



## Report on Fish Harvest, 2009



Bangladesh Country Office

February 2009

## The Fish Harvest

In a significant win for the people of Tanguar Haor, the Deputy Commissioner of Sunamganj launched a fish harvesting pilot programme on 16 January 2009 under the 'Community Based Sustainable Management of Tanguar Haor' project. Present to witness this historic moment were Mr. Md. Moktar Ahmed, Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO), Tahirpur, Mr. Ehtesham, Officer In Charge (OC), Tahirpur, community leaders, and local civil society members.

This was the first formal fish harvest permitted in Tanguar Haor since the wetland was brought under strict protection by the Sunamganj District administration in 2004, and the ecological recovery afforded by a four year hiatus in fishing was reflected in the increased size of the individual fish caught. A small scale piloting was done in April 2008 to test the agreed modality of harvesting and benefit sharing.

Historically the fishing rights to Tanguar Haor were leased out to a small number of influential people, which had led to a serious imbalance in access to the resources of the haor. This co-management project is paving its way to replacing the traditional leasing system with a 'resource sharing' approach in which the local communities around the haor share equitably in the management and the resources of the wetland.

The launch of the fish harvesting pilot programme represents a clear policy outcome at the local and national level, shifting the access to and benefits of Tanguar Haor's resources from a small number of leaseholders to benefit the wider local community. The project is being developed and implemented by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Bangladesh and its partners Intercooperation, CNRS, BELA and ERA on behalf of the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF), Government of Bangladesh, with financial support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

The official endorsement from the MoEF on the benefit sharing ratio from fish harvest is a ground breaking achievement and will usher future wetland management in Bangladesh. The official notification endorsed that benefit arising of the harvest will be shared among the direct participants (40%), the community organizations that organizing the people (36%) and government (24%). This endorsement has given the legal basis to provide community people access to the Tanguar haor resources.

The fisherfolks in Tanguar haor are the poorest of the poor. Large scale fishing within the co-management structure is bringing direct benefit for the poor households in Tanguar haor. Started from 16 January, fishing is still continuing with a gap of 10 days owing to the fact that law enforcing agencies and local administration were involved in upazila election on 22 January 2009. Fishing will be continued up to 31 March if not interrupted by any natural calamities.



Deputy Commissioner of Sunamganj addressing to fishfolks

## Fish Harvest Outcome

So far, more than 23 thousand fishes of different varieties were harvested having weight more than 20 metric tons was sold Taka 2,286,057. Out of these, fishers received Taka 914,424 on the spot in cash as 40% share. Community Organization received Taka 822,980 as 36% share that was deposited to their own bank account that opened in Sonali Bank, Tahirpur branch by the name of the Central Adhoc Committee. Accordingly, the UNO as GoB representative received Taka 548,653 as 24% share. Please see Table-1 below for more details. Initiation of fish harvest piloting program has resulted tremendous response among the communities of Tanguar Haor (TH).

SI #	Date	Total # of fish	Total quantity of fish in Kg	Total quantity sold in Taka	Fisher's share 40%	Community share 36%	GoB Share 24%
1	16/01/09	82	170	24,799	9,919	8,928	5,952
2	25/01/09	322	384	57,774	23,109	20,799	13,866
3	26/01/09	157	259	33,899	13,559	12,204	8,136
4	27/01/09	256	132	15,670	6,268	5,641	3,761
5	28/01/09	257	214	27,052	10,821	9,739	6,492
6	29/01/09	645	403	48,152	19,261	17,335	11,556
7	01/02/09	336	377	46,435	18,574	16,717	11,144
8	02/02/09	464	343	40,815	16,326	14,693	9,796
9	03/02/09	392	423	57,989	23,197	20,875	13,917
10	04/02/09	437	325	41,191	16,478	14,828	9,885
11	05/02/09	251	221	30,014	12,006	10,805	7,203
12	06/02/09	193	161	20,629	8,252	7,426	4,951
13	07/02/09	573	407	52,906	21,162	19,046	12,698
14	08/02/09	1,049	756	93,507	37,403	33,662	22,442
15	14/02/09	747	601	69,246	27,698	24,929	16,619
16	15/02/09	718	557	63,467	25,387	22,848	15,232
17	16/02/09	445	584	66,100	26,440	23,796	15,864
18	13/03/09	1,634	1,579	199,068	79,627	71,665	47,776
19	14/3/09	1,568	1,238	131,857	52,742	47,469	31,646
20	15/3/09	2,844	2,722	287,460	114,984	103,486	68,990
21	16/3/09	1,867	1,885	206,748	82,699	74,429	49,620
22	17/03/09	2016	1,532	157,058	62,823	56,541	37,694
23	18/03/09	2298	1638	165,943	66,378	59,739	39,826
24	19/03/09	1846	1529	161,611	64,644	58,180	38,787
25	20/03/09	865	904	99,283	39,713	35,742	23,828
26	21/03/09	1218	874	87,384	34,954	31,458	20,972
	<b>Total</b>	<b>23,480</b>	<b>20,218</b>	<b>2,286,057</b>	<b>914,424</b>	<b>822,980</b>	<b>548,653</b>



Fisherfolks setting off to harvest fish

Considering market demand, price and potential, all harvested fishes were categorized into 29 groups as shown in Table-2 below.

Table-2: Showing summary of fish harvest by species and price						
SI #	Name of Fish	Grade/Size	Number of fish	Weight in Kg	Average Rate in Taka/kg	Price in Taka
1	Rui-1 and Katla-1	0-1.5kg	1,425	1,202	96	114,819
2	Rui-2 & Katla-2	1.6 - 2.5 kg	3,083	6,348	119	757,884
3	Rui-3 & Katla-3	2.6 - 5 kg	2,259	7,132	134	957,127
4	Rui-4 and Katla-4	5 kg - above	52	326	168	54,784
5	Rui-5	injured	18	50	93	4,597
6	Mrigel	0-1.5 kg	472	287	68	19,472
7	Mrigel	1.5 kg above	64	87	126	11,024
8	Gonia	0-1.5kg	14,863	3,695	66	243,808
9	Gajar-1	0-1.5kg	241	237	85	20,016
10	Gajar-2	1.6-2.5kg	161	249	111	27,707
11	Gajar-3	2.5 kg above	29	71	135	9,553
12	Boal-1	0-1.5kg	169	150	125	18,740
13	Boal-2	1.6 - 2.5 kg	16	49	212	10,304
14	Boal-3	2.6 - 5 kg	16	28	146	4,123
15	Boal-4	5 kg - above	5	28	251	7,055
16	Ayer-1	0-1.5 kg	36	43	106	4,587
17	Ayer-2	1.5 kg above	20	6	187	1,094
18	Carp-1	0-1.5kg	-	-	-	-
19	Carp-2	1.6 - 2.5 kg	6	5	119	594
20	Carp-3	2.5 Kg Above	3	22	111	2,420
21	Grass Carp	2.5 - 5 kg	87	140	80	11,136
22	Lachu		93	11	80	914
23	Pabda		-	-	-	-
24	Shol-1	0-1.5kg	6	5	78	396
25	Shol-2	1.6 - 2.5 kg	-	-	-	-
26	Shol-3	2.5 kg above	-	-	-	-
27	Kalibaus-1	0-1.5 kg	256	45	78	3,477
28	Kalibaus-2	1.5 kg above	15	3	125	313
29	Foloi, Meni and others		50	2	61	135
			<b>23,480</b>	<b>20,218</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>2,286,057</b>



Different fish species gathered for open auction



## Participating fisherfolks

In average, 121 have been participating in the fishing program everyday. Highest numbers of participants were noticed from Uttar Sreepur union as it is situated in the heart of TH. The second highest numbers of participants were from Daxin Bangshikunda as they live in the closest vicinity of TH and the lowest numbers of participants were from Uttar Bangshikunda. Please see Table-3 below for more details.

**Table-3: Showing fisher's participation by union and date**

# No	Date	U. Sreepur Union	D. Sreepur Union	U. Bangshi Union	D. Bangshi Union	Total Fisher
		No of Fisher	No of Fisher	No of Fisher	No of Fisher	
1	1/16/09	20	11	0	8	39
2	1/25/09	73	2	0	33	108
3	1/26/09	36	14	0	41	91
4	1/27/09	31	3	0	33	67
5	1/28/09	38	3	0	33	74
6	1/29/09	44	3	0	30	77
7	2/1/09	25	3	2	27	57
8	2/2/09	60	3	2	25	90
9	2/3/09	62	3	2	25	92
10	2/4/09	50	3	2	21	76
11	2/5/09	51	3	2	20	76
12	2/6/09	33	3	2	21	59
13	2/7/09	50	3	2	21	76
14	2/8/09	60	3	7	28	98
15	2/14/09	59	3	7	24	93
16	2/15/09	60	3	7	35	105
17	2/16/09	63	3	7	38	111
18	3/13/09	77	12	1	57	147
19	3/14/09	77	26	9	78	190
20	3/15/09	72	28	10	105	215
21	3/16/09	91	22	9	106	228
22	3/17/09	100	31	12	96	239
23	3/18/09	84	11	8	86	189
24	3/19/09	72	31	6	89	198
25	3/20/09	79	27	7	84	197
26	3/21/09	70	26	7	59	162
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1537</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>1223</b>	<b>3154</b>
	<i>Average</i>	59	11	4	47	121

## The Process to ensure transparency and accountability

The name of fisherfolks was identified during the census taken place in the beginning of the project. Besides, consultation took place with the community leaders to finalize the list of fisherfolks. The number of fisherfolks to be participated in fishing from each union was also been advised by the community leaders. Each fisherfolk was given a temporary permit which allowed him to fish on daily basis from 9 am to 3 pm. The permit was signed by the Deputy Commissioner, Central Committee Leader and TH Project Manager. During the harvest, community leaders performed the surveillance along with the local authority representatives.

Fishes were sold through open auction in presence of local administration, community leaders and project staff. Traders from different areas participated in the auction. Fishes were delivered to the highest bidder. This system was found very complex and time consuming. After some days it was realised that local traders were not able to buy bulk amount of fishes and rate was tending to go downwards. In order to minimise these problems, PSMU convinced the local administration to change the system and collect quotation from the traders for each group and deliver fishes to the highest bidder. Accordingly, the system was changed through a meeting with UNO Tahirpur attended by community leaders, project staff, civil society members and IUCN. New system started from 13 March. Fish Harvest Committee comprising representatives

from local administration, community leaders, PNGOs and PSMU are now delivering fishes to the highest bidder. Payment is made on daily basis on the total catch.

Before the bidding, all catch is weighted and data is kept in access software. As the bidding is completed, calculation is done to distribute the benefit following the agreed modality endorsed by the MoEF. All three shares are distributed instantly. Necessary paper work is done and records are also kept electronically in Access database. All the data used in this report have been generated from the database. The system has ensured transparency and accountability of the process.



Benefits are distributed with proper paper work

### World Wetland Day

The World Wetland Day was celebrated in Tangaur haor in midst of enthusiasm of the people participating the fishing activities. This year the slogan selected by Ramsar Secretariat was "*Upstream-Downstream: Wetlands connect us all*". The slogan was a perfect match to portray the activities undertaken in Tangaur haor

A boat rally was organised in the wetland. Fishers, community leaders, civil society members, project staff and representatives from local administration participated in the rally. A social gathering was organised on the bank of Tangaur haor. Different news papers published the news of fish harvest as well as World Wetland Day with great importance.



Fishermen rallying to observe the World Wetland Day

Annex: Some pictures



Fisherfolks resting in temporary fishing camp



Fisherfolks in action



Happy to catch fish



Fishing using *garo jal*, a very specialized gear for Tangaur haor