



December 2008 - January, 2009

Welcome to the seventh issue of the MFF e-Newsletter!

This e-Newsletter aims to keep MFF National Coordinating Bodies (NCBs), partner organisations and other stakeholder groups up to date on MFF activities and other marine and coastal news. We warmly welcome your contribution!

News/Announcements

Newcomers!

It is our great pleasure to announce the appointment of Mr. **Nicholas Rosellini**, Deputy Assistant Administrator and Deputy Regional Director, RCBAP, Bangkok, Thailand as the **new MFF UNDP Co-chair**. Nicholas joined UNDP in 1986 in Ghana. Since then, he has held a variety of positions, the most recent being UN Resident Coordinator, Thimphu, Bhutan. Prior to this position, Nicholas served as Chief of the Directorate, Bureau of Management (2000-2005); Deputy Resident Representative, Viet Nam (1996-2000); Assistant Resident Representative, Pakistan (1992-1996); and Programme Advisor, Ethiopia (1989-1992). He holds an MSc in Economics from London School of Economics. Please join us in wishing Nicholas all the best in his new role.



We also have the pleasure to introduce, **Judith C. Simbara**, Programme Officer for Natural Resources Management, Environment Unit, UNDP Indonesia. Judith, will attend to matters related to MFF and coordinate the MFF SGF in Indonesia. In addition, she will work on the programmes Green Aceh and Environment Impact Assessment and Strengthening Community-Based Forest and Watershed Management in Indonesia. Prior to joining the Environment Unit she was a Project Manager to the "Capacity 2015 in West Papua" and later for the "Timor Leste Scholarship programme". She can be contacted at: judith.simbara@undp.org.

Recent Events

The Sundarbans Tiger Reserve Hosted the Fourth MFF Regional Steering Committee Meeting 19-22 January, 2009, Sundarbans, India

MFF's Regional Steering Committee meets twice a year. This is where MFF's overall future direction is steered and important decisions are taken. The Steering Committee comprises of two co-chairs Aban Marker Kabraji, IUCN and Nicholas Rosellini, UNDP, the NCB chair from each focal country and representatives from dialogue countries and the respective MFF institutional partners, as well as the MFF Secretariat. The Sundarbans Biosphere Reserve (SBR) provided a unique opportunity to hold the fourth regional steering committee onboard a ship and to visit the Sundarbans Tiger Reserve.



© Sundarbans Biosphere Reserve

The Sundarbans is the largest single mangrove area in the world and is known for its spectacular species diversity home to many rare animals such as crocodiles, Olive Ridley turtle, and the famous Royal Bengal tiger. Mangrove forests are extremely productive coastal ecosystems with a wide range of goods (such as Honey collecting, timber, fuelwood, crabs, fish) and environmental regulating and cultural services (preventing erosion and negative impacts from extreme weather events). Efforts to protect this remarkable mangrove forest date back to the 19th century and visitors are coming from all over the world to visit the Sundarbans.

*“The Sundarbans is the single largest single mangrove forest in the world with 80 percent of the global mangrove floral diversity. MFF simply would not be complete without the Sundarbans... Bringing the MFF to have a first hand experience with the Sundarbans, illustrating the beauty and the challenges face in conserving the Sundarbans allowed for an opportunity for the forest department to show how India has successfully dealt with these challenges to the rest of the world..”, says **N.C. Bahuguna**, Chief Conservator and Director, Sundarban Biosphere Reserve.*



N.C. Bahuguna



IUCN President embraces the MFF philosophy

The recently elected IUCN President, Mr. Ashok Khosla attended a specially organised reception at ITC Sonar, Kolkata, India evening of 19 January. This was Mr. Khosla's first official function as President of IUCN. He was thrilled of the MFF achievements so far and said that *“MFF could be a model for how IUCN works”*.

Left: Mr. Parsheera Special Secretary MoEF, and Chair of the National Coordinating Body (NCB) for India together with Mr Ashok Khosla, IUCN President at the Reception

MFF Regional Steering Committee (RSC) Approves Large Projects!

The first call for MFF Large Projects was initiated after the third RSC meeting following approval of the guidelines and template for MFF Large Projects in June, 2008. The countries have primarily focused on implementing the Small Grant projects first, and have only very recently made a call for Large Projects. The exception is Thailand which has successfully processed five full project proposals which were appraised by the Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) and approved by the RSC. A further five proposals from India are in the pipeline and others from Indonesia and Sri Lanka are in preparation.

MFF also strongly encourages large projects with implementation in two or more countries in the region. Special guidelines for regional projects will soon be available on the MFF website (in addition to the SGF and Large Project Guidelines).

Small Grant Facilities proven popular

To date, **43 SGF projects in four countries (India, Seychelles, Sri Lanka and Thailand)** have been selected and the process of contracting and implementing them is underway. India is the first country to implement SGF projects. The SGF programme is proving to be very popular and effective as a means of giving assistance to coastal communities. However, more efforts are required to help project proponents to write proposals in line with the MFF guidelines, as well as the important task of project monitoring and feedback of results, especially to capture the lessons learned and share these at the national and regional levels.

The SGF programme funds were allocated equally among the six MFF focal countries and are being managed by the UNDP country office in Indonesia and Thailand, and by IUCN Offices in India and Sri Lanka, while currently the SGF in Seychelles is handled directly by the IUCN Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office. The Maldives SGF is managed by the UNDP office with backstopping from IUCN Sri Lanka office. Sri Lanka has also used the SGF as matching funds with existing CIDA funded projects.

“Current Status, Threats, and Conservation Measures of Coral Reefs in India” - National Brainstroming Workshop, 29-30 December, Tuticorin, Tamil, Nadu, India

The success of SGF have already been illustrated through the recent National Workshop on the *Current Status, Threats and Conservation of Coral Reefs* in India held in Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu, 29-30 December 2008. As the first MFF SGF project in India, this national workshop was organized by Suganthi Devadason Marine Research Institute (SDMRI) to commemorate the conclusion of the International Year of the Reef 2008 (IYOR 2008). 51 participants and representatives from the four major reef areas, namely; *Gulf of Mannar, Gulf of Katchch, Lakshadweep, Andaman and Nicobar Islands* in India attended.



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Mr. B.P. Nilarathna

The workshop brought together; administrators, reef managers, scientists and research students from Government and Non-Governmental organizations / Institutions.

A total of 28 research papers and reports were presented at the workshop under five broad research areas: 1. *Coral Status and Conservation*, 2. *Coral Associates*, 3. *Coral Diseases & molecular Studies*, 4. *Reproduction, Recruitment and Restoration*, and 5. *Coral environment and threats*. The final output from this brainstorming workshop is to put together a status report on the coral reefs and its associates of India.

Engaging the Private Sector

MFF about to launch its private sector programme in Thailand

Coastal areas of Indian Ocean countries provide lucrative opportunities for business and industry, especially within the fisheries, tourism, oil and gas and transportation sectors. But much of the commerce, industry and development are taking place with scant regard to the environment, and with devastating consequences on coastal ecosystems and local livelihoods. Private sector actors in these sectors are simultaneously primary economic beneficiaries of coastal environmental services and ideally positioned to finance environmental service (ES) provision to support their economic activities. MFF is identifying ways of promoting sustainable opportunities and practices. To respond to these opportunities, MFF's private sector programme seeks to build on existing CSR initiatives in the region and encourage a more explicit and demand-oriented coastal ecosystem investment regime amongst private stakeholders that will complement its work with the public sector.



An MFF visit to Srinart Rajini Mangrove Ecosystem Learning Centre in Pranburi, June, 2008

Six Senses Resorts and Spas – The sustainability policy of Six Senses Resorts and Spas is framed so that the Group incorporates the highest possible systems for sustainable travel and tourism. Six Senses Resorts and Spas will soon commence a co-operative programme with MFF in supporting the conservation and management of the Srinart Rajini Mangrove Ecosystem Learning Centre in Pranburi. The co-operation will have dual benefits. It will add value to the Mangrove Ecosystem Learning Centre in order to further facilitate sustainable mangrove forest management in the area and elsewhere with the participation of relevant stakeholder groups including local communities, as well as pilot test practical and relevant guidelines focusing on private sector use of protected areas for sustainable tourism.

Planning for Climate Change in the Coastal and Marine Environment- A 10-day Training Course for Coastal Resource Managers, Marine Resource Managers, Protected Area Managers, Hazard and Emergency Response Decision Makers, December, 2008, Hue, Viet Nam

Through a U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), University of Rhode Island's Coastal Resource Center (CRC) and USAID partnership, the *Planning for Climate Change in the Coastal and Marine Environment* in-residence training course was offered to 40 participants representing coastal areas from throughout Vietnam. The curriculum was specifically tailored to address climate change issues relevant to Vietnam and moved participants through the planning process including: understanding impacts on the coastal and marine resources from climate change; collecting information to evaluate human and natural resource coastal community resiliency; conducting vulnerability assessments; selecting adaptation responses; and, evaluating effectiveness.

The highly dynamic Tam Giang Lagoon complex in central Vietnam served as the field study site for the training course. The lagoon supports different wetland habits which is used by a large number of migratory waterfowl in winter; and is known to provide important spawning, feeding and nursery grounds for fish and shellfish. Local communities in the area are beginning to realize how the impacts of climate change are full of uncertainties, creating enormous challenges. The implications of climate change are already impacting every aspect of their lives from threatening roads, irrigation systems and other infrastructure, to submerging rice paddies and shrimp ponds.

Additional training courses will be held in the Verde Passage, Philippines and Galapagos and Ecuador later this year. For more information, please contact: Anne Walton, NOAA/National Marine Sanctuary Program at anne.walton@noaa.gov.



IUCN-Pakistan and SANDEE host a policy dialogue on coastal ecosystems, 27-29 November, 2008

This three day event was hosted by IUCN Pakistan and SANDEE, South Asian Network for Development Environmental Economics. It served as a platform for a policy dialogue between stakeholders drawn from the government, academia, environmentalists, coastal community representatives and members of the civil society. Experts at the three day orientation workshop called for a paradigm shift to save mangroves and urged for a campaign to raise awareness about not only the short and long-term damage to the mangroves, but their role in minimizing natural disasters, and their economic value. For more information visit:

http://www.iucn.org/about/union/secretariat/offices/asia/asia_where_work/pakistan/index.cfm?uNewsID=2304

Yayasan Pembangunan Berkelanjutan
Foundation for Sustainable Development



A Programme of the Foundation for Sustainable Development (Yayasan Pembangunan Berkelanjutan, YPB)



Darwina Sri Widjajanti

Since 2004 LEAD Indonesia, a programme of Yayasan Pembangunan Berkelanjutan (the Foundation for Sustainable Development, or YPB) has expanded its undertakings to go beyond the conventional LEAD Associate Training. This new undertaking is concerned with developing partnerships with other institutions to carry out various programmes in response to national and local needs. The change came about when Ms. Darwina Sri Widjajanti, Executive director developed YPB as a resource center that conducts training, consultations, public discourse, and research and develop policy recommendations. Research has included community-based integrated efforts for coastal and marine resources, as well as case studies from Buleleng (Bali) on green and fair trade in fish. Ms. Darwina visited the MFF Secretariat Fri 30 January to share experiences from YPB and to promote information exchange between coastal and marine programmes in the region. For more information: www.lead.or.id or www.ypb.or.id

Cattle feed leads to mangrove discovery!



Avicenna Marina

Experts have discovered mangroves in a site located some 120-kilometres inshore in the Thatta district - adjacent to the south-eastern lower part of Keenjhar Lake in Pakistan. What is unique about this patch of mangroves, according to experts, is that it is far from the shore, and is also not connected to the River Indus or the sea. In a recent study titled '*A Unique Basin: Mangrove Stand of the Indus Delta*' by Syed Mohammad Saifullah and Fayyaz Rasool and sponsored by Mangrove Ecosystem Lab, Department of Botany, University of Karachi, it was found that locals who use *Avicenna marina* for feeding their cattle may have introduced propagules in the area. The basin forest flourishes well for long periods without seawater intrusion elsewhere. Experts also believe that there may have been a connection between these plants and the Indus River in the past. The propagules of *Avicenna marina* drifted into an area where they were trapped, thus germinating and eventually becoming full-fledged trees.

CORAL REEFS – Emission cuts can save corals



The IUCN Press Release, 10 December, 2008 revealed that the world has lost 19 percent of its coral reefs, according to the 2008 global update of the world's reef status. The report, released by the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network, shows that if current trends in carbon dioxide emissions continue, many of the remaining reefs may be lost over the next 20 to 40 years. This will have alarming consequences for some 500 million people who depend on coral reefs for their livelihoods. Climate change is considered the biggest threat to coral reefs today. Corals have a higher chance of survival in times of climate change if other stress factors related to human activity are minimized. Well-managed marine protected areas can also boost the health of coral reefs, but proper enforcement is difficult, especially in remote areas where the most pristine reefs are found.

Phuket, Thailand, © MFF Secretariat



Field Visits

The Sundarbans Biosphere Reserve (SBR)

The Sundarbans Biosphere Reserve (SBR) was established in 1989 through a notification of the Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of India under the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme. The Sundarbans is the largest intertidal area of approximately 26 000 km² where two major riversystems meet, Ganga and Brahmaputra in the Bay of Bengal along India and Bangladesh. The Indian part of the Sundarbans covers an area of 9630 km². There are 54 islands interspersed by innumerable rivulets, tidal rivers and creeks. The SBR has three zones; 1, a core zone (1700 km²), 2, a buffer zone (2515 km²), and 3, transition zones (5415 km²). The Sundarbans has a very rich biodiversity of mangrove flora and fauna. There are 64 species of mangroves and many endangered and threatened species such as; the Bengal Tiger, Estaurine Crocodile, Salvator Lizard and Grey Water Monitor. It also serves as a nesting ground for endangered marine turtles like Olive Ridley, Green Turtle, as well as the Gangetic Dolphin and many migratory birds. 3.7 million people live in the Indian part of the Sundarbans. The main livelihoods are single-crop and subsistence fishing, and wood and honey collection in the forests. A total of 30 000kg of honey is collected every year. Factors such as pollution and reduced fresh water flows are significantly altering the ecosystems. The increased demand for forest and marine resources has resulted in excess harvesting with detrimental ecological effects.

Empowerment of local women

The RSC meeting participants visited the Forest Protection Committee's (FPC) eco-development activities such as self-help groups in the villages of Binodpur and Baikunthipur with a population of 2780 to help empower local women and to reduce pressure on valuable resources. Participants were received by 150-200 community members mainly women and school children. One self-help group consisted of 14 households who were making bicycle saddles and bags which increased the average household income with 500-600 INR per month. Other women in Baikunthipur engaged in weaving of Sarees as a supplementary income, earned INR 350 per Saree. These women were previously engaged in fishing before the establishment of the self-help group which not only proved to be a supplementary income but an alternative to fishing, reducing pressure on fisheries resources.



A reception with 500 community members and RSC participants



"When I came to this village I entered the forests illegally and was afraid inside and outside my house. I had no decision-making power. After the eco –development activities, I was not only earning supplementary income to the household, but gained social uplift".

Female community member, Baithipur.

The Sundarbans Biosphere reserve has already received an MFF SGF and is applying for a large grant to achieve the conservation objectives and to further support self-help groups of the Indian Sundarbans.

The Sundarban Tiger Reserve

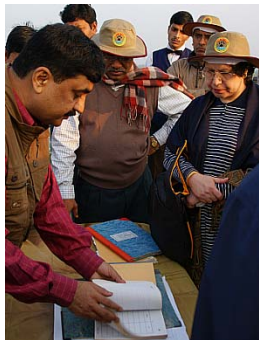


The Sundarbans Tiger Reserve was established in 1973 and the Sundarbans National Park was declared a World Heritage Site by IUCN in 1987. The tiger reserve is still estimated to have the largest tiger population in India. But the reserve are facing threats such as reduction in fresh water table, over-exploitation of aquatic fauna, erosion, pollution and dredging of the river bed.

RSC participants visited one of the Tiger Reserve highlights, the Dobanki Canopy walk, a 150 meter walkway through the mangroves giving you a feeling of exploring the mangrove canopies. The walkway leads up to a watch tower where the lucky few can spot a tiger!



MFF Thai NCB Coordinator, Siriporn Sriaram, tiger spotting at dawn



Tiger sighting recording at Dobanki watch tower

Tiger Monitoring

A “Pugmark Plaster Cast Method” is conducted every two year and a “prey-based” method along with a logbook of Tiger sightings at various posts. 11 Forest Protection Committees have been formed and 14 eco-development committees. The committees are actively involved in protecting natural resources and rescuing strayed wildlife. 50 000 tourists visits the Indian Sundarbans every year. 25% of the revenue funds the committees and their activities. There is 150 field staff in the reserve and 41 water crafts and 6 speedboats equipped with satellite telephones patrolling the area, as well as 14 km of observation line.



Forest Officer Patrolling in the Tiger reserve

Catch and Release

The man eating Bengal Tiger often stray outside the forest area towards villages causing man-tiger conflicts. There are six tranquilization squads involved in catch and release of reported strayed tigers. The release is often over water, by opening the cage from a boat allowing the tiger to leap out. To minimize the man-tiger conflict, special nylon net fencing (64 km) has been put up along village-forest interfaces. In addition, awareness raising activities are also helping reduce the conflicts such as street plays, films, community meetings and the “Tiger express boat” a mobile awareness campaign.

Bengal Tiger being released into the wild



© Sundarbans Biosphere Reserve

Upcoming Events

ICS2009 10th INTERNATIONAL COASTAL SYMPOSIUM



The 10th International Coastal Symposium, ICS 2009, will be held in Lisbon, Portugal, 13-18 of April 2009
For more information: <http://e-geo.fcsh.unl.pt/ICS2009/index.html>



The next ICRI General Meeting - 20– 24 April 2009, Phuket, Thailand. The International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) is a partnership among governments, international organizations, and non-government organizations seeking to reverse the degradation of the world’s coral reefs and related ecosystems. The secretariat of the Initiative is currently co-host by the governments of Mexico and the United States. The ICRI partnership and approach is to mobilize governments and a wide range of other stakeholders in an effort to improve management practices, increase capacity and political support, and share information on the health of these ecosystems. <http://www.icriforum.org/thailandgm.html>

International Marine Conservation Congress (IMCC 2009)

Making Marine Science Matter!

The Marine Section of the Society for Conservation Biology (SCB) is hosting the first International Marine Conservation Congress (IMCC) from **20-24 May 2009** at George Mason University near **Washington D.C.** IMCC is aimed at advancing marine conservation by facilitating discussion among scientists, managers and policy makers and developing science-based products that inform policy change and implementation.



The Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA), l'Université de La Réunion, l'Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD) and l'Institut Français pour la Recherche et l'Exploitation de la Mer (IFREMER) are organising the **Sixth WIOMSA Scientific Symposium** to be held in **La Réunion in August 2009**.
<http://www.wiomsa.org/filearchive/2/2743/Sixth%20Symposium-First%20Announcement.pdf>



"Indonesia is proudly hosting the World Ocean Conference (WOC2009) to build commitment for sustainable management of marine resources"

The World Ocean Conference (WOC) 2009 is a forum for the world community to discuss current marine issues related to climate change, in order to achieve an international agreement and draw up an adaptive strategy to use of marine resources wisely for the benefit of humanity. The WOC2009 is hoping for strong political will from the government representatives attending so that an agreement can be reached to guide marine management at the global level. With this goal in mind, Indonesia has taken the initiative of holding the WOC in Manado – Indonesia, 11th – 15th May 2009, which will be attended by Ministers and High Level Government Officials and High Level Officials from Multilateral Organisations in order to develop a common

understanding and firm commitment to face up to the impact of climate change on the state of the world's oceans and to increase our understanding of the role of the oceans in determining the rate of global climate change. Email: info@woc2009.org or visit: <http://www.woc2009.org/home.php> for more information.

Coastal Climate Change Adaptation Strategies and Actions- One-day training workshop

World Ocean Conference, 09.00-16.00 May 12, 2009, Manado, Indonesia

This one day workshop aims to introduce practitioners and policy makers to policy and practical challenges in coastal climate change adaptation. The event combines presentations on content of two new guidebooks with a professional exchange of ideas on coastal climate change adaptation in different settings. A group exercise will explore in more depth the different starting points for understanding strategies to mainstream adaptation measures into projects, places and national policy. The sessions will introduce the vulnerability and adaptation (V&A) approach for assessing vulnerability to climate change and climate variability, developing and implementing adaptation options, and will focus on integrating adaptation options into programs, development plans, and projects at the national and local levels.

The workshop is aimed at coastal and marine conservation policy makers who are trying to decide how to proceed in addressing adaptation challenges without creating new laws or programs; for planners and project managers who want some practical approaches to act immediately and for researchers, advocates and outreach professionals seeking to make the connection between information, needs, and action. Opportunity will be provided for sharing experiences and utilizing participant cases in discussions and exercises.

The event is sponsored by the CRC, USAID, MFF and the Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries. For more information and to apply, send your name, organizational affiliation, contact information and a short description of your interest and current work to Don Robadue, don@crc.uri.edu.

Media

The Indian media showed great interest in the eco-development activities in the Sundarbans and the MFF initiative.



Left: Local woman being interviewed by NE Bangla TV about their saree weaving self-help group.



Right: MFF IUCN Co-chair, Ms. Aban Kabraji being interviewed by The Indian Express.

New and Forthcoming Publications

Coastal Oceans Research and Development in the Indian Ocean, Status Report, 2008 - A new report on the state of Indian Ocean coral reefs, launched in December by CORDIO, an organisation aligned with the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network, states an overall trend of continued degradation, only alleviated by signs of recovery in some areas. "With this report, the far-reaching degradation of Indian Ocean coral reefs has become evident," says **Olof Linden** of the CORDIO network and Professor at the World Maritime University (WMU), Malmö, Sweden.

Adapting to Coastal Climate Change: A GUIDEBOOK FOR DEVELOPMENT PLANNERS. The new guidebook developed by URI-CRC, USAID and other partners provides an overview of how coastal areas will be impacted and existing tools or methods to assess vulnerability. Practitioners will value the detailed goal setting process for linking coastal climate change issues to potential adaptation actions. The guidebook provides unique perspectives on 17 common coastal interventions and how they need to be adapted for climate change. Policy-makers will benefit from the integrated strategies for mainstreaming adaptation actions into multiple sectors and scales. Copies of the guidebook will be available in March at www.crc.uri.edu.

Put your news in the next issue of the MFF E-Newsletter!

Do you have any news or stories that you would like to feature in the next issue of the bi-monthly MFF Newsletter? We invite you to send in your latest news and updates on projects and other activities to: e-news@mangrovesforthefuture.org.

About MFF

Mangroves for the Future (MFF), is a unique partner-led initiative to promote investment in coastal ecosystem which builds on a history of coastal management interventions before and after the 2004 tsunami, as well as extensive consultations with over 200 individuals and 160 institutions involved in coastal zone management. It focuses on the countries worst-affected by the tsunami; India, Indonesia, Maldives, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, as well as dialogue countries in the region that face similar issues. MFF uses mangroves as a flagship ecosystem but is inclusive of all coastal ecosystems.

MFF provides a collaborative platform among the many different agencies, sectors and countries who are addressing challenges to coastal ecosystem and livelihood issues, to work towards a common goal. Through generating knowledge, empowering institutions and individuals to promote good governance in coastal ecosystem management MFF seeks to achieve demonstrable results in influencing regional cooperation, national programme support, private sector engagement and community action.

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Produced by the MFF Secretariat with the financial support of Norad and Sida.

