

DIYASARU

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NEWSLETTER

Issue No 01 : July 2022



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Message from Chairman



Sri Lanka Land Development Corporation (SLLDC) under the purview of Ministry of Urban Development and Housing is a leading government institute mandated to work for the betterment of Urban Wetlands in Colombo. Wise uses of wetlands are assured by us in achieving our vision “To be recognized as an esteemed and dynamic engineering organization for the creation and promotion of the development of low lying lands with efficient and effective drainage systems to ensure a flood free habitat”.

The urban wetland cluster managed by SLLDC is a significant ecosystems within Colombo catchment, for all aspects such as flood management, urban wildlife protection, ecotourism promotion, urban climate regulation etc. Diyasaru Park is the main urban wetland park in Colombo, the first wetland capital city in the world. During the past nine years Diyasaru Park has been provided numerous educational and awareness activities while promoting research on various disciplines in wetland management. Therefore Diyasaru Newsletter will be an effective platform to disseminate such knowledge gathered, among its stakeholders. I warmly congratulate Diyasaru Park and its upcoming Diyasaru Newsletter for all success!

**Eng. Hiran Balasuriya, Commodore
Chairman, Sri Lanka Land Development Corporation**

Message from General Manager



We, Sri Lanka Land Development Corporation is always keen to manage the urban wetland landscapes to make flood free and environmentally friendly habitats for citizens. Diyasaru Park is an asset to the entire country as an ideal wetland educational center as well as a place of relaxation. Therefore Diyasaru Park possess a higher visitor base. Sharing the most recent updates is a timely requirement as a part of the continuous CEPA (Communication, Education, Participation, and Awareness) activities while promoting citizen science for the betterment of wetlands. Upcoming Diyasaru Newsletter is the best opportunity for it and I convey my heartiest wishes for the successful continuation of it.

**Eng. Srimathi Senadheera
General Manager, Sri Lanka Land Development Corporation**

Message from RRC – EA



Congratulatory Message On behalf of the Ramsar Regional Center – East Asia and as Secretariat of Wetland Link International – Asia, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations for launching the Diyasaru Newsletter. The Diyasaru Park implements various wetland CEPA activities to support capacity building and enhancing awareness of wetland stakeholders and the general public, including students and members of the Diyasaru Nature Club. Publishing a newsletter regularly will promote effective communication between Diyasaru Park and relevant stakeholders in terms of sharing knowledge and information on CEPA activities and biodiversity

research in Diyasaru Park. We would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Sri Lanka Land Development Corporation, under the leadership of Chairman Hiran Balasuriya and General Manager Srimathi Senadheera, for their consistent support to Diyasaru Park management. We wish the Diyasaru Park a bright future with ever remarkable achievements in the years to come.

Suh Seung Oh

Executive Director Ramsar Regional Center – East Asia

Message from Deputy General Manager (Wetland Management)



I'm pleased to send this message to the "First newsletter" of Diyasaru Park prepared by the Wetland Management Division of Sri Lanka Land Development Corporation (SLLDC). Wetlands in the capital city of Sri Lanka-Colombo are extremely valuable and consists of rich biodiversity throughout the year.

Diyasaru wetland was developed into the Diyasaru Park by SLLDC with the aim of providing a dreamy opportunity to visitors who need to spend their leisure more close to the nature.

Diyasaru Park carries the theme of "Releasing the stress of urbanization " and acting as a water retention area. The park reduces the stress being a wetland that provides multiple ecosystem services , both locally and globally.

The Park is mainly visited by children from pre-school to higher education institutes and universities and also nature lovers who are keen in experiencing both biotic and abiotic components of wetlands.

Therefore, an increased public awareness on the significance of wetland park is of utmost importance for conservation and management of wetland ecosystems. Hence, this Diyasaru Newsletter is created and published as a result of great team work.

DIYASARU PARK SECURES WLI ASIA FUND 2022

Diyasaru Park received WLI Asia Fund 2022 to promote and facilitate the CEPA activities at the Park. The proposed activities include :

- “Diyasaru Nature Club” is being established under this fund to connect all wetland interested community in Sri Lanka to raise the awareness on wetlands by effectively communicating and engaging them for wetland conservation and wise use via participatory mechanisms.
- Wetland weekend programs for each twelve months targeting different groups from kids to the adults.
- Wetland seed collection campaigns to collect and grow native wetland plants to use for wetland restoration.
- Ensure the sustainability of Diyasaru Park by initiating a Souvenir shop for sell promotional materials.
- Conduct various Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness activities at Diyasaru Park.

These activities are closely monitored throughout the year by Ramsar Regional center- East Asia and WLI Asia.

The total fund values USD 7000 where 75% of the fund has been already transferred for successful Continuation Proposed activities.

This Diyasaru Newsletter is also launched under the WLI Asia fund 2022.



Diyasaru Park

Extending across 60 acres, Diyasaru Park is a dreamy opportunity for the visitors in Sri Lanka who need to get more close to nature forgetting about the heavy traffic jam, busy noises, and sweltering heat in the busy city around them. Diyasaru Park is located in a highly urbanized area of Sri Jayawardenepura, the administrative capital of Sri Lanka with proximity to the parliament. This is one of the two wetland parks in Colombo which showcases a range of wetland habitats such as marshes, woodlands, and ponds.

With the vision of “Releasing the Stress of Urbanization” the prime objective of the park is to give an opportunity to learn about nature while enjoying and experiencing it. With having more than 230 animal species, Diyasaru Park is an ideal place that shows the beauty and uniqueness of urban wildlife in Colombo wetlands. In order to enjoy the nature park provides many facilities and activities for its visitors. Diyasaru park is managed by the Wetland Management Division of Sri Lanka Land Development Corporation (SLDC).

History of the park

Park in 1980s



The history of Diyasaru is fascinating as the park itself. Before the 1980s the land was an active paddy field owned by the people who were living around the area. During that time, a significant change happened in the administrative structure of the country with the shifting of administrative capital to Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte. Many lands closer to the proposed new parliament were acquired by the government for development activities and Diyasaru land is also one such. In the early 1980's, during the construction of Parliament Lake, this particular land was selected as one place to dump the dredged material. As a result, the paddy became abandoned and the land was neglected and gradually transformed into a marsh but completely invaded by *Annona glabra*, a vigorously invasive plant that has been distributed all over the lowland wet zone of the country.



2004



2012



2015

CEPA Activity Highlights at Diyasaru Park

16 March

Guided nature tour for Kids from Gateway College

Grade 01 students of Gateway College, Rajagiriya visited Diyasaru park on 16th March 2022, for a nature tour. Altogether 142 students and staff joined for the program. Kids were made aware on wetland animals, plants, water quality, urban agriculture and wetland ecosystem while walking through the park. Kids were engaged also in a scavenger hunt activity.



23 April

Venue Partner of Green Con'22

Green Con is a green life initiative that was newly introduced by the Interact District for the 1st time in 2020 concerning the avenue of green life. Green Con'22 was organized by the Interact District along with the Interact Clubs of St. Peter's College, Gothami Balika Vidyalaya, Horizon College International, Asian Grammer International School, Maliyadeva Balika Vidyalaya based on the theme of "Sustainability into Reality" providing the youth with a platform to practice sustainable living and zero waste managing lifestyle.

Additionally topics as "Deforestation and global warming" and "Micro-plastics and marine pollution" were addressed by the keynote speakers to make the event more fruitful.

Diyasaru Park joined hands with Interact Movement as a venue partner for Green Con'22 on 23 April 2022.



23 April

Wetlands and Water

Wetland Weekend Program

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WETLAND WEEKEND PROGRAM FOR KIDS
"Wetlands and Water"
 For kids below 12 years

Date - 23rd April 2022
Time - 2pm to 4pm
Venue - Diyasaru Park open study area.

Free of charge

Bring your junior scientist to the Diyasaru park on **23rd April 2022** to explore wetland with fun filled educational activities including,

- Nature Trail
- Spotting wildlife creatures
- Experimenting wetland Services

Contact Ranoshi on 077-3443025 and reserve a seat for your kid ASAP as only 20 kids will be selected, on first come first serve basis.

Conducted by Diyasaru Park in collaborations with Wetland Link-Asia and Ramsar Regional Center-East Asia.

The entire workshop will be conducted as per the Covid-19 Health Guidelines



23 April

Workshop on Citizen Science water quality monitoring device/ FLOAT

Luisa Charles is partnering with IMWI and Cobra Collective on the Darwin project, with facilitation by the University of Moratuwa to create a low cost, citizen's science USV kit for community driven water quality monitoring. The project aims to empower communities living around the wetlands to collect data about the quality of the water in the environments they are living in.

It does this through a USV (unmanned surface vehicle) kit, developed through community workshops and basic robotics skill sharing. Insight gaining workshops, skill sharing and testing workshops will be conducted with the aim of gaining design insights directly from the people who the technology is designed to be used by, to share basic skills in programming, electronics, and fabrication, and to test out the devices in a real world setting. The very first workshop was held at Diyasaru Park on 23 April 2022.

SLLDC, being a partner of Darwin Project facilitated the meeting and provides technical support for the project implementation.

21 May

Art of Urban Home Gardening Wetland Weekend Program

Wetland weekend May program was held to raise the awareness on wetland based urban home gardening to support the urban food security.

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Art of Urban Home Gardening

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26 June

Butterflies in Diyasaru Park Wetland Weekend Program

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Identification of butterflies in Diyasaru Park was held as the June wetland weekend program with participation of fifteen participants in various age categories as interested for butterflies.

29 June

Seed Collection Campaign

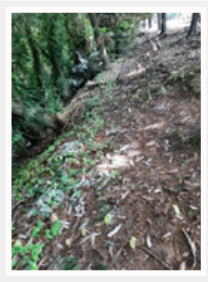
One of the most important structural components of wetland ecosystems is the seed bank. Seed banks are present in nearly all ecosystems; however, it is important to maintain a seed bank with diverse native seed varieties mainly to use in wetland restoration. It will act as a storage medium for plants that might otherwise not survive through stressful conditions.

Lack of native wetland plants is one of the major limitations in wetland restoration. Since most of the urban wetlands are invaded by Alian Invasive Plants; it is difficult to find natural seed banks of native wetland plants.

Therefore, Diyasaru Park has initiated to conduct wetland seed collection campaigns to collect, plant and maintain such plant species at our nursery.

Accordingly, the 1st seed collection campaign was held on 29th June 2022 to collect seeds and seedlings of more than 200 Ceylon Ironwood plants (Naa) from the vicinity around the parliament.

The Ironwood (Na Tree), botanically known as "Mesua ferrea" was declared the National Tree on February 26, 1986.



Project Updates

Butterfly Conservation and Interpretation Project at Diyasaru Park

Butterfly Garden at Diyasaru Park is a major attraction to all types of visitors to the park, as it is a live collection of common and rare butterflies in the area. This was developed in 2015, and being monitored and maintained to provide ideal habitats for a variety of butterflies in Colombo.

In 2022, Butterfly Conservation and Research Group of Sri Lanka (BCRG- SL) signed a MoU with SLLDC for the re-development of the Butterfly Garden.

This project will ensure the conservation of butterflies while providing opportunities for knowledge creation, research and education.



The proposed butterfly garden design

Diyasaru Nature Club - දියසරු සොබාදම් මිතුරෝ

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Join with Diyasaru Nature Club



- Improve your knowledge on significance of urban wetlands, its features & services.
- Understand and act towards promoting the wise use of urban wetlands.
- Get sense of pride knowing that you have directly supported active urban wetland conservation efforts.
- Opportunities to involve voluntarily in urban wetland management activities.
- Enhance your soft skills.

General Membership for Nature lovers of age above 13 years.

Junior Membership for Kids between age 4 to 12 years.

How to become a Member ?

Find the Membership application at www.diyasarupark.lk & Diyasaru Park ticketing counter.

For more details contact : 071-241 8128/ 071-728 3423/ 071-202 4907

diyasarupark@gmail.com



To whom

Anyone keen on environment, nature & wetlands, and wishes to be a wetland friend.

Diyasaru Park is there for you,

To educate you while you relax in nature consists of various natural, semi-natural and man-made Urban wetland landscapes to provide you an unforgettable wetland experience.



Tag Diyasaru Park Facebook page in your next photograph taken at Diyasaru Park and win a chance to feature your photograph in our next newsletter.

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