

Study visit in Thailand: Wetlands and Aquatic Ecosystems Co-Management



In collaboration with the Forest Department, the Department of Environment and Department of Fisheries, USAID's Climate-Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL)

Project arranged a study visit program on participatory wetlands and aquatic ecosystem co-management in Thailand from July 20-26, with 12 government officials participating. The objective of

the study visit was to gain new insights from the management experiences of co-management organizations at the Bueng Khong Long Non-Hunting Area Ramsar site, a famous wetland ecosystem in Bueng Kan province in Thailand, as well as understand their role in wetlands ecosystem conservation. The team also visited Songkhram river basin of Nakhon Phanom province. On the first day of the study visit, an introductory and briefing session on participatory wetlands and aquatic ecosystem co-management was held at RECOFTC, a regional international training center in Bangkok.

CREL Partners with Media to Promote Eco-Tourism in Sreemongal

Banglanews24.com, an online news portal in Bangladesh, organized a weeklong campaign called “Bochor Jure Desh Ghure: Sylhet Porjoton” (Round the Year, Round the Country: Sylhet Tourism) from July 16-23, in Sylhet division. This campaign was divided into three parts: reporting on prospects of eco-tourism in different sites in Sylhet division; a discussion meeting with relevant stakeholders; and consultation and presentation before the Minister of Civil Aviation

and Tourism Bangladesh with key recommendations from the stakeholder discussion and eco-tourism reports. CREL was engaged with this campaign in multiple ways, including by facilitating journalist site visits to three project working areas in the Ratargul swamp forests, Bikka Beel and Hakaluki Haor, all of which were promoted by Banglanews24.com. During the stakeholder consultation and discussion with the honorable minister, CREL highlighted the important role of media in promoting eco-tourism and talked in favor of responsible tourism with the involvement of local communities. CREL distributed 250 t-shirts containing awareness messages as a part of the same campaign.

Multi-Stakeholder Consultation to Be Held in Cox's Bazar

USAID's CREL Project is going to organize an workshop on natural resources and environmental laws and rules for senior level government officials from the Ministry of Environment and Forest, Forest Department, Department of Environment, Ministry of Land, Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock and Ministry of Finance. This consultation will be held at the Long Beach Hotel in Cox's Bazar from August 4-6, to be followed by a field trip to Shilkhali.



CREL Organizes Tree Fair in Cox's Bazar



“Tree for life and livelihoods; eat more native fruits for health, wealth and nutrition” was the theme of a CREL-organized tree fair in Cox's Bazar from July 18-24, in close collaboration with the Forest Department and Department of Agricultural Extension. The core attraction of the fair were 20 smart stalls of native forest, fruit and medicinal plants. The seven-day long tree fair was inaugurated with a rally and discussion meeting, with participants including district administration, Forest Department and Department of Environment officials, co-management organizations, journalists, teachers, students and stakeholders from all levels. Over 500 people participated in the rally and discussion meeting, and visitors to Cox's Bazar were enthusiastic about the attractive stalls of trees and purchased saplings to plant at home.



CMC Long-Term Planning Workshop Held in Chittagong

Given the importance of a long-term vision and an articulated plan to sustain co-management committees (CMC), a two-day CMC long-term planning workshop was held on July 18-19 in Chittagong with the support of USAID's CREL Project. High-level officials from the Forest Department and CREL staff participated in the workshop, with Mr. Abdul Latif Mia, Conservator of Forests, Chittagong Circle, and the CREL Project Director chairing the workshop. Representatives/ office bearers from each of the seven CMCs were key participants in the workshop. The aim was to identify strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, threats, stakeholders' role and set strategic objectives to prepare a specific action and implementation plan for the sustainability of co-management organizations in protected areas. After working in groups during the two-day workshop, each CMC achieved the capacity to prepare a long-term plan. With the newly acquired knowledge they developed a draft plan and presented before the house.



Fish Week Celebrated in Southwest and Northeast Regions

With the theme “Jol Ase Jekhane Mas Chas Sekhane” (Cultivate Fish Where There is Water), USAID's CREL Project celebrated National Fish Week in the Southwest region in collaboration with the Department of Fisheries and the Forest Department from July 19-24. Fish Week events directly engaged over 600 participants from the fisher communities of the Sundarbans who are involved in fish poisoning and illegal net uses. Some of the major events CREL organized included a rally, discussion meeting, fish fry release, distribution of leaflets and t-shirts with awareness messages, a mass awareness event on dolphin sanctuary and a five-day miking against fish poisoning as well as illegal net use. During Fish Week events, co-management committee representatives explained

the importance of fish cultures as an alternative livelihood option for forest-dependent people. Again, in Fish Week celebrations of the Northeast region, 13 fish farmers from the Rema-Kalenga Wildlife Sanctuary were awarded by the Upazila administration for their outstanding performance in using modern aquaculture practices.

