

Four new sites for Indus Ecoregion Programme selected

Staff Report

KARACHI: WWF-Pakistan (WWF-P) has selected four new sites for its Indus Ecoregion Programme (IEP), namely Shah Bunder as deltaic ecosystem in Thatta District, Manchar Lake as freshwater wetlands ecosystem in Dadu District, Nara Wetlands Complex as desert wetlands complex in the districts of Khairpur and Sukkur, and Khabrani Forest as riverine forest in Matiari District.

Discussing the different aspects of the ecological importance of these sites during a consultative workshop on Tuesday, many stakeholders, represented by experts, departmental heads and senior officials, selected these four sites after considering the 50-year vision of the IEP and its implementation in those sites.

IEP is a long-term initiative to conserve biological diversity in the Lower Indus Basin through Participatory Natural Resource Management and poverty alleviation. The first six-year (2006-2012) implementation phase of the programme is known as the Indus For All Programme (IFAP). Implemented by WWF-P in close collaboration with the Sindh government and other stakeholders, the IFAP is operational in four of the 14 priority sites of the Indus Ecoregion. The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands has generously provided financial support to implement the first phase in the four priority sites that represent the critical ecosystems in the Indus Ecoregion, namely Keti Bunder as deltaic ecosystem and Keenjhar Lake as freshwater wetlands ecosystem in Thatta District, Pai Forest as forest ecosystem in Shaheed Benazirabad District and Chotiari Reservoir as desert wetlands ecosystem in Sanghar District.

Representatives of Sindh Planning and Development Department, Sindh Forest Department, Sindh Wildlife Department, Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority, Sindh Environmental Protection Agency, Karachi Port Trust, National Institute of Oceanography, Marine Fisheries Department, Coastal Development Authority, University of Karachi, University of Sindh, Shah Abdul Latif University, Zoological Survey Department, Participatory Development Initiative, Institute of Irrigation and Drainage Engineering, Mehran University of Engineering and Technology, United Nations Development Programme's Sustainable Land Management Project, International Union for Conservation of Nature, Leadership for Environment and Development, various media agencies and WWF-P staff participated in the workshop.