WORLD WIDE FUND FOR NATURE – INDIA (WWF-INDIA)

KERALA STATE OFFICE

ANNUAL REPORT

2009 – 2010

APRIL 2010
2009 – 2010 AT A GLANCE

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8. PUBLICATION OF ‘MRUTHIKA’

March – April 2009  Sept – Oct 2009


July – August 2009 Jan – Feb 2010

PHOTO GALLERY
STAFF PROFILE

Main Staff:
Mr. Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director
Mr. A.K. Sivakumar, Education Officer
Ms. Pushpakumari, Admn & Accts Officer
Mr. Harishkumar, Office Attendant

Project Staff:
Ms. Shalini G., Research Officer

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THRUST AREAS OF KERALA STATE OFFICE
- Projects for conservation of species and habitat
- Environment Education
- Engaging with government on environmental issues
1. PROJECTS

1.1 Design and Installation of Information Panels for the Deer Park at Ottakkal, Thenmala

Thenmala has a Deer Park under the Kerala Forests and Wildlife Department and managed by Thenmala Ecotourism Promotion Society (TEPS). This facility is visited by thousands of visitors every year. The main attraction is the deer population comprising of three species. It was proposed to prepare, design and install Information Panels on the Deers in this facility and the work has been entrusted to WWF-India, Kerala State Office and it has been successfully completed in a period of two months time. The project was funded by TEPS.

1.2 Carbon sequestration capacity of mangroves and comparison at ecosystem and species level of the Mangrove Ecosystem of Kannur District funded by DST

This project funded by Department of Science and Technology, Government of India is being jointly undertaken in association with College of Forestry, Kerala Agricultural University, Thrissur. Sri. Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director is the Principal Investigator and Dr. Vidyasagaran, Associate Professor, College of Forestry is the Co-Principal Investigator of the project. Two Research Associates are also appointed for the field work, data collection, analysis and other associated work. The work is specifically aimed at looking at the carbon sequestration aspect of the mangrove ecosystem of the area. The field work, sample collection, lab analysis, data compilation and data analysis is almost complete. The draft report is ready and is being reviewed before submission to the funding agency.

1.3 Development of Sustainable Livelihood Security Index (SLSI) for the Ramsar Site (Vembanad) of Kerala

Vembanad lake is one of the biggest and most important waterbody in Kerala. It gains international importance because of its status as being declared as a ‘Ramsar site’. Vembanad lake supports thousands of beneficiaries under various stakeholder classes by providing livelihood opportunities in various forms like fishing, sand mining, clay mining, lime shell mining, boating, tourism etc. The present study funded by Environment Management Agency – Kerala under the Department of Environment,
Government of Kerala is a two year study aimed at striking a balance between conservation and sustainable utilization of resources. Thorough review of secondary literature and data has been completed since there is lots of previous completed work with regard to Vembanad. Basic information with regard to the panchayats adjoining Vembanad have been collected and compiled from Vikasana Rekha. The methodology with regard to arriving at the SLSI has been refined with much literature review, discussions with experts and brain storming sessions. The questionnaire with regard to the primary field data collection have been drafted, reviewed and refined. The field primary data collection will commence in the days ahead.

1.4 Improvement of Interpretation in Thiruvananthapuram Museums & Zoo Complex

Thiruvananthapuram Museum & Zoo complex is one of the prime tourist attraction located right inside the City and it attracts thousands of tourists every year. For better information and interpretation, a work has been assigned to WWF to document the biodiversity of the Museum and Zoo Complex, prepare and put up proper signages for the animal enclosures, install information and education panels, prepare a handbook for distribution to the visitors etc. The work is funded by Directorate of Museums and Zoos, Government of Kerala. The work is nearing completion. The work on signages for the animal enclosures, fifteen information panels on various themes in relation to the biodiversity of the complex, preparation and printing of handbook etc have been completed. The identification of few plant species and putting up boards and installation of layout map is progressing.

1.6 Initiatives towards Marine Turtle Conservation along Kerala Coast

Marine biodiversity – Training and capacity building workshop

For the protection and conservation of our marine and coastal ecosystem and its biodiversity, a multi pronged approach is necessary, which includes enforcement, education and awareness programmes and strengthening of local conservation groups. It is in this regard that WWF-India jointly with Kerala Forests and Wildlife Department organized a one day ‘Training and capacity building workshop of marine biodiversity with special significance to marine turtle conservation’.
The workshop was organized on 8th June, 2009 at the Vanasree Auditorium, Kerala Forests and Wildlife Department Head Quarters, Thycaud, Thiruvananthapurum. The workshop was attended by Forest Department field protection staff, protection staff from Coast Guard, Marine Enforcement Agency, local NGOs active in coastal conservation, fishermen representatives etc. The programme was inaugurated by Mr. D.K. Verma, IFS, Conservator of Forests (Social Forestry) in a function presided over by Mr. Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director, WWF-India. The technical sessions were led by Dr. Bijukumar, Lecturer, Dept. of Aquatic Biology and Fisheries, University of Kerala, Dr. Kamalakshan Kokkal, Principal Scientific Officer, KSCSTE and Dr. Vinod M., Senior Coordinator, Marine Programme, WWF-India. Local conservation groups shared their experience from the field. An open session was also included for the participants to have interaction with the scientists and experts.

Planning Workshop on Marine biodiversity Conservation along the coast of Thiruvananthapuram

Formation of the First Model Coastal Eco-development Committee (EDC) has been proposed for Vizhinjam and surrounding areas to address marine biodiversity conservation and related issues along the coastal stretches. The proposal came in the discussion and planning meeting conducted at Thiruvananthapuram jointly organised by WWF-India and Kerala Forests and Wildlife Department. The meeting was attended by officials from various enforcement agencies, NGO representatives, local fishermen community representatives and panchayat authorities. The meeting was convened in the light of the recent frequent reports of marine species killing along the coastal stretches of Thiruvananthapuram which mainly includes turtles, whale sharks and dolphins which are all included under Schedule 1 of Wildlife Protection Act. The meeting opened with a presentation by Mr. Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director, WWF-India which gave an overview of the issue and its intensity, what is the present status and the way forward. After the presentation, it was time for open discussion which was led by Dr. Bijukumar, Lecturer, Department of Aquatic Biology, University of Kerala and Dr. Appukuttan, retired Senior Scientist, CMFRI. The others who contributed includes Mr. Pradeepkumar, DFO, Forests and Wildlife Department, Sri. Denson Castro, Vice President, Vizhinjam Grama panchayat, Fr. George Gomez, Ms. Latha from People for Animals and Ms. Aswathy from KSCSTE.
2. ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

2.1 Teachers Training Workshops

Like that of previous years, WWF-India, Kerala State Office has started off with Teachers Training Workshops on Environment Education targeting School and College teachers and for Teacher Trainees in association with CPREEC, Chennai.

Thodupuzha - First of the Teachers Training Workshop series on Environment Education in Kerala during the academic year 2009-2010 being organized by WWF-India, Kerala State Office and supported by CPR Environment Education Centre was held on 24th June 2009 at Govt. Higher Secondary School, Thodupuzha. Fifty two teachers from three taluks of Idukki District participated in the workshop. “Save Idukki Campaign” movement and authorities of the Thodupuzha Municipality provided all the local support for the successful conduct of the workshop. The workshop was inaugurated by Smt. Sheela Jayan, Chairperson of the Thodupuzha Municipality in the function presided over by Smt. K.S. Vijayakumari, Chairperson of the Standing Committee, Health and Education, Thodupuzha Municipality. Sri. Muraleedharan Nair, Headmaster of the School, Sri. James Mlakkuzhy, Vice Chairman of Save Idukki Campaign felicitated the workshop. The technical sessions were led by Sri. Raveendran and Sri. A.K. Sivakumar. Activity session and action plan preparation was also conducted.

Pala - The second programme was held at Holy Cross Higher Secondary School, Cherpunkal, Pala on 14th July 2009 with the participation of 45 teachers from different schools of Kottayam District. The workshop was inaugurated by Rev. Fr. Mathew Malepparambil, former Principal of St. Thomas College, Pala and an eminent personality both in education and conservation movement of Central Kerala. The inaugural session was chaired by Smt. Marykutty, Principal of Holy Cross Higher Secondary School, Cherpunkal. The technical sessions were handled by Dr. Jomy Augustine, Sri A.K. Sivakumar and Sri Mathew M. Kuriakose. Group discussion also followed.

Thalassery, Kannur - The third workshop was held at Thalassery, Kannur District on 13th August, 2009 with the participation of 40 teachers from different schools of Thalassery educational district. The workshop was inaugurated by Sri. Raju Master, Vice President of the Chittariparamba Grama panchayat in the function that was presided
over by Smt. Santhakumari, Headmistress of UP School, Kannavam. The technical sessions were led by Mr. C. Sunilkumar, Senior News Photographer, Mathrubhoomi and Member, Wildlife Board, Government of Kerala and Mr. A.K. Sivakumar, Education Officer, WWF-India. Activity session and Action plan preparation exercise were also part of the one day programme.

**Kannavam, Kannur** - The fourth Teachers Training Workshop was held at UP School, Kannavam in Kannur district. This workshop was a follow up workshop with the participation of 42 teachers from different parts of the district who participated in the workshops conducted in the last two years. The workshop was inaugurated by Sri. K.P. Mohanan, MLA who is also the member of Environmental Committee of Kerala Legislature Assembly in the function that was presided over by Sri. Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director of WWF-India, Kerala State Office. Sri. Sahilraj, Coordinator of the BRC of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) felicitated the workshop and appreciated WWF-India and CPREEC in organizing the follow-up programmes also. The technical sessions were handled by Mr. C. Sunilkumar, Mr. A.K. Sivakumar and Mr. Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director, WWF-India. Mr. Renjan also conducted a general quiz on Nature and Environment. The participants participated in the quiz with great enthusiasm and team spirit. The planning and action plan preparation session followed.

**Alappuzha** - The fifth workshop was held on 21st August 2009 at St. Josephs High School, Punnapra, Alappuzha with the participation of 42 teachers from different schools of Alappuzha district. Sri. Romeo James, Secretary of District Science Club introduced the organizers of the workshop. This was followed by an introduction of the workshop by Sri. A.K. Sivakumar. The first session on “Significance of Environment Education in the context of Global warming as a threat to human existence” was led by Sri. K.J. Suresh, Lecturer in Environment Education of NSS Training College, Changanachery. The second session on the “Basic principles on Environment Education with reference to Wetlands and its conservation” was led by Sri. A.K. Sivakumar. The post lunch session was an activity session where the teachers were grouped into five and asked to design and demonstrate mini drama for duration of five minutes. The threats to the wetlands like reclamation, indiscriminate use of pesticides, sand mining, industrial development and tourism were given as the themes.
Sooranad, Kollam - The sixth in the series of Teachers Training Workshop and the first targeting Teacher Trainees was held at Millath College of Teacher Education, Sooranad, Kollam on 23rd October. The workshop was inaugurated by Smt. Radhamony Amma, Principal of the college. Technical sessions on the topic ‘Environmental Education and school education’ and ‘Environmental problems of Kerala’ were led by Sri. Abraham Thomas, Selection Grade Lecturer in Education, Peet Memorial Training College, Mavelikara and Mr. A.K.Sivakumar. The post lunch session was based on two activities that sensitised the participants towards their role in Environment Education. The entire participants were divided into 6 teams and two teams were assigned to prepare a mini drama of five minutes duration on specific environmental problems. The remaining four teams were asked to find out the spots and stripes on living things within their campus and to note them with number. Changing lifestyle and food habits was the theme of the first drama and deforestation and pollution was the theme for the second one.

Vallachira, Thrissur - The seventh programme was held at Santa Maria Academy, Vallachira, Thrissur on 2nd December 2009. Forty-six teachers from different schools attended the single day workshop organised from 10am to 4.30pm. The workshop was inaugurated by Ms. Molly Thayyil, President of Sahodaya Schools (Association of CBSE Schools) of the district and Principal of the venue school. Technical sessions on ‘Significance of Environment Education in Schools and the Society’ and ‘Basic principles on Environment Education with reference to Wetlands and its conservation’ was led by Sri. K.M. Jayahari, Programme Officer of Winrock India, New Delhi and by the Education Officer. The post lunch sessions included a technical session on Wetlands of Kerala and How to run Nature Clubs by Education Officer and Sri. Jain J. Therattil from St. Alosious College, Thrissur. Two activity sessions were introduced in the form of some games that could be used as a tool for imparting environment education to the young student community. The game ‘Tiger in our life’ and mini drama presentation on environment related issues were done by the teachers and their involvement was really appreciable.

Pavaratty, Thrissur - The eighth workshop was held at St. Joseph’s B.Ed College, Pavaratty, Thrissur on 13th January 2010. The workshop was attended by 130 Teacher Trainees from three institutions and was inaugurated by Fr. Sebi Palamattathu, Manager of St. Joseph’s Educational Institutions in a function that was presided over by Smt. K. Santhakumari, Principal of the college. Technical sessions on ‘Environment
Education’ and Environmental issues of Kerala’ were led by Sri.Jain J. Therattil and A.K.Sivakumar. Activity sessions included games and mini dramas and skits based on the presentation done on environmental issues of Kerala. Both the activities lifted the energy level of the workshop and made it highly interactive. During the concluding session, participants expressed their thanks to the organizers for providing them such a chance to conceive more clearly the concepts and ideas on environment education.

**Kuzhalmannom, Palakkad** - The ninth workshop in the series was held at Indu Memorial B Ed College, Kuzhalmannom, Palakkad on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2010. The workshop was attended by 110 Teacher Trainees from three institutions and was inaugurated by Sri.K.V.Vijayan, President of Kuzhalmannom Panchayat in a function that was presided over by Sri.Mohandas, Standing Committee Chairman of Health and Environment of the Panchayat. Sri.P.Sankaranarayanan, Principal of the college welcomed the guests and participants. Sri.Udayakumar V.K., Panchayat Member felicitated the meeting. Technical sessions on ‘Biodiversity and Humans’ and ‘Environmental issues of Kerala’ were led by Sri. S.Guruvayoorappan, Programme Co-ordinator of Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI), Southern Region and A.K.Sivakumar. During the activity session, entire participants were divided into groups of 10 and were asked to prepare mini dramas and skits based on the presentation done on environmental issues of Kerala. Followed by this a game to find out the spots and stripes on living things within their campus was exercised.

**Kozhikode** - The 10<sup>th</sup> workshop was held on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2010 at Prestige Public School, Kozhikode. The workshop was attended by 37 Teachers from different schools of the district. The workshop was inaugurated by Smt.Sahirabanu, Principal of the school in a function that was presided over by Sri. A.K.Sivakumar. Following the inaugural session, a multimedia presentation on the topic “Environmental issues at global and local scenario” was led by Dr.Muhammad Rafeequ of Dept. of Botany, Malabar Christian College, an active member of Malabar Natural History Society (MNHS), Kozhikode. Second session was led by Sri.A.K.Sivakumar on the topic “Biodiversity Conservation and Environment Education”. In the post lunch session, the participants were divided into six groups and asked to design and demonstrate a skit based on the previous technical sessions. They had group discussions in teams and presented the same with adequate creativity and conceptualization. Solid waste management, tree
felling, irresponsibility of public in environmental management, wetland reclamation, student involvement in conservation, real estate mafia etc were the topics they portrayed through their skits of five minute duration allotted for each team.

**Wayanad** - The 11th workshop was held on 21st January 2010 at Govt. Vocational Higher Secondary School, Kalpetta, Wayanad. The workshop was attended by 61 Teachers from different schools. The workshop was inaugurated by Sri.K.Muhammad, Principal of the school in a function that was presided over by Sri. A.K.Sivakumar. Sri.C.Jayarajan, District Convener of NGC programme welcomed the participants and guests to the workshop and Sri. Thomas Stephan, State Vanamitra Award Winner delivered the vote of thanks. Sri.A.K.Sivakumar, led a session on ‘Climate Change and Environment Education’ with the help of a multimedia presentation followed by an open discussion on ‘Eco-friendly lifestyle’ that can be adopted by each individual without any compulsion or any extra pain. The participants involved very actively in this session and collectively viewed this as the best part of the workshop. The post lunch session was led by Sri.P.A.Ajayan, an environmentalist and member of Ferns, a nature conservation organization of the district. The session was on the potential of environment education in the district with reference to the biodiversity richness.

**Pala** - The 12th Workshop was held at St.Thomas College of Teacher Education, Pala on 4th February 2010 with the participation of 140 Trainees. The workshop was inaugurated by Prof. Austin Michael, Former Principal of the college in a function that was presided over by Sri.Jose P. Matttom, the Principal of the college. A manuscript magazine ‘Mukulangal’ was released by Sri.Michael and was received by Sri.Jomy Augustin, HOD, Dept. of Botany of St. Thomas College. The first technical session on “*Man and others - life vs life*” was led by Dr.Jomy Augustin, a well known taxonomist of the State. The second technical session on Environment Education and Global warming was led by Sri. A.K.Sivakumar. The third session in the afternoon was an activity session and the participants were divided into six groups based on their subjects and asked to prepare new educational games that would help in the process of imparting Environment Education. They had a 30 minute long brain storming session for this and presented their new games and ideas. The session was highly interactive with songs, names of
places, fruits, vegetables and so on. It helped to lift the energy level of the participants and to make the workshop into a two-way dialogue.

**Ottapalam, Palakkad** - NSS Training College, Ottapalam hosted the 13<sup>th</sup> workshop. The programme was attended by 172 Teacher Trainees from 6 Teacher Training Institutions. The workshop was inaugurated by Dr. Gopalakrishna Kurup, Head of the Department of Botany, NSS College, Palappuram in the function that was presided over by Dr. S. Premkumar, Principal of the Training College. Sri. Abdul Gafoor E.K. of Salafia Training College, Karinganad felicitated the workshop. Technical sessions were led by Sri. K. J. Suresh, Lecturer in Education of NSS Training College, Changanassery, Dr. C. V. Sreerenjitkumar, Dept. of Zoology, Govt. Victoria College, Palakkad, Mr. Jain J. Therattil of St. Alosyious College, Thrissur and Nature Club Co-ordinator of the district for WWF-India and Mr. A. K. Sivakumar, Education Officer. In the activity session, the participants were divided into groups and asked to design dramas or skits that project local level environmental issues and concerns and to present the same in the venue. Uncontrolled exploitation and pollution of Bharathapuzha, popularly known as Nila, changing land use pattern, unscientific developmental process, less commitment of social leaders on environmental matters, changing lifestyles and attitudes were the topics they selected. The dramas and skits were good and touching upon most of the environmental problems of Kerala.

**Mavelikara** - The 14<sup>th</sup> training workshop was held at Peet Memorial Training College, Mavelikara on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> February 2010. It was attended by 84 Teacher Trainees from 4 Teacher Training Institutions. The workshop was inaugurated by Prof. Anne Paul, who has years of experience in the capacity of Principal for different Teacher Training Institutes, and a Lecturer in Natural Science, in the function that was presided over by Dr. Ashok Alex Philip, Principal of the Training College. Sri. E. K. Jijan, Lecturer in English of Mount Tabor Training College felicitated the workshop. Technical sessions were led by Sri. K. J. Suresh, Sri. Abraham Thomas of Peet Memorial Training College, Mavelikara and Ms. Salini G., Research Officer from WWF-India, Kerala State Office. In the activity session, all the participants were divided into five groups and asked to visit different areas of Mavelikara, to find out the local environmental problems and they had to prepare an environment education project to address the same. They visited Kottathode, Thazhakkarapuncha, Vallikkavu, Kottarkavu and Prayikkara.
Kasargod - The 15th and last workshop in the series for this academic year was held on 24th February 2010 at Apsara Public School, Kasaragod. The workshop was attended by 42 Teachers from 28 schools of the district. The workshop was inaugurated by Dr. Madhava Panikkar, (Retd) Deputy Director of Collegiate Education and known environmentalist of the district. Sri. Kunjambu Nair, District Convener of the NGC programme felicitated the function and offered all possible help for the follow-up of the programme. Following the inaugural session, Dr. Panikkar led the session on the ‘Importance of Environment Education and Conservation’ in the background of water resource conservation and management. A movie named ‘Jalam Jeevamrutham’ on water resources and conservation of Kerala was screened. The session on ‘Basic principles and action of Environment Education’ and was led by Sri. A.K. Sivakumar.

After the lunch break, Mr. Sivakumar led another short session on ‘Ecosystem Interpretation’ that helped the participants in capacity building to be good interpreters and they proved the same in the next activity session in which participants were divided into five groups and assigned various topics like pond, river, forests, banyan tree and paddy fields. They were provided with chart sheets and sketch pens to prepare a pictorial interpretation on the same topics. The last session was a game asking the participants in teams to sing the maximum possible number of songs staring with the names of flowers. Each team put forward two names and other groups sang the songs. This session helped them to realize the cultural value of flowers and very much helped in raising the energy level of the programme.

2.2 Commemoration of Environmentally Important Days

World Environment Day
As part of World Environment Day celebrations on June 5th, Mr. Renjan Mathew Varghese addressed the students of LeCole Chempaka School during the function organised as part of the morning assembly. A talk was given using multimedia presentation to the staff of UST Global at Technopark as part of the day.

Ozone Day 2009
International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer 2009 was commemorated on 16th and 17th of September 2009 at Ernakulam. On 16th, painting and mini drama/skit competitions was organized at Rotary Auditorium, Panampilly Nagar, Kochi. About 50 students from 8 different educational institutions participated. Master Akash K. of Cochin
Refineries School, Ambalamukal, Kum. Stephy Caroline Stanley of SBOA Public (Sr. Sec) School, Chittoor and Master. Basil Baby Alex of Cochin Refineries School, Ambalamukal bagged 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} prizes. Kum. Rachana Ramesh and Master. Dawn Abraham of Cochin Refineries School, Ambalamukal were awarded with the consolation prizes.

On 17\textsuperscript{th}, for the awareness programme, Mr. Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director, introducing the workshop, explained the history of Ozone Day celebrations and about the various programmes held at the global and local level to educate and generate awareness among the different sections of the society. Dr. V. Madhu, Lecturer, Department of Atmospheric Sciences, Cochin University of Science and Technology was the Chief Guest and he inaugurated the awareness programme. With his vast experience in extensive global and local data collection on ozone layer and its various related parameters and his research expertise, the participants really had a great opportunity to hear and learn about the various aspects of the ozone layer. Mr. K.S. Vijayakumar, Chief Environmental Scientist from the Central Laboratory in Cochin under the State Pollution Control Board delivered the special address on the occasion. Mr. Harinath V. from JCI Cochin delivered the vote of thanks concluding the inaugural programme. After tea break, the documentary brought out by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) – ‘Ozzy Ozone’ was screened for the benefit of the participants. Mr. Ramachandran, retired scientist from ISRO and an active member of Kerala Sastra Sahithya Parishad (KSSP) led the technical session titled ‘Ozone layer – its facts and issues’. He had very good interaction with the students. Mr. A.K. Sivakumar, Education Officer of WWF-India led a quiz programme on the theme. More than a competition, it was an awareness generation activity. The students thoroughly enjoyed the session. It was more of an interactive learning process. In the valedictory function, the winners of the competitions were announced and awards and certificates distributed.

In addition to this programme, A.K. Sivakumar, Education Officer took awareness classes on Ozone depletion and its impacts on 19\textsuperscript{th} and 23\textsuperscript{rd} at Govt. HSS, Kezharoor and Govt. HSS, Venjaramoodu, Thiruvananthapuram. The sessions helped in sensitizing the student community on ozone depletion and related topics.
Coastal Cleanup Day 2009

WWF-India, Kerala State Office with volunteers from TIDY CITY and Nature Club members observed International Coastal Cleanup Day 2009 with the beach-cleaning programme from 7am to 9.00 am at Shanghumughom Beach on Saturday, September 19th. This is the fourth time the event is being observed locally under the initiative of WWF – India. This is the largest and most successful volunteer event of its kind globally and in Thiruvananthapuram about 15 volunteers participated in the clean-up drive. More than a cleanup drive, the significance of the event is with regard to the collection of the litter from a unit stretch of the beach and its segregation and further quantification. The data collected is input into a standard datasheet which will then be shared with an international agency who with its global partners compile the data and come out with the final report on the trends in our coastal and marine pollution at the global scale.

Wildlife Week 2009 - Wild Wisdom Quiz Competition

The Wild Wisdom Quiz 2009 got off to a vibrant start with the first regional round being conducted in St. Mary’s HSS, Pattom, Thiruvananthapuram. Nineteen teams of two students each from the schools of southern region of Kerala including Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam and Alappuzha districts participated in the competition. The quiz was mastered by Mr. A.K. Sivakumar and assisted by Ms. Shalini and Mr. Hari. The quiz questions were very comprehensive being categorised into eight subsections covering forests, wildlife, protected areas, flora, fauna, personalities, institutions, laws and legislations etc. The quiz was more Kerala centric but had few questions on national and international issues on wildlife conservation also. The teams from Chinmaya Vidyalaya (Vazhuthacaud), Sree Narayana Guru Central School (Ezhukone, Kollam) and Cherupushpa Bethany School (Alappuzha) bagged the first, second and third prizes respectively.

The regional round conducted at Kozhikode on 7th October was held at Prestige Public School, Mankavu. Eighteen teams of two students each from the schools of northern region of Kerala including Kozhikode, Malappuram and Kasargod districts participated in the competition. The quiz was mastered by Mr. A.K. Sivakumar and assisted by Ms. Seema and other faculties of the school. The teams from Al-Haramine English School, Puthiyangadi, Devagiri CMI Public School and Veda Vyasa Vidyalayam, Kozhikode
bagged the first, second and third prizes respectively. In the regional round conducted for Central Kerala at Thrissur on 7th October at Govt. Model Boys School, the quiz was mastered by Mr. Jain. J Therattil, District Co-ordinator of WWF-NCI. Sacred Heart English Medium Senior Sec. School, Malappuram and Rajagiri HSS, Ernakulam bagged the first and second prizes. Semi final of the Wild Wisdom Quiz 2009 was held on 10th October at the Radio Kiosk of Museum Garden at Thiruvananthapuram.

The first and second winners from the northern, central and southern regions participated in the semifinal. The eight round quiz was mastered by Mr. Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director and Mr. A.K. Sivakumar, Education Officer of WWF-India and assisted by Ms. Shalini, Ms. Aswathy and Mr. Hari. The teams from Rajagiri HSS, Kalamassery (Ernakulam), Sree Narayana Guru Central School, Ezhukone (Kollam) and Chinmaya Vidyalaya, Vazhuthacaud (Thiruvananthapuram) bagged the first, second and third prizes respectively. The winning team from the State competed with 13 teams from the other states at the grand finale on 14th November, 2009 at New Delhi and they won the second price.

Salim Ali Day
WWF-India, Kerala State Office and Viswadarshanam, Pathanamthitta jointly observed the Dr. Salim Ali Day 2009 with two sessions of bird watching at Pathanamthitta on 12th November 2009. Nearly fifty students attended the programme. Education Officer and Sri. C. Harikumar led the technical sessions and the field bird watching. The participants were able to observe about thirty six species of birds around the venue. Multimedia presentations on bird watching and Birds of Kerala were presented and the same helped the participants in the field activity also.

World Wetlands Day 2010
World Wetlands Day 2010 was observed by WWF-India, Kerala State Office at NSS Training College, Changanassery, lying in close proximity to wetlands, canals, paddy fields and marshes around Vembanad Lake, the largest Ramsar Site of India. The programme was attended by 155 Teacher Trainees and their faculty. The workshop was inaugurated by Sri. K. Gopalakrishnan Nair, Vice-Chairman, Municipal Council, Changanassery in a function presided over by Smt. Christal Gladis, Principal of the
institutions. Participants were provided with a set of 3 posters on wetlands. Mr. A.K.Sivakumar and Sri.Renjan Mathew Varghese from WWF-India led the technical session on ‘Wetlands in general, national and state scenario’ and ‘Threats and Conservation Issues of Wetlands’. A quiz programme exclusively on Wetlands was led by Mr.Sivakumar. The poster competition conducted in connection with the event was thought provoking and informative. The poster set prepared by teams of Physical Science and Mathematics were selected as first and second respectively.

In a similar programme organised at NSS College, Cherthala, Ms. G. Salini, Research Officer of WWF-India, Kerala State Office presented a multimedia presentation on Wetlands as part of a half day seminar. Sixty students from the various disciplines of environmental science, zoology and botany participated in the programme.

**World Forestry Day 2010**

As part of celebrating World Forestry Day around the globe to sensitize various sections of the society about the importance, values and functions of the forest ecosystem, WWF-India, Kerala State Office jointly with Shanthivanam Nature Club of Govt. Brennen College, Thalassery supported by Global Forest and Trade Network (GFTN) and European Commission organized competitions for college students on 21st and Awareness programme on 22nd March 2010 at the College Seminar Hall. The programme included Inter Collegiate Quiz Competition on Nature and Environment, Inter Collegiate Poster Design Competition, technical talks, release of resource materials (poster series), exhibition on information panels on Biodiversity of Kerala, exhibition of photo panels on Mangrove Ecosystem of Kerala etc.

**Earth Hour 2010 at Thiruvananthapuram**

Earth Hour 2010 was commemorated in Thiruvananthapuram in a grand way organised jointly by WWF-India, Kerala State Office, NIMS Heart Foundation, NI Educational Trust and Energy Management Centre. Various pre-event campaigns were held for publicity. Press meeting was held and repeated press releases were given. The major event was organised at Gandhi Park on 27th March from 7.30 – 9.30pm which included Musical programme by MBS Youth Choir, Lights Switch Off and Candle light vigil led by Sri Jayan Babu, Worshipful Mayor of Thiruvananthapuram Corporation and many other
dignitaries and Magic show on Energy Conservation led by Mr J.P Ajit. The programme was well received by all sections of the society.

2.3 Invited talks, lectures and presentations

Invited talks

Mr. Renjan delivered invited talks

- On ‘Wetland Ecosystem’ in the two day workshop on Wetland Ecosystem Conservation and Management’ organised at Alappuzha by St. Joseph’s College for Women.

- On ‘Sustainable Development’ in the two day training and capacity building workshop for NSS Volunteers at Thiruvananthapuram organised by NSS Circle, Thiruvananthapuram and supported by EMAK.

- On ‘Natural Resource Management’ in the week long Training for ACFs organised by Kerala Forests and Wildlife Department at Thiruvananthapuram.


- On ‘Global warming and Climate Change’ at Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Engineering and Technology, Kottayam on 11th March, 2010.

- On ‘Global warming and Climate Change’ at Noorul Islam University of Science and Technology at Thakkala, Tamilnadu

Mr. Sivakumar delivered talks and lectures


- On ‘Environment protection’ at Mar Theophilus Training College, Thiruvananthapuram on 8th Oct in which sixty-five Teacher Trainees participated.

- An interactive awareness session on Environment and Nature at Madavoor Central School, Kollam on 26th October in which about 40 children attended.

- Mastered a quiz competition as part of State Children’s Environmental Congress organized by the State Biodiversity Board on 11th November 2009 at Kanakakkunnu Palace, Thiruvananthapuram.
- One-day training session for the selected Guide Trainees of Thenmala Ecotourism Programme at Thenmala that was organized by TEPS. The programme included technical sessions on birds and bird watching and its practical demonstration in the field.

Technical session at Institute of Management in Government on 28th October 2009
State Director Mr. Renjan delivered a talk on ‘Environmental Impact Assessment and its various aspects’ to the officers from the various departments of the government who were participants of the weeklong training and capacity building program at IMG. Practical hands on session were also given. Education Officer Mr. Sivakumar delivered a multimedia presentation on “Natural Resource Management”. The talk detailed on depleting natural resources and the issues and concerns with regard to its management.

Awareness sessions in Colleges of Teacher Education
Education Officer delivered a multimedia presentation on ‘Environmental issues of Kerala’ at Swami Vivekananda College of Teacher Education, Mayilumpuram, Palakkad which was attended by 120 Teacher Trainees. Possible intervention by teacher community and potential of environment education in these issues were discussed in this session. The session was well appreciated by the participants as it was quiet a new experience in their career. In a similar programme, Education Officer presented a multimedia presentation on ‘Environment Education’ at Govt. College of Teacher Education, Thalassery as part of inaugurating their Nature Club on 22nd January 2010.

Nature awareness programme at Peet Memorial Training College, Mavelikara
WWF-India, Kerala State Office organized a one day Nature Awareness Programme at Peet Memorial Training College on 25th January. Students from three schools participated in the programme which comprised of two technical sessions and a quiz programme on wetlands. The active involvement of about 80 students from Bishop Hodges HSS, Mavelikara, Govt. Girls HSS, Mavelikara and Mahatma High School for Girls, Chennithala was very evident from their questions and clarification regarding the technical sessions. Mr. Abraham Thomas, Lecturer in Natural Science, Peet Memorial Training College and Mrs. Salini G., Research Officer, WWF-India, Kerala State Office led the technical sessions on ‘Importance of nature conservation’ & ‘Environmental
Issues of Wetlands’. The quiz programme on wetlands was mastered by Sri. C. Harikumar, resource person of WWF-India. This activity raised the energy level of the students. Bishop Hodges HSS won the first place. Awards to the winners and participation certificates were distributed.

**Paper presentations**

**State level Workshop on Water Governance**
Mr. Renjan attended the two-day national seminar organised by SEUF at Thrissur and presented a paper titled ‘Role of NGOs and CBOs in Water Conservation and its Governance’.

**Kerala University National Seminar on Environment and Development**
Mr. Renjan attended the three-day seminar at Thiruvananthapuram and presented a paper titled ‘World’s Top Ten Rivers at Risk and the Kerala Scenario’.

**Annam Seminar on National Food and Agrobiodiversity**
Mr. Renjan attended the three-day seminar at Kozhikode and presented a paper titled ‘Food Security – A critical review of the situation in God’s Own Country’.

**International Conference on Mountain Biodiversity: Conservation, Sustainable Utilisation and Management’**
Mr. Renjan attended the 3-day conference from 13th – 15th March at Dehradun organised by Doon University. He presented a paper titled ‘Participatory Forest Conservation in the Western Ghats – A critical review of NAP in Munnar, Kerala’.

**2.4 Friday Forums**
Friday forum, the monthly interactive open forum for the student community to discuss the environment related topics were conducted on both months with more than 150 student’s participation.

**July 2009** - Unlike normal presentations, the Friday Forum was arranged on the 3rd of the month as a Quiz Programme for the participants titled ‘Quiz on Nature and Environment’. Mr. Vishnu M.J., student of Integrated M.A. in Development Studies and a
Master Quizzer conducted the quiz for the students. The students accepted it with great enthusiasm and thoroughly enjoyed the programme.

**August 2009** - The Friday Forum was arranged on the theme of ‘Marine Biodiversity’. Dr. Bijukumar, Lecturer, Dept of Aquatic Biology and Fisheries, University of Kerala led the session. About 150 students attended the programme. The students really benefited from the presentation and the interaction session which followed.

**October** – This session was arranged on the theme of ‘Wildlife of Kerala – Issues and Concerns’. The talk on the subject was delivered by Mr. E. Kunhikrishnan, Lecturer, Department of Zoology, University College, Thiruvananthapuram. With his strong background of long years of field level conservation, he could explain to the students about the richness in the wildlife of Kerala, be it flora and fauna and he also elaborated the various threats to our wildlife resources and how we need to conserve them. About 120 students attended and had very good interaction.

**November** - Friday forum, the monthly interactive forum for Nature Club members of Thiruvananthapuram for this month was on the topic ‘Rivers of Kerala - issues and concerns’ and was led by Dr.George Chakkachery, Scientist and Officer-in-charge of CWRDM sub-center, Thiruvananthapuram. The forum was attended by 120 students from different schools in and around the City. The programme was highly interactive and informative.

**December** - Friday Forum, the monthly interactive forum for Nature Club members of Thiruvananthapuram had a major change in this month from the usual and that was in the form of presentations by each individual participant schools. Poster presentation and PowerPoint presentation by students on different topics were held by the various schools and this assured the involvement of student community in this unique programme.

**3. NATURE CAMPS**

**3.1 Nature Orientation Camp in Nilgiris**

A four day camp was conducted covering various places in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve with fourteen participations, mainly family members of supporters and well wishers of the
organization from 10th to 14th September. The camp started at Nilambur where Kerala shares its boarder with Karnataka and Tamilnadu. The team visited the Canolly's plot, the ever first teak plantation of Kerala, teak museum of KFRI and Nedumkayam forests. On the second day the team got a chance to have a van ride through the forests of Muthumala WLS which offered good wildlife sightings. At Masinagudy the team visited the farm lands, tribal huts and nearby forests. In the evening they visited Bandhipur NP and were treated to excellent sightings. A held of nearly 300 spotted deers were there in the vicinity of the forest office by late evening. The trip was highly interesting with sighting all these animals. The third day's trip was to Ooty, where the campers enjoyed the serene beauty of the place as well as understand the negative impact of tourism on the area. They got a chance to interact with the farmers of the place harvesting carrot and understood the issues associated with agriculture. The camp ended with the travel back to Thiruvananthapuram.

3.2 Nature Education Camp for team from Gujarat

The group of 37 students and teachers from Gujarat under the auspices of Valsad Divisional Office of WWF-India really enjoyed and understood Kerala’s precious and unique natural resources during the six day long camp from 11th to 16th October organized by Kerala State Office covering Thenmala, Periyar Tiger Reserve, Eravikulam National Park and Vazhachal forests.

3.3 Nature Education Camp at Nelliyampathy

An open Nature Education Camp was organized for our supporters and well wishers at Nelliyampathy, Palakkad from Oct 30 - Nov 1st 2009. The area is pristine forest of Nemmara taluk of Palakkad district with rich habitat and biodiversity. Evergreen, deciduous, semi-evergreen and teak plantations also keeps the habitat varied. The base camp was the Thoothanpara Estate which is in the midst of forest and was acquired from the Poabson plantations after their lease period. The team experienced wonderful nature walks within the forest areas and had rich wildlife sightings and was treated to the sweet and melodious calls of a variety of birds. The camp was led by Mr. A.K. Sivakumar and Mr.Biju P.B.
3.4 Nature Education Trip to Chathancode

The trip was had participation of 8 professionals from US Technologies, Technopark, Thiruvananthapuram and was led by Education Officer from WWF-India. The team had a nice and informative nature watch through the evergreen and deciduous forest of Chathancode and enjoyed the fresh stream and waterfalls of Thodayar, a part of Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary of Thiruvananthapuram district.

A second trip was arranged to Chathancode, the tribal hamlet near the Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary on 5\textsuperscript{th} December 2009 and had participation of 14 professionals of US Technology, Technopark, Thiruvananthapuram. The trip was led by Education Officer from WWF-India. The team had a nice interaction with the local tribal people and informative nature watch through the evergreen and deciduous forest of Chathancode. It was a totally different experience for them from their normal routine.

3.5 Three day camp held at Nelliyampathy

WWF-India, Kerala State Office conducted a Nature Education Camp at Nelliyampathy, Palakkad from 14\textsuperscript{th} to 16\textsuperscript{th} December 2009 with the participation of 20 students from MAMO College, Kozhikode. The nature walk within the vicinity of the estate was interesting and was a totally fresh experience to the participants. Few sessions on field level conservation issues were led by Mr.C.Harikumar, resource person from WWF-India and Mr. A.K.Sivakumar. During the long walk in the subsequent two days, the students experienced the sight and sound of many birds and animals. In the evenings, the students were trained to experience the nature by their ear and nose through ‘Feel the Nature’ session.

4. NATURE CLUBS

WWF-India, Kerala State Office presently coordinates 121 Nature Clubs under the NCI movement across the State. This includes schools, college, youth clubs and teacher training institutes. Kerala State Office provides them with all possible support for conducting local environment education and awareness programmes and also necessary support in intervening in local environmental issues. The Nature Clubs are regularly provided with WWF-India Newsletter (PANDA), Kerala State Office bimonthly newsletter (Mruthika), other printed resource materials like posters, stickers, PowerPoint
presentations, documentaries for screening and technical guidelines as and when necessary.

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5. INTERVENTION IN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

5.1 Campaign against tree felling in Thiruvananthapuram - Haritha Koottayma
The campaign against indiscriminate tree felling for road widening in Thiruvananthapuram City gained much momentum with the group coming together at Lenin Balavadi on 26th June, 2009 and deciding to conduct a series of roadside signature and awareness campaigns. The first campaign was organised at Thampanoor on 29th June, 2009. This was followed by campaigns in different places in the evenings covering Sasthamangalam, Vellayambalam, Kawdiar, Ayurveda College Jn etc. Mr. Vishnu, Intern and Harishkumar from WWF were involved in organizing the events.

5.2 Clearing of Valanthakad Mangroves
Mangrove ecosystem and its biodiversity is receiving greater attention in view of the Convention on Biological Diversity and is one among the most threatened ecosystem due to global climatic changes. Mangroves are well known for their faunal and floral diversity. The mangrove plants have several specific adaptations to the dynamic coastal environment. Mangroves also serve as a nursery, feeding and spawning grounds for several commercially important fishes. Mangrove ecosystem has various known and unknown functions and values to the planet and to the society, many of which cannot be quantified. As the development and management of mangrove ecosystems are given high priority the world over, the existing Valanthakad mangrove ecosystem of Cochin also deserves special attention in terms of conservation. Kerala, which once used to have vast extents of mangrove vegetation across the State, now has only small patches
left mainly in Kannur district. The major chunk has been replaced by development activities in various forms. Hence, it is very much the need of the hour to identify the leftover mangrove ecosystem and conserve it for the betterment of humankind. In this direction also, these islands of mangrove vegetation has high significance. Geographically the area lies within the boundaries at latitudes 9°55'10.24" North and longitudes 76°19'51.98" East, coming under Maradu Panchayat. The area is hardly 5 -6 km from the heart of Kochi city, alongside the National Highway (bypass 47). This mangrove exists as fringing vegetation distributed along the sides of the Cochin backwaters in Vembanad Lake. This island has around 44 families with a total population of 125. Majority of them seek out a living from fishing from nearby waters in a sustainable manner. It has to be stressed that majority of them belong to scheduled community. Among the existing mangroves ecosystems of Cochin backwaters, Valanthakad Island is one of the untouched patches of mangrove vegetation with rich biodiversity.

5.3 Background paper on opposing the project proposal by KINFRA for sea reclamation along Thiruvananthapuram coastal belt.
Kerala Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (KINFRA) under the Government of Kerala has called for Expression of Interest from consultants for undertaking pre-feasibility study for the proposed project titled ‘Preparation of a Pre-feasibility Report for a Land Reclamation Project in Thiruvananthapuram District’. The real issue is that the proposed land reclamation is ‘reclamation of land from the sea’ rather than from wetlands or paddy fields, even though is destructive and illegal is actually happening in a wide extent in our State. And this proposal is the ultimate in this chain of anthropogenic activities harming nature and the environment.

KINFRA actually proposes to reclaim about 5000 ha of coastal waters into land around the Akkulam – Veli precinct for the ultimate purpose of addressing the need for developable land and yet simultaneously resolve the conflict of interest between the need for urban expansion. They envisage that the proposed reclamation is intended to create the required area for the expansion of the International Airport, in addition to providing for housing and commercial development along the waterfront with attractive leisure/ recreation/ entertainment facilities and open spaces.
Prima facia, the proposed project does not seem to have any potential to achieve the said goals and objectives. Secondly, more than optimism, the proposed project raises doubts and concerns in the minds of people about every aspect of it:

- Violation of CRZ norms
- Technological feasibility
- Economic feasibility
- Environmental feasibility
- Social feasibility
- Security issues

Under these circumstances, we urged KINFRA and the Government of Kerala to revoke the tender for the pre-feasibility study and shelve the project proposal. Presently, land is not a scarce commodity that we need to reclaim sea for developmental activity. Let us judiciously use the land resources already available with us and try to complete the ongoing projects for which land and funds has already been made available, but then also the progress is on a snail’s pace.

5.4 Release of caged animal (monkey) in Idukki

An animal lover from outside Kerala, recently on his visit to various tourist locations in Kerala with his family came across a wild monkey that had been kept chained and caged in a tourist resort in Idukki district to serve as a “tourist attraction”. He explained the condition as ‘a pitiful sight indeed’. This was brought to the attention of the Species and Landscape Programme of WWF-India and from there to the Kerala State Office. Immediately we took it up with Sri. Thampi George, Local Co-ordinator and Sri M.N. Jayachandran, SPCA Idukki and they informed the Kerala Forests and Wildlife Department. When the Forest Department officials encountered the resort authorities and explained to them the significance of keeping such a wild animal caged and being convinced of the crime that they had unintentionally committed, they immediately freed the animal. This incident still proves the level of ignorance in the minds of people with regard to wildlife, status of various species and their protection.

5.5 Reclamation of vast extent of wetlands for golf course and other luxury amenities in and around Vembanad lake – the prestigious Ramsar Site of Kerala

The most recent and bizarre of development proposal being pushed forward by the Industries Department is by an international development firm proposing to reclaim 450 acres of wetlands named ‘Methran Kayal’ in Kuttanad area, and that too, to put up a 18 hole golf course, multi star hotel, condominium, luxury resorts etc. One has to realize
that this proposed wetland site is part of the internationally acclaimed Ramsar Site Vembanad. Vembanad is one of the largest wetland of Kerala extending across 4 or 5 districts. It gains much significance with regard to its values and functions, high biodiversity and immense livelihoods provided to a wide range of stakeholders across the State. If this is the form of development that our government and associated development agencies foresee and wants to push forward, then we have to beware about our future as Keralites in Kerala, because it seems that the Government is interested in catering luxuries to the minor rich, whereas the major poor loose their livelihoods and other conveniences and finds themselves in trouble. Earlier there was agriculture in all these lands. But about two years back, the land has been purchased from small land holding farmers giving about 13-14 lakhs per acre (normal rate being1lakh per acre) and since then it is lying as fallow land. The farmers cannot be blamed. In a State where agriculture till date has not been given the due priority (many promises and schemes remains on paper whereas farmers and farmer families are pushed to suicides), it is high time that the Government adopts a proactive approach to ensure the long term food security issue. The site has very good number of avian visitors also.

5.6 CRZ to CZMP and now back to CRZ

WWF-India, Kerala State Office has been proactively involved in the consultations, debates and workshops as part of the move by Union Ministry of Environment and Forests to change CRZ into CZMP as per the recommendations of the Swaminthan Commission and again with the stiff resistance from fishermen community and environmental groups to revert back to CRZ. Mr. Renjan, State Director in consultation with Mr. Vinod, Co-ordinator, Marine Programme has been following up the case as and when required. The campaign is led at the national level by National Fishermen Forum (NFF) and in Kerala by Kerala Swathanthra Matsya Thozhilali Federation (KSMTF).

5.7 Proposal to kill cormorants in Kollam to save declining fish population

WWF-India Kerala State Office responded actively and immediately regarding the proposed scheme under the Integrated District Development Plan (IDDP) for Kollam to cull and reduce the population of the Little Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax niger*). The IDDP is a government document prepared by the District Planning Committee. The IDDP scheme states that these fish-eating birds are a major cause for the depletion of fish
wealth in inland waterbodies. Fishermen depending on inland water fishing for their livelihood have expressed concern over this for long. The scheme aimed at culling 70 per cent of these birds from its present population of about 1,00,000 in the district. Under the scheme, an incentive of Rs.5 a bird will be given to a trained person for shooting down the bird with an air gun. The scheme states that the birds will be hunted only during evening when they return to roost. The issue was taken up with the respective authorities on the fact that cormorants are protected under the Wildlife Protection Act. The issue was also highlighted in leading dailies to attract public attention. Each and every creature has a right to life and safe and healthy environment. Without any proper survey and understanding of the interdependent biological cycles and interaction between various life forms, the district administration had proposed the same. The proposal was immediately scrapped.

5.8 Campaign against introduction of GM crops in India
The recent proposal by the GEAC of the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests to introduce Genetically Modified (GM) Crops into India, mainly BT Brinjal, was opposed at all levels by environmentalists, scientists, agriculturists and others. State Government of Kerala was also proactive in opposing the introduction. A nation wide campaign was launched in this regard. The campaign in Kerala was led by Kerala State Biodiversity Board and Thanal. WWF-India Kerala State Office offered all possible help and support in this campaign.

6. OTHER ACTIVITIES

6.1 Exhibition at Koodalmanikyam Temple, Irinjalakuda from 5th May, 2009
As part of the annual festival and exhibition at Koodalmanikyam Temple near Irinjalakuda, an exhibition was arranged. WWF-India in association with Kerala Forests and Wildlife Department put up an elaborate exhibition on the various aspects of ‘Biodiversity of Kerala’.

6.2 Forest Certification Project
In recent times, the increased demand for forest certification is likely to affect the economic prospects of wood based industry and plantations, including farm forestry/agro-forestry systems in India. The Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are particularly vulnerable in this context due to the lack of capacity and awareness but have
an important role to play to promote forest certification in the country. In order to meet
the growing demand for forest certification in the global market, the Indian industry has
to look for certified forests/plantations to source their raw materials. In India, forest
certification is still at very early stage and at present only one private plantation in Tamil
Nadu secured FSC Forest Management Unit certificate. WWF has established the
Global Forest and Trade Network (GFTN) to facilitate trade links between companies
committed to achieving and supporting responsible forestry and thereby creates market
conditions that help conserve the world’s forests while providing economic and social
benefits for the businesses and people that depend on them. GFTN-India was launched
on 3rd December 2008. In this context, a consultative meeting and training workshop on
“Forest Certification in India” was organized by WWF-India in collaboration with the
project associates on 19th May 2009 (9.30am - 5.30pm) at Hotel Taj Residency at
Kochi, Kerala. The objectives of the meeting were to (a) Understand the scope for forest
certification in India, with special reference to Kerala State (b) Identify suitable
approaches to promote forest certification (c) Create awareness on “credible forest
certification” and the benefits to the key stakeholders, and (d) Build capacity among
SME wood processors in Kerala to provide certified forest products. The participants of
this meeting included SME wood processors, forest and plantation managers, farm
forestry/agro forestry growers, timber traders, (including wooden handicraft exporters),
paper and pulp companies, retailers dealing with wood and non-wood forest products,
NGOs, R & D institutions, Government, certification bodies, financial institutions, builders
and architects. The programme was inaugurated by Sri P.K. Mohanty IAS, Principal
Secretary (Forests), Govt. of Kerala. Dr.T.R. Manoharan, Dr. Sejal Worah and Mr. Allan
Smith led the sessions.

6.3 Fisheries Certification Project
WWF-India Marine Programme is implementing a project on Fisheries Certification in
Kerala mainly targeting Oil Sardine and Squid. The Stakeholders Meeting of the project
was held in Cochin on 9th and 10th of March, 2010 in which Mr. Renjan attended full time.

6.4 Staff outing to Kallar and Ponmudi
WWF-India, Kerala State Office staff, families and internship students went for an outing
trip to Kallar and Ponmudi on 18th June, 2009. It was a real rare experience for all to get
to know each other better and to have very good interaction. The group started out from
Trivandrum by 8.00am. The 1.5km long trekking to Meenmutty waterfalls turned out to be a real challenge especially in the rugged terrain and heavy rainfall. But the team was enthusiastic enough to complete the trek, but returned back drenched. The group had lunch at Kallar and then proceeded to Ponmudi. The group was greeted with dense fog on the way itself and on top also the climate was very cold and windy. The group returned to the City by 7pm.

6.5 Nature Photography Competition at TKMIM on 19th June, 2009
As part of the nature club activities, LEAVES in association with WWF-India announced an Amature Nature Photography Competition. The entries were evaluated and winners selected. In this regard, a talk and Prize Distribution function was organised at TKM Institute of Management on 19th June, 2009. The talk on ‘Ecological Footprint’ was delivered by Mr. Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director, WWF-India. Mr. A.K. Sivakumar, Education Officer also spoke on the occasion.

6.6 Prithvi Ratna Essay Writing Competition on Climate Change
WWF-India in association with Union Ministry of Environment and Forests had launched the national essay writing competition on climate change. The competition was mainly targeted on school and college students. The essays could be either in English or Hindi. The national level winners would join as part of the delegation of the Government of India to the Copenhagen Summit. The event was organised at the state level by the State Office. The entries were invited and received, evaluated by a panel of judges and results sent to the Secretariat. The event received over whelming response from the student community.

6.7 Kerala Bird Race 2009
Kerala Bird Race 2009 is a national level bird watching programme conducted every year supported by HSBC. For 2009, the event in Thiruvananthapuram was held in six different locations in and around the City with the active participation of 54 birdwatchers ranging from the age of 10 - 70. The Bird Race was coordinated locally by WWF-India, Kerala State Office and Warblers & Waders. The participants were grouped into six teams and were equipped with binoculars and bird log books. Peroorkada, Akkulam wetlands, Punchakkari paddyfields - Vellayani Lake and surrounding areas, Arippa,
Museum – Zoo compound and Kallar - Ponmudi were the bird race sites. Each team compulsorily included an expert bird watcher accompanied by budding birdwatchers and enthusiasts. All the teams were out in the field the entire day up from 6am till 5 pm.

On return to the City, the participants gathered together in the Conference Hall at Hotel Pankaj, Thiruvananthapuram by 6pm. The gathering was inaugurated by Prof. D.Thankamony, Member Secretary of Kerala State Pollution Control Board. Sri. Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director of WWF-India welcomed the guests and participants of the programme. Sri Ajay Sondhi, Vice President and Branch Head of HSBC Thiruvananthapuram briefly on the background of the Bird Race and the CSR mandate of HSBC. Sri.J.Praveen, the State Coordinator of the Bird Race 2009 did a PowerPoint presentation on the Migrant Watch Programme and about the Bird Race. The presentation dealt with the trends of bird migration with respect to climate change. Sri. A.K.Sivakumar, Coordinator of the Bird Race and Education Officer of WWF-India briefed on the programme at Thiruvananthapuram and the sites of the race and it’s potential.

All the six team leaders along with their team members introduced themselves to the gathering and shared their experience and presented the findings. The location, number of species, Bird of the Day (most important sighting) and Dip of the Day (the bird most expected, but not seen) for each location, and the highlights of major observations were covered in the presentations. The judging panel comprising of Sri.C.Sushanth Kumar (Executive Member, Warblers and Waders) and Sri.S.Rajeevan (Advisory Board Member, Warblers and Waders) gave their comments and analysis of the findings. The winners who sighted maximum number of species were announced and the team Black Baza who had surveyed Arippa Forests won the 1st prize with a sighting of 87 species, the team Osprey who surveyed Punchakkari paddy fields and Vellayani Lake won the 2nd prize with 80 species and the team Honey Buzzard who visited Kallar - Ponmudi area won the 3rd prize with the sighting of 66 species. In total, the teams reported 145 species of birds during the Race. Mr. Unus Kunju who was the eldest among the participants and Master Kevin S. Biju who was the youngest birdwatcher of the race were also felicitated. About 30 photographs of Sri Sushanth Kumar were displayed in the venue and this attracted a lot of attention.
6.8 National Environment Awareness Campaign 2009-10
The awareness programme conducted as part of the National Environment Awareness Campaign 2009-10 organized jointly by WWF-India, Kerala State Office and Centre for Environment and Development with the support of Ministry of Environment and Forests, Govt. of India on the theme ‘Climate Change — combating a global phenomenon through local initiative’ was held on Monday, 8th February, 2010 at the Museum Auditorium, Thiruvananthapuram with the active participation of 165 students from 9 educational institutions of the district. The campaign was inaugurated by Prof.D.Thankamony, Member Secretary of Kerala State Pollution Control Board in a function that was presided over by Sri. Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director, WWF-India. Smt.Shilo K. Dev, Programme Coordinator (Outreach) of Centre for Environment and Development and Sri.Gangadharan, Education Officer of Museum and Zoo Directorate felicitated the campaign. A set of resource materials including six colorful posters, a set of four stickers and a CD ROM on the theme of energy conservation and climate change was released in the inaugural session for awareness creation among the students and public. The materials were released by the Chief Guest and were received by the teachers and students from the various schools. A multimedia presentation on ‘Climate Change and Low Carbon Future’ was presented by Sri. Renjan Mathew Varghese in which facts and figures of climate change and its impacts at global, national and local level were explained.

6.9 Exhibition and Information Stall at Annam in Kozhikode
Centre for Innovation in Science and Social Action (CISSA) organises Annam – National Food and Agro Biodiversity Festival every year since 2009. This year, the event was organised from February 11 – 15th at Kozhikode. WWF-India Kerala State Office with the support of GFTN-India and European Commission put up a stall as part of the festival. The stall was well received by the people of Kozhikode. Many queries on partnership programme and other possible initiatives were received. Some available resource materials were distributed free of cost to children. Mr. Harish Kumar, Office Attendant manned the staff for 5 days.

6.10 Seminar on Water Resource Management
WWF-India Kerala State Office in association with Department of Environmental Studies, Kerala University organised a one day seminar on ‘Water Resource Management’ for
the students of the various departments of the University. The seminar was inaugurated by Dr. Padmakumar, Member of Syndicate, University of Kerala. In his inaugural address he highlighted the international, national and local scenario of water resource, availability and management. Dr.V. Sobha, Professor, Department of Environmental Sciences and Mr. Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director, WWF-India was also present on the occasion and addressed the audience. The technical sessions were led by Dr. George Chackacherry and Dr.P.S.Harikumar from CWRDM, Dr.A.S.K. Nair from CESS, Mr. Subash Chandra Bose, Former Director, CCDU, Kerala Water Authority and Mr. Jojo T.D., Program Officer, ATREE, an NGO working in Alappuzha. The participants had very good interaction with the speakers especially with regard to clearing their doubts on how they can solve the problem of drinking water in their own locality. The seminar concluded by 4pm.

6.11 Participation in the Bird Survey at Shendurney Wildlife Sanctuary
Being an expert on birds, Education Officer participated in the three day bird survey at Shendurney WLS, one of the biodiversity rich sanctuaries of Western Ghats. The survey was jointly organized by Warblers and Waders and Kerala Forests and Wildlife Department. The team led by Education Officer reported 83 species of birds from this region including Great Indian Hornbills, Southern Treepie, Black eagle etc.

7. INTERNSHIP
7.1 National University of Juridical Sciences (NUJS), Kolkata
Mr. Peter Adam and Nikhil P. Joseph, students of B.A., B.Sc., L.L.B (Hons) of The West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences, Kolkata has joined for a period of 45 days placement training with WWFIndia, Kerala State Office. They are expected to work attached to an organization and by involving themselves understand the work and working environment of the same. The two students are assisting in developing quality resource materials in the form of multimedia presentations, flipcharts, handbook, thematic articles etc to aid in our various outreach programmes to different sections of the society.

7.2 Stella Maris College (SMC), Chennai
WWF-India Kerala State Office had a good intake of intern students from various institutions across the country. Ms. Pimi Ann Shaji and Ms. Poona Anna Zachariah,
students of M.A. in International Studies from Stella Maris College, Chennai joined us for a period of two months. They were very involved in the daily activities of the office and also very much helped in the education and other outreach programmes. They also assisted in preparing the materials for the animal signages as part of the Thiruvananthapuram Museum & Zoo Complex project. They also completed a study on the ‘Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) of Corporates and Industries in Kerala’.

7.3 National University of Advanced Legal Studies (NUALS), Kochi
Ms. Parvathi Shaji, second semester student of the five year B.A., L.L.B. (Hons) Degree Course of The National University of Advanced Legal Studies (NUALS), Kochi joined us for a period of one month. She assisted the WWF team in organizing the Forest Certification Workshop. She also did a literature survey and review and came out with a quality compilation titled ‘Recent environmental issues of Kerala, environmental laws and legislations, violation and correction measures’. The material will be very helpful as we propose to hold an environment education and awareness programme for lawyers.

7.4 IIT Chennai
Mr. Vishnu M.J., student of Integrated M.A. in Development Studies, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Chennai joined us for a period of one month internship in the month of June 2009. During his period he helped in preparing a flipchart set on ‘Climate Change and its Impacts’. He was also associated with the WWF project on ‘Preparation and installation of Information Panels, Signages and Handbook for the Thiruvananthapuram Museum and Zoo Complex’ and he was instrumental in preparing the layout for the information panels.

WWF would like to take this opportunity to thank all the interns for their valuable contributions.

8. PUBLICATION OF ‘MRUTHIKA’
Kerala State Office is regularly bringing out a bimonthly newsletter ‘Mruthika’ which covers environment related news at global, national and local level, Children’s Corner, Species of the issue, news regarding programmes conducted by Kerala State Office in the past two months etc. The newsletter printed in 1000 copies is being circulated to schools, colleges, R&D institutions, youth clubs, nature clubs, NGOs, government
departments etc. The newsletter is being brought out with the support of Kerala State Pollution Control Board. The newsletters were prepared, printed and distributed very regularly for March – April 2009, May – June 2009, July – August 2009, September – October 2009, November – December 2009, and January – February 2010.

Renjan Mathew Varghese
(State Director)
PHOTO GALLERY

Information Panels at Deer Park, Thenmala

Carbon Sequestration of Mangroves

Improvement of Interpretation in Museums and Zoo Complex, Thiruvananthapuram

Training and discussion workshops on marine biodiversity conservation
PHOTO GALLERY

Teachers Training Workshops

Teachers Training Workshops

Teachers Training Workshops
PHOTO GALLERY

World Environment Day at Technopark

Ozone Day in Kochi

International Coastal Cleanup Day

Wild Wisdom Quiz during Wildlife Week

World Wetlands Day at Changanassery

Earth Hour at Thiruvananthapuram
PHOTO GALLERY

Friday Forums

Nature Camp at Nilambur

Nature Camp at Periyar

Nature Camps at Chathancode

Nature Camp at Nilgiris
PHOTO GALLERY

Staff outing to Kallar and Ponmudi

Nature photography at TKMIM

Bird Race 2009

NEAC 2009

Exhibition stall at Annam in Kozhikode