



Report
on
World Wetlands Day 2021

**World
Wetlands Day**
2 February 2021
Wetlands and water



Organized by
ENVIS Resource Partner
on
Forest Genetic Resources and Tree Improvement
Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding
(Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education)
Coimbatore

Digital Observance of World Wetlands Day 2021 by IFGTB ENVIS

The ENVIS Resource Partner on Forest Genetic Resources and Tree Improvement at the Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding, Coimbatore marked World Wetlands Day 2021, the 50th Anniversary of the Ramsar Convention digitally on 02.02.2021 by organizing an awareness event through Facebook live in order to contain the spread of COVID 19. A mobile photography contest was also conducted for students and public on the topic “Wetlands and their Significance”. Both the events were registered in the worldwide events organized by World Wetlands Authority.

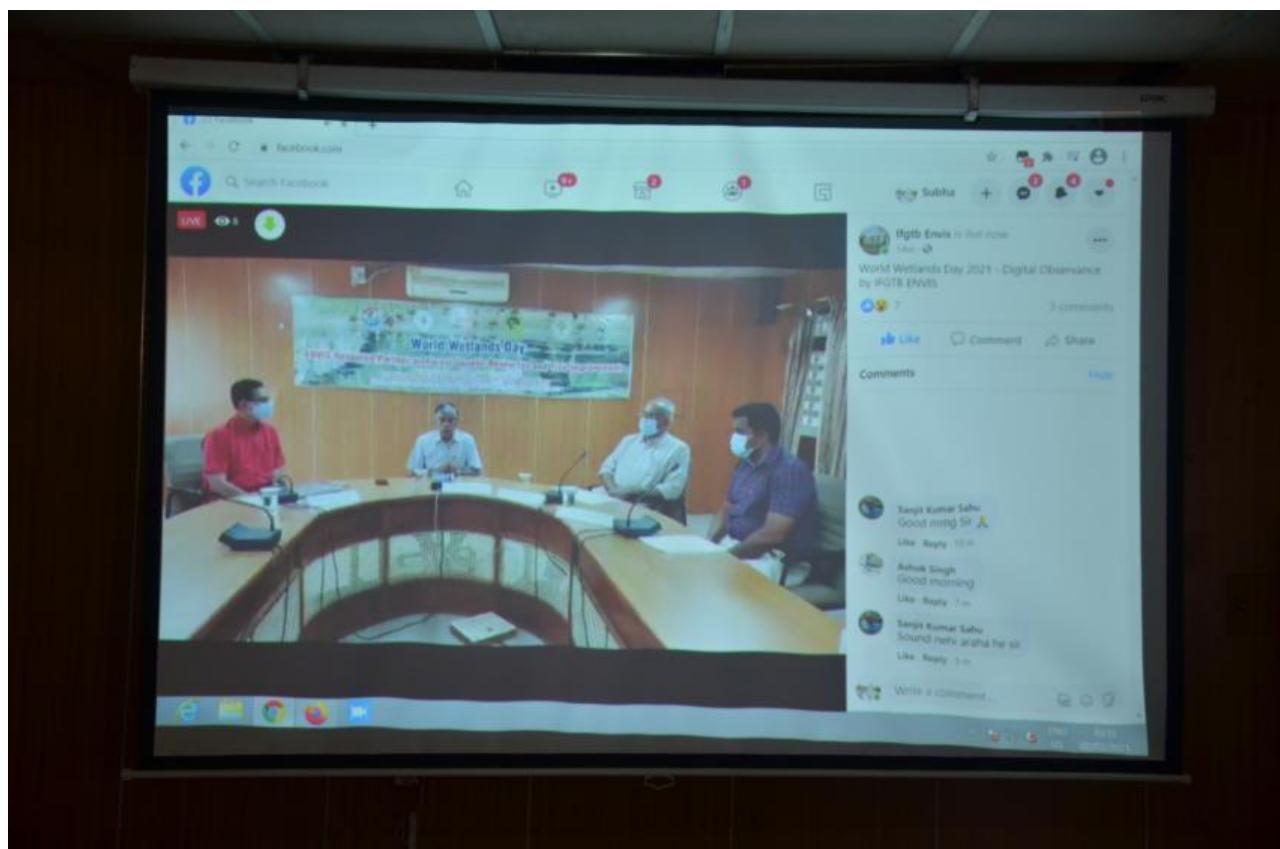
The digital event began with Prakruthi Vandnam, an invocation on nature in Sanskrit based on Yajur Veda by Dr Kannan CS Warrier, Scientist F and ENVIS Coordinator. During his introductory remarks, Dr Kannan CS Warrier explained world wetlands day also marks the date of the adoption of convention on wetlands on 2 February 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea. In his awareness lecture, Dr Warrier highlighted that wetlands are land areas that are saturated or flooded with water either permanently or seasonally. Inland wetlands include marshes, ponds, lakes, fens, rivers, floodplains, and swamps. Coastal wetlands include saltwater marshes, estuaries, mangroves, lagoons and even coral reefs. Fishponds, rice paddies, and saltpans are human-made wetlands. Highlighting its potential, Dr Warrier pointed out that wetlands are acting as important carbon sinks in mitigating the climate change. There are 42 Ramsar sites in India and they serve as abode of many threatened species of flora and fauna including 213 species of fish and 74 amphibians, he added. Dr Warrier gave an insight to the Ramsar sites in Southern India. He highlighted that Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest and halophytic block harbours two globally threatened species of mangroves. Though wetlands are rich in biodiversity, they are disappearing three times faster than forests. It is essential to conserve all the wetlands.

Dr C Kunhikannan, Director, IFGTB in his special address pointed out that wetlands are rich with biodiversity and are habitats for a dense variety of plant and animal species. Through the ability to absorb nutrients, wetlands are able to produce biomass quickly. Their ability to efficiently create biomass may become important to the development of alternative energy sources. However, unsustainable use of wetlands without reckoning of their assimilative capacity constitutes a major threat to the conservation and management of these vital biodiversity rich areas. Dr Kunhikannan emphasised that dense human population in catchments, urbanisation, and various anthropogenic activities have resulted in over exploitation of wetlands, leading to degradation in the water quality and quantity. There is increasing concern to conserve and restore perishing

wetlands and endangered habitats to achieve ecological sustainability. Director urged all to start restoring wetlands, which is the need of the hour.

Results of the Mobile Photography Contest held on the theme “Wetlands and their Significance” were declared by the Chief Jury, Dr John Prasanth Jacob, Scientist G. Among the 79 participants who took part in the contest from different states of India, Ms B. Divyadharshini, 2nd Grade, Chinmaya Vidyalaya, Kilpauk, Chennai, Shri Suraj Pratap Singh, Centre of Environmental Studies, Department of Botany, University of Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh and Shri Jayeshkumar Vaghela, Wildlife Trust of India, Gujarat won the first, second and third prizes respectively. Prizes were awarded to the winners and E Certificates to all the participants. An awareness poster and a video highlighting the importance of conservation of wetlands were released during the occasion and its digital copies were shared with students and all the stakeholders. Dr S. Vigneswaran, Programme Officer, ENVIS proposed the vote of thanks. The online event can be accessed at <https://bit.ly/39GwOZO>. The awareness video can be accessed at <https://bit.ly/3au40TT>.







WORLD WETLANDS DAY 2021

Wetlands and Water



Wetlands are land areas that are saturated or flooded with water either permanently or seasonally. Inland wetlands include marshes, ponds, lakes, fens, rivers, floodplains, and swamps. Coastal wetlands include saltwater marshes, estuaries, mangroves, lagoons and even coral reefs. Fishponds, rice paddies, and saltpans are human-made wetlands. One of the most important benefits that wetlands provide is their capacity to maintain and improve water quality. When healthy, wetlands have a rich natural diversity of plants and animals. These can act as filtering systems, removing sediment, nutrients and pollutants from water. Water and wetlands are connected in an inseparable co-existence that is vital to life, our wellbeing and the health of our planet.



42 Ramsar sites are in India



Chilika Lake is the 1st Ramsar site in India



Renuka Wetland in Himachal Pradesh is the smallest wetland of India



Sundarbans is a Wetland of International Importance



Tso Kar Wetland Complex in Ladakh is the recent Ramsar site in India

Wetlands in India account about 4.7% of the total geographical area



What wetlands do?

- Water purification
- Shoreline stabilization
- Control erosion
- Provide habitats
- Ground water recharge
- Streamflow maintenance
- Mitigates climate
- Enhances recreation



What should we do?

- Stop destroying, start restoring wetlands.
- Don't dam rivers or over extract from aquifers.
- Address pollution, cleanup fresh water sources.
- Increase water efficiency, use wetlands wisely.
- Integrate water and wetlands into development plans.

