

July - August 2010

Newsletter of WWF - India, Kerala State Office

FROM THE STATE DIRECTOR'S DESK

WWF-India convened its National Conference for 2010 in June at the Secretariat in New Delhi. State Directors from all the states and heads of programme and administrative divisions led by the Secretary General Mr. Ravi Singh and Programme Director Dr. Sejal Worah went through some real good brainstorming sessions to strategise on the various projects, programmes and activities at the state level and how better support and coordination can be brought in between the State Offices and the administrative and programme divisions at the Secretariat. The vision statement given for Kerala for 2010 was to 'Conserve our Wetlands and Forests and their associated biodiversity on a priority basis'. The three main approaches that have been identified are conservation and awareness programmes with regard to Marine Turtles along the Kerala Coast, networking and advocacy with regard to the protection of the wetland ecosystem in the State and related conservation, education and awareness programmes. Kerala is called as God's Own Country because of its abundant natural resources in the form of habitats, ecosystems, biodiversity etc. This is mainly attributed to the availability of about 3000mm of rainfall in two distinct monsoon seasons. But then also Kerala faces severe water shortage in all sectors, be it domestic, industrial or commercial. This is mainly because of the degradation and deterioration of our wetlands and water bodies. Food security is also under stake because of non-agriculture and reclamation of paddy fields and wetlands for other purposes. Hence to ensure sustainable availability of our primary requirements like water and food, it is highly essential

that we give priority and conserve and protect our wetland ecosystems, be it tanks, ponds, lakes, rivers, paddy fields etc. Global warming and climate change are global disasters faced by mankind these days. And the major mechanism by which we can combat this is to reduce GHG emissions and also to sequester more carbon in vegetation. Kerala, a state having a coastline of about 570kms, is very vulnerable to the effects of such disasters. Hence we need to take a very proactive role in protecting our existing forest resources and also for increasing our forest and urban vegetation cover through various afforestation and eco restoration programmes. Hence we have given priority to both these issues. Maybe we will not be able to achieve much in the immediate years, but we need to stay focused and work accordingly for long term sustainability. In the past few months, we saw a lot of students joining WWF for their internship programmes as part of their course curriculum. We were really thrilled at this experience due to various reasons. First of all, it was nice to see youngsters take interest in nature conservation as part of their internship programmes. Second, youngsters have very creative and energetic brains and minds which can pave the way for new approaches, strategies, programmes and projects in the conservation field. Third, it helped us in manpower management for the extra load of work that we have in hand. We expect and welcome more of such internship and volunteer programmes. All of us - children, youth, adult or old have their part to play in nature conservation.

Renjan Mathew Varghese,
State Director

IMPORTANT NEWS ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURE GLOBAL

Rising temperatures threaten Greenland Ice Sheet

The entire ice mass of Greenland will disappear from the world map if temperatures rise by as little as 2°C, with severe consequences for the rest of the world according to Prof. Richard Alley of Pennsylvania State University. The fall-out would be felt thousands of

kilometers away from the Arctic, unleashing a global sea level rise of seven metres. Greenland is losing ice mass at an increasing rate, dumping more icebergs into the ocean because of warming temperatures. The stark warning was underlined by the momentous break-up of one of Greenland's largest glaciers, which set a 260 sq.km. chunk of ice drifting into the North Strait between Greenland and Canada. The Petermann Glacier spawned two smaller breakaways: one of 88 sq.km. in 2001 and another of 26 sq.km. in 2008. (The Hindu, 12 Aug, 2010)

A third of 'extinct' mammals found alive

A survey of the world's mammals published on September 29 reveals that more than a third of the species once feared extinct have since been spotted in the wild, 180 years after the last confirmed sighting. The Guadalupe Seal was hunted to apparent extinction by 1892, but a tiny colony was spotted on the island by two fishermen in 1926. One rodent, the Bahian Tree Rat, which lives in forests on the Brazilian coast, went missing in 1824 and was rediscovered in 2004. The Bridled nail-tail Wallaby was once common in eastern Australia but seemed to die out in the 1930's. Later it was spotted in 1973. A small marsupial called Gilbert's Potoroo was missing for 115 years before it was rediscovered in the south of Western Australia in 1994. (The Hindu, 30 Aug, 2010)

NATIONAL

Species of Writhing Skink rediscovered

Zoologists from Osmania University have rediscovered a species belonging to the lizard family, which was last seen way back in 1839 in the then Bengal Province. The species, thought to be extinct till now, has been identified as *Lygosoma Vosmaerii* (Vosmer's Writhing Skink). The research team at Jaggayyapet, Andhra Pradesh maintained that 15 species of skink occur in the Oriental region, of which 11 species are from India and to date four species of Writhing skink have been recorded in Andhra Pradesh. This is the fifth species which has been added to the herpatofauna (reptiles and amphibians) of Andhra Pradesh. The research team has managed to preserve and deposit the adult specimen of the skink in the Natural History Museum of Osmania University, Hyderabad. (The Hindu, 26 Aug, 2010)

Many trees cut for Taj project

About 4022 trees have been cut for widening the road for the Yamuna Express-way corridor project up to Agra. Advocate Ajay Aggarwal submitted that the trees were cut for the project without obtaining permission from the Court. He said that appropriate penal action should be taken against the respondents concerned. A three judge bench headed by Justice D.K.Jain has expressed concern over felling of so many trees without the Court's permission. (The Hindu, 22 Aug, 2010)

Spill may trigger long-term environmental problems

The oil spill from MSC Chithra has caused massive damage to the 25 km mangrove stretch in and around the city of Mumbai. An ongoing survey by the Bombay Natural History Society has revealed that six to eight inch oil sediment has already reached the shore of the coastline. The contaminated sites have been noticed in two-three patches. The spill is set to disturb the entire marine ecosystem. The analysis of water and fish samples reveals no contamination from the hazardous chemicals. (The Hindu, 14 Aug, 2010)

STATE

A biological solution for soil pollution

Recent research at University of Kerala points out that a fast growing plant Vetiver (*Vetiveria zizanoides*) is highly tolerant to adverse climatic conditions, herbicides, pesticides and can be used to remedy pollution of soil by heavy metals. The plant is capable of absorbing nutrients and heavy metal ions from the soil, especially zinc and lead. The heavy metals were absorbed by the plant and accumulated in the roots, making the soil ready for plant growth. (The Hindu, 4 July, 2010)

Master plan for protection of lake

Sasthamcotta lake listed as a Ramsar site, is the biggest freshwater lake in the State. Rampant mining of sand and clay, encroachment and pollution are the major threats to the lake. A review committee meeting at the District Collectorate has decided to draw up a master plan for the protection of the lake which faces serious ecological problems. Strong actions would be initiated against trading establishments found engaged in polluting the lake. Minister for Water Resources N. K. Premachandran announced that Sasthamcotta lake would be protected as a drinking water sanctuary. The declaration would be made with the objective of conservation and regulation. (The Hindu, 7 July, 2010)

Safety net for five ecosystems

The Kerala State Biodiversity Board has identified five ecosystems to be designated as Biodiversity Heritage Sites. They are Kalasamala at Kunnamkulam, Connolly's Teak Plantation in Nilambur, Paliyeri Mookambika kavu at Karivallur, Pathiramanal Island in Alappuzha, and Iringole kavu in Perumbavoor. Experts have identified a grove of critically endangered

tree species *Syzygium travencoricum* at Kalasamala, the Connoly's Teak Plantation is considered as the world's first teak plantation, the Paliyeri kavu is home for *Myristica fauta*, Pathiramanal Island and Iringole kavu is rich in biodiversity aspects. (The Hindu, 9 Aug, 2010)

Reserves of endangered mangroves in Kannur

A mangrove survey organized by the Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad has discovered large reserves of endangered *Aegiceras corniculatum* species of mangroves in the Kannur district. The study is organized to prepare a database of surviving mangroves. Kannur is home to giant-sized mangroves of *Avicenia officinalis*. Also the *Kandelia candel* species of mangrove facing extinction in other parts of the State is found in a healthy condition in Kannur. Over 500 hectares of undisturbed mangrove forests with trees of 150 years old are found in the forest. (The Hindu, 13 Aug, 2010)

Garbage threat to wildlife sanctuary

The truck drivers using the Kozhikode - Kollegal National Highway - 212 that passes through the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary and the Thamarassery Forest Division in Kozhikode district are dumping the garbage in the sanctuary. Garbage including poultry waste, disposable plastic glasses and plates, rotten vegetables and watermelons are heaped on both sides of the NH. There are no sign boards, no threat of legal action and hence the practice continues. The dumping of waste poses a serious threat to the wildlife. Toxic pesticides sprayed on the dumped vegetables and fruits prove fatal for the animals which usually feed on the garbage. (The Hindu, 29 Aug, 2010)

SPECIES OF THIS ISSUE

Pond heron

Pond heron is a common water bird popularly known as paddy bird and seen in almost all types of wetlands across Kerala in single and in groups. The dull plumage with ash and brown color help the bird to merge itself with the pattern of the habitat but very distinct in flight as the pure white plumage hidden under the wings shows. The yellowish green bill with black tip and legs are distinct characters. The black eyes have a yellow ring. This shy bird always waits with enough patience eagerly looking for its bite in the waters. When it comes near, it suddenly straightens the neck and picks it up. It feeds on fishes, tadpoles, frogs, grass hoppers, and small insects and serves the role of a population

controller of pests of the habitat. Like other water birds Pond heron is also facing the threat of habitat loss and biomagnification due to high pesticide usage in our paddy fields.



Photo - Biju P B

CHILDREN'S CORNER

Test your knowledge on animals and their genders

Animal	Male	Female
Porpoise	Bull	Cow
Lion	Lion	Lioness
Kangaroo	Boomer, Buck, Jack	Doe, Flyer, Jill
Impala	Buck	Doe
Mouse	Buck	Doe
Mule	Jack	Hinney
Ostrich	Cock	Hen
Panda	Boar	Sow
Mallard	Drake	Duck
Horse	Sire, Stallion, Stud	Mare, Filly

ACTIVITIES OF WWF-INDIA KERALA STATE OFFICE

Friday Forum

July - The monthly interactive forum for school students of Thiruvananthapuram on environment related topics was held on 2nd July 2010 at the usual venue, the Museum Auditorium, Thiruvananthapuram from 10.30 to 12.30pm. About 170 Nature Club Members from 7 Nature Clubs participated and Sri. Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director of WWF-India

presented the topic "Ecological footprint". As the topic was quite new to the student community, it was highly informative and helped them to develop an ecofriendly lifestyle. Following the interactive session, an exercise was done to self assess the ecological footprint by analyzing their hour to hour daily routine lifestyle.



August - Friday forum for August 2010 was led by Ms. Shiny D.S. of Clean Kerala Mission and the topic discussed was 'Environmental health, sanitation and hygiene'. She presented the topic with examples and case studies from across the State.



Inauguration of Bhoomitra Club and talk at Shanthigiri Ayurveda Medical College

Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director was the Chief Guest at the inauguration of the Bhoomithra Club on July 1st at Shanthigiri Ayurveda Medical College. He delivered a talk on 'Our Planet and Our Ecological Footprint'. About 120 students and faculty members attended the programme.

Nature Education Camp at Parambikulam WLS

Education Officer and 20 nature enthusiasts from across the State had a wonderful experience at Parambikkulam WLS while attending a Nature

Education Camp with the cooperation of Kerala Forests and Wildlife Department held from 9th to 11th July 2010. On the way to Parambikulam and within the sanctuary, the team got frequent sightings of many animals. The Parambikulam dam and the PAP (Parambikulam - Aliyar Project) also came into discussion as it is a matter of interstate contract on water resource. Sri. Manoj Balakrishnan, Wildlife Assistant and Sri. Abubakkar, Range Officer of the sanctuary spoke to the participants during the night sessions and had informative interactive sessions. During the field trip, the team spotted a number of birds also.



Nature Club Adviser's meetings

As part of strengthening the NCI movement and bringing the Nature Clubs of the State to a common platform of activities, Education Officer called discussion meetings with Nature Club Advisers at various places including Thrissur, Nilambur and Kozhikode on 14th, 15th and 16th of July 2010 to discuss the revised Nature Club fee and Nature Club service format. Based on the discussions, various programmes were planned for all these three districts. Meetings were held at Mavelikara, Changannassery and Pala also on 26th and 27th July 2010.

Class for Forest Officers

The State Director was invited to deliver a lecture as part of the Training Programme for Forest Rangers organised by Kerala Forests and Wildlife Department at the Social Forestry Complex Office on July 27th. A talk on 'Development and its Environmental Impacts' was delivered and there was very good interaction with the participants.

Session at Kottayam for KSSF

Kerala Social Service Forum is a forum of about 20 NGOs working in Kerala under the Catholic Church. They have selected 'Biodiversity' as the main theme for 2010 – 2011 in the background of the UN declaration of 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity. The

State Director was invited as the Key Speaker in the Annual General Body Meeting organised at Kottayam on July 30th. The programme was attended by Bishops, Priests, NGO Directors and other staff of KSSF. It has been agreed that KSSF and WWF-India will cooperate wherever possible in its common goal towards nature conservation and environment protection.



Awareness Programme on Biodiversity Conservation at TKMM College, Nangyarkulangara

As part of the Nature Club service, a single day awareness programme was conducted at TKMM College, Nangyarkulangara of Alappuzha district on 4th August 2010. Around 160 Nature Club Members from three college level Nature Clubs from Sri Ayyappa College, Eramallikara, Peet Memorial Training College, Mavelikara and the host college attended the programme. The programme was inaugurated by Sri.T.M.Thaha, Block Panchayat President in the function presided over by Dr.Ramanan, Principal of the college. Sri. Lohithan, HOD of Commerce Department, Dr. Gayathri, HOD of English Department and Sri.Abraham Thomas of Peet Memorial Training College spoke on the occasion. The first thematic



presentation was on 'Wetland Biodiversity' led by Sri. John C. Mathew, Faculty from School of Environmental Sciences, MG University. He started with the structure and functions of wetlands as an ecosystem and described its role in productivity, climate management and social importance. Flora and fauna of wetlands also were detailed in his session. The afternoon session was on the 'Biodiversity of Forest Ecosystem' and was led by Sri.A.K.Sivakumar, Education Officer from WWF-India. Definition, levels, process, values, services, threats of biodiversity were detailed in this presentation. During the valedictory session, Sri.Ramanan, Principal of the college distributed the certificates to all the participants.

Awareness Programme on Biodiversity Conservation at NSS College, Manjery

As part of the Nature Club service, a single day awareness programme was conducted at NSS College, Manjery, Malappuram district on 6th August 2010. Around 120 nature club members from three colleges attended the programme. The programme was inaugurated by Dr.T.N.Vijayakumar, Principal of the college. Sri.K.Balakrishnan, Nature Club Adviser felicitated the programme. The first thematic presentation was on 'Biodiversity of Forest Ecosystem' led by Sri.A.K.Sivakumar. 'Biodiversity of Wetland Ecosystem' was explained by Sri.Jain J. Therattil, Lecturer of St.Aloysius college, Thrissur. During the afternoon session, various activities related to biodiversity and ecosystems were carried out like songs, skits etc.



Class for Forest Rangers

The State Director was invited to deliver a lecture on August 6th as part of the Training Programme for Forest Rangers organised by Kerala Forests and Wildlife Department at the Social Forestry Complex Office. A talk on 'Development and its Environmental Impacts' was delivered and there was very good interaction with the participants.

Launch of Saturday Forum at Kozhikode

Following the monthly open forum for students at Thiruvananthapuram, an open forum was launched at Kozhikode hence forth regularly on first Saturday of every alternative month at Regional Science Center and Planetarium. It is a joint initiative of WWF-India, Kerala State Office and the Planetarium. It was inaugurated by Sri.M.K.Raghavan, MP of Kozhikode in a function presided over by Sri.C.Balachandran Nair, Chief Conservator of Forests. Sri.V.S.Ramachandran, Project Coordinator of the Planetarium welcome the participants and guests. Sri. Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director of WWF-India and Dr. C.Radhakrishnan, Director of Zoological Survey of India felicitated the function.



The theme of the open forum was Wetland ecosystem that was led by Dr.Jafar Palot from Zoological Survey of India. About 160 students from different educational institutions participated in the programme. Prof. John P.I. and Mr. A.K.Sivakumar led the programme.



Awareness Programme on Biodiversity Conservation at MES College, Marampally

As part of Nature Club service, a single day awareness programme was conducted at MES College, Marampally, Aluva on 11th August 2010. Dr.Fathima, Principal of the college inaugurated the workshop and

the head of the departments of Computer application and Chemistry felicitated the programme. Smt.Aly C. Antony, NCA welcomed the guests and participants and Sri.Shafi, Student Coordinator of the Nature Club delivered vote of thanks.

The first technical session was handled by Sri.Jain J. Therattil of St. Aloysius College, Thrissur and was on 'Wetland biodiversity'. The second technical session was on 'Forest Biodiversity' led by Sri. A.K.Sivakumar, Education Officer from WWF-India. This session discussed the concept of biodiversity in general and the global scenario. The biodiversity profile of India as well as Kerala also was discussed. The threats being faced by the forest biodiversity and associated issues were discussed. A slide show of the representatives of biodiversity in Kerala followed the session. During the activity session, the students were grouped into three groups representing forest, wetland and marine ecosystems and asked to sing songs related to each ecosystem.

Sensitization talk for Eco club members of TCS, Infopark

A sensitization talk and slide show on 'Biodiversity Conservation' was done for the Eco Club members of TCS, Infopark, Ernakulam by Mr. A.K.Sivakumar, Education Officer. It was the onset of their conservation initiatives and the participants actively involved in the discussion session and prepared an action plan for conservation education on their own.

Observation of Farmers Day (Chingom 1)

About 170 school students from four institutions gathered at the seminar hall of Bishop Hodges High School, Mavelikara to observe Farmers Day on 17th August being 1st of Chingom, the Malayalam month, marking the onset of New Year in Kerala. The observance started with a mini drama by students depicting the agricultural heritage of Kerala. As the



day highlights the agricultural tradition and heritage of Kerala, the sessions arranged were on agro biodiversity and genetically modified foods. The first session on 'Agro biodiversity' was led by Dr.P.J.Joseph, Asst. Director of Agriculture (Rtd.) with a series of slides and he shared his experience in traditional conservation practices in the field of agriculture. The second session was on the topic 'GM Crops – issues and concerns' by Sri. Biji Abraham, Dept. of Economics, Christian College, Chengannur. He had a good interaction with students on the topic. It was highly thought provoking for them as it raised several questions over the food security of the State.

Introductory session for Nature Clubs at KVVS College of Technology, Adoor

Mr.A.K.Sivakumar did an introductory session for the nature club members of KVVS College of Technology, Adoor, Kollam District about the significance of nature clubs and its initiatives. It was an interactive session discussing mostly on Nature Club activities.

Association with NIMS

NIMS Medicity and NIMS Heart Foundation, as part of their CSR programme, has launched several conservation programmes for this year including a massive tree planting drive. NIMS has requested WWF-India Kerala State Office for necessary technical support and in this regard an official association has been established in the various ongoing and planned programmes.

Field visit to Pathiramanal

Pathiramanal is an ecologically fragile island in the Vembanad lake. Some years back it was proposed to lease out the land to Oberoi Group of Hotels to put up a hotel and resort. Because of the stiff opposition from the environmentalists, this was later on dropped. Recently the Kerala Government has initiated steps to



develop the area and has assigned the work to KITCO. Kottayam Nature Society opposed the proposal by moving the Supreme Court and the SC ordered the State Government to hear the petitioners. On hearing, it was decided to carry out a EIA and implement the project based on the guidelines proposed by the EIA. But now again the State Government has started various construction and reclamation activities. WWF was requested by local conservation groups to intervene in the issue. In this regard, to have a thorough understanding of the issue at hand, the State Director personally visited Pathiramanal Island on 24th July and assessed the natural environment and the various ongoing interventions, mainly in the form of construction activities.



Condolence on the demise of Dr. Sushama Bhaskaran

WWF-India would like to place on record our heartfelt condolence on the demise of Dr. Sushama Bhaskaran, Professor, Department of Extension, Kerala Agricultural University and wife of Dr. C. Bhaskaran, Professor of the same department and Member, WWF-India, Kerala State Advisory Board. She was a great friend, well-wisher and supporter of WWF-India programmes and activities. Our prayers are with the family as they go through this tough time of loss of a loved one.

Association in other seminars & meetings

World Environment Day celebrations organized by Adhwana at YMCA on 3rd July.

Attended MDG 7 meeting on 12th July jointly organised by CCDU under Kerala Water Authority and UNICEF at Mascot Hotel, Thiruvananthapuram.

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Mr. A.V. George
Mr. Renjan Mathew Varghese
Mr. A.K. Sivakumar

പരിസര ശുചിത്വം ആരോഗ്യകരമായ ജീവിതത്തിന്

വരമാലിന്യം

വൃത്തിയുള്ള പരിസരം ധാർമ്മികമാക്കാൻ നമുക്ക് കഴിയും.
നമ്മുടെ പൗരഭോധവും സമൂഹ ശുചിത്വ ഭോധവും ഉണ്ടാക്കാൻ
മനോഭാവത്തിൽ മാറ്റം വന്നാൽ
ചപ്പാ ചവറുകൾ വലിച്ചേരിയുന്ന ശീലം ഉപേക്ഷിച്ചാൽ
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സംഭരിക്കുന്ന ശീലം വളർത്തിയാൽ

ശുദ്ധമായ കൂടിവെള്ളം

സംസ്ഥാന ജല അതോറിറ്റിയും ഇതര സ്ഥാപനങ്ങളും വിതരണം ചെയ്യുന്ന
ശുദ്ധ ജലം ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്നതിനോടൊപ്പം തന്നെ നമ്മുടെ വീടിനോടു
ചേർന്നുള്ള കൂളം, കിണർ തുടങ്ങിയ ജലഗ്രേശാത്മകൾ ശുദ്ധമായി സംരക്ഷി
ക്കുക. ജല ഗ്രേശാത്മകളിൽ മാലിന്യം ഇടുന്നത് ഒഴിവാക്കുക.

കിണർ വെള്ളം മലിനമാക്കാതിരിക്കാൻ ശ്രദ്ധിക്കേണ്ട കാര്യങ്ങൾ

- അലക്ക്, കൂളി എന്നിവ കിണറിനതികിൽ ചെയ്യരുത്.
- കിണർ വലയിട്ട് മുടി സുകഷിക്കുണ്ട്.
- ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്ന ബക്കറ്റും കയറ്റും വൃത്തിയായി സുകഷിക്കുണ്ട്.
- കിണർ ആർ മറ കെട്ടി മശവെള്ളം ലഭിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നതെതു സംരക്ഷിക്കുണ്ട്.
- സെപ്പറൈറ്റ് ടാങ്ക്, സോകപ്പിറ്റ് ഇവ സുരക്ഷിതമായ
അകലത്തിൽ നിർമ്മിക്കുണ്ട്.
- ഇടക്കിടെ കിണർ വെള്ളം അണ്ണു വിമുക്തമാക്കുണ്ട്.

കിണർ അണ്ണുവിമുക്തമാക്കുന്നതെങ്ങനെ?

1000 ലിറ്റർ വെള്ളത്തിന് 2.5ഗ്രാം സ്റ്റീച്ചിംഗ് പൊയർ വെള്ളത്തിൽ കലർത്തി
തെളിയുന്ന കിണറിൽ ഒഴികുണ്ട്. ആറുമൺിക്കുറിനു ശേഷം കിണറിലെ
വെള്ളം ഉപയോഗിക്കാം.



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