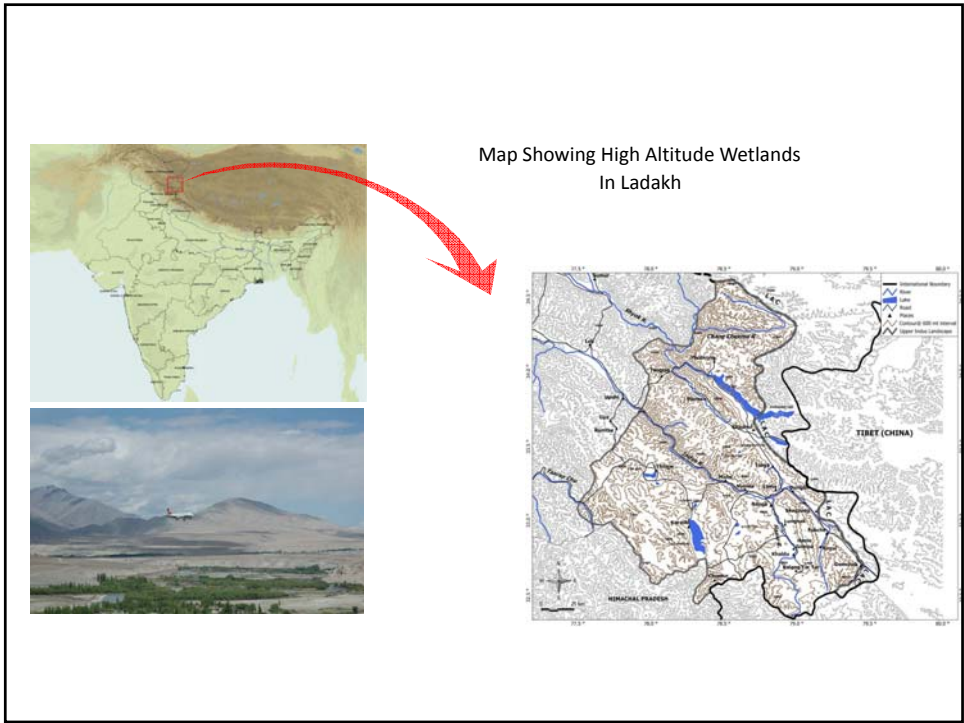
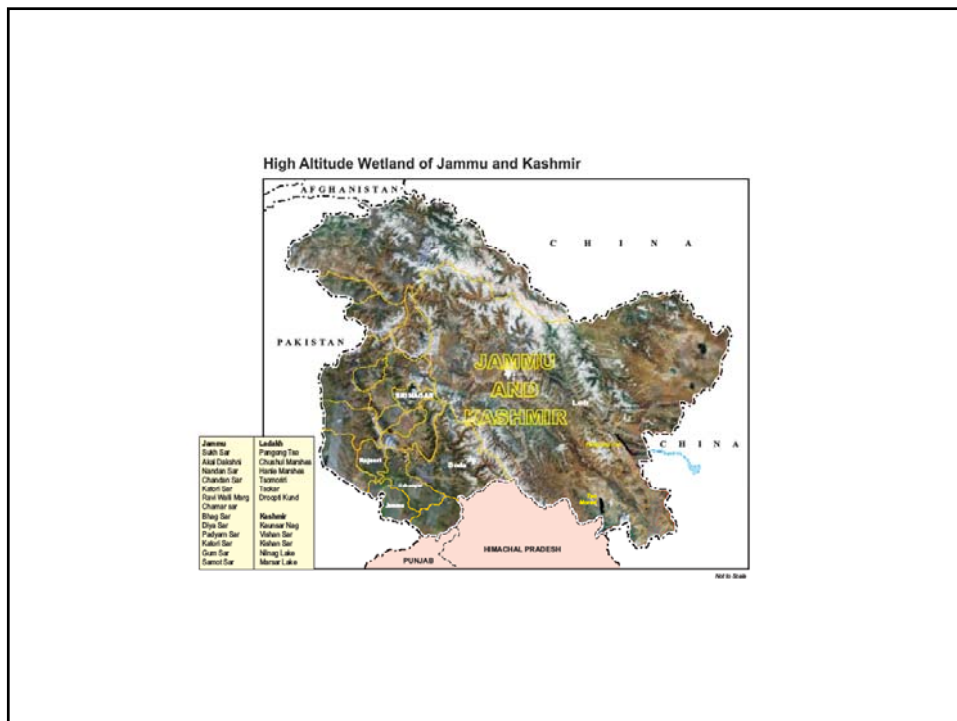
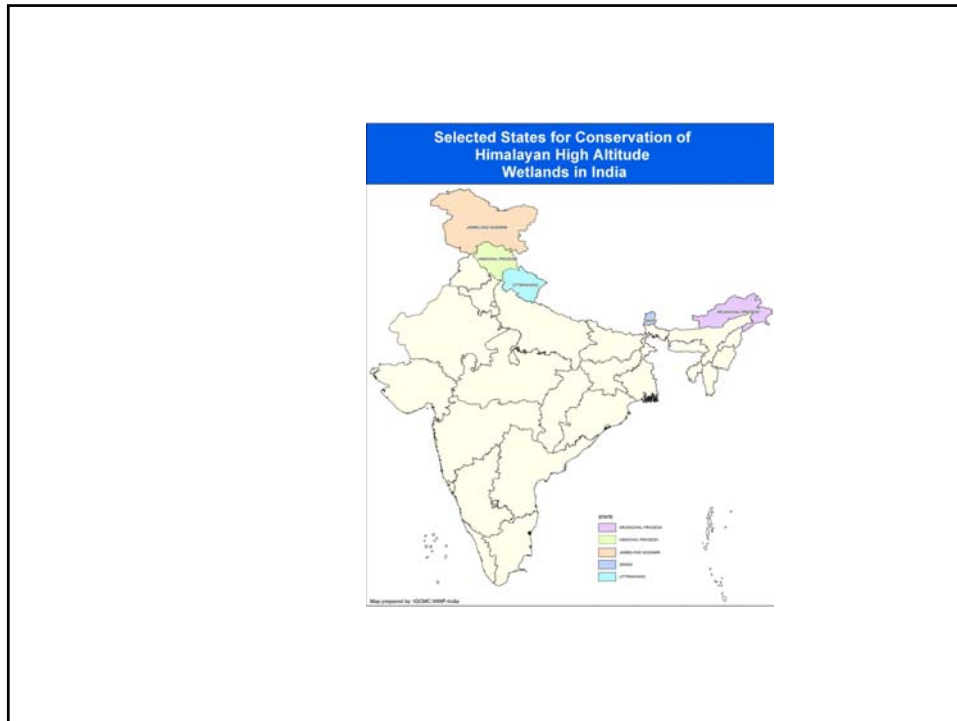


# High Altitude Wetlands of J&K and Status of WWF-India Project

Ms. Nisa Khatoon  
Project Officer  
Freshwater & Wetlands Programme





### Phase 1

The Project Started in Year 2000 with a Stakeholders Meeting at Leh

Various Activities were Planned at Three Wetlands

1. Tsomoriri
2. Tsokar
3. Pangong Tso

Two more sites were added in 2004

1. Hanle Marshes
2. Chushul Marshes



### Biodiversity

Only Breeding Grounds for Black-necked Crane in India.

Key Species like Snow Leopard, Tibetan Gazelle, Tibetan Antelope, Musk Deer, Hungul, Markhor etc are also found in the area.

Highly endangered medicinal plants like *Dactylorhiza*, *Picrorhiza*, *Podophyllum* etc used in the Tibetan System Of medicine can be seen growing in the area.



### Major Threats to the Area

Unplanned and Unregulated Tourism

Tourist season coincides with peak biological activity

Infrastructure

Tremendous Grazing pressure

Lack of awareness among the stakeholders

Emerging Threat of Climate Change

Lack of Coordination among various Developmental agencies



### WWF Conservation Actions

1. Field Presence at Leh, Tsomoriri and at Tsokar
2. Target Oriented Education and Awareness Activities
3. Publication of Resource material, like Project Report, BNC Report and Management Plan. Also posters on various themes. Army Orientation Pack etc.
5. Capacity Building Programmes for Stakeholders
6. Community Based Tourism Activities
7. Scientific Documentation of the High Altitude Wetlands
8. Institutional Mechanisms like Community Trusts Evolved



### Education and Awareness

The main aim was to reach out to common masses

Various modes were used and well designed campaign Was launched

Various important days were used to disseminate the Specific message

At times big rallies were organised and at times Street plays in the streets were organised

Seminars and Symposium related to water conservation were organised



Debate Competitions were organised to attract the Attention of students towards various water related Issues

On various occasions students were asked to make Models about how to understand the mountain Ecosystem and how to tackle the issue of water scarcity In their specific areas

Specific themes like Water & Water Birds etc were given to the students for various drawing and painting competition



### Reaching Out to Communities

PRA (Participatory Relaxed Assessment)s were used as a tool to reach out to the local Communities

This gave a better understanding of the Socio – Economics of the specific wetland sites

Valuable information on status and distribution of Key wildlife species was also collected during these exercises

This also gave an idea about the key concerns and Priorities of the local population



### Scientific Documentation

Regular Surveys were conducted to understand the High Altitude Wetland Ecosystems in a better way

Water samples were collected and analysed For specific parameters

Vegetation sampling was carried out on a regular basis

Avifaunal Surveys were conducted to record the Status of key bird species



### Study on Black-necked Crane

For the first time a regular uninterrupted survey  
On the status of Black-necked Crane was  
Conducted

During the survey six new nesting sites were  
Discovered

At present the study has produced the data  
On Status and Breeding Productivity of Black-  
Crane for more than eight years

Links established with Bhutan and China



### Training Programmes for Officers of Armed Forces

One Training Programme after every  
Alternate year

Indian Army, ITBP, Indian Air Force Border  
Roads Organization and Jammu & Kashmir  
Police Officers Participate

The process of training the officers has been  
Institutionalized

Many officer who were trained in these  
Training programmes contributing in  
Conservation in other parts of India as well



### Training Programmes for Tour Operators

One Training is organised every year for the tour operators

Organizations like Bombay Natural History Society  
Are also coming forward to help in these training  
programmes

Tour operators in Ladakh are regularly participating  
In various conservation activities

Annual cleanliness of the camping sites is organised  
Every year by the tour operators

Himalayan Car Rallies in wetland areas have been  
Stopped with the help of local tour operators



### Capacity Building Programmes for Local Communities

Regular capacity building programmes for local communities

These programmes are jointly organised with the help of local trusts

Local youth have been trained to act as wildlife guides

Capacities of the conservation trusts have been built so  
That they can manage tourism in the area

Community Based tourism in the area has helped  
In raising the economic standard of the locals

Homestays have become very popular among  
Tourists coming from across the globe



### Capacity Building & Trainings

WWF asked to conduct Ecotourism module  
For students of TATA Institute of Social Sciences

People visiting the Tsomoriri and Tsokar Sites  
To learn about the Wetland Conservation Model

Indian Army and ITBP requests WWF for regular  
Ecology orientation programmes for their troops



### Policy Support

Government of Jammu and Kashmir invited WWF to  
Prepare management plan for Tsomoriri and Tsokar

The plan was prepared through various consultations  
With the stakeholders

Key scientists who have worked in the area were  
Involved in the planning exercise

The printed management plan has been  
Submitted to the Government for further  
Followup

Designation of One High Altitude Wetland as Ramsar  
Site

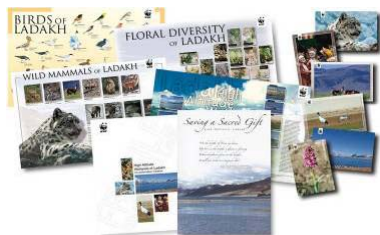


Resource Material

Posters

Brochures

Scientific Reports



Climate Witness Ladakh

*Supported Under  
Climate Change and Freshwater Initiative in Himalayas*

Community Perceptions on Climate Change

Climate Change Focused Education and Awareness

Documentation of Extreme events

A Climate Witness Film for wider dissemination and  
Mobilizing policy support



### Local perception on climate change.

Change in precipitation pattern.  
Climate change that are impacting the landscape are also likely to affect the tourism economy.

The rise in temp& heavy snow melt in Ladakh as observed by Households can be confirmed by widely acknowledge information that indicates that glaciers like Siachen, Kahardung & Stok in ladakh all well known for their strategic 7 scenic location Have either receded or almost disappeared in about a decades.

Traditional home in Ladakh have been designed with much Ecological and Climaticwisdom.  
Change in pastoralist groups migration.  
Increase in the frequency &intensity of pest attacks.  
(Locust)



### Major Achievements

1. Two Community Conservation Trusts
2. Community Based Tourism Model at Two Sites
3. Army and ITBP working for wetland conservation
4. A Model for HAW Conservation evolved
5. Reports and papers related to work published
6. Profile of HAWs of Ladakh raised at local, State and National level
7. Tsomoriri designated as Ramsar Site
8. WWF International produced a film under its People for conservation series on the project which received Silver Screen Award at Losangles, USA.



Key Stakeholders and WWF Partners in J&K

1. Local Communities.
2. Department of Wildlife Protection.
3. Indian Army and Indo Tibetan Border Police.
  4. Department of Tourism.
  5. Educational Institutions.
6. Hill Council and State Government

Immediate Conservation Action Needed in J&K

1. To document current status of HAW's of the state.
2. To raise the profile of HAW's at state level.
3. To closely work with two Tribal Communities of the state who have a very high dependency on High Altitude Wetlands
  - (a). Changpas in Eastern Ladakh.
  - (b). Gujjar and Bakerwals in Pir Panjal Range.

### Challenges and Lessons

High Altitude areas are very very tough and difficult to work

Conservation outcome also depends on political situation

Ownership of the conservation activities should be given to the local communities

Conservation activities should be related to economic Incentives

Conservation should also help in improving the livelihood Of poor and vulnerable communities



A Strong Communication Plan should be formed to communicate the project activities

Regular Monitoring and Evaluation can improve the outputs to a great extent

Let's Leave  
Our Children  
Living Waters

