

## Pakistan Wetlands Programme's Travelling Wetlands Nature Carnival

Throng of people crowded around numerous displays at the Pakistan Wetlands Programme's Wetlands Nature Carnival when it opened in Lahore for a one day event on March 4<sup>th</sup> 2007.

This event was a sequel to the well attended wetlands carnival event which took place in Karachi on February 25<sup>th</sup> 2007.



The Pakistan Wetlands Programme (PWP) 'Wetlands Nature Carnival' is a means of reaching to the public to raise their awareness and understanding for the need to conserve, protect and manage Pakistan's wetlands resources and the valuable scientific and social roles they occupy within the country and region. It also serves as a vehicle for government agencies and private, corporate sector to show their involvement and concern in protecting the wetlands aspects of the country's biodiversity.

Among the distinguished attendees from both the Government, corporate and scientific sectors at these two events were the Minister for the Environment, Sindh, Dr. Saghir Ahmed, Conservator Forests Sindh, Mr Ghulam Rasool Channa, Mr. Fayaz Rasool, Karachi Port Trust and while in Lahore Dr. Bashir Ahmed Wani, and Conservator Wildlife NCCW, Mr. Umeed Khalid.



The event attracted participation by corporate sponsors who established stalls showing their participation in environmental sensitivity especially where wetlands are concerned. In addition these carnivals served as a basis for public outreach by corporations which have become more proactive in wetlands conservation and management and to publicly demonstrate this resolve.



The corporate participants were Nestle Pakistan, NIDO, Maggie Pakistan and ICI Pakistan. In particular NIDO Pakistan had big multi-participatory presence with wetlands art competitions, wetlands quiz, and speech competition.



Highlighting the event was a Wetlands information Pavilion established by the PWP's National Awareness Raising and Communications Programme which sought to motivate a better understanding of Pakistan Wetlands and associated biodiversity through posters depicting the country's wealth of fish plant and reptilian life found in the wetlands biomes.

Provided free to the public by PWP were posters, office planners, informative brochures, calendars and an illustrative and colourful booklet using drawings and photographs showing threatened fish species in Pakistan.



Members of the public were able to become informed of the roles that each participating donor and partner plays in the creation, facilitation and implementation of the PWP.



Interactive wetlands displays attracted curious participants and onlookers with exhibits depicting marine turtles and their habitat, Indus River Blind Dolphin, dependence of local communities on wetlands resources, wise use of wetlands, and relationship between poverty and the environment.

The Wetlands Pavilion also included innovative wetlands games enabling participants to identify critical issues related to wetlands in a fun and educational fashion which could be utilised and understood by diverse age groups.



Live presentations by the schools, species and habitat recognition, issue explanation related to wetlands in Pakistan and overall encouragement to appreciate Pakistan's wetlands diversity took place.

Prominently displayed were information panels, display boards and the emblems of the donors and partners of the Pakistan Wetlands Programme.





Stimulating participation in wetlands conservation, both public and private school students throughout Lahore and Karachi from level 1 to high school were sent open invitations to contribute art works and three-dimensional interactive displays. A prize distribution ceremony was held for the best students' art work depicting issues relevant to wetlands in Pakistan.



On April 22<sup>nd</sup> 2007 Islamabad will play host to the third Wetlands Nature Carnival at F-9 Park Islamabad. The event will begin at 9.a.m and will continue until 6 p.m. Following this the travelling Wetlands Nature Carnival will be held in Faisalabad on April 29<sup>th</sup> 2007. It is anticipated that the event will continue to be an annual spring Wetlands Carnival.



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