



Indus Forever

A Quarterly Newsletter of the Indus For All Programme, WWF - Pakistan

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EDITORIAL BOARD

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Indus Forever is the quarterly newsletter of the Indus for All Programme; the first five-year (2007-2012) implementation phase of a 50-year vision of the Indus Ecoregion Conservation Programme. Funded by the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Pakistan, the Programme is being implemented by WWF- Pakistan in close collaboration with Government of Sindh. The Programme aims to conserve the rich biological diversity of the Indus Ecoregion through livelihoods improvement of the local communities. The newsletter aims to keep the stakeholders of the Programme, other concerned organisations and individuals updated about the activities, progress and future endeavours of the Programme.

Biodiversity Significance of the Indus Ecoregion

Indus ecoregion is characterised by diverse habitat types consisting of coastal, freshwater and brackish wetlands, riverine forests, a vast desert and irrigated plains. The area is rich in biodiversity of significant ecological and economic importance to the country in general and to the local communities in particular.

The Indus Delta has one of the largest arid climate mangroves cover in the world. It includes 17 major creeks besides a large number of minor creeks and mud flats. Although eight species of mangroves have historically been reported in the area, only four remain. These are *Avicennia marina*, *Aegiceras corniculatum*, *Ceriops tagal* and *Rhizophora mucronata*. In addition, the main delta area harbours at least 34 animal species, 138 bird species, 24 reptile species and about 200 fish species.

The coastal waters and associated wetlands attract a number of migratory birds. Some 56 bird species belonging to six orders and fourteen families have been reported in the Sindh coastal waters.

The main river course is habitat of the blind Indus Dolphin. Moreover, a variety of fish species including Indus baril, Indus garua and the Golden mahasheer are found in the river. The riverine forests along the banks of the Indus support a variety of flora comprising of *Acacia*, *Tamarix* and *Prosopis* and fauna including Hog deer, Wild boar, Jackals and Foxes.



Programme Highlights

Comprehensive Ecological Assessment in the Programme sites

The Indus for All Programme has initiated a detailed ecological assessment in the Programme's four sites for the year 2007. A team of consultants, comprising of subject specialists from Pakistan Museum of Natural History, Islamabad, Sindh Wildlife Department, and WWF-Pakistan conducted the detailed fauna survey that also covered an additional site, Keti Shah (a riverine ecosystem in Sukkur). All the sites represent diverse ecosystems situated in the Indus Ecoregion. The survey, conducted from June 10 to 26, 2007, focussed on



Herpatologist collecting samples in Chotiari

mammals, birds, reptiles, fish and invertebrates. The study includes a detailed assessment of the abundance, seasonal frequency and distribution of the species. The study will identify the threats to the survival of the species, and suggest the remedial measures in this regard.

The initial summer survey, will be followed by the Monsoon or Fall survey in October 2007 and winter survey in January 2008. These surveys will give a better insight into the biodiversity of the area.



A Lizard species found in Chotiari

Indus Ecoregion Steering Committee Meeting

The second meeting of the Indus Ecoregion Steering Committee (IESC) was held on 12 April 2007, in the Committee Room of Planning and Development Department, Government of Sindh. The Additional Chief Secretary (Development), Planning and Development Department, Government of Sindh, chaired the meeting. Some of the important decisions taken

during the meeting were:

1. a sub-committee of IESC for Indus for All Programme was constituted under the Chairmanship of the Secretary Forest and Wildlife Department;
2. the newly constituted sub-committee of the IESC was authorized to review and recommend approval of the 5-year and 50-year logical framework analyses in its first meeting scheduled in July 2007;
3. the work plans of Indus for All Programme were discussed and approved;
4. the following new members were considered for inclusion into the IESC:
 - the Small Grants Programme (SGP) of the UNDP
 - Federal Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan.



2nd Meeting of the Indus Ecoregion Steering Committee, 12 April 2007

Orientation and Team-building Exercise

After completing induction of staff during the inception phase, the Indus for All Programme organised an orientation visit and team building exercise from 20 to 28 April, 2007. As part of orientation, the team members visited WWF -Pakistan's Head Office in Lahore and Programme Office in Islamabad. The team also met with the staff of the Pakistan Wetlands Programme in order to agree measures to reduce duplication and foster joint ventures. The three-day team-building exercise took place in Abbottabad. Adventure Foundation Pakistan facilitated the exercise. Through innovative and interactive learning approaches, the skills and knowledge of the team members were enhanced in leadership, teamwork and effective communication. Later, the team visited Ayubia National Park in Nathiagali. The Chief Conservator, Wildlife Department, NWFP and the Divisional Forest Officer Ayubia National Park briefed the team about conservation initiatives taken by NWFP Wildlife Department in general and Ayubia National Park in particular. Besides this, the team also visited the Pakistan Museum of Natural History in Islamabad.



Team-building Exercise in Abbotabad

The Policy Monitor

Updates on Policy-Level Developments

In order to include more target-oriented approaches for effective implementation of the Programme, and to identify the role of the stakeholder in this respect, over fifty one-on-one introductory and confidence building meetings were held. The key line departments that were consulted include Sindh Planning and Development Department, Sindh Environment and Alternate Energy Department, Sindh Forest Department, Sindh Wildlife Department, Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority and Coastal Development Authority. As a result, MoUs have been drafted and focal persons have been identified to facilitate the Programme implementation.

Parallel to the development of Pakistan Vision 2030, the Government of Sindh is currently finalizing Sindh Vision 2030 to prioritize sectors and mobilize resources essential for sustainable development of the province. The consultative process for Sindh Vision 2030 provided an opportunity for introduction of the Indus Ecoregion Programme and its objectives to district-level stakeholders and mainstreaming of the same in the vision document.

The Indus for All Programme is involved in the development of WWF-Pakistan's Freshwater Policy Programme which focuses on integrating policy components of the organization's freshwater initiatives. In this regard, Manager Policy and Programme Development took part in a presentation and discussion on strategic synergies in two Fresh water Programmes that will become the focus of the WWF's Policy initiatives.

The Poverty-Environment Watch

The aim of the Indus for All Programme is to improve economic opportunities for the communities residing in the surrounding areas of the four priority sites, i.e. Pai Forest, Chotiari Reservoir, Keenjhar Lake and Keti Bunder, while sustaining the natural resources on which the livelihoods of the local people depend. Accordingly, the role of the Programme Economist is to develop and administer initiatives relating to livelihoods, policy and natural resource management.

The economist is also required to lead valuation exercises whose purpose is to place a monetary value on un-priced

goods and services provided by the wetland ecosystems present in the Programme's sites. In this connection, an in-house Travel Cost Model and an accompanying questionnaire for Keenjhar Lake have been developed. The pre-testing of the questionnaire will be conducted in the third quarter of the implementation phase of the programme.

Moreover, in order to profile the social and economic characteristics of the local communities as well as their access to natural, financial, social and physical capital, a socio-economic baseline study has been initiated. The preliminary results are expected by the 4th quarter of this year. The study is expected to help document levels of poverty and peoples' dependence on natural resources in their respective areas. It will also help gather information on health, economic, policy and other shocks.

The Programme commits to extend incorporation of Poverty-Environment dynamics into the policies and plans included in the government's Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) between 2007 and 2012. In this connection, the preliminary Terms of Reference for a consultant and a plan of action have been prepared for improved mechanisms of soliciting stakeholders' inputs into the drafting process of PRSP documents.

Glimpses from the Programme Implementation Units

Hepatitis Vaccination Camp at Sanghar

The Programme Implementation Unit (PIU) team in Sanghar actively supported the District Government in organising a vaccination camp against Hepatitis at Village Chaudhary Barkat Ali on 11 May 2007. The purpose of the camp was to provide protection to the people of the area against the imminent threats of Hepatitis and provide advice on preventive measures against the possible infections. The staff joined hands with the District Government in bringing the people, particularly women and the elderly people, to the camp by providing transportation facilities. The event was an opportunity to sensitize people about sanitation issues and to disseminate information about the Indus For All Programme.



Hepatitis Vaccination Camp in Sanghar, 11 May 2007

World Environment Day-2007 Celebrations at Sanghar

On the occasion of World Environment Day - 2007, the PIU Sanghar facilitated a seminar organised by the local NGO Dharti Dost Sangat. With participation of the district and local government officials, representatives from various NGOs and a large number of volunteers, environmental issues were discussed and mitigation measures were prioritised. Environment and sanitation are among the worst problems faced by the community. The Taluka Nazim of Sanghar was the Chief Guest at the event. He assured the participants that actions would soon be taken to address sanitation problems and to keep a clean environment in the district. WWF-Pakistan offered to play its role in the networking between government and civil society organizations in this respect.

On the same day, the Programme staff visited the Degree College Sanghar, where they briefed the Principal and teachers about the objectives of the Programme with special reference to environmental awareness. Later on, the staff participated in tree plantation activity at the premises of the college.



World Environment Day-2007 Seminar in Sanghar

Interactive Theatre on Environmental Issues Organised in Sanghar

To mark the World Environment Day - 2007, the PIU Sanghar organised an interactive theatre on the embankment of Chotiari Reservoir on 5 June 2007. Over 2000 spectators including a large number of local community members, district and local government officials and representatives of various NGOs and media personnel attended the event. The theatre performers belonged to the "Jagartaa Group" of Sindh Development Society, a local NGO working on environmental awareness. The event helped highlight biodiversity issues and the negative effects of natural resources depletion on the livelihoods of the local people. Following theatre performance, a musical programme was held in which various folk artists performed. The poetry and songs focussed on various aspects of environmental conservation portrayed in the popular Sufi poetry of Sindh. The event was covered by print and electronic media. This includes news bulletins and articles, in addition to a 5-minute documentary on Indus TV.

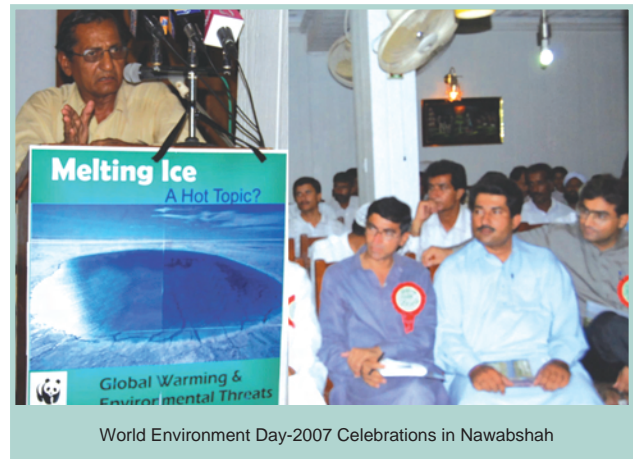


Interactive Theatre in Sanghar 5 June 2007

World Environment Day-2007 Celebrations at Nawabshah

The Nawabshah PIU organised an awareness-raising programme on "Melting Ice: A hot topic", the theme for World Environment Day-2007. The event was attended by the representatives of local government, academia, and community members. Students from two schools of the area presented skits on the global warming. This programme was helpful in creating awareness among local stakeholders about the harmful effects of global warming and climate change.

Speaking on the occasion, stakeholders raised their concern over unfavourable climate changes caused by global warming. The event was covered by the local print and electronic media which helped widely disseminate the message of the World Environment Day 2007.



World Environment Day-2007 Celebrations in Nawabshah

Medical Camp in Sakrand, Nawabshah

The PIU Nawabshah organized a one-day medical camp in Taluka Sakrand near Pai Forest on 21 June 2007, with the coordination of a local Community-Based Organization (CBO) "Sindhica Reforms Society, Nawabshah". Medical staff of Nawabshah Medical College and Hospital, Taluka Hospital Sakrand, EDO Health, Nawabshah and Rotary Club Nawabshah participated in the medical camp and extended their support in organisation of the medical Camp.

In total, 780 patients belonging to 42 villages of Taluka Sakrand were treated at the camp. Most of the villagers who took part in the camp belong to villages within the 10 kilometre area of Pai Forest. The camp was divided in 7 different sections catering to the needs of patients with different ailments. The included Paediatrics ; General Physicians; Ear, Nose and Throat; Blood screening (Hepatitis B & C); Medicines; Tubercloses (awareness); and Gynaecology with ultrasound facility.



Medical Camp in Sakrand, Nawabshah

During the camp, 25 ultrasounds of gynae patients were carried out. In the blood screening section, 55 blood samples were collected for Hepatitis testing. The Indus for All Programme provided medicines to the patients. Moreover, brochures and pamphlets were distributed to local communities for awareness regarding the significance of conserving natural resources.

Release of a captured Civet cat in Pai Forest

During the recent ecological survey of the Pai Forest area, the Indus For All Programme's survey team was informed that a local villager has been keeping an unidentified wild animal. The team visited the person and identified the animal as a Civet cat. The survey team, together with the Sindh Wildlife Department (SWD) representatives, convinced the villager to release the rare species into the wild and the animal was set free in the Pai Forest by the villager himself. Mr. Rab Nawaz, the NRM Coordinator of the Programme, presented a shield and a cash reward to the villager for his contribution towards nature conservation.



Release of Captured Civet cat in Pai Forest

Open Discussion Forum with local stakeholders

On World Environment Day (WED), the Programme's Keenjhar Lake PIU organised a dialogue among representatives of local CBOs and the NGOs working in the area with a purpose to discuss environment and natural resources issues of Keenjhar Lake.

The discussion identified existing environmental issues of the district like sea-intrusion; water-logging and increasing salinity; excessive use of pesticides; over-fishing; illegal hunting; pollution from industries and deforestation.

A significant number of NGOs and CBOs working in the district were represented including; HANDS, LEAD Pakistan, AKPBS, M.H. Panhwar Trust, Pakistan Press Foundation (PPF), Sindh Agriculture and Forestry Workers Cooperative Organization (SAFWCO).

Indus for All Programme's Relief Efforts in Keti Bunder

Beginning from 22 June 2007, a strong Monsoon weather system over the North Arabian Sea swept over the Sindh coastal areas. The weather system then converted into a Tropical Cyclone (Yemyin No.03B). Under its influence, heavy rainfall, winds and extremely rough southwesterly wave action caused rapid destruction of housing in Keti Bunder. This devastated the livelihoods of coastal communities including inland and remote creek inhabitants. Initial estimates found that 5,220 families became homeless in Keti Bunder town alone with 200 improvised thatch huts destroyed and 4,200 partially damaged, 135 boats damaged, half of all poultry and betel leaf sheds damaged, and half of all crops on 500 acres of agriculture land destroyed.



Indus for All Programme's Relief Efforts in Keti Bunder

Although Yemyin struck Balochistan province the hardest, it left behind intense rain-storms and flooding in Keti Bunder making fishermen families homeless and depriving them of boats - their only source of livelihood. Another post-cyclone effect was the spread of malaria and water-borne diseases such as diarrhoea. Fortunately, few human lives were lost (three dead in boat sinking incidents).

Keti Bunder is one of the priority sites of the Indus for All Programme. In the wake of the destruction, the Programme

responded rapidly and provided rescue and relief and gauged the demand for rehabilitation of those affected. The site office team, in collaboration with other NGO's, district government and local volunteers, managed to evacuate a majority of the local people from Keti Bunder town to safer locations.

Besides this, the programme office also provided boat-fuel to other individuals and organizations for distribution of relief goods in the inland and creek areas; conducted a rapid damage assessment to determine the extent of the damage and measure the scale of rehabilitation efforts required. All WWF staff participated in the exercise in spite of harsh weather conditions and accompanying threats. Thanks to generous support from Qarshi Industries, a water purification product was distributed to affectees. Qarshi Industries donated 6,300 bottles of their famous water purification product Aab-e-Nuqra for the communities.

Mobile Medical Camp at Sanghar

The Programme Implementation team Sanghar organised a Mobile Medical Camp on 17 June 2007 at Village Bakaar situated in the outskirts of Chotiari Reservoir. The Indus For All Programme sponsored three well-known doctors attending the camp. A significant population of about 2,200 from the small villages adjoining the Chotiari Reservoir benefited from the camp.

The PIU Sanghar also used the event to raise awareness among local residents about the importance of natural resources and their conservation. Hence, messages about environment, health and hygiene and conservation-related information were disseminated through banners and other resource materials.



Medical Camp at Chotiari

Meeting with District Nazima, Nawabshah

The Nawabshah PIU team organised a meeting with Ms. Faryal Talpur, the District Nazima Nawabshah in her office on 9 June 2007. The team briefed the District Nazima about WWF-Pakistan and the Indus for All Programme, its objectives, implementation plans and future endeavours. Ms. Talpur inquired about various aspects of the Programme and particularly asked about plans related to Pai Forest. The team informed her that the Programme envisages a long term sustainable management plan for Pai Forest that will involve

communities, relevant government departments and civil society to carryout collaborative efforts. The team also briefed Ms. Talpur on forthcoming vegetation survey in Pai Forest as part of the initial assessment towards long-term planning and implementation. Ms. Talpur stressed the need for habitat assessment of Crocodiles in Mundh Jumrao. The team noted that the Pakistan Wetlands Programme is planning to conduct ecological surveys of Ramsar sites, hence they would cover Deh Akro as well.

The District Nazima assured WWF of her support in the Programme. She supported the Nawabshah PIU in organising a medical camp in Sakrand.



Meeting with Nawabshah Nazima - 2007

HR News

Indus for All Programme's Internship Programme Kicks off

With the start of the implementation phase, the programme engaged its first interns namely, Abida Parveen from Jinnah University for Women, Karachi and Tehmina Afsar Ali from Indus Valley School of Arts, Karachi. Both the interns provided useful support to the Programme Economist and the Environmental Education and Communication component, respectively. The programme envisages a comprehensive internship programme to support young development professionals, researchers and students from various academic and research institutions to conduct research work on various themes about the Indus Ecoregion.

WWF- People

The following people joined the Indus For All Programme during the first quarter of the implementation phase.

1. Mr. Dewan Hari Das, Environmental Education Officer - PIU Keti Bunder, Thatta
2. Ms. Noushaba Malkani, Environmental Education Officer - PIU Pai Forest, Nawabshah

3. Ms. Nazia Bano, Environmental Education Officer-PIU Kinjhar Lake, Thatta
4. Mr. Naveed Ali Soomro, Environmental Education Officer- PIU Chotiari Reservoir, Sanghar
5. Mr. Farooq Ahmed Laghari, GIS Analyst, Karachi

Other News

Updates from Pakistan Wetlands Programme

Significant progress has been made in the Pakistan Wetlands Programme during the last quarter (April-June, 2007) in all the components. All the four site offices have been established and the staff has been hired. The survey programme has been initiated and covers nineteen Ramsar Sites at this stage. Surveys at Taunsa Barrage, Tanda Dam and Chashma Barrage has been completed. Moreover, a preliminary visit by Programme Donors and Partners was arranged to the Northern Areas to assess and review the Programme's involvement in high Alpine Wetlands.

Several training courses have been facilitated under the programme. Significant strides have been made in implementing the awareness raising component of the Programme. A wide range of awareness-raising activities on different occasions have been conducted during the quarter. Significant progress has been made in the Central Indus Wetlands Complex especially concerning the awareness campaign against the extensive killing and trade of freshwater turtles. In addition, the issue of cranes, marine turtles and other species of concern regarding wetlands are also being highlighted in other regions. (Contributed by Shafaq Masood, Research Assistant to NPM, PWP)

Completion of Tackling Poverty Project

The EU - sponsored " Tackling Poverty in Pakistan's Coastal Communities through Sustainable Livelihoods" project completed its execution on 30 June 2007. The four year project focused on sustainable management of coastal mangroves and fisheries at four sites; Sandspit and Keti Bunder (Sindh province) and Sonmiani and Kalimat (Balochistan province). During its implementation, the project organised local committees in the form of male and female CBOs/Groups and enhanced community awareness on natural resources and their relationship to livelihoods. The project took several initiatives related to policy, research and advocacy on participatory management of coastal mangroves and fisheries resource at the four sites.

Syed Asad Ali Award 2007

Two conservation activists from Balochistan received the Syed Asad Ali Conservation Award-2007 in a ceremony held on 3 May 2007, at the Wetland Centre Sandspit Karachi. Master Abdul Rasheed, a local community member from Sonmiani and Mr. Abdul Rahman, Deputy Park Ranger, Hingol National Park, Balochistan were nominated for this year's award. The recipients were presented with shields and Rs.50,000 each as cash awards by the Chief Guest

Prof. Dr. Syed Irtifaq Ali, the former Vice Chancellor of the University of Karachi.



Recipients of Syed Asad Ali Award 2007

Sperm Whale Washed off at Gadani Beach

A dead sperm whale was found washed off the beach of Gadani in Balochistan on 24 April 2007. The whale was 31.2 feet long and 7.1 feet wide. This is the second recorded incident of sperm whale species being washed ashore on a Pakistani beach. The first such incident was recorded at Manjaar village on the coast of Karachi on 8 December 2005, by the Cetacean Conservation Project team.

Sperm whales are one of the deep diving species and generally feed at depths ranging between 200 and 2,000 meters.



Beach Cleaning Activity at WWF-Pakistan, Wetland Centre, Karachi

WWF-Pakistan's Wetland Centre at Sandspit, with the support of Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC), Pakistan, organised a beach cleaning activity on 5 June 2007 at Sandspit.

The event was aimed at creating awareness on marine turtle. After the event, participants visited the Wetland Centre where they were sensitised about the importance of beach

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cleaning through presentations and a documentary on marine turtles. Speakers from both organisations emphasised the crucial role of the private sector as a partner in conservation initiatives. Turtle hatchlings were also released into the sea on the occasion.

Sandspit/Hawkesbay is a globally important site for marine turtle nesting. The beach is sandy and the nesting habitat is concentrated along a 5 km stretch of the beach. Sindh Wildlife

Department has been implementing a marine turtle conservation programme at the Karachi coast. WWF initiated its turtle conservation activities at the Karachi coast after establishing a Wetland Centre at the Sandspit beach.

Pakistan is a signatory to the IOSEA Agreement on conservation of marine turtles.



WWF and HSBC staff at Beach Cleaning Activity

Upcoming Events

Vegetation Survey in the Programme Sites, July 2007

Launching Ceremony of the Indus for All Programme, August 2007

Media Workshop, December 2007

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“ Man has too long forgotten that the earth was given to him for usufruct alone,
not for consumption, still less for profligate waste.”

George P. Marsh