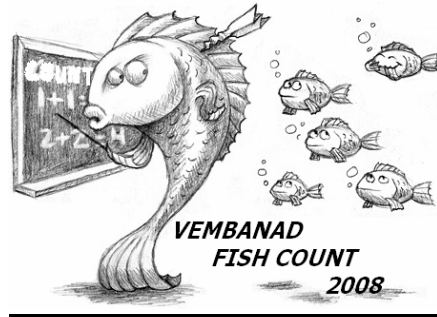


VEMBANAD FISH COUNT 2008



30th May 2008



**Community Environmental Resource Centre (CERC)
Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment**



**Regional Agricultural Research Station(RARS)
Kerala Agricultural University**

The Vembanad estuarine system, the largest of its kind on the west coast of India has all the attributes of a tropical wetland, abundantly enriched with mangroves, water fowl habitats and diverse fishery resources. Considering these unique endowments, the Vembanad Lake has been declared as a 'Ramsar site' for conservation and management. A transitional ecotone between sea and land, Vembanad Lake is a highly productive environment, providing feeding, spawning and rearing areas for a very large proportion of commercial fish and shellfish. However, the biodiversity of the Vembanad wetlands is alarmingly declining due to a variety of reasons such as sand mining & habitat destruction, loss of riparian canopy cover, encroachment, pollution hazards from agro-chemicals, pesticides and sewage and unethical fishing practices. Besides these, the greatest threat to biodiversity is the lack of awareness of the Biodiversity values of the region.

In this context Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), in collaboration with the Regional Agricultural Research Station (RARS), is organizing a participatory fish census, as the “**Vembanad Fish Count-2008**”, mainly to inventorise the fish biodiversity. This in turn will also help to create mass awareness on the need for conservation of our most valuable common property resource “the lake” through more sensible management. This event is co-sponsored by the National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources, Regional Centre (CMFRI), Cochin and the State Biodiversity Board, Kerala.

The survey is scheduled at **6.00 AM** on **30th May 2008**. It will be a participatory survey by trained teams of volunteers including scientists, naturalists, students and interested people. Those interested can register as a volunteer and should attend the training at the RARS, Kumarakom, on 25th May 2008, Sunday, at 2.00 PM.

On behalf of the organizing committee we invite you to participate in this important event and lent your whole hearted support in protecting our great natural heritage.

Conveners

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To register for participation in the event, please contact

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Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) www.atree.org was established in 1996 to help curtail the rapid loss of India's biological resources and natural ecosystems, and to address the environmental, social and economic dimensions of this decline. Over the last decade it has emerged as a premier conservation institution in India working on Biodiversity conservation through interdisciplinary research and conservation projects. Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India has recognized ATREE as a **Centre of Excellence in Conservation Science**. In its effort to address the threats being faced by wetlands, ATREE has initiated a Community Environmental Resource Centre (CERC) at Alappuzha, Kerala, to involve local communities and institutions for wetland management. www.vembanad.org



The Regional Agricultural Research Station, Kumarakom is the major center of research and learning of Kerala Agricultural University in the Vembanad region. It has engaged in multidisciplinary studies on the Vembanad wetland for the past three decades and has pioneered several conservation programs for rational management of the fishery resources of the wetlands viz., open water fish enhancement, captive breeding and ranching, establishment of artificial fish sanctuaries, and fish germplasm conservation. The center has also been actively involved in devising and popularizing sustainable farming models suited to the region.