

Newsletter

Wet Notes

www.pakistanwetlands.org

February 2008

Wetlands

The Ministry of Environment's Pakistan Wetlands Programme

The monthly 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 Royal Netherlands Embassy (RNE), WWF Global Network and the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF).



Opening ceremony of WWD 2008 Gala.

World Wetlands Day Gala 2008

Pakistan Wetlands Programme celebrated the World Wetlands Day on 2nd February to renew the pledge to conserve this unique and threatened ecosystem.

As we all know, wetlands are a key component of the environment that sustains life on earth. Wetlands are various types of water bodies such as marshes and mangroves, etc. located inland, along rivers, lakes or coastlines where the water is at most six metres deep. Along with oceans, forests, pastures and other ecosystems, wetlands contribute to our well-being in many ways: they help control floods, act as a buffer against storms, recharge groundwater and maintain water quality, to name a few. But as with most ecosystems wetlands face severe challenges from human activities and are thus threatened in most parts of the world. The world community responded to the

challenge of degradation of wetlands by signing a Ramsar Convention at Ramsar (Iran) on February 2nd, 1971, for international cooperation in their conservation and management. Despite the generally arid nature of Pakistan's climate, the region supports an estimated 780,000 ha of wetlands that cover about 10% of the total surface area of the country. More than 225 significant wetlands sites have been identified in Pakistan and 19 of these have been internationally recognised by the *Ramsar Convention* as being of global importance. Pakistan has been an active and responsible partner in this global effort. The diverse assortment of natural freshwater and marine wetlands that occur within Pakistan support many unique combinations of biodiversity.

More recently, since 2005, through the Pakistan Wetlands Programme (PWP), a

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Production Staff:

This edition of Pakistan Wet Notes was compiled and edited by Marriyum Aurangzeb, Coordinator, National Awareness-raising and Communications, PWP, Nauman, assistant coordinator, PWP, Fareeha Irfan, PWP consultant. Graphic Design by Fakhr-e-Alam.

Photography by Ghulam Rasool, Syed Raza and Kashif Haider Qutub.



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pioneering partnership between the Government of Pakistan, Royal Netherlands Embassy, Global Environment Facility, United Nations Development Programme, WWF network and local communities. At WWF Pakistan we stand steadfast to the cause of conserving Pakistan's unique wetlands.

Indeed, conservation and sustainable management of wetlands presents us with an unprecedented win-win opportunity to not only enhance the quality of this ecosystem but at the same time provide sustainable livelihoods, reduce poverty and contribute to the well-being of millions of our citizens. Through *Healthy Wetlands Healthy People* theme we hope to accentuate both the positive effects on human health of maintaining healthy wetlands - such as the provision of food, clean water,

recreational opportunities, mental well-being and pharmaceutical products – as well as the negative effects of mismanaging wetlands that result in the impairment of our health and even loss of life - such as through the effects of water-related diseases, burning peatlands, floods, and water pollution.

At PWP, as we marked the World Wetlands Day we look back to look ahead—from a modest beginning much has been accomplished over the last two years, but much still remains to be done. And we can only succeed in this task with your participation: this is an effort which all of us have to undertake together because we collectively hold the environment in trust for future generations and all of us must act as responsible guardians.

We believe that the people of this country, especially children, who are our future citizens and leaders, have

a vital role and responsibility in the conservation of wetlands. Hence students of all ages were particularly invited to participate in these events. The PWP undertook a number of events and activities on February 2nd, 2008, and throughout the week. For further details please visit our website www.pakistanwetlands.org, or contact: Marriyum Aurangzeb, Coordinator, National Awareness-raising and Communications. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or would like additional information. We look forward to your questions, comments and enthusiastic participation to join us in this journey to conserve our wetlands that has only just begun.

A week with Pakistan Wetlands Programme

Thousands of visitors were lured to the Pakistan Wetlands Programme's nation-wide Wetlands Gala 2008 as it toured four of the country's major cities, regions and wetland complexes casting its net of wetlands awareness and environmental protection.

The Federal Ministry of Environment's Pakistan Wetlands Programme in collaboration with

on the Conservation of World Wetlands in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971.

This year the Wetlands Gala adopted the international theme for the World Wetlands Day 2008 i.e. *'Healthy Wetlands Healthy People'* which emphasises the strong relationship between maintaining functional wetland ecosystems and

organisations throughout Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad, representatives of key organisations as well as stakeholders from the four regional complexes of PWP were sent open invitations to celebrate the World Wetlands Day 2008.

The nation-wide celebrations began on February 2nd this year and continued through-out the



the Capital Development Authority celebrated the World Wetlands Day (WWD) 2008, by organising a wide array of engaging and educational activities over a week-long 'Wetlands Gala'. The World Wetlands Day is celebrated world-wide on 2nd February to mark the signing of the *Ramsar Convention*

human health.

The Gala was organised with an objective to raise awareness about the importance of wise-use of wetlands resources among the youth and general public and highlight the value and benefits of wetlands and associated biodiversity.

Wetlands conservationists, students of schools, colleges and universities along with partner

week with a grand finale in Islamabad on February 10th. The Wetlands Gala was Inaugurated at Rawal Lake View Park by the Honourable Federal Minister of Environment, Syed Wajid Hussain Bukhari. Various activities were organised to reach out to a diverse set of audience. These included Arts and Essay competition for students, advocacy

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walk, play performances, documentary screenings, a puppet show and conservation messages on the radio and TV.

The nation-wide Wetlands Gala celebrations concluded with a two day programme at

objective to target a large and diverse group of spectators. On the first day, youth from schools, colleges and universities attended the programme whereas representatives from

Programme were prominently displayed at the venue of the concluding ceremony. Moreover, members of the public received information about the role



Islamabad Club on 9th and 10th February. The same programme was repeated on both days but to a different audience with an

NGOs, the corporate sector and government ministries attended the programme on the second day. Information panels, display boards, and the emblems of the donors and partners of the Pakistan Wetlands

that each participating donor and partner plays in the creation, facilitation and implementation of the PWP's activities.

Outdoor Awareness

Two days before the initiation of the Gala, teasers were placed on banners and pole flexes at various hotspots of Islamabad. These banners and pole flexes gave little information except the web page address of the Pakistan Wetlands Programme and thus motivated interested individuals to get more information from the PWP's official website. A definite increase of 2016 hits on the web page i.e. www.pakistanwetlands.org was noted during these days.

With the initiation of the 'Wetlands Gala' on 2nd February, banners, pole flexes and bridge hoardings



Wetlands promotion on giant screen in Jinnah Super Market, Islamabad

displaying awareness raising messages in general, and the Wetlands Gala 2008 in particular, were put up at many prominent locations of Islamabad. These included bridge hoardings at Zero Point, Faizabad, Islamabad

Highway and the bridges of 7th Avenue. Banners were also displayed along main roads of Islamabad like Kashmir Highway, Blue area, Club Road, Rawal Lake Road and prominent market places



A public message on Faizabad bridge, Rawalpindi

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including Jinnah Super, Super Market, F-10 Markaz etc. Slogans like *Wetlands are not wastelands conserve them...*, *Healthy Wetlands Healthy People...* *Our Wetlands Our Responsibility* were seen on these banners. This outdoor awareness was courtesy of Capital Development Authority as the PWP had to pay no charges for acquiring these spots and thus received free publicity and mileage.



Pole Flex for outdoor awareness.

As part of this week-long awareness campaign for the World Wetlands Day 2008, a documentary titled '*Healthy Wetlands Healthy People*' was shown at the digital screen at Jinnah Super Market for ten consecutive days. This documentary highlighted the close relationship and interdependence of humans, biodiversity and wetland resources.

Media Coverage

FM 89, a national radio network was the official media partner for the World Wetlands Gala 2008 and regular announcements were made on the channel regarding the importance of wetlands throughout the ten day celebrations. Information was also aired about the Wetlands Day 2008 as well as the planned activities of the Wetlands Gala at Islamabad Club. Four slots

of half hour each were exclusively dedicated to the discussions of the global theme of the WWD 2008 in context to Pakistan. *FM 89* provided the air time free of cost and therefore

prepared by the PWP Awareness-raising team was shown by most channels in addition to discussions, panel talks and interviews on environmental issues.



Media representative eager to cover inauguration WWD 2008, Rawal Park.

contributed to the PWP's awareness-raising campaign of providing information on linkages between health of wetlands and people. In addition to *FM 89*, ten other radio channels aired exclusive programmes dedicated to the World Wetlands Day 2008 as part of their corporate social responsibility. These include *FM 100*, *Radio Pakistan*, *FM 89*, *BBC World*, *Express News* etc.

The print media too actively reported on the activities of the Wetlands Gala. Almost all English dailies and many Urdu newspapers carried information about the Gala activities both before and after the event. This extensive reporting in the newspapers helped publicise the activities of the Gala and enhanced the understanding on wetlands conservation.

Arts competition



Abdul Qadir Rafique, UNDP, Dr. Ejaz, WWF, Mairiyum Aurangzeb, PWP and Raja Javed, CDA.

Moreover, the Wetlands Gala 2008 received a noteworthy coverage on various national and international TV channels. A total of 25 TV channels such as *Dawn TV*, *Geo TV*, *ARY One*, *Aaj, Waqt*, *Khyber TV*, *Apna TV*, *Indus TV* aired wetlands related programmes throughout the week. The documentary '*Healthy Wetlands Healthy People*', especially



A student busy in art work.

The *Healthy Wetlands Healthy People* Arts competition was simultaneously held on 2nd February in Islamabad Lahore, Karachi, Gilgit, Swat, Naushera, Rahim Yar Khan, Gwadar and Jiwani for primary and secondary level schools, with an objective to encourage students to express their views on wetlands conservation through the medium of art. A total of

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Essay competition at Rawal Park.

940 students in Islamabad, 125 in Lahore and 365 in Karachi participated in the arts competition. The scenic Rawal Lake View Park was the venue in Islamabad and provided an ideal backdrop for the event where hundreds of students from government and private



An Art competition participant.

schools were seen engrossed putting their thoughts on paper using different media such as collage, water paints, oil and dry pastel colours etc.

In Lahore, the art competition was held at the WWF office and in Karachi at the Sandspit Wetland Centre in collaboration with the Indus For All Programme, District Government and American Consulate.

The event provided an ideal platform to emphasise the benefit of wetlands and educate the participating students in an enjoyable, fun filled way.

Poster Competition

Students are often the target of awareness-raising campaigns. But in an innovative new concept, PWP organised a nation-wide poster competition for teachers of schools and colleges. Hundreds of posters were received from all parts of the

country in line with the theme of the competition - 'Healthy Wetlands, Healthy People'. Teachers from both government and private schools enthusiastically participated in the competition.



First prize winner for healthy wetlands, healthy people art competition.

Poetry Competition

One of the most popular competitions of the Gala was the

Wetlands have so many creatures, Wetlands have so many features People of here are so healthy, They breathe in fresh air, and see so many animals. People of here always remain healthy, Wetlands have egrets and great blue herons, People would be more caring to ducks And not misplace their ducks.

The greenery of the grounds Make me sing a song The droplets of water Makes it even look softer The oxygen in the air Makes us look fair The pollution goes away Makes us feel happy and gay The wetlands are a treasure For everyone a pleasure

Sands of green, lands of brown Sands where birds fly up and down, Dry with heat, wet with rain Ponds spread through out the plain, Green glass high, green grass low, Spiders live and die and grow, Watch a great blue heron fly, Watch an egret sail by Wetlands green, wetlands brown, Wild life living all around!

nation-wide Poetry Competition on the theme of the WWD 2008. This competition was open to students of primary and secondary level students, yet some of the poems received were superior in style and content indicating a high level of wetlands conservation awareness among students.

Essay Competition

The thousands of thought provoking essays received for the Essay Competition are witness to the fact that students are sensitive to the issues of the wetlands and keen to play their part in conservation. This year the theme for the essay competition in line with the theme of the WWD 2008 was 'Healthy Wetlands, Healthy People'. In Islamabad this competition was held at Rawal Lake View Park while in all other cities, students submitted their essays online.

Advocacy Walk

Shortly after completion of the Arts and Essay Competition, the Rawal Lake View Park was stage to an advocacy walk. More than a thousand people participated in the walk including students of the competitions, teachers, representatives of UNDP, Ministry of Environment, Capital Development Authority, WWF, IUCN and prominent radio and TV channels etc.

The eager and excited participants of the walk were seen carrying banners, posters and placards with messages such as 'Wetlands are not wastelands; conserve them' and 'Healthy Wetlands, Healthy People' etc.

The advocacy walk received extensive media coverage especially in newspapers, and thus, spread the message of wetland conservation not just among the participants, but also among the general masses.



Glimpses of healthy wetlands, healthy people advocacy walk.



PWP's team leading the walk

Wetlands Gala casting its net...

NAWC activities for World Wetlands Day, 2008



Advocacy walk in Ghizer District, Northern Areas.

The Northern Alpine Wetlands Complex celebrated the WWD 2008 by organising various activities in the regions of District Swat, District Chitral and the Northern Areas of Pakistan.

Letters, leaflets, brochures and flyers highlighting the importance of the WWD 2008. were disseminated among various stakeholders including media personnel, relevant government departments, NGOs and educational institutions.

Posters, banners and pole flexes were displayed at key locations in Swat and Northern Areas of Pakistan including the offices of local NGOs, CBOs, schools, government departments, hotels and public places.

Healthy Wetlands Healthy People Walk

To celebrate the WWD 2008, the NAWC site office team and High Altitude Wetlands Project (HAWP) of WWF-Pakistan organised a Nature Walk at Gahkuch in the Ghizer District of the Northern Areas. The district is surrounded by the key wetlands including the world famous *Shandur Lake*, *Karumbar Lake* along with the *Hundrap Lake*, *Khalti Lake*, *River Ghizer* and some other unexplored wetlands ecosystems. Participants from schools, government departments, NGOs, CBOs etc. enjoyed the

picturesque surroundings while observing the wetlands ecosystems and their associated biodiversity.



Advocacy walk in scenic wetlands ecosystems.

The objective of this event was to raise awareness among the participants about the importance of high altitude wetlands, their role in maintaining natural ecosystems and the various ecological and social benefits wetlands provide to the communities. Moreover, the



Advocacy walk in Ghizer District, Northern Areas.

event also aimed at strengthening partnerships with members of the local community and promoting their involvement in biodiversity conservation.

Quiz Competition

The Nature Walk at Gahkuch culminated in a series of short lectures delivered by staff members of the PWP and WWF-P. This was followed by a Quiz Competition among the students participating in the walk. The Chief Guest at the event was Mr. Mohammad Ali Yogovi, DC Ghizer who in his address stressed the wise use of wetland resources and appreciated the efforts of the PWP and the WWF-P for organising such awareness-raising events in the Northern Areas.

School Presentations

Two presentations were given to students of The City School, Swat, to introduce the activities planned for WWD 2008 celebrations. This helped spark the interest of the students thereby leading to active participation in all the events especially the Arts Competition.



Prize distribution ceremony at NAWC.

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Press conference at NAWC.

Arts Competition

More than 250 students took part in the *Healthy Wetlands Healthy People* Art Competition organised in The City School, Swat. The chosen drawings were displayed within the school premises on the WWD and a five-member selection committee chose winners from the different categories. The Chief Guest at the occasion Mr. Sher Afzal Khan, EDO Education Swat distributed prizes among the winners.

Media Coverage

Both the electronic and print media provided coverage to the events of the WWD 2008. Photographs of related activities were printed in several local newspapers including Chitral Times, Daily Shamal, Daily K2 NAs, Weekly Bade Shamal NAs, Daily Sadai Gilgit etc.

The Radio Pakistan in Chitral broadcasted the messages of wetland conservation both in Urdu and the local language *Khowar* for the diverse ethnic communities living in District Chitral.

Ahmad Said, Site Manager, NAWC, PWP

Nature Walk and Bird Watching Activity at Khabbeki Lake, SRWC



SRWC, Advocacy walk reaches Khabbeki Lake.

The Pakistan Wetlands Programme, Salt Range Wetlands Complex (SRWC) organised a Nature Walk and Bird Watching Activity at Khabbeki Lake on 12th February. Over 300 students and staff members from Government High School, Khabbeki took part in the event.

The walk started from Government High School, Khabbeki and was led by Rana Shahbaz, Site Manager, SRWC, along with other staff members of the PWP. Students walked to the Khabbeki Lake carrying banners and posters displaying the message *Healthy Wetlands Healthy People*.

Rana Shahbaz briefed the students about the importance of wetlands and different migratory birds found at Khabbeki Lake. The students were provided with binoculars to learn from the bird watching activity

and some tips were given on how to distinguish between various species of birds such as coot and



Bird watching at Khabbeki Lake.

duck. Moreover, information was also given about some local ducks species such as pochard, mallard, teal, and migratory white-headed duck.

Rana Shahbaz, Site Manager, SRWC, PWP



Student enjoys bird watching at Khabbeki lake.

World Wetlands Day 2008 at CIWC



Play Performance on WWD 2008 at CIWC.

The Central Indus Wetlands Complex team celebrated the WWD 2008 with great enthusiasm. Various events and competitions were organised for the schools of District Rahim Yar Khan. The objective was to raise awareness among the young generations to

- ✳️ conserve their wetlands and natural resources.
- ✳️ *Healthy Wetlands Healthy People*
- ✳️ speech, play, quiz and poster competitions were organised to provide opportunity to local students to participate in Wetlands Gala 2008 and add to their



Sajid Qudoos, Site Manager addressing the audience.

knowledge regarding the importance of wise-use of wetlands. Students, teachers and parents showed great enthusiasm and interest in all the activities.



Prize distribution ceremony at CIWC.

Ahmad Khan, Programme Manager Regional Programmes distributed the prizes among the winning students.

Sajid Qudoos, Site Manager, CIWC, PWP



Guests seated at the occasion WWD 2008, CIWC.

World Wetlands Week 2008 celebrated at MCWC

A week-long festive celebration was held at MCWC to mark the World Wetlands Day 2008 and raise awareness about the theme for this year 'Healthy Wetlands Healthy People'. The activities included:



WWD 2008 Jiwani, MCWC.

Media Seminar on WWD

MCWC organised a seminar for print and electronic media



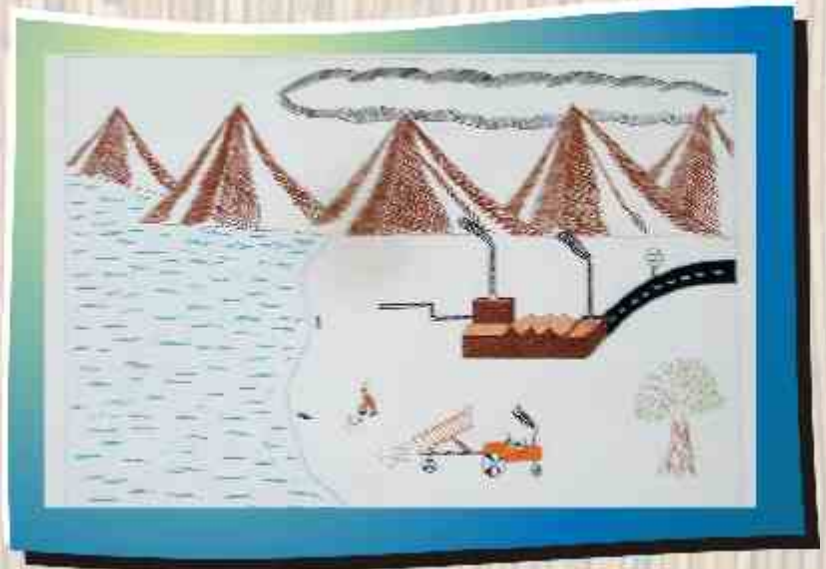
Media seminar at Jiwani, MCWC.

personnel to apprise them of the activities planned for the WWD 2008. Abdul Rahim, Site Manager of MCWC urged the journalists to provide maximum coverage to the events of the Wetlands Gala Celebrations, and play their role in raising awareness about the importance of wetlands

Arts and Essay Competition

Eleven schools were short-listed in consultation with the Gwadar Directorate of Education to take part in 'Healthy Wetlands Healthy People', Arts and Essay Competition. The event was arranged at the Government Model High School

Hall, Gwadar and provided an excellent opportunity for the participating students to learn about the close relationship between maintaining functional ecosystems and human health.



Painting submitted for WWD 2008, MCWC.

Representatives from Gwadar Directorate of Education, government officials and other relevant organisations participated and appreciated the students' performances.

Radio Talk Shows

The local radio channel of Gwadar, FM 103 gave complete coverage to the Wetlands Gala celebrations held at the Makran Coast. Information was given about the various activities that were being organised as well as the importance of the World Wetlands Day.

Two talk shows were aired on 3rd February one in Urdu and the other in the local Language, Baluchi. Participants from the PWP and relevant government departments participated in these talk shows and discussed the human dependence on wetlands and importance of wise and sustainable use of wetlands resources.

Advocacy Walk

Carrying banners, posters and placards, hundreds of people enthusiastically participated in the Awareness-raising and Advocacy Walk in Jiwani. The walk was arranged by the WWF-P office in Jiwani to affirm solidarity with the cause of protecting coastal wetlands and their resources. These wetlands resources are facing severe pressure in the wake of the recent unsustainable

developmental activities at Gwadar. The participants of the walk included school students, teachers, the nazim of the area, as well as representatives from the Union

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Advocacy walk at Jiwani, MCWC.

Council, government departments, NGOs etc.

Group Discussion at Jiwani

As part of the WWD celebrations,



Ending ceremony advocacy walk at Jiwani, MCWC.

the MCWC organised a group discussion for the youth of Jiwani at the WWF-P Jiwani Conservation and Information Centre. A team of PWP gave short presentations on wetlands related topics such as the



Press briefing on WWD 2008, MCWC

characteristics of wetlands, their values and benefits, significant wetland sites in Pakistan and the role of PWP in protecting wetlands resources. Information was also given about the Ramsar Convention

and the WWD 2008 celebrations. The presentations were followed by an interactive discussion that provided the youth with an opportunity to voice their opinions on various wetland related issues and problems.

Awareness-raising Seminar for General Public

MCWC site office organised an Awareness-raising Seminar at District Assembly Hall Gwadar. About 150 persons from all walks of life attended the seminar including representatives from NGOs, CBOs, international organisations, various government departments and the media. Majid Sorabi, Tehsil Nazim



Abdul Rahim, Site Manager addressing the audience.

Gwadar, chaired the event and in his speech stressed the importance of having healthy wetlands to ensure human well-being. He appreciated



Play performance at Gwadar.

the efforts of the PWP for striving to protect the wetlands and offered all kind of co-operation needed from



Prize distribution of WWD 2008.

the local government for PWP's future initiatives.

Abdul Rahim Site Manager, MCWC Gwadar.



Audience assembled for WWD 2008 at District Assembly Hall, Gwadar.

Celebrating WWD 2008 with Partners

World Wetlands Day Celebrations Wetlands Centre, Sandspit, Karachi



Dr. Ejaz Akbar presenting a memento to Ms Kay L. Anske, Consul General of the USA.

The Pakistan Wetlands Programme in collaboration with WWF-Pakistan's Indus for All Programme organised a wide array of activities in Karachi to celebrate the WWD 2008, with more than 1600 schools from the City District Government Karachi and various private schools participating in the celebrations. The event was attended by senior officials including the Consul General of the United States in Karachi, Government officials, corporate members and a large number of media personnel.

Arts Competitions

Arts Competitions were held earlier in 18 towns involving more than 1600 schools of the City District Government Karachi. The



Art competition held in Karachi.

winning students of the earlier contests participated in the final *Healthy Wetlands Healthy People* Arts Competition, held at the

Wetlands Center Sandpits, Karachi.

Speech Competition

A Speech Competition was held between the teachers of both private and government schools of Karachi. The speeches were prepared keeping in view the international theme of WWD 2008, *Healthy Wetlands, Healthy People*, highlighting the importance of Wetlands conservation in Pakistan

Beach Cleaning

The Citizen Foundation School carried out a beach cleaning activity at *Sandspit Beach*. The *Sandspit Beach* is famous for being a nesting ground of two

First Taste of Freedom (Turtle Hatchling)

The release of turtle hatchling into the sea was another activity in the series of events. The activity was carried out at *Sandspit Beach* near the Wetlands Centre in Karachi. The



Turtle hatchlings being released.

Chief Guest Ms Kay L. Anske, Consul General of the United States, along with other distinguished guests released turtle hatchlings into the Arabian



Beach cleaning at Sandspit, Karachi.

endangered marine turtle species; the Olive Ridley and Green Turtle. Over a hundred children collected solid waste material responsible for many turtle mortalities on the beach.

Sea. The release of the turtle hatchling symbolised a renewal of the pledge to protect wetlands and its associated marine biodiversity.

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Contribution of Modern Media

A significant number of print and electronic media representatives also attended the event providing extensive coverage of the WWD 2008 celebrations



Ms Kay L. Anske, addressing the media.

before and after the event. The media coverage also provided an added mileage to the PWP and its initiatives across the country.

Concluding Ceremony

The event provided a good opportunity for students and teachers of Government and private schools from Karachi to understand about numerous aspects of wetlands. They illustrated their understanding



Prize distribution ceremony.

about the role of functioning wetlands ecosystems in maintaining human health. They also demonstrated their commitment towards wetlands conservation by participating



Guests on WWD 2008 at Sandspit Karachi.

whole heartedly in all the activities of WWD 2008.

Zafar Ali, Indus For All Programme, WWF-P.



Painting submitted by students for WWD 2008.

The Grand Finale

Three dimensional Model Presentation

The interactive wetlands models displayed at Islamabad Club on 9th



3-D model display at Islamabad Club, WWD 2008.

and 10th February were surrounded by curious visitors and onlookers. These 3-D model exhibits were



3-D model display by students, WWD 2008.

developed by various schools students from the twin cities on the theme of the Gala celebrations and

depicted the dependence of local community on wetlands resources, wise use of wetlands, and relationship between poverty and the environment.

Participating schools gave live presentations explaining their models, recognising species and habitats, and explaining issues related to the wetlands. The contribution of the PWP in alleviating the problems of wetlands and spreading awareness was appreciated.



Play performance on WWD 2008.

Play Performances

This year government and private schools from Islamabad and Rawalpindi eagerly participated in the 'Healthy Wetlands, Healthy People' play performances at Islamabad Club. A total of six plays were performed by various schools/colleges which were viewed with great interest by the audience. A brief synopsis of the plays is given below:



Children dressed as wetlands species.

Its Never too Late performed by students of Roots School depicted the future of Pakistan in 2012 as environment sensitive country and livelihood dependence of fishermen



Play performance on clean drinking water.

on wetlands resources and how degradation of the wetlands is affecting their daily lives. The play also showed the

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Students charring on their classmates. interrelationship between healthy functional wetlands ecosystems and the well-being of local communities residing in the vicinity of wetlands.

A lively and colourful play, **Save the Wet** by students of the Angelique School showed the negative



Play performance at Islamabad Club.

impacts of water pollution and how this declining water quality affects the wetlands and its associated biodiversity.

Let the Future Smile expressed the links between water quality and health risks in Pakistan. It depicted that apart from human losses, water

borne diseases are responsible for substantial economic losses.

Lets Make Their Joy Last was a thought provoking play by students



Play performance at Islamabad Club.

of Sheikh Zayed School and depicted the links between water quality and health risks due to water-borne diseases.

Ahsaas Ki Lehar by Islamabad Model College for Boys revealed the acute livelihood dependence of rural communities on wetlands and their long and intimate association with their vital natural resources.

Geeli Zameen discussed how water logged soil could be made



Play performance on wetlands and its associated biodiversity.



Young actors pose for snap.

suitable for irrigation. Wetlands are not wastelands and with proper management can be made useful, was the central theme of the play.

Puppet Show

Keeping in view the importance of



Puppets singing a wetlands song.

infotainment in awareness-raising, the PWP invited renowned puppeteers Rafi Peer Theatre Workshop from Lahore to present a



Grumpy croc educates the people on wetlands.

puppet show on 'Healthy Wetlands, Healthy People'. This puppet show was definitely the highlight of the concluding ceremony and narrated in a most enjoyable way the importance of wetlands and sustainable use of wetland resources. The audience thoroughly

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Puppets discussing the significance of wetlands.

enjoyed the colourful show and clapped excitedly to the title song 'Jhilmilati Machlian'.

Documentary Show

A set of creative thematic documentaries were especially prepared by the Pakistan Wetlands Programme's Communication and Awareness-raising Section on the theme of the WWD 2008. These were shown at Islamabad Club on 9th and 10th February and a brief summary of each is given below.

'Miiti da Bawa' a musical

survival and indispensable for all living species.

A promotional video titled Explore Wetlands of Pakistan illustrates the overwhelming beauty of the significant wetlands in all four complexes of the Pakistan Wetlands Programme i.e. Northern Alpine



Screen shot of wetlands promotional slides.

Wetlands Complex, Salt Range Wetlands Complex, Central Indus Wetlands Complex, and Makran Coastal Wetlands Complex. It shows the diversity of wetland flora and fauna and the dependence of the local communities on wetlands resources.



Screen shot of wetlands documentary.

documentary that stresses the urgency of addressing Pakistan's environmental problems and challenges such as accelerated growth, urbanisation, water pollution and hazardous solid waste disposal etc.

Portraying the importance of water to human beings, Water for Life describes how water is essential for

Healthy Wetlands Healthy People.

In line with the global theme for WWD 2008, this thematic documentary shows the close linkages between human health and the health of the wetlands. It portrays the fragility of wetlands and the degree to which humans rely on wetlands for various needs.

Rawal Lake is the only wetland in the

vicinity of the Federal Capital Islamabad. A Day Dawns at Rawal Lake is a promotional film that shows the beauty of the newly developed Rawal Lake View Park with a view to attract eco-tourism.

Partnership with CDA

The Wetlands Gala 2008 was sponsored by The Capital Development Authority. Courtesy of CDA, bridge hoardings, pole flexes and banners were displayed in all important hot spots of Islamabad free of charge for 10 days. Moreover, no rent or fee was charged for using Rawal Lake View Park, the venue of the Art Competition and Advocacy Walk.



Dr. Ejaz Ahmad WWF presenting a partnership shield to Raja Javed CDA.

CDA officials actively participated in all the Wetlands Gala celebrations and events. They gave interviews to the media and took part in TV talk shows and panel discussions.



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Play performance let the future smile.

Special Guests

Among the distinguished attendees at these two events were representatives of the Federal Ministry of Environment, Royal



Mr. Abdul Qadar from UNDP.

Netherlands Embassy, United Nations Development Programme, Capital Development Authority,

Islamabad and IUCN. Mr. Mazhar Hussain, Member, Environment, Capital Development Authority was



Mr. Mazhar Hussain, Member, Environment, CDA.

the chief guest at the occasion on behalf of Mr. Kamran Lashari, Chairman CDA, Islamabad



Honorable guests and PWP team members.



Audience at closing ceremony of WWD 2008.



Feedback after the Gala

The Wetlands Gala 2008 was a tremendous success. E-mails, letters and phone calls congratulating the staff members of the PWP have been received from students, teachers as well as government officials, representatives of NGOs, journalists etc.

Invitations have been extended from various quarters for partnership and collaboration. Some schools have requested the Pakistan Wetlands Programme to initiate a Wetlands Club in their respective schools that will provide information about wetlands conservation to its staff and students. Moreover, corporate entities and companies have shown an interest in receiving regular information about wetlands in general and the PWP in particular.

Newspapers, radio and TV channels were instrumental in publicising the Wetlands Gala before and during the celebrations. Newspapers have expressed willingness to publish regular articles on conservation, environmental issues and wetlands. Moreover, prominent TV channels have requested the PWP to conduct regular programmes on wetland related issues.

The PWP is delighted with this positive feedback and intends to use every possible platform to meet its objectives of wetlands conservation and awareness-raising.

Donors Quote

'The Gala was a well organised and well-published event and it has succeeded in setting wetlands high on the agenda at all levels. Messages about the wetlands and the need to preserve them came across loud and clear. The school children were not only enthusiastic on stage, the public showed great enthusiasm as well. Beautiful models on wetlands prepared by school children and exhibits adorned the Islamabad Club spreading the word of the wetland's importance. RNE was very impressed with this important awareness-raising event.

Mrs. Yasmin Jawed Khan Senior Programme Officer (Environment & Water) Royal Netherlands Embassy.

It is heartening to see over a thousand school children putting colours to their imaginations about the wetlands of Pakistan. The scenic beauty of the Rawal Lake added to the enthusiasm and the resolve of all those present to contribute to the protection of valuable resources of our wetlands.

The vibrant and energetic play performances by the students speaks volumes about the expectations of our future generation when it comes to protecting the environment.

Abdul Qadir Rafique, UNDP.

During the celebration of World Wetlands Day, I had the opportunity to attend a graceful ceremony organised by the Pakistan Wetlands Programme at Rawal Park named as "Wetlands Gala". I witnessed the children translating the beauty of wetlands in colours and words to participate in poster and essay competition. The enthusiasm, interest and knowledge of the youth convinced me to believe that future of wetlands in Pakistan is not that grave as we had thought. I hope that the young generation of Pakistan will force the wetlands managers to ensure the wise-use of wetlands resources very soon.

I look forward to join the efforts of Pakistan Wetlands Programme whenever invited.

Umeed Khalid, Conservator Wildlife, Ministry of Environment.



Some of the promotional material for WWD 2008.

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