – KLSO organized a trail at the Chettuva Mangroves near Chavakkad along with the Coastwise Marine Festival on 10th February. Three of the Volunteers from the Magical Mangroves Program (Sana Anjum, Aswin A., and Agnal George) along with 12 others visited the Chettuva Mangroves and spent the evening there observing the bird murmuration and other species associated with mangroves.



Asian Waterbird Census (AWC)

AWC for Thiruvananthapuram District was held on Saturday, 13 January 2024 with the support of Social Forestry Division of Thiruvananthapuram, under the Kerala Forests & Wildlife Department. The combined efforts of 62 Volunteers led to a total tally of 5,412 birds representing seventy species, including thirty-three migratory ones. Mr. Saju S Nair, ACF, Social Forestry, Thiruvananthapuram

addressed the audience during the conclusion ceremony held at PTP Nagar Forest Office.



In Kollam District, AWC was held on 26 January with the support of Kollam Birding Battalion and Social Forestry Division, Kerala Forests and Wildlife Department and Fatima Mata National College (Autonomous), Kollam. A total number of 11470 birds belonging to 83 species, including 42 migratory species, compared to 7592 and 69 species last year, was recorded and this could be attributed to the exclusive counts conducted this year in Munroe Islands, Umayanalloor Wetlands, and Sasthamkotta Lake. 63 volunteers participated in the census.



Tide Turners Plastic Challenge

Three workshops were conducted in January 2024. The workshops were done at SN College and Fatima Mata National College at Kollam on 9th January as forenoon and afternoon sessions. Anushreedha S.S. and Sivakumar led the sessions, and Anju V.N., Intern, provided ground support. The TTPC Orientation at Noorul Islam College of Dental Sciences (NICDS) Neyyattinkara, Thiruvananthapuram was conducted on 11th January. Anju V.N. and A.K. Sivakumar led the sessions. Mementos were given to all the Co-ordinating Teachers as a token of appreciation.



Five workshops were conducted in February 2024. The workshops at St. Mary's College and St. Joseph's

College at Thrissur on the 8th and St. Aloysius College, Elthuruthu, and the University of Calicut Teachers Training Centre, Aranattukara at Thrissur on the 9th of February. Anushreedha S.S. and Anju V.N. led the sessions, and Murukan Parepparambil, WWF-India Volunteer, provided ground support. The TTPC Orientation at All Saints College, Thiruvananthapuram was conducted on 19th February. Anushreedha S.S. and Anju V.N. led the sessions. Mementos were given to all the Co-ordinating Teachers as a token of appreciation.



Beach Combing

In Thiruvananthapuram district, the monthly Beach Combing program to document the shore birds, including the migratory species was carried out by a seven-member team led by Azhar Muhammed at Poovar on 13th January 2024 along with the annual AWC. They documented Black-headed Gulls, Lesser Black-backed Gulls, Slender-billed Gulls, Greater Crested Terns, Lesser Crested Terns, etc.

Invited Talk

Symposium on Biodiversity – Department of Zoology. St. Berchmans College



The State Director inaugurated the one-day Symposium on Biodiversity organized at SB College on 18th January and delivered the Lead Talk on “Human-Wildlife Conflicts – from Conflicts to Co-Existence”. 80 participants, including students and faculty, attended the program.

Invited Talk on Marine Plastic Pollution at Coastal Police Station, Kollam and St. Joseph’s HSS, Shakthikulangara

A.K. Sivakumar was invited by the Fatima Mata National College, Kollam, to deliver sessions on Marine Plastic Pollution and its impacts on 28th February 2024. The target group for the first session was the Police Officials of Neendakara Coastal Police Station and the Fishermen’s Community. Around 60 people attended the session. The second session was in the afternoon at St. Joseph’s HSS, Shakthikulangara, where most of the students are children of the fishermen’s community. The session was attended by 70 participants.



Webinars & Meetings attended

Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director attended the National Seminar on Use of GIS and Remote Sensing in Natural Resource Management organised by the IT Division of Kerala Forests and Wildlife Department at the Forest HQ on 9th January 2024. Mr Renjan and Dr Areendran were panel members in the seminar.

Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director was invited to PM Shri Kendriya Vidyalaya, Pangode for a talk on “Sustainable Development & Ecological Footprint” on 10th January 2024.



Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director was invited to CSI Institute of Legal Studies, Parassala on 12th January 2024 to inaugurate the One-day Seminar and give a talk on Wildlife Protection and Legal Provisions. Mr. Reji Kunnumparam

representing YMCA Thiruvananthapuram and UCM also was present on the occasion.

World Wetlands Day (WWD) 2024 observation



WWD was observed in three colleges in Kerala and saw an outreach of 192. The colleges were Mar Thoma College, Ayur, K G College, Pampadi, and Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham. Expert talk and activity sessions were held in two colleges. The Lead Talk on “Wetlands and Human Well-being: How are we treating our wetlands – Case Studies from Kerala” was led by Renjan Mathew Varghese followed by another session on “Wetlands as Waterbird Habitats – Bird Surveys and Monitoring” was led by A.K. Sivakumar. The session on “Wetland Biomonitoring in Dragonfly Festival under WWF-India’s People4Planet” was led by Anushreedha S.S. The documentary on wetlands by Suresh Elamon, Nature & Wildlife Photographer, was screened, and a brainstorming session, which was a Group Activity, was conducted where the teams made an action plan for local wetland protection.

Coastwise Marine Festival

Coastwise on-ground program at Thrissur was carried out on 11th and 10th February. The release of 117 Olive Ridley Turtle hatchlings at Blangad Beach marked the exciting start of the event, which took place at 4:00 pm. WWF-India State Director for Kerala Renjan Mathew Varghese and IFS Sri. Vyshakh led the release. The team arrived at Puthenkadappuram Beach around 9:30 pm and joined the local Volunteers of Surya LMTCG. Renjan Mathew Varghese provided an overview of Marine Turtles and WWF’s conservation efforts, with a specific focus on Chavakkad. Following this, the LMTCGs detailed the project-related activities conducted at Chavakkad. The team divided into two groups to patrol the area and both teams found turtle nests by 1:30 am. Unfortunately, both groups narrowly missed witnessing the turtles’ laying eggs. They then relocated the eggs to designated hatcheries for protection. The activity concluded by 3:00 am. The following morning, the team visited Marine World, a well-established aquarium under the CISO Institute of Oceanic Studies located at Panchavadi, Chavakkad. It provided a visually stunning and educational experience, allowing them to observe both marine and freshwater species up close.



Volunteers from WWF-India explored six beaches for shorebirds on 18th February 2024 from 6.30 to 10.30 am. Three teams visited Poovar, Veli and Perumathura beaches of Thiruvananthapuram District, and another three teams visited Kappil-Pozhikkara, Vellanthuruthu, and Azheekkal beaches in Kollam District. The observation protocol was a line transect with 1-hour Lists. But, since the date coincided with GBBC, it was recorded as 15-minute checklists in eBird. Later, these checklists were compiled by preparing Trip Reports. Each team covered an average of 3 km along the coast. Though the first and second teams of Thiruvananthapuram were not fortunate to see any shore

birds, the third one got a good sighting of a Masked Booby in flight.



The picture from Kollam was slightly different. The Kappil-Pozhikkara team observed Tibetan Sand Plovers, Common Sandpipers, Lesser and Greater Crested Terns, all of which are migratory. They also observed Western Reef Herons, which are residents. Vellanathuruthu team reported 3 species of Plovers (Lesser and Greater Sand-Plover and Kentish Plover) Whimbrel, Common Sandpiper, Common Greenshank, 3 species of Gulls (Slender-billed, Black and Brown-headed Gull), 6 Tern species (Lesser and Greater-crested, Gull-billed, Caspian, Common and Whiskered) and a Little Stint, which are migratory. Azheekkal team reported 4 species of terns (Common, Gull-billed, Lesser and Greater), Whimbrels, and Common Greenshanks, which are migratory, along with resident species such as Little Cormorant, Little Egrets, Western Reef-Heron and Indian Pond Herons.

Campus Bird Count (CBC) and Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC)

Seventeen colleges registered for the Campus Bird Count from Kerala this year and twelve conducted the same

successfully. The Kerala State Office provided necessary local support for the best conduct of the count. It was conducted from 16th to 19th February 2024. GBBC was conducted by our birder volunteers in the Thiruvananthapuram District. They uploaded 985 lists in these four days.



Volunteer Anniversary Day

Kerala State Office celebrated the WWF-India Volunteers Anniversary Day 2024 on 4 February 2024

at the YMCA Youth Centre, Vettinadu, Thiruvananthapuram. It was a half-day event that started at 3 pm and concluded at 8.30 pm, in which 32 volunteers and five staff members participated. It was a fun-packed event with sports engagements, team-building exercises, cake-cutting, and dinner. All 32 volunteers joined the Kerala State Office Staff Team by 3 pm on the turf in the venue. The sports events were a cricket tournament and a short play of "Seven Tiles" by forming the volunteers into two teams. The entire team had a refreshment break with tea and lime juice and had free time to relax. Then the team moved into some team-building exercises and leisure games, and concluded the activities with a good dinner. A few of them gave their feedback on the event and appreciated WWF-India's initiative to get the

volunteers engaged in such activities too, and gave a few suggestions like taking them to a Nature Trail/ Camp or any kind of outdoor engagement.



Exhibition

WWF put up our exhibition stall at the Kerala Science Congress held from 8-11 February 2024 at Kasargode.



Relocation of Olive Ridley Turtle Nest in Veli Beach of Thiruvananthapuram



The Kerala State Office acted in response to a collapsed Olive Ridley Turtle nest reported by Ms. Gayathri Ashok, one of our Volunteers, on 25 February at Veli Beach. With the assistance of Mr. Anil, a Lifeguard at Veli Beach, the eggs were relocated to a location slightly away from the tide line. On 26th morning, a team from WWF-India and the Social Forestry Wing of the Kerala Forests & Wildlife Department visited the site and assessed the situation and deemed it unfavorable for the eggs to hatch properly. Consequently, it was decided to move the eggs to a more secure location and minimize potential threats to the nest. Under the guidance of LMTCGs of Chavakkad, the eggs were collected (134 nos) and relocated to a hatchery-like setting, completing the mission by 8:30 pm. The Kerala Forests & Wildlife Department officials were informed of the same and now anticipate the hatching of the eggs by the first week of April.



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