

# Regional Seminar on Wetlands, Recreation and Ecotourism

Khajuraho (M.P.)  
1-3 February 2012



## FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT



Organised by  
*Centre for Inland Waters in South Asia*  
**National Institute of Ecology**

## About the NIE

The National Institute of Ecology (NIE), started in 1978, is India's premier non-governmental organization (professional association) in the fields of Ecology and Environmental Science. It is well known for having organised the INTECOL's First International Wetlands Conference in New Delhi in 1980. Donations made to the NIE are eligible for tax deductions. The NIE is also eligible to receive overseas contributions and grants.

The NIE has its members drawn from all disciplines (including Engineering and Social Sciences) and from every part of India, besides from a few other countries. The NIE organizes national and international workshops, symposia and conferences, conducts training, undertakes research projects, and publishes the *International Journal of Ecology and Environmental Sciences* and the *Bulletin of the NIE*. The NIE works closely with the concerned government departments/Ministries as well as the NGOs. It maintains its main office in Delhi, and has five regional offices. It has recently initiated two Centres: a *Centre for Application & Research in Ecotechnology and Ecological Engineering*, and a *Centre for Inland Waters in South Asia*. Since 2008, the NIE awards an annual Prof. R. Misra Birth Centenary Lecture to an eminent ecologist/environmental scientist.

For details and membership information, visit our website: <http://www.nieindia.org/>



## National Institute of Ecology

*Devoted to Environmental Conservation through Education, Research and Management*

*(Non-Profit Professional Association)*

*Registered under the Societies Registration Act, at Jaipur, No. 495/80-81)*

FCRA Registration no. 231660512 (Educational);

Registered under sections 12A and 80(G) of the Income Tax Act

125 (First Floor) Main Road (opp. Indian Statistical Inst.),  
Katwaria Sarai, New Delhi 110016

Homepage: <http://www.nieindia.org/>

Email: [secretary@nieindia.org](mailto:secretary@nieindia.org); [nieindia@gmail.com](mailto:nieindia@gmail.com)

Tel/Fax: +91-11-26511332

## Introduction

All kinds of ecosystems provide us numerous benefits, now known as ecosystem services. Whereas some of these 'services' can be easily valued in monetary terms, others are not so readily appreciated. Among them the most prominent are the *Cultural Services* which include Recreation and Ecotourism, Aesthetics, and Spiritual and Religious values. Wetland ecosystems are the largest provider of these cultural services. Rivers, waterfalls, lakes, reservoirs, marshes, sea beaches, lagoons, and even the village ponds are the most desirable and most visited areas for recreation (bathing, swimming, diving, boating, canoeing, sport fishing, bird watching, sunbathing and/or simply enjoying the landscape) and tourism. These wetlands invariably enhance the aesthetics of the 'landscape'. Many centuries before the 'Developed Countries' realised the values of wetlands, and that too after having drained and transformed them into pastures or urban-industrial lands, the people in Asia in general and South Asia in particular revered them as sacred places, associated them with spiritual and religious activities. Even today, wetlands are of special significance in socio-cultural and religious activities in South Asia.

In recognition of these cultural services of wetland ecosystems, the Ramsar Convention has chosen "Wetlands and Tourism" as the theme for the World Wetland Day 2012. The central theme of the 11<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Contracting Parties of the Convention (Bucharest, Romania; 19-26 June 2012) is also Wetlands, Tourism and Recreation.

The National Institute of Ecology will celebrate the World Wetlands Day 2012 by organising a **Regional Seminar on Wetlands, Recreation and Ecotourism**, in association with several Partners. The term Ecotourism is used preferably in view of its definition which states, "Ecotourism is *responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people*" (International Ecotourism Society).

The Seminar will also mark the Opening of the **Centre for Inland Waters in South Asia** - an International Centre for Research, Education and Management of Inland Aquatic Ecosystems of South Asia - that is being established near Khajuraho (M.P.) by the NIE jointly with the Pragra Education and Environment Trust.

## The Venue

The seminar will be organised in Khajuraho (Madhya Pradesh) - a well known tourist destination, known for its 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century temples, now a World Heritage Site. Among other attractions for ecotourism are the Panna Tiger Reserve, magnificent Raneh Falls on River Ken, the Ken Ghariyal sanctuary, Vijaysagar (a bird sanctuary and many wetlands such as Rangwan, Gangau, Benisagar, Belatal, and Madansagar within 50 km from Khajuraho. River Ken, which drains the area and flows through the Panna National Park, is a major tributary of R. Yamuna, and of special interest because of its near pristine condition and the proposed Ken Betwa River Link.

Khajuraho is accessible by road, air and train. It is only 10 km from Bameetha on NH 75 from Jhansi to Satna, The present airport is being upgraded to an international airport. It is also connected to Delhi and Varanasi by a direct train which requires an overnight journey.

## The Seminar

The seminar will focus on the Ecosystem Services of wetlands in the South Asian region with particular reference to their relationship with cultural services (ecotourism, recreation, socio-cultural values, livelihoods). The seminar will attempt to highlight the lesser known wetlands which provide significant ecosystem services. Only those contributions which are based on actual data on tourism and management of specific wetlands, will be accepted. Constraints of time will allow only 30-40 Oral Presentations of 15-20 minutes each. There will be adequate space for poster presentations.

The seminar is expected to bring together senior scientists, young researchers, Government officers and NGO representatives interested in wetlands from all countries of South Asia and neighbouring countries. Organisations interested in promoting ecotourism in wetland areas are also welcome to attend.

Details of the Conference Programme, format for preparing oral and poster presentation, as well as Excursions, Field Visits, etc. will be available in the Second Circular by **mid-November 2011**.

**Duration:** 1-3 February 2012 (Three days)

## Registration Fees

**Rs 3000** (SAARC countries)     **US\$ 100** (Countries other than SAARC)  
(It includes a day-trip to Panna National Park OR wetlands near Khajuraho; Seminar Kit, Lunch and Tea/Coffee during the seminar, but not the accommodation).

Payments will be required in advance by Demand Drafts drawn in favour of the National Institute of Ecology on any bank in New Delhi.

## Travel and Accommodation

Participants are required to make their own travel arrangements. Organisers do not have any funds to support the participants and will not be able to assist with booking air or train travel. A formal letter of invitation will be sent to the overseas participants, who may require a visa, if their presentation is accepted for the Seminar.

Hotels range from Rs 500 to Rs 5000 per night (Bed and Breakfast). Details of hotel accommodation will be provided in the Second Circular and placed on the Website.

## Contact

All those interested in participating in the Seminar with or without a presentation should communicate their name, affiliation, address and proposed contribution to the Organisers (*Convener*: Dr Brij Gopal) **latest by 31 October 2011 by Email to:**

ciwsa.nie@gmail.com OR nieindia@gmail.com