

CELEBRATION OF WORLD WETLANDS DAY, 2022

Wetlands action for people and Nature

Date: 02.02.2022

Venue: Nalban 1 No. Matsyajibi Samabay Samity Limited, East Kolkata Wetlands

On the occasion of the World Wetlands Day, the East Kolkata Wetlands Management Authority (EKWMA) along with Nature Environment & Wildlife Society (NEWS) organized a one day programme at the East Kolkata Wetlands, a Ramsar Site, involving students, youth citizens and local communities to take several actions on wetland conservation. 71 participants attended the programme. Based on this year's theme, '*Wetlands Action for People and Nature*', several actions were taken in this event.

The event started with the release of 1 quintal fingerlings of Indian Major Carp species (Rohu, Katla, Mrigal, Bata, etc.) in the Nalban-1 Bheri by the fish farmers in presence of Mr. K. Balamurugan, Chief Technical Officer (CTO), EKWMA, students, NEWS team and volunteers.

The programme began with a welcome address by Ms. Ajanta Dey, Joint Secretary & Programme Director, NEWS. She stated the importance of the wetlands and the dependence of lives and livelihoods.



Figure 1 Release of fish fingerlings at Nalban 1 number Bheri

It was followed by an inaugural speech by Mr. Rakesh Roy Choudhury, Upo-Pradhan, Tardaha Gram Panchayat. He also mentioned that though there are a lot of debates, the local people must come together to restore these wetlands which support their livelihood.

The keynote address was given by Mr. K. Balamurugan, CTO, EKWMA. He welcomed all to celebrate this day and appreciated the role of fish farmers in maintaining the health of the wetlands.



Figure 2 Key speakers of the Event

After that, an interactive session took place where five local fish farmers expressed their views on the present state of the East Kolkata Wetlands. They stated that they are facing problems in fish cultivation due to heavy siltation and low discharge of sewage waters. They urged the Government to collaborate with the farmer cooperatives to come up with new projects which will be beneficial for them and sustain their livelihood.

The inaugural session ended with a vote of thanks by Ms. Ritwika Ghosh, NEWS.

After that, water quality monitoring including various physical and chemical tests (pH, temperature, DO, transparency, turbidity, nitrate, TAN, phosphate) was demonstrated to sensitize the fish farmers to maintain the water quality parameters in the ponds. The fish farmers, students, citizens collected samples and took an active part in conducting the tests.



Figure 3 Demonstration of physical and chemical water quality parameters

A cleaning drive was organised involving the fish farmers, students, and volunteers where the solid wastes near the wetlands were cleared and properly disposed of.



Figure 4 Cleaning drive with students, local communities and volunteers

Finally, all the students and youth citizens went for a 'Nature Walk' to study the aquatic species, bird species and butterflies dwelling in the East Kolkata Wetlands.



Figure 5 Group Photograph of 'NATURE WALK'