



# Newsletter Wet Notes

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The quarterly newsletter of the Pakistan Wetlands Programme (PWP) is published to inform donors, scientists, academics, researchers, environmentalists and environmentally concerned individuals of all qualifications and ages about the Programme, its projects and upcoming events while giving insights and updates on research, education and habitat management activities. The PWP's objective is to conserve the globally important wetlands biodiversity in Pakistan while alleviating poverty. It is a progressive initiative of the Federal Ministry of Environment and is being implemented by the World Wide Fund for Nature, Pakistan (WWF-P). It is funded by a consortium of national and international donors including, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Embassy of Kingdom of Netherlands (EKN) and WWF Global Network.

### Articles in this Edition:

Logger head turtle at Gwadar  
Street Theatre

### Also Lurking Inside:

Programme Updates  
Public Events

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Mangrove plantation

## Programme updates

### » Training and Capacity Building



The Pakistan Wetlands Programme has designed and conducted various training courses since its inception. These training courses have been designed to impart the knowledge of wetlands and their management so that participants from various organisations can contribute towards the protection, restoration and

conservation of wetlands in Pakistan. In this quarter, the training and capacity building section conducted five training courses in which 372 participants were trained. These courses include Principles and Applications of Conservation, GIS which is offered to Wildlife and Forest Departments throughout the country and Natural Resource Management. Training in Natural Resource Management was also given to participants of Civil Service Academy Lahore. These courses were offered in Sindh and Punjab.

### » NRM workshop at Civil Services Academy, Lahore

A two day workshop on Natural Resource Management (NRM) for CSS officers at the premises of Civil Services Academy (CSA), Lahore was organised by the Pakistan Wetlands Programme (PWP) on

*Continued on page 2*



*Continued from page 1*

September 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009. 180 officers from various occupational groups participated in the workshop.

Advisor NRM Training from Pakistan Wetlands Programme briefed participants about workshop's scope, objectives and framework. Mr. Richard Garstang, National Project Manager introduced the PWP, biodiversity and ecotourism prospects for Pakistan. Eminent scholars presented their lectures on NRM including Prof. ZB Mirza, Dr. Mumtaz Malik, Mr. Safdar Ali Shah and Dr. Attaullah Shah and Mr. Afzal Hussain. During their respective presentations, they apprised the participants about eco-system issues and management, indigenous horticulture and landscaping, wildlife conservation in Pakistan and environmental impact assessment (EIA).

The opening session of the workshop was also attended by DG WWF - Pakistan Mr. Ali Hasan Habib and Vice President Emiratus WWF and Chairman Houbara Foundation of Pakistan, Brig Mukhtar Ahmed. The CSA is the first bureaucrat organisation for which the NRM workshop was organised. The objective of this workshop was to enhance the capacity building of civil services trainees in natural resource management. Since CSS officers are intimately involved in policy making, district management and community development, the workshop focused on highlighting the role they can play in the nature conservation in different eco regions of Pakistan.

### » NRM Workshop for Pakistan Rangers, Sindh

The Pakistan Rangers are part of the paramilitary force, and the organization has members of the Pakistan Army under the control of the Ministry of the Interior. Pakistan Rangers are divided into two separate branches: Pakistan Rangers Sindh and Pakistan Rangers Punjab. In spite of their paramilitary role, both divisions have participated in the Pakistan Wetlands Programme's NRM

training workshops.

As a sequel to the NRM workshops presented to Pakistan Rangers Punjab, PWP organised workshops for Suchal, Shahbaz and Bhittai Rangers in Karachi and Thar Rangers in Sukkur from November 16<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2009. Renowned conservationists and environmental experts including Dr. Fahmida Firdous, Prof. ZB Mirza, Dr. Moazzam Ali Khan, Dr. Shakeel Auj and Dr. Muhammad Arshad delivered their lectures on different subjects.

During the workshops, participants from the Sindh Rangers at Karachi were taken to the Wetlands Centre at Sandspit where Dr. Altaf Abro (Indus for All Programme, WWF - Pakistan) and others briefed them on the functioning of the Wetlands Centre, threats to the local mangrove forest, highlights of Indus eco-region programme management and conservation initiatives taken by the PWP.

Conservationist Mr. Babar Hussain described the dynamics of the mangrove forest and its importance to marine ecology while Dr. Fehmida Firdous from the Sindh Wildlife Department briefed the Rangers about threats both from poachers and pollution which the endangered green turtles in Pakistan's waters are facing.

While participants from Sukkur were taken to Lungh Lake where

representatives from Sindh rangers, Mr. Muhammad Sheikh Taj (Deputy Conservator, Sindh Wildlife Department) and game officer, Mir Akhtar Hussain joined the PWP team. The participants were divided into three groups each led by wildlife expert. Participants were briefed about bird migration, migratory routes, habitats and threats posed by global climate change, pollution, socio-economic pressures on the lake and lastly but most specifically, the role Rangers can play to check unethical hunting were explained and emphasised.

### » Medical Camp at Suntsar Village, Dasht

Pakistan Wetlands Programme's Makran Coastal Wetlands Complex (MCWC) site office organised a one day medical camp at Samati Village, Dasht, with the collaboration of Rural Community Development Council (RCDC), President Primary Health Initiatives (PPHI) and National Rural Support Programme (NRSP), Gwadar office.

As a result of social mobilization at Dasht for the conservation of marsh crocodile, it was also observed that many people are sick or unhealthy due to the use of unhygienic practices like use of contaminated water from Dasht River and non availability of health facilities in remote areas. It was decided to jointly organise a medical camp for



*Continued on page 3*

*Continued from page 2*

the wetlands users at Dasht with help from partner organisations.

In this medical camp, there were four male doctors: child specialist, ENT specialist, eye specialist, and dental surgeon and a female gynaecologist who served in the camp along with a dental technician and a vaccinator.

A total of 344 patients were facilitated in the camps along with 41 cases of different types of vaccinations. There were 69 males, 159 females and 344 children from various villages. The major diseases treated were heart problems, eye diseases, ENT, body pain, stomach problems and water borne diseases.

The PWP team displayed banners with slogans for healthy people and healthy wetlands. Meanwhile the Programme team distributed water purifiers among the community for cleaning the freshwater which they use from the Dasht River. The final message conveyed to all participants/patients was that if they wisely use their wetlands and protect them from pollution then they will be healthy and strong.

### » Bird ringing programme conducted at Gwadar

PWP MCWC site office conducted a bird ringing programme at MCWC site office, Gwadar. Mr. Ahmed Khan Regional Programme Manager supervised this activity and ringed

fourteen migratory birds. Among the birds, there was one herring gull, nine common quill and two buzzards.

The site team, with technical help of RPM, organised and used various techniques for capturing the birds in the wild.

The bird ringing programme's main objective was to ring certain migratory waterfowl and other birds that use the migratory routes from the Makran Coast to northern Pakistan. As a result of this programme, when the birds are recaptured it will help in defining the migratory routes and threats to the birds during migration. Then PWP will be able to make a management and conservation plan for the birds.

Most waterfowl species use the Makran Coast in winter and migrate in summer. The duration of their stay depends on food availability and environmental changes in the cooler regions. Each year PWP-MCWC have to ring more than two hundred birds in four seasons. The Programme is also planning to collect blood samples of each bird to identify genetic variables in the birds.

Executive District Officer of Balochistan Forest and Wildlife Department, Mr. Maqbool Hassan and his staff accompanied the PWP team for the bird ringing programme. They also helped in capturing birds of prey like buzzard falcon.

### » Marine turtles tagging at Daran Village, Jiwani



Pakistan Wetlands Programme's MCWC site office, Gwadar mounted two satellite transmitters to marine turtles at Daran Beach, Jiwani. Mr. Ahmed Khan, Regional Programme Manager conducted this programme and mounted PWP-07 and PWP-08 satellite transmitters on female green turtles. The transmitters will remain attached to the turtles for six months, which is also the time the batteries will last.

The site team later tagged five marine turtles. They also trained the local community of Daran who are taking care of the turtles on all three beaches. Now they able to tag them by them selves.

Executive District Officer, Mr. Maqbool Hassan from Balochistan Forest and Wildlife Department, Gwader office with his staff also visited the turtle tagging site Daran village and he got informed about the whole scientific techniques of fixing the satellite transmitters and tagging activities for the conservation of marine turtles.

The main objective of this project is to define the exact migration route and feeding grounds of marine turtles from Daran Beach and Astolla Island. As a result of these findings the Programme will make a conservation plan for marine turtles. Most of these sea turtles are visiting neighbouring countries like Iran, Oman and others.



*Continued on page 4*

Continued from page 3



» **Partnership and Networking enhanced in Turbat.**

A consultative meeting was held with Makran Resource Centre (MRC) and Agriculture Date Farm Tree Research Centre, Turbat. In order to enhance the local products PWP aims to reactivate the dying Balochi traditional embroidery art like Chakan Kari and Pesh Kari. Additionally, by reintroduction of this alternative livelihood initiatives for the coastal community, especially women, can be enhanced.

» **MoU signed with District Agriculture Department at Gwadar**

Pakistan Wetlands Programme, MCWC site office signed an MoU with District Agriculture Department Gwadar. The principal objectives of this MoU were to create an enabling environment for both organizations, working on integrated water resource management and promotion of state of art agriculture technologies at district level. Prior to this development initiative, a grand research survey conducted by both organizations at district level for analysis of water resources and agriculture potential in district Gwadar. People from both organisations visited potential communities. It was identified that there are some common issues of drinking water and agriculture in

district Gwadar which come under the objectives of both organisations. In light of this survey, both organisations made a mutual understanding for working in these areas for the conservation of wetlands.

» **Mangrove plantation at Kawari village.**

Pakistan Wetlands Programme MCWC site office started mangrove plantation campaign at Kalmat lagoon, Kawari Village. In the beginning of the new plantation season, the site team procured 892,450 mangrove seeds. Seeds of *Avicennia marina* were purchased from community members of Kalmat where natural mangroves exist and those of *Rhizophora*



Mangrove with flowers at Kawari/A. Rahim/PWP

*mucronata* from the community of Somiani village. The new year season plantation started with the continuation of last year's mangrove plantation. About two hundred hectares of land were covered with plantation of these two mangrove species.

PWP's main objectives in mangrove plantation are to protect coastal communities from natural disasters; to provide them with better livelihoods; and to support coastal fisheries and fodder for domestic animals.

» **Agriculture nursery established at Gwadar**

PWP-MCWC established an agriculture nursery at district office of Agriculture Department, Gwadar. The District Agriculture Department is an active partner of MCWC site office, for the conservation and sustainable use of coastal wetlands. Both organisations are already working on integrated water resource management at district level and recently signed an MoU for further partnership for integration of drip irrigation demonstration system at Billar Dam, and for drinking water issues of Kawari village.

The main objective for establishment of the agriculture nursery is to raise plants for farmers and promote agriculture techniques in the district, and to promote environment friendly and indigenous agriculture crops to farmers. The size of the agriculture nursery is 20 feet in width and 35 feet in length which has capacity for more than fifteen thousand container plants.

PWP provided basic structure of agriculture nursery with green sheet, polythene bags for plants, nursery tools and bucket water shower for the nursery. The district Agriculture Department provided land space and water source, and took responsibility for permanent management.

Continued on page 5



*Continued from page 4*

### » Daran Community primary School handed over to Education Department

PWP-MCWC permanently handed over the Daran primary community school to the district Education Department.

Pakistan Wetlands Programme - MCWC site office and Daran Village Conservation Society have been working for marine turtle conservation at Daran for the last three years. PWP also signed an MoU with Daran community for the conservation of marine turtles and for sustainable development of coastal wetlands. According to the MoU, PWP hired two turtle watchers, supported running of the community school and bore the school teacher's salary, which the Education Department now does. Additionally the Programme provided alternative hybrid energy sources (solar and wind) power for the Daran community.

PWP has also supported the Daran community for construction of one large schoolroom of size 18\*12 feet and a shed at Daran village. The community members also contributed their share for the construction of community school and now there are two rooms with shed for both girls and boys.

The MCWC site team organised a study visit for Executive District Officer (EDO) and Deputy Education Officer Jiwani to Daran community school. The district official also received a brief presentation about the school and the children's participation in conservation of marine turtles.

The site team had been asking the district Education Department if WWF could hand over the school to the department, so that the land it is built on becomes permanent government land for the school. This was supported by the community in the form of a letter writing campaign. Finally, in this financial year, the Education Department approved the request.

### » Visit of Federal Secretary of Environment to Makran Coastal Wetlands Complex

Federal Secretary of Environment Mr. Kamran Lashari visited the Makran Coastal Wetlands Complex site office, Gwadar. He visited the mangrove rehabilitation project started by PWP-MCWC at Kawari village and then the mangrove plantation which is on an area of almost six hectares, and has been raised with mechanism of direct broadcasting, sewing of container plants and nursery raising. Mr. Ahmed Khan, Regional Programme Manager, MCWC he briefed Mr. Lashari about the demonstration for economical and environmental benefits of coastal community. Mr. Lashari was also told about the alternative hybrid energy models (solar/wind) and integrated shrimp farming initiated by PWP for the Kawari community.

On the way to Gwadar, Mr. Lashari visited Pasni Fish Harbour and received updates about the dredging problem there. Local fishermen briefed him about this issue and asked him for a sustainable solution to this problem. In the evening, he visited the Jiwani Wetlands Information and Conservation Centre and was informed about the centre for

education of common visitors and students. Mr. Sabir Baloch from the information centre spoke of the centre's performance in disseminating information about Jiwani wetlands and their associated biodiversity. On the way to back to Gwadar, Mr. Lashari visited the marine turtle conservation project at Daran beaches. He was shown the hybrid alternate energy model and Daran community school.

The next day, Mr. Lashari visited the newly build Gwadar deep sea port. He was informed of environmental problems like illegal fishing, trawling, overexploitation of fishery resources and solid waste dumping in coastal areas.

In the meeting with district administration and local representative of Gwadar, Mr. Pasad Khan Buledi DCO Gwadar and Mr. Mir Ghaffor Kalmati addressed the issues of the city. They emphasized on problems like solid waste issues, sanitation, savage problems, lack of recreational sites like park and green areas in coastal belt. Mr. Lashari assured them of support from federal level and requested them to submit project proposals.

Mr. Lashari attended a meeting with the Gwadar Development Authority (GDA), and was given a presentation on the ongoing developmental activity of Gwadar according to approved master plan.



*Continued on page 6*

Continued from page 5



» **Stranded Fin Whale found in East Bay, Gwadar**

A fin whale washed up on the beach at East Bay, Gwadar, on September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009. The specimen was 45 feet long from fluke (tail) to snout. Technical observation by experts of Pakistan Wetlands Programme revealed that the whale had been injured in the fluke and head region. This fin whale was a sub adult.

MCWC team members took full measurements, collected stomach materials and tissue samples to trace the cause of mortality. On interviewing local fisherfolk, they learnt that they whale may have been caught in a gill net. When this happens fisherfolk cut off its tail and give it repeated blows on the head to try to kill it. Then they throw it in the sea.

The PWP team members showed this stranded whale to electronic and press media to highlight this issue locally and nationally, to stop such victimization in future.

The Pakistan Wetlands Programme, MCWC site office, has conducted a survey on stranded cetaceans and threats to them. On the basis of this study, the Pakistan Wetlands Programme is in the process of developing a better management plan for conservation of dolphins and whales on the Balochistan coast.

» **Three Wetlands Village Conservation Committees registered at Gwadar**

Pakistan Wetlands Programme, MCWC site office completed registration of three Wetlands Village Conservation Committees (WVCCs) of both men and women at Pishukan and Pasni Tehsil, Gwadar. Among three WVCCs, two were for women and one for men.

PWP is already working with these village committees for conservation of coastal wetlands. Social organizers work for community capacity building and awareness raising. PWP has also established some demonstration models with collaboration of these community members, like pitcher irrigation models as best practices of kitchen gardening and solid waste management: installing dustbins in these tehsils. In addition, PWP has conducted some capacity building programmes like traditional embroidery trainings, kitchen gardening training programmes, short courses on basic computer skills and net making training programmes. The Programme also helped these committees in organising environmentally significant days like World Biological Diversity Day, World Environment Day, and World Ozone Day.

PWP's basic objective is to organise

and strengthen the local community/wetlands users to step forward for conservation and sustainable utilization of their own natural resources.

After the WVCC registration, the Programme will help these communities in development of small project proposals. PWP also assists these committees in getting small grants for developing conservation models on wetlands biodiversity in their areas for the conservation of coastal wetlands.

» **Interim Wetlands Management Committee meeting conducted at Gwadar**

The Pakistan Wetlands Programme, MCWC conducted the 6th meeting of Interim Wetlands Management Committee (IWMC) at MCWC site office, Gwadar. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Manzoor Ahmed Chief Conservator of Balochistan Forest and Wildlife Department. Mr. Malik Mumtaz, Ex-Chief Conservator of Wildlife Department NWFP was invited as Chief Guest. Mr. Ahmed Khan Regional Programme Manager PWP was there as observer.

The Site Manager, MCWC site office, presented the progress report of second and third quarters, 2009. He spoke of each activity in the site office and also shared the collaborative activities of partner organisations like Forest and Wildlife Department, Agriculture Department and Gwadar Development Authority.

In the next agenda of meeting, Mr. Manzoor Ahmed CCF elaborated the sustainable partnership between PWP and Balochistan Forest and Wildlife Department for the conservation of coastal wetlands. He also appreciated the



Continued on page 7

*Continued from page 6*

jointly organised activities of mangrove plantation, national tree plantation, MoU signing, crane conservation initiatives of PWP and capacity building programme at Hingol National Park. He emphasized the sustainability of the programme and said that it would be impossible without strengthening of government institutions.

Mr. Abdul Rahim shared the upcoming planned activities of last Quarter, 2009. In the next agenda he also explained the drafted work plan of MCWC site office, Gwader for year 2010. He elaborated each and every activity with specific objectives. He highlighted the role of partner organization for the implementation of work plan.

#### » **Satellite transmitter mounted on marine turtle on Astola Island**



PWP-MCWC mounted a satellite transmitter on a marine turtle at Astolla Island.

Pakistan Wetlands Programme, MCWC site office is working for conservation of marine turtles at makran coast and helping the community in protection of three marine turtle nesting beaches of Daran village. The Programme is also supporting them in enclosures and flapper tags. PWP has hired three community members as turtle watchers for data collection of turtle nesting at Daran.

The basic aim of mounting satellite transmitters to marine turtles is to help define the exact migratory route, feeding grounds and mating places of marine turtles. As a result of satellite data, the Programme will be able to make a conservation plan for marine turtles at the Balochistan coast. Marine turtles are critically endangered species globally.

#### » **GEO TV documentary on Coastal Wetlands biodiversity completed**

Pakistan Wetlands Programme's MCWC, with collaboration of GEO TV has completed a documentary on wetlands at the Makran coast. The documentary focused on the biodiversity of wetlands, socio economic issues and other developmental issues of the coast. It also covered the biodiversity of Astola Island and the activity of mounting satellite transmitters on marine turtles.

PWP aims to educate the local communities about the environmental issues of coastal areas. The media have recorded environmental issues/wetlands issues started from Jiwani to Ormara and they have covered the marine and coastal area. A special programme was organised at Astola Island to record the potential biodiversity of the island. In the meantime, MCWC site office team recorded the activity of installation of satellite transmitters on marine turtles at Astola Island. The GEO team recorded the whole process of installation. They also recorded the process of Egg laying and emerging of hatchlings from sandy beaches. They also recorded the threats of Astola Island, that is, discarded pieces of plastic nets thrown by fisherfolk. Most turtle hatchlings get entangled in these and die, sometimes adult turtles as well. They were also informed about the coral and coral fishes discovered by

the Pakistan Wetlands Programme. On the way to back from Astola Island, the visiting team found a school of dolphins near Pasni harbour. At the end of the Programme they visited Hingol National Park.

#### » **Protected Areas Management training workshop conducted at Hingol National Park**

Pakistan Wetlands Programme, MCWC site office organised a three day training workshop on wetlands and protected area management for staff of Balochistan Forest and Wildlife Department at Hingol National Park.

Balochistan Forest and Wildlife Department is a key stakeholder / main partner of Pakistan Wetlands Programme and both organisations are working on the same objectives at provincial level.

PWP organised this training programme for the capacity building of the EDOs and administrative/management staff. PWP TREC department organised tents for all participants and classroom/kitchen.

There was also a field trip to the national park. On the first day the team visited the Hinglaj Nani Mandar and saw ibex and urial. The next day they visited the creek area of the national park for migratory bird watching. On the last day they had a boat trip to see the coastal area; and they witnessed illegal fishing.



*Continued on page 8*

*Continued from page 7*

### » **Pakistan Wetlands Programme equips Deosai National Park field staff**

The Pakistan Wetlands Programme has equipped the field staff of Deosai National Park (DNP) with summer and winter uniforms, boots, heavy jackets, whistles and other accessories necessary for park management.

In the Gilgit-Baltistan region, which falls within its Northern Alpine Wetlands Complex, PWP collaborates with the Gilgit-Baltistan Forest Department for the conservation of wetlands and has signed an MOU with it to formalise this collaboration.

As agreed in the MOU, PWP provided summer and winter uniforms to the field staff of DNP. This was done because it was felt that the field staff in this high and remote region had to endure some extremely tough climatic conditions and needed high quality uniforms, as well as equipment for dispensing their duties.

When the uniforms were ready at the end of September 2009, the Gilgit office of PWP with assistance from WWF - Pakistan Skardu office, arranged a high profile ceremony on October 12 in Skardu to present the full kits to the staff. Commissioner Baltistan Mr. Asif Bilal Lodhi was Chief Guest at the occasion.

The former Director of Deosai National Park (DNP) Ismail Zafar, DC Skardu Mohammad Ali Yougvi, Conservator Forests Gilgit Baltistan Ghulam Tahir, AIG Skardu Hijat Mir, representatives of prominent NGOs, specially nominated students from Skardu area schools, and media representatives attended the ceremony.

Speaking at the occasion, Commissioner Baltistan appreciated the PWP for its conservation activities in the region. He stressed to the public to join hands with PWP for conservation of natural resources. He also suggested to the NGOs to share their data with each other and with his office. Mr. Ghulam Tahir and Mr. Ismail Zafar also spoke at the

occasion and assured their cooperation with the Programme in all its future endeavours. PWP's Col. Wasim explained the objectives of WWF - Pakistan and PWP and told the audience all the efforts involved in the preparation of the uniforms and the contents and cost of each set, with the help of charts. PWP Gilgit-Baltistan representative and wetlands biologist Dr. Humaira told the audience about PWP's activities in the region and its planned interventions. She said that the objective of distributing the uniforms among DNP's field staff was to assist them in their duties, and seek commitment from DNP

management for greater protection of wildlife and better tourist management.

The uniforms were distributed to the field staff by the VIP Guests. PWP also presented special gifts to Commissioner Baltistan and Conservator Forests Gilgit-Baltistan.

As a result of high media participation in the event, the news of the function was broadcast on Geo TV, Express News and local Skardu cable channels. Additionally it was published in Dawn newspaper, several local newspapers and on the online paper Pamir Times.

## Public events

### » **Ozone Day 2009**

PWP- MCWC site celebrated International Day for Ozone Protection with key stakeholders at Gwadar. The theme was 'Universal Participation: Ozone Protection Unifies the World'. Partners were invited from civil society organisations, fisherfolk, industrialists, government organisations and media. More than fifty people participated.

Ozone molecules (O<sub>3</sub>) consist of three oxygen atoms. This poisonous gas is extremely rare in the atmosphere, representing just three

out of every 10 million molecules. Ninety per cent of ozone exists in the upper atmosphere, or stratosphere, between 10 and 50 km (6-30 miles) above the earth. This ozone, which forms what is known as the ozone layer, protects the earth's inhabitants from harmful UV radiation, and is essential for life on earth.

The ozone layer absorbs most of the harmful ultraviolet-B radiation from the sun. It also completely screens out lethal UV-C radiation. The ozone shield is thus essential to life as we know it. When the ozone layer gets



*Continued on page 9*



*Continued from page 8*

thinner or a hole appears in it, more UV-B is allowed to reach the earth. This increased UV-B can lead to skin cancers, eye cataracts, weakened immune systems, reduced plant yields, damage to ocean ecosystems and reduced fishing yields and adverse effects on animals.

Site Manager MCWC site office, Mr. Abdul Rahim shared a short introduction of PWP including the Makran Coastal Wetlands Complex. He spoke about this day and why this protective layer is important for the life on earth. He emphasized the fact that the Government of Pakistan is signatory to the 1976 UNEP convention for protection of the ozone layer.

In concluding, he urged the participant to avoid poisonous gases like chlorofluorocarbons, purchase only products which do not contain them, and help educate others about the importance of the ozone layer.

## Articals

### » Logger head turtle at Gwadar



The Makran Coast is not only known for its sandy beaches and azure waters but also for its rich biodiversity. It has fascinating marine and terrestrial wildlife including marine turtles. The local community has a strong association with it because of fishing as a major source of livelihood or work in fish processing industries.

Marine turtles, dominantly green turtles nest on the beaches of Makran Coast including the famous nesting sites of Hingol, Ormara, Ganz and Daran while Olive Ridley turtles are also seen there, though rarely.

Recently Mr. Dad Karim, a fisherman from Gwadar accidentally caught a loggerhead turtle (critically endangered!) in his net. An experienced fisherman from Gwadar, he is a strong supporter of PWP and is convinced of the need to conserve marine life. He safely released the turtle into the sea; but did not forget to take pictures.

Ahmad Khan  
Programme Manager  
Regional Programmes  
Pakistan Wetlands Programme

### » Street Theatre

Everyone loves a good story from fairy tales and folk tales to lok dastans, with enjoyable local themes and delightful characters stimulating a range of emotions that add spice to life. Street or community theatre is a thrilling and striking medium to spread the cause in an attractive and public way. Especially where there is very low literacy rate or lack of other communication tools, this is the best tool to utilize and raise awareness about social and environment issues.

In our rural and remote areas the mela or festival is famous in public entertainment. Majority of villagers adore these fairs because of the folk singers, their communal songs, local familiar characters, and theatrical performances. So this can be an extremely and genuinely effective channel of communication for advocacy.

Surveys and experiences guided us that southern Punjab and interior Sindh are the main focal areas to raise awareness through street theater. Both areas contain very large communities deficient in education.

Sharing a meaningful story with others is even better. There is something about a collective cause or sigh of relief that bonds viewers in a primal and universal way. That is why so many of us enjoy going to the theatre. A community drama provides wonderful opportunities of bringing together all generations and neighbors. While professional stage drama is exciting, local community or street theatre can be as good or better. One reason is that those who attend often know the actors on stage, linking audience with performers for a meaningful experience. Another reason we enjoy small-scale productions is their appealing, simple qualities that make art seem so accessible to all of us, even those who lack skill in literary appreciation.

*Continued on page 10*

*Continued from page 9*

The uniqueness of street theatre is the sensitive actors, writers, puppet creators and producers involved who like to spread social awareness through their performances. It is very important to establish a link between this theatre and community to promote the use of arts in addressing social and environmental problems and fostering sustainable development. Pakistan Wetlands Programme, WWF - Pakistan is using this communication tool very effectively and efficiently to raise awareness on wetlands and their associated biodiversity in the central Indus region. If someone is interested in organising street theatre, here are a few guidelines that may help as we established at the Wetlands Street Theatre.

### Wetlands Street Theatre

- ◆ Theme of the Street Theatre: Focus on wetlands and then related issues e.g. wise use of wetlands, turtle killing, crane captivity, excessive hunting, deforestation of mangroves, degradation of key species habitat, smooth-coated otter, diversion of water bodies, industrial pollution in coastal areas, oil spill, climate change scenario, solid waste management, waste water treatment, soil conservation, biodiversity protection in key wetland habitats, and livelihoods etc;
- ◆ Deciding your target audience;
- ◆ Set design... costumes, make up, folk dresses, props, stage;
- ◆ Venue... community main gathering place "Behthak" "Hujra" or any central place;
- ◆ Script according to theme and folk tradition;
- ◆ Choosing the right theatre group according to local language, culture;

- ? Choosing the famous actors of the community for influence, the crew for effectiveness;
- ? Concept should be funny or with human interest;
- ? Marketing and gathering the public.

### Suggestions

- ◆ Develop a mission statement for the theatre performance;
- ◆ Select a key location;
- ◆ Make a budget for all necessary features of the theatre e.g. hiring of actors, group etc;
- ◆ Research for theme and concerned issues. Discuss with the communities;
- ◆ The script has to be the right one;
- ◆ Hiring the right actors, group, performers, stage managers, producers and creative director;
- ◆ Determine the length of a theatrical session;
- ◆ Market the street theatre through famers' networking, local restaurants, general stores, bookstores, libraries, business places, other NGOs, CBOs, VBOs, mosques, and schools;
- ◆ Use public relations techniques to get the word out, get organised, and get others to help. Phone calls, fliers, posters, a website, and in-person requests will help to promote the upcoming event and spark interest;
- ◆ Send news releases to local media, business leaders and local Union Council members who represent the district. Promote the event as an effort to create awareness raising and provide for a higher quality of life in the wetlands community;
- ◆ Gather a trusted board of advisors in the shape of CBOs;
- ◆ Set a schedule, including launching date;
- ◆ Work and re-work a budget, make it as low as possible;
- ◆ Do not expect the play to be a hit

- on the first production, if possible repeat it in other wetlands communities;
- ◆ Take lot of pictures, and make a video.

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### The Pakistan Wetlands Programme's Site Offices

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**Central Indus Wetlands Complex**  
Indus River Dolphin Conservation Centre  
Lab E Mehran, Near Madrissa  
Faiz Ul Uloom, Bandar Road, Sukkur.  
Tel: 071-5630687

**Makran Coastal Wetlands Complex**  
Bungalow # M-74 Phase-1,  
New Town Housing Project,  
Gwadar.  
Tel: 086 4211500

**Northern Alpine Wetlands Complex**  
NLI Colony, Near Imamia Eid Gah,  
Shahrae Quaid-e-Azam,  
Jutail, Gilgit.  
Tel: 05811 55658, 55688

### Pakistan Wetlands Programme

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