

Project Proposal
Empower Youth for Anawilundawa Wetland Sanctuary
Conservation
Presented by
The Youth Voice International – Sri Lanka

Introductions

Sri Lanka is rich in nature, with a number of sanctuaries and national parks to protect the wildlife that inhabit the many varied ecosystems here. Anawilundawa Wetland Sanctuary is one of the more obscure sanctuaries, that lies on the coastal belt between Negombo and Puttalam. Covering an area of 1397 hectares, this RAMSAR Wetland is special for being at a location where three very distinct ecosystems collide. These ecosystems are the forested wetlands, including mangrove swamps and freshwater swamps; the saltwater ecosystem of the coast; and the freshwater lakes. There are six large manmade tanks; Pinkattiya, Maradansola, Anawilundawa, Mayyawa, Surawila and Vellawali; and three peripheral tanks that form a complex irrigation system.

This ancient system was created in the 12th century AD in order to sustain traditional paddy fields and islets of natural vegetation in the area. The area being quite dry; the tanks stored water and irrigated using old waterways. They also played a major role in flood control, aquifer recharge, retention of pollutants and sediments, and nutrient export. As the waterways have now disappeared without a trace; the tanks are now fed by the floodwater from Deduru Oya which is transferred via the Sengaloya scheme.

The varied conditions caused by the tanks have given way to an ecosystem which is ideal for a large number of species of birds and mammals.

The RAMSAR Statement

“An ancient system of human-made cascading tanks or reservoirs, ranging between 12 and 50 hectares each and totaling some 200 ha, dating back to the 12th century, which help to sustain traditional paddy fields in the area as well as islets of natural vegetation.

In addition to being unique to the biogeographically region, the site harbors quite a few species of threatened fish, amphibians, birds, mammals, and especially reptiles and supports up to 40% of the vertebrate species found in Sri Lanka. The system serves as an important refuge for migratory birds and also supports about 50% of the country’s freshwater fish species, including at least three endemic species. Only 3-4 meters deep, it is a highly productive wetland with an array of zooplankton and phytoplankton, which also makes it extremely important for migratory fish.”

The Wildlife

The Anawilundawa Wetlands is a bird watcher’s haven, with over 150 species of birds; both resident and migratory. Resident and endemic bird species can be seen throughout the year; whilst the period from October to April is the best time for getting a glimpse of the many rare

migratory birds. Anawilundawa is also the nesting site for many exotic birds; including some of the rarer species of cormorants, egrets, storks and ibis, along with the pheasant tailed-jacana and the purple swamp hen.

There are also over 20 species of mammals; including the Toque Macaque monkey, five threatened species of Slender Loris, Rusty Spotted Cat, Fishing Cat, and the Indian Otter. Over 70 species of butterflies breed here; whilst over 50% of the country's freshwater fish species are found in these waters.

Anawilundawa Wetland Sanctuary is especially good for bird watching, hiking and boat rides; and is fast growing into one of Sri Lanka's most important ecotourism attractions.

Environment threats have been Face

However, the sanctuary is currently facing various human, natural and climate threats.

- a) For example, the ancient waterway that fed the sanctuary has all but disappeared. Therefore, the prevailing drought has exacerbated the problem. By now the springs in the garden's internal drainage system have dried up. This is a wet ecosystem and threatens the survival of wildlife, including birds
- b) In addition, large factories are being built despite the protests of the residents. External environmentalists who love the gardens believe that many factories have been construct without proper environmental feasibility studies.
- c) In addition, the pollution of industrial air pollutants , water pollutants and the light has now become a threat to this wet ecosystem inhabited by birds.
- d) Another major threat is the spread of invasive aquatic species that rapidly seize the tank system in the sanctuary. This may have caused the reservoir to fall or land.

Conservation Measures

- In order to eliminate these threats of the park, the following measures have been proposed for wildlife and environmental conservation initiatives.
- Project target group is volunteer environmental organization and they love the park and are working to eliminate this situation.
- These voluntary associations have been set up by youths who have studied environmental protection in high schools. They say that through the capacity development of these youth societies, they can participate positively in the environmental conservation activities of the park.
- The "Intergenerational Learning for Nature Conservation Volunteers" project is an innovative approach to environmental education. The conservation activity focused to learning that combines learning among the elderly and youth (intergenerational), through games using Information and Communication Technologies tools will make the youth more attractive.
- And with the experiences of older generations, an international learning system for the protection of nature for new environmentalists is introduced. That knowledge and training will be a positive start to the conservation of the valuable ecological heritage of Anawilundawa,
-

Project Activities

- i. To Establish a learning team, including young people and seniors, work together as volunteers to protect the environment, and to create awareness materials for conservation needs in protected areas. One or more learning facilitators and an environmental protection specialist should assist the learning team.
- ii. To Ensuring that all team members meet their needs and design the global learning activities required for the implementation of the learning system.
- iii. To Participate in joint conservation activities in the protected area of the Park where the team has decided to focus.
- iv. To Participate in a number of learning sessions / meetings where senior citizens and environmental specialists exchange knowledge on conservation needs and heritage of the selected area.
- v. To start conservation work with gather all and know the protected area better and using innovations & knowledge base through training on the Park.
- vi. To Evaluate the personal and community benefits of learning and project implementation.

Other stakeholders in this project

This conservation process is owned by the Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Department, which is in charge of the park. It is stated that the existing resources and facilities of the Department are not sufficient to make this conservation a success. Therefore, they expect additional support from the Environmental Organizations to elimination of these environmental threats. Therefore, this project were designed with them. These community organizations have already held several agitations to force the relevant authorities to stop human activities in the environment of the new park.

The Wetland Park is a popular tourist attraction especially for bird watching. Therefore, the property is supported by environmentalists. Further, Shri. The Lanka Environmental Protection Trust will provide technical support for the project. The project's round breaking project is guided by the project's environmental group, the Friends of the Environment.

Expected outcome

- The ancient waterway that fed the sanctuary has all but disappeared. Therefore, the prevailing drought has exacerbated the problem. By now the springs of the garden's internal drainage system have dried up. This is a wet ecosystem and threatens the survival of wildlife, including birds. For this purpose, the project will covered the park's internal waterways and water conservation.
- In addition, large factories are being built despite the objections of residents. External environmentalists who love gardens believe that many factories have been built without proper industrial feasibility studies. Empowering youth environmentalists' associations will be increased to capacity to combat these adverse human activities and take action.
- In addition, industrial air pollutants, water pollutants and light pollution are now threatening this wet ecosystem inhabited by birds. This situation can be mitigated by having a productive dialogue with the industry owners

- Another major threat is the spread of invasive aquatic species that rapidly capture the sanctuary's tanks system. This may have caused the reservoir to collapse or land. These invasive species can be eliminated as a result of our conservation program

Budget Descriptions

| Activity | Cost USD | | |
|---|----------|-------|-------------|
| | Total | Donr | Youth Voice |
| i. To Establish a learning team, including young people and seniors, work together as volunteers to protect the environment, and to create awareness materials for conservation needs in protected areas. One or more learning facilitators and an environmental protection specialist should assist the learning team. | 8000 | 4000 | 4000 |
| ii. To Ensuring that all team members meet their needs and design the global learning activities required for the implementation of the learning system. | 6000 | 3000 | 3000 |
| iii. To Participate in joint conservation activities in the protected area of the Park where the team has decided to focus. | 10000 | 5000 | 5000 |
| iv. To Participate in a number of learning sessions / meetings where senior citizens and environmental specialists exchange knowledge on conservation needs and heritage of the selected area. | 12000 | 6000 | 6000 |
| v. To start conservation work with gather all and know the protected area better and using innovations & knowledge base through training on the Park. | 5000 | 2500 | 2500 |
| vi. To Evaluate the personal and community benefits of learning and project implementation. | 3000 | 1500 | 1500 |
| Total | 44000 | 22000 | 22000 |

Other Photo gallery





