

World Wetlands Day 2021 – A Brief Report

World Wetlands Day is celebrated every year on 2nd February to mark the anniversary of signing of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance in 1971. This inter-governmental treaty provides the framework for national action and international co-operation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. This year marks the 50th year of the signing of the Convention. The theme for World Wetlands Day, 2021 is “Wetlands and Water”.

It seeks to bring awareness of the following facts:

- only 2.5 % of water on the earth is fresh water
- less than 1% is usable
- Our water use has increased sixfold in 100 years and rises by 1% each year
- Almost 2.2 billion people do not have access to safe drinking water
- Clean water is critical for healthy lives



The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, as the Nodal Ministry for wetlands conservation has been supporting the State Governments/ Union Territories since 1987, in design and implementation of Management Action Plans for conservation and management of wetlands including Ramsar sites. The concept of Integrated Management Plans is now being implemented and initiatives for wetland rejuvenation and capacity development have been taken up as well.

This year, the Ministry celebrated the World Wetlands Day virtually with minimum physical presence at Godavari Hall in Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, New Delhi. The event was chaired by Hon’ble Minister of State (EF&CC), Shri Babul Supriyo. The list of attendees physically present in the event is attached below. Virtually, the event was attended by Senior Officials of Ministry, State Wetland Authorities, Knowledge Partners and other Guests.

The event was also screened live at the Ministry's official YouTube Channel (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=46_fcMDIE6U) and was thus attended by other guests as well.

The event commenced with a welcome address followed by a presentation by the Joint Secretary of Wetlands Division. The presentation recapitulated the work done in year 2020, the designation of Ramsar sites, introduced the Centre for Wetlands Conservation And Management (CWCM) and gave a demonstration of the web portal under development.

Shri Ravindra Singh, Director, Indo-German Biodiversity Programme, GIZ, elaborated on the portal and other aspects of the project – Wetlands Management for Biodiversity and Climate Protection. The portal would be a publicly available information and knowledge platform “Wetlands of India Portal” in order to facilitate knowledge sharing, information dissemination, host capacity building material, and provide a single-point access data repository. It would be a system for processing information and making it available to the stakeholders in an efficient and accessible manner.

Prof R. Ramesh, Director, National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM) gave a presentation on the proposed CWCM. The Centre would serve as a knowledge hub and enable exchange between wetland users, managers, researchers, policy-makers and practitioners and assist the national and State/ UT Governments in the design and implementation of policy and regulatory frameworks, management planning, monitoring and targeted research specifically related to wetlands. A video on the 42 Ramsar sites was also screened (https://youtu.be/ESkKAqS_jIE).

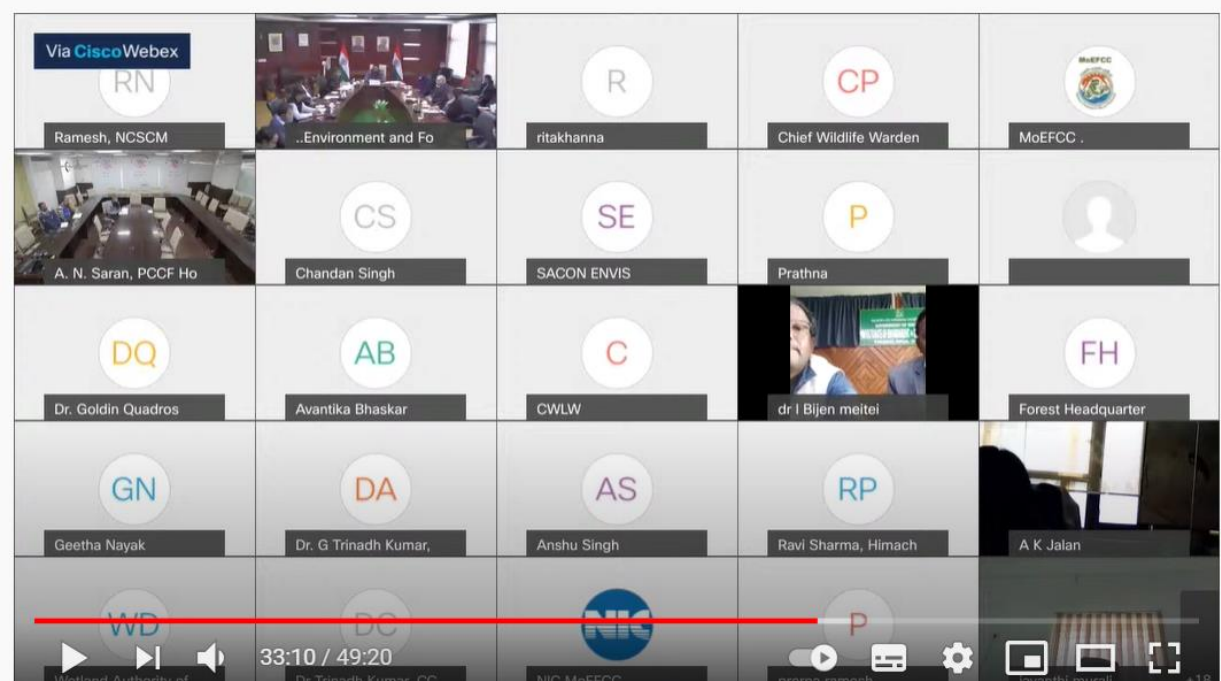
The Secretary, MoEF&CC addressed the gathering. He talked about the importance of wetlands and India's Ramsar commitments, He elaborated on the work being done by the Ministry to conserve and manage wetlands and the role that the Centre and the portal would have in bridging the existing gaps.

The Hon'ble MoS released a book on Faunal Diversity in Ramsar wetlands of India digitally and a brochure on Designating and Managing Ramsar sites physically, followed by his address. He elaborated on this year's theme of Wetlands and Water, recapitulated how the Centre for Wetlands Conservation and Management was conceptualised during the visit of the Ramsar Secretary General to India last year and hoped that it would soon be able to advise other South Asian countries as well. He talked about the two important publications released and stated that the web portal under development would be made public in a few months.

The event ended with a vote of thanks.



World Wetlands Day 2021 celebration at Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, New Delhi under the chairmanship of Shri Babul Supriyo, Hon'ble MoS (EF&CC)



Virtual Participation

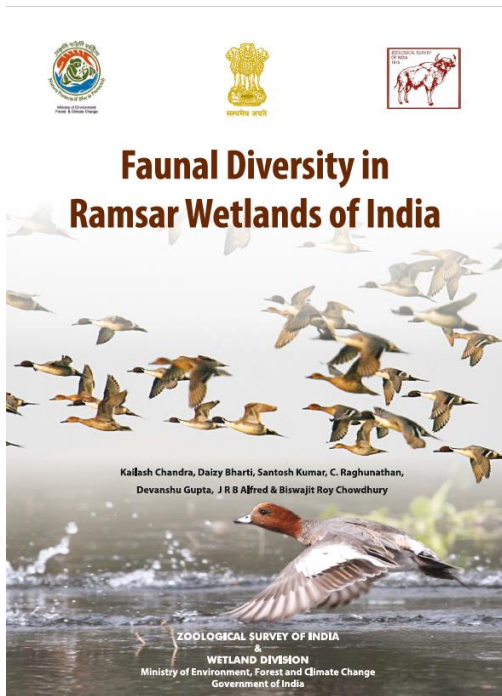


Video Screening on Ramsar sites of India

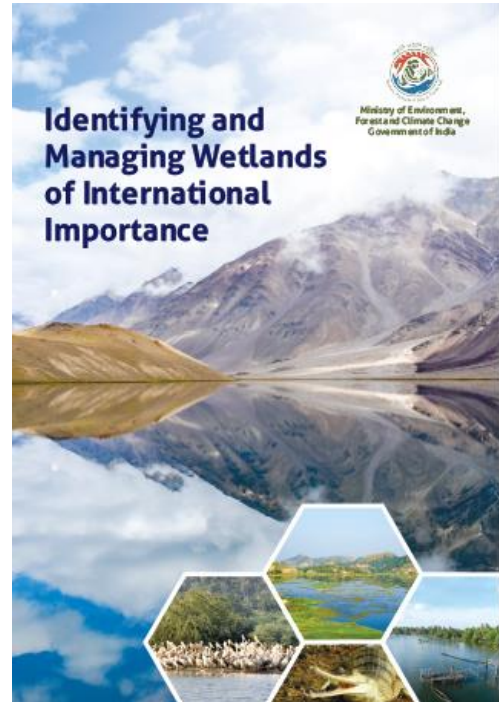


Presentation by Prof R Ramesh, NCSCM

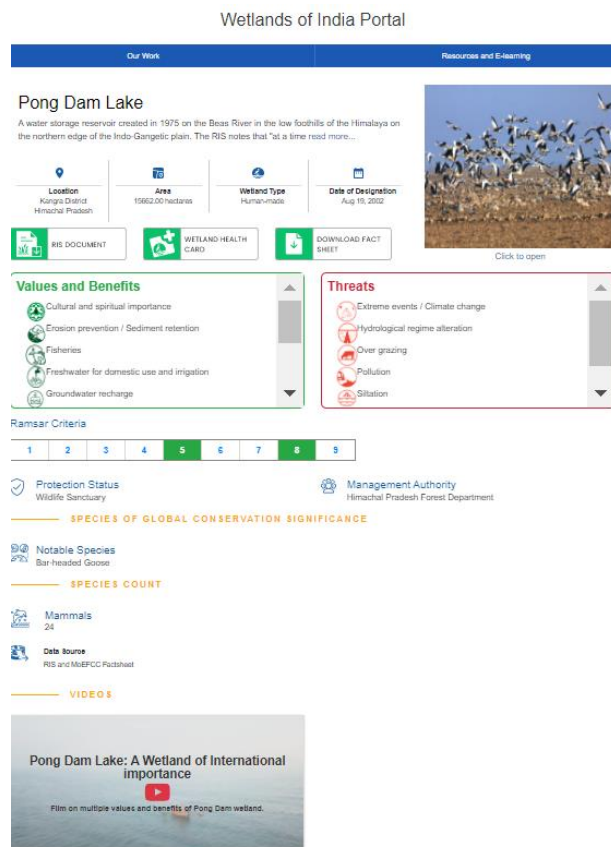
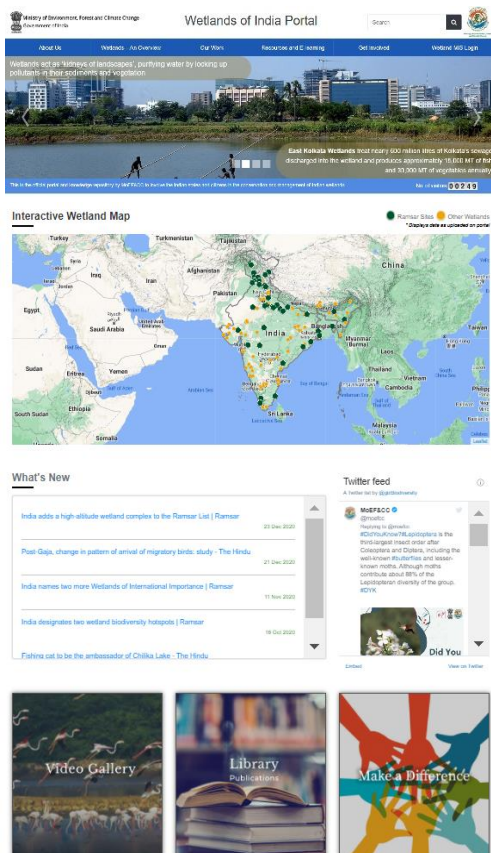
Publications released:



Faunal Diversity of Ramsar Wetlands of India



Brochure on Identifying and Managing Wetlands of International Importance



Screenshots of the web portal under development

List of attendees at the venue:

Shri Babul Supriyo, Hon'ble MoS (EF&CC)

Shri Rameshwar Prasad Gupta, Secretary, MoEF&CC

Shri Sanjay Kumar, Director General Forest & Special Secretary, MoEF&CC

Shri Praveen Garg, Special Secretary & Financial Advisor, MoEF&CC

Shri Ravi Agrawal, Additional Secretary, MoEF&CC

Smt. Manju Pandey, Joint Secretary, MoEF&CC

Dr. M. Ramesh, Scientist 'E', MoEF&CC

Dr. C. Raghunathan, Scientist 'E', ZSI, MoEF&CC

Shri Rajasekhar Ratti, Scientist 'D', MoEF&CC

Shri Ravindra Singh, Director, Indo-German Biodiversity Programme, GIZ

Ms. Shambhavi Krishna, GIZ

Mr. Kunal Bharat, GIZ

Ms. Suchita Awasthi, WISA

The IT team of MoEF&CC led by Dr S. Annadurai

Members of Press