

Asian Waterbird Conservation Fund

亞洲水鳥保育基金

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project title:

Community Based Waterbird monitoring and Conservation in Cox's Bazar coastal areas, Bangladesh.

Name of organisation:

Marinelife Alliance

Project person in charge:

M. Zahirul Islam

SUMMARIES ON ACTIVITIES ORGANISED

A. Awareness Raising Among Community

1. **Awareness Raising among Community:** We are trying to minimize bird hunting through motivation and proper training and awareness of local community. So far 6 motivation program conducted in different areas with a total participation of 199 community people.

2. **Awareness Raising to Hunters:** We spent time with targeted people who infact occasionally engage themselves in hunting activity during inter season when shorebirds and other waterbirds are abundant and easy to catch with various ground trap. There are group of 11 people who we invited initially and 2 other program will be organized within this project during July 2009. It is really difficult to separate people as hunters as they are not all professional hunters, only occasionally.

Goal of the activity:

To raise awareness among community to reduce threats derived from people intentionally and unintentionally.

Organising date:

Awareness with community people

Date	Village	Number of Participants
21 Jan 2009	Sonadia west Village	36
22 Jan 2009	Sonadia East Village	31
29 Jan 2009	Ghotivanga Village	39
31 Jan 2009	Gorokghata Village	41
11 Mar 2009	Pechardwip Village	29
12 Mar 2009	Sonarpara Village	23

Awareness with Hunting people

Date	Village	Number of Participants
23 Jan 2009	Ghotivanga Village	11

Actual number and group of participants:

Total number of participant in the community awareness program was 199 people and 11 in the awareness program with people engaged in bird hunting and trapping.

Evaluation:

Participants were very much aware about the deep sea port issues (Appendix I) and all agree that birds will leave this vast place if deep sea port activity starts.

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The awareness participants from the community were very much interested regarding the program and they emphasized that birds should be protected. They mentioned various habitat destruction is one of the main causes of bird population decline. In addition human interference increased in bird areas. They agreed that in season a lot of bird's still hunt by some community people. Lack of awareness and activity on bird's education and conservation is one of the major conservation challenges. People in Sonadia island mentioned that deep sea port planning by the government if implement will totally destroy the migratory bird's habitat and only way is to change the deep sea port site to farther north to Kutubdia island.



Discussion with community people (Credit: M. Zahirul Islam)

Similarly as usual the most of the people in hunting group mentioned they do not hunt much just occasionally. They mentioned a lot of birds are killed by children by slang shot. They mentioned sometime rich people come to hunt migratory ducks. They finally agreed to help us to prevent hunting. But they mentioned it is very important to continue this awareness program.

Awareness program will be continued as regular program with the bird hunters. So far we understand the hunting is seasonal and incidental although some people do this whenever they can, but it is not the only activity they have to rely on. Bird hunting is not essential for their livelihood, there are other activity they can do for their life. The area we work the number of total birds sold in hiding may attain several hundred per season and included the available species of shorebirds and resident waterbirds, viz., pond heron, little egrets, cattle egret, black coot, moorhen, whimbrel, curlew and also we have seen lesser sand plover during field trapping and we understand people do that intentionally as sometime the small birds are less worth full and some awareness can change that attitude. In addition the livelihood is a great challenge in Bangladesh all over the country thus concurrently it is very important to initiate local based ecotourism and handicraft opportunity for the people engaged in such activity to enhance their economy and water bird conservation.

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B. Community Capacity Building

1. **Training :** We trained 10 persons as bird volunteer and they are currently engaged in data collection on bird areas and hunting in their respective areas. We distributed bird ID to the participants and it is very important to make materials in local language as people are illiterate and most even can not read local language. It will take time to build their capacity fully to monitor birds.

2. **School Education:** We conducted 7 school education programs on waterbirds. Children's were very much interested to waterbirds. They agreed some of them are frequent Slang shot users to kill birds. These are not waterbirds local birds like Black Drongos, Mynas etc. We distributed bird posters, leaflets, among the children's and teacher.

Goal of the activity:

To build community peoples capacity that they can monitor and protect waterbirds.

Organising Date:

September 2008- Present

Actual number and group of participants:

Date	School	Students	Teachers
21 Oct 08	Sahporirdwip Jaliapara Primary School	67	4
11 Nov 08	Inani Govt. Primary School	51	3
12 Nov 08	Sonadia Primary School	61	2
25 Jan 08	Pechardwip Karachi Para Primary School	45	3
12Feb08	Kutubdia Para School	69	3
19 Feb 08	Sonarpara High School	55	2
07 Apri 09	Sonaichari Primary School	43	3
Total		391	20

Evaluation:

Students were very much enthusiastic about the birds' photo and wanted to be engaged in annual bird survey. One of the most important issues is the lack of instruments that students want to use binoculars that they do not have. Therefore they emphasized to provide enough binoculars during participation. More telescope and good quality binoculars can make the field work and bird observation easier and effective in terms of species identification, counting, confirmation and community participation. For a good impact we need 10 pairs of good quality binoculars and at least 4 telescopes. The telescope is also not available in our country that one can buy anytime.

Children were agreed to raise awareness among themselves and parents and encouraged to conduct more programs in their school regularly. Similarly teachers were interested to be trained to know waterbirds and conserve.

C. Field Establishment

1. **Strengthening Monitoring Station:** For bird monitoring, research and conservation three monitoring stations have been established in three important bird areas at Sonadia and Sahporirdwip. Now monitoring station are being furnished with various displays, guides, accommodation facilities and 3 permanent local observers. This base station for waterbirds conservation and research center will be developed gradually in future activity. These will be equipped where scientist would be able to stay for bird research. Moreover these stations would be used as bird's areas protection station.

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2. **Establishing Ornithological Center:** Resource center are being established to facilitate community education on water birds and for permanent training center purposes. It is near the important bird area, Sonadia Island, within the village community area. It will be a bamboo cottage of about 20 Ft X 30 Ft dimensions where seating facility will be developed for 40 people and various display materials will be hanged regarding ornithological basics like Identification guides, maps, Migratory routes, threats, Bangladesh status, important water birds areas, role of birds in the nature and wetland in particular.

Goal of the activity:

To develop monitoring station that can be helpful for scientific study and conservation and the Bird center will raise mass awareness and help enormously in basic scientific education towards the community and outside people.

Organising date:

May- August 2009

Actual number and group of participants:

3 monitoring station will be upgraded and one Bird center will be established.

Evaluation:

We have purchased all the materials for the monitoring station like safe custody, sleeping rack and producing the materials regarding bird's information including flyways and area map. All we will fix after the rainy season. In September 2009. We infact in need continuous support for the 3 permanent staff at three monitoring station to prevent hunting.

Similarly the main ornithological center is under construction in Sonadia Island. It will take time until August and hope to finish within our timeframe. In the mean time we are also producing the materials for the center. It will be Bamboo cottage of 20 ft by 30 ft on stilt. There is extreme necessity for the solar panel for lighting inside the cottage as we do not want any electric generator facility as that create lot of noise, smoke and more or less environmental impact.



Shorebirds at Belekerdia, Sonadia Island, Spoon billed Sandpiper spotted here, Government is also planning to establish deep sea port in this important bird area. (Credit: Samiul Mohsanin)

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D. Outreach Materials Production

For awareness raising and community training, outreach materials will be produced like T-shirts, identification sheets, picture cards, posters, leaflets, and some other gift items. Materials will be produced in local Bangla language and also in English. The outreach materials would be used also for fund raising activity to carry on future conservation work. We have planned to produce outreach material from the local community. Initially some training will be provided to women and men of the respective areas where they would be able to make some selected items that can be sold for their income generation.

Goal of the activity:

To distribute among students and community, professional and amateur to get the scientific fact information regarding waterbirds and their conservation needs in Bangladesh

Organising date:

March- present 2009.

Actual number and group of participants:

We distributed materials to over six hundred people. Some materials still to come out from the production company. We hope to get those finish by August and ready for distribute.

Evaluation:

We are producing Bird ID Cards/Guides 5000 PCS, Booklet 500, Posters 1000, Folders 1000. Some more items also will be in addition to these as we are securing funds from other activity.

E. Community Based Water Bird Protected Areas

We are monitoring bird and hunting activity in the Sonadia west Belekerdia and East at southern part and at Sahporirdwip area. Today's bird area would be encroached for shrimp farming, salt pans or agricultural land within near future it is very urgent to conserve the bird habitat before it has been altered. We are trying to motivate community people to participate in conservation and establish small protected areas where still huge no of water birds gather seasonally. These areas have been identified during the Phase-1. With the local community participation these areas would be conserved with volunteer from the community.

Goal of the activity:

To conserve the important bird area to allow safe area for migratory and resident water birds.

Organising date:

October 2008- Present 2009

Actual number and group of participants:

Area more than 5 square kilometres.

Evaluation:

Currently there is no hunting pressure as our people are trying to save these from threats. The total area would be more than 5 square kilometre. But one of the major issue is that the future is still uncertain since government not emphasizing doing permanent protected areas even there are declarations in the papers. We have to keep proposing regarding the protected areas.

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F. Bird Census

In January 27-30, 2009 we conducted annual Bird survey in Cox's Bazar area, including Sonadia island, Teknaf Peninsula, Sahporirdwip. Their habitat is gradually spoiled by unplanned urbanisation and indiscriminate use of water bodies (top). These are often disturbed by tourists driving Jeeps on the beach on their way to and from Teknaf.

Goal of the activity:

To gather information regarding migratory and resident birds in terms of population declining that needs in conservation efforts.

Organising date:

27-30 January 2009

Actual number and group of participants:

5 professional bird watchers and a lot of community peoples including students engaged in the program

Evaluation:

A total of 15,933 birds of 52 species have been spotted. Total 52 species spotted and out of those 37 are migratory birds. About 11,878 birds were found at Sonadia and Moheshkhali. Two globally endangered species, Spoon-billed sandpiper and Nordmann's greenshank -- were also spotted in Sonadia. Students of Zoology Department of Jahangirnagar and Jagannath universities and Bird Club members Samiul Mohsanin and Mohammad Faisal, among others, conducted the census.



Annual Waterbirds survey team, at Sonadia Island, 2009 (Credit: Giasuddin)

Birds are losing their habitats because of indiscriminate use of water bodies and setting up of huge structures in an unplanned way. The shrimp enclosures at Sonadia and Moheshkhali are also causing severe damage to their natural habitats. Moreover, shrimp enclosures have been built along the forest near the Naf River in Teknaf, posing a serious threat to their habitats. The habitats include marshlands at Alordia and adjacent sandy beaches, Belekerdia in Sonadia, Taziakatarchar and Paikdia in Moheshkhali. Besides,

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Badar Mokam in Sahporirdwip is also considered as a very important bird habitat. Spoon-billed sandpipers had earlier been spotted in the area, according to surveys conducted in 2006 and 2007. The area of census falls under the East Asian Australian Flyway of migratory birds. The migratory birds come to these natural habitats travelling thousands of miles. If the proposed deep-sea port is built at Sonadia island, the bird habitats might be lost forever.

G. Creating Shorebird Database

Our plan was to create database initially for Cox's Bazar region for yearly distribution and occurrence with habitat and mapping set up in computer programming with Flash Multimedia projections, which will be updated every year after waterfowl census. Finally, database will be downloaded to a website for general use. We so far developed the database and still in the initial stage. We hope to finalize within 2 months time for website distribution.

Goal of the Activity:

To develop database and information system to general people easily available for scientific and conservation purposes.

Organising date:

March –June 2009

Actual number and group of participants:

The database will reach to every bird watcher and lover through internet whoever and whatever people like to do. It will be gradually developed and updated in future

Evaluation:

So far the main body of the database developed and now we are inputting the data and information. And we can not open this until it is suitable condition. One computer programmer working on this part time basis.

The Daily Star

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Birds galore in Cox's Bazar
A CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A total of 15,933 birds of 52 species have been spotted in Cox's Bazar, according to a census of aquatic birds.

Nature conservation and research organisation 'Marine Life Alliance' conducted the census at Sonadia, Maheshkhali, sea beaches at Cox's Bazar and Teknaf, Shah Parir Dwip and on the bank of the Naf River in Bangladesh side from January 27 to 30.

Organisation Director Zahirul Islam said of the 52 species, 37 are migratory birds. About 11,878 birds were found at Sonadia and Maheshkhali.

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Another flock of aquatic birds on the Cox's Bazar beach. These are often disturbed by tourists driving SUVs on the beach on their way to and from Teknaf.

PHOTO: STAR

News publish on annual waterbirds survey 2009, The Daily Star

PROPOSED DEEP SEA PORT AT SONADIA ISLAND.



The Deep-sea issue is very critical for sea turtle, shorebirds and other biodiversity in Sonadia Island wetland and marine systems. Government is planning to establish a deep-sea port at the sea turtle nesting hotspot, and winter shorebird area. The whole area is lying within the East Asian Australasian flyways; within the northern zone of the Sonadia Island called Belekardia, Pikedia. The whole area is pristine, sandy shore, mudflats, mangroves, near shore sandbars. Currently no anthropogenic impact and considered ecologically important area by the government and declared as ECA in 1999 under Environmental Act of 1995. One Japanese consultancy firm named Pacific Consultancy did the survey of feasibility to construct deep sea port and they selected the Sonadia site although there are good site just 15 kms north at Kutubdia island that is less important for biodiversity comparing Sonadia Island. It is an extreme urge to the international community to help us to solve this problem and save the hotspot biodiversity. Where we are working is going to spoil forever. Please help us if possible. The proposed project sites just the hotspot where endangered sea turtle nest and the wintering bird use as stopover during migration. Last winter January 2009 we counted 8 individuals of Spoonbill sandpiper in the area where the deep-sea port has been proposed.

Quote fro the newspaper:

For the deep-sea port, Bangladeshi government will seek project funding from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. Bangladesh's Sonadia Island in the Cox's Bazar district is the most suitable site for the development of a deep-sea port, according to a survey report submitted to the Ministry of Shipping by Japanese port consultants. Japan's Pacific Consultant International (PCI) pointed out Kutubdia Channel in the same district as the second most suitable site. State authorities want the proposed deep-sea port to have 58 jetties with a total length of 11 kilometers (km). Sonadia Island, located between Cox's Bazar town and Moheshkhali Island in the Bay of Bengal, is isolated from the mainland by a river and the report maps out a master plan of bridges, tunnels, roads and railway lines that could be constructed to facilitate cargo shipment. A ten-member committee has been formed to evaluate PCI's recommendations and finalization is expected to come in the next fifteen days. The committee includes representatives from the private sector. Final approval of the recommendations would be required from the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs before the project can proceed. According to government officials an appeal would be made to the World Bank and Asian Development Bank to obtain funds for the project.

Please help us:

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Project Site: Cox's Bazar Coast, South East Bangladesh

Spoonbilled sandpiper record 2009

Proposed Deep sea port area

30 km

Sonadia Island

Cox's Bazar Town

Teknaf peninsula

Myanmar

Bay of Bengal

● Important Bird Area

Bodormokam, Sahporirdwip
Spoonbilled sandpiper record 2006, 2007

St. Martin Island

Image © 2009 DigitalGlobe
Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO
Image © 2009 TerraMetrics
21°05'20.99" N 92°03'59.24" E

Eye alt 105.58 km
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