



BULLETIN

CONSERVATION OF IRANIAN WETLANDS PROJECT

JULY 2021



Department of the Environment



پروژه حفاظت از تپه‌های ایران
تنگه‌های نمک‌زداد و تپه‌های ایران



From
the People of Japan



www.wetlandsproject.ir



Introduction

Wetlands are valuable ecosystems and dynamic habitats that play an important role in the development of human communities. The climatic and geological diversity of Iran have caused that out of 42 types of wetlands identified in the world, 41 types exist in Iran.

The Conservation of Iranian wetland Project commenced in cooperation between the Government of Iran (Department of Environment), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) since 2005 with the aim of reducing or permanently eliminating threats and conservation of wetland ecosystems in Iran. CIWP started its work in selected and important wetlands as the pilot sites.

The project started with the slogan of “Saving Wetlands, for people, for nature” and with the general goal of permanently reducing or eliminating threats and the sustainability and survival of wetland ecosystems. Currently, the CIWP, in line with its five-year document (2020 to 2025), seeks to expand the experience gained in establishing the ecosystem approach and balancing, conservation, and wise use in pilot wetlands in other wetlands all over the country.

This bulletin presents a report on the most important activities, achievements, and outputs of the CIWP in the first six months of 2021.

Equipping & setting up a Bird Watching Center at the Govater Bay and Hur-e-Bahu

In new conservation approaches, including ecological management, special attention has been paid to the role of humans and their livelihoods in the ecosystem, and by recognizing the wise use, the protection of natural ecosystems is practiced.

Following the finalization of the interrogated management plan of Govater Bay and Hur-e- Bahu, and in order to increase the level of awareness of visitors about biodiversity and species of waterfowl and wetlands, Govater Bay Hur-e-Bahu the Birdwatching Center is equipped and under the management of local organizations, it hosts visitors and tourists to the

area. Govater Bay and Hur-e- Bahu International Wetlands have a variety of species of native and migratory birds in their habitats, which have increased the biodiversity richness of this ecosystem.

These International Wetlands have forty species of birds, thirteen of which are native and the rest are migratory. The birdwatching center has been set up with the cooperation and participation of local NGOs, Chabahar local office of Department of Environment, Chabahar Free Economic Zone and local organizations and welcomes those interested in birdwatching in all seasons.



A Wise Link Between Local Communities & the Largest Marine Wetland in the Middle East

Following the development of the integrated management plan of Khoran Estuary, and in order for the CIWP to establish the ecosystem approach and facilitate cross-sectoral communication to implement its annual work plan, and the implementation of small-scale and quick win projects connecting local communities and wetlands was on its agenda. In this regard, considering the potentials and areas of joint cooperation of the CIWP, a multilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed among Bandar Khamir Municipality, Hormozgan provincial office



Ecotourism House

of Department of Environment, and a local NGO of Bandar Khamir nature lovers. The results include the equipment and operation of the Communication, Education, Participation, and Awareness Raising Center (CEPA Center) in Khamir Port. This center, which is located in the coastal park of Bandar Khamir and adjacent to Khoran Estuary International Wetland, can be used as a reference for visitors to the wetland and provide up-to-date information about the wetland, its importance, and various animal and plant species in the region for tourists and visitors. The largest marine wetland in the Middle East with the highest area of mangrove forests in the area of 86,000 hectares is located in Hormozgan province in southern Iran. Considering the existing potentials in the region, in the framework of this joint cooperation and with the active participation of local communities of Khoran Estuary Wetland, several wetland tourism projects such as opening the first recycled wooden restaurant in Iran near Khoran Estuary International Wetland, inaugurating Tako eco-lodges, and the opening of the first phase of the Boom Gohari Museum were carried out in order to revive the maritime culture and knowledge of the wetland. The inauguration of Teko and Sancheh ecotourism resorts and the opening of the first phase of the Boomgohari Museum's dormitory were carried out to revive the marine culture and knowledge of the wetland. With these activities, more than 60 people were directly employed.



**Bandar
Khamir**



Establishment of Sustainable Farming Techniques at the Farm Level

The establishment of sustainable agricultural techniques is one of the important areas of the CIWP's activity, which has been considered from the first phase of the jointed project of the Department of Environmental and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) with the participation of the Government of Japan since 2014.

In this activity, which is carried out with the participation of the CIWP, the Agricultural Jihad Organization, agricultural technology, and engineering companies, NGOs, and monitoring team in the two provinces of East and West Azerbaijan; the promotion of innovations and technologies to



Onion Farm

improve the utilization of basic resources (water and soil) in rural areas of two mentioned provinces is followed.

The agricultural sector has a significant share in water consumption in Lake Urmia's basin and irrigation efficiency in this sector is much lower than desired (less than 35%). The CIWP in cooperation with the Agricultural Jihad Organizations of the West and East Azerbaijan provinces and technical companies, local agricultural engineering established sustainable agricultural techniques in 183 villages of Urmia Lake basin area in West Azerbaijan (Urmia, Miandoab, Mahabad, and Naqadeh) and East Azerbaijan (Azarshahr, Osko, Sarab, Bonab, AjabShir and Malekan) that 33 of these pilots are new in 2021.

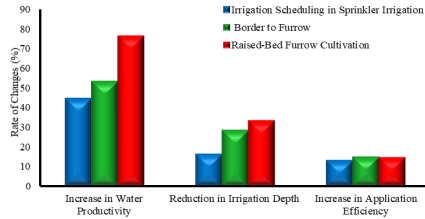
Various techniques, including furrow irrigation system, strip irrigation, hole fertilization, plant feeding based on soil test, etc. have been used at the field level. By implementing these techniques at the field level, reducing the consumption of inputs and biological control instead of chemicals, increasing soil fertility and optimal water consumption at the field level have been achieved. According to the water monitoring data, water efficiency has improved by 27.1%. Also, the model used, which is based on the TOR of establishing sustainable agricultural, is an achievement of the executive method for Agricultural Jihad Organizations, local implementing partners, and the CIWP.



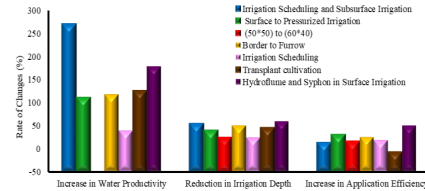
Establishment
of Sustainable
Agricultural



Water Monitoring to Evaluate the Effectiveness of Sustainable Farming Techniques



1



2

To evaluate the effectiveness of the techniques mentioned in the headline above, and the need to implement and establish sustainable farming techniques at farm level, the monitoring team with a specific framework, measured and evaluated the effectiveness of various techniques to reduce water consumption at the farm level during the seven phases of the project. During this evaluation, the efficiency of some techniques at the farm level was confirmed. The techniques also are promoted by the Agricultural Jihad Organization in areas outside the pilot projects of the two provinces of West and East Azerbaijan.

Due to the monitoring team's latest report the average on water productivity increase at the farm level is 27.1%. It should be noted that this value is different for different techniques for example, as the chart indicates that there is a 40% improvement in water efficiency with the implication of sprinkler irrigation technique.

Also, other important parameters in irrigation such as irrigation depth have been decreased. This will improve irrigation management at the farm level and reduce water consumption. For example, the second chart shows that irrigation depth can be reduced by up to 30%, which is very useful in the sustainable development of resources at the farm level by using raised-bed furrow cultivation.



Diversifying Livelihoods Compatible with Wetland Resources

Considering the essential role of local communities in protection of wetlands and also considering the dependence of livelihood of these communities on wetland resources (including water and other products), paying attention to the livelihood of local communities has always been among the priorities of Conservation of Iranian Wetlands Project. Diversifying livelihoods in line with wetland resources in two provinces of West Azerbaijan (in the cities of Urmia, Naqadeh and Mahabad) and East Azerbaijan (in the cities of Bostanabad, Osko, Ajabshir, Bonab and Malekan) has been done in cooperation with local companies.

During the years of the project, consistent livelihood activities have been carried out in 37 villages. 19 NGOs have actively participated in accomplishing these activities. Also, 700 rural women have participated in the project and 39 microcredit funds have been established and are managed by the local women. According to the latest census of the project in 2021, more than 88 livelihoods have been created in various livelihood groups, including tailoring, kilim weaving, dairy production, producing pickles, etc. in the target villages of the provinces of West and East Azerbaijan. These activities have helped reduce inequality and poverty in rural communities and have sought to reduce the pressure on wetland resources.



Implementation of Participatory Technology Development (PTD) in West & East Azerbaijan

Participatory Technology Development seeks to create participatory practices and approaches at the local community level. Local experts, researchers and farmers learn from each other during the implementation of PTD activities, and during the implementation of this approach, participatory behaviors and attitudes enhances at the village level. These activities provide valuable lessons for participatory development. In this approach, the TOR is not predetermined and the project starts with entering to the local community and trust building. After situation analysis and reviewing the challenges and getting in touch with the locals, work will start. In this process, the farmers are the main actors. since 2016, in order to activate and

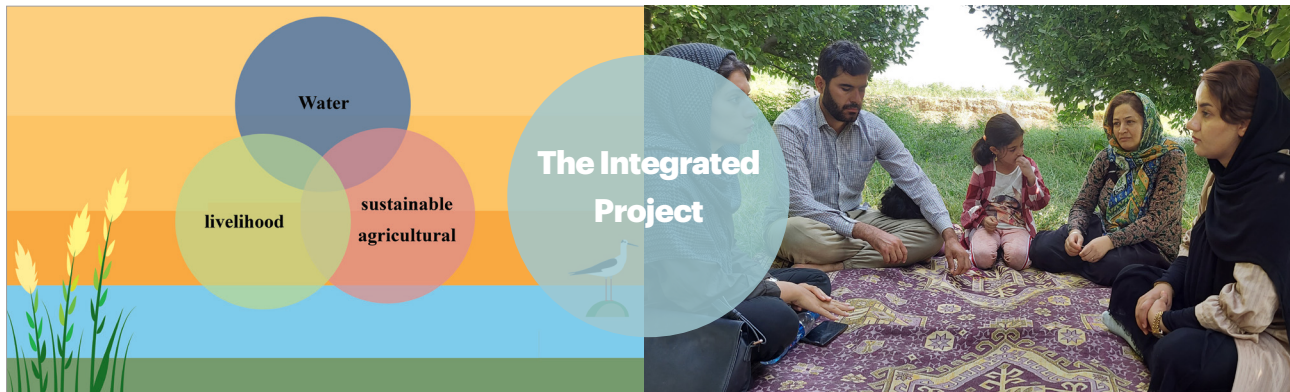
support and locate innovative methods of developing participation in rural communities, the CIWP implemented the approach in four pilots in Malekan and Miandoab counties. One of the most important achievements of this project is the practice of participatory methods for social mainstreaming. The findings indicate that in some villages, including Shabanloo village of Miandoab city, the farmers are more dynamic and interact with outside actors to solve problems at the farm level. In fact, the farmers participating in the PTD project have learned how to deal with agricultural issues with a research and participatory spirit, and have learned problem-solving techniques.



Modeling Local Participation in Restoration of Lake Urmia with an Integrated Approach in the Cities of Bonab, Urmia and Miandoab

During the implementation of Modelling Local Participation in Restoration of Lake Urmia, various activities in the field of sustainable management of water and soil resources and also improving the living conditions of local communities in the pilot villages of Lake Urmia Basin have been accomplished. In order to investigate the possible effects of integrating these activities, an innovative approach was adopted in which simultaneous implementation of the activities and the link between the three axes of water, livelihood and sustainability were practiced.

In 2018, four villages were selected from the provinces of West and East Azerbaijan (two villages in each province) and then the approach was implemented with the leadership of the CIWP national consultants and the cooperation of the local companies. This project not only seeks to implement a set of measures, but also consultants with a research-oriented approach seek to develop a model for rural development with an emphasis on conservation of wetland resources.



Marketing and Branding Studies on Livelihood in Lake Urmia

Establishing a direct connection with the market and supply spaces of products produced by the farmers, as well as livelihood groups formed as a result of the CIWP activities, will be an effective step to ensure the relative sustainability of these activities. Therefore, in order to investigate the existing context and potentials for the operational mechanism of marketing and branding of these products, the project conducted a preliminary study in this regard. In this study, the supply chain of agricultural products in Lake Urmia, which could potentially lead to the development of agricultural businesses

in line with wetland resources, was identified. The purpose of this study in the first step was to know the number of crops, area under cultivation, selected agricultural products and production costs and challenges. Then, based on different indicators such as the comparative advantage and production advantage of each product with similar production crops in one city and, then compared to other cities was evaluated and solutions for branding and marketing of products with priority given to items that are not harmful to the environment, were proposed.



Wetland Related Webinars for the Media

Today, the importance and impact of public media to enlighten public opinion in various fields, including the importance of wetland ecosystems and the need for their conservation and sustainable management is obvious to anyone. The need for journalists and media activists to be aware of up-to-date information in the field of wetlands led the CIWP to plan and hold training courses for this group of audiences. Due to the outbreak of coronavirus, these courses were held virtually in Adobe Connect with the presence of more than 350 activists and journalists in the field of environment and wetlands, as well as public relations experts of the provincial offices of Department of Environment. The key objectives of holding these online

webinars include strengthening the relationship between media activists and various sections of the Department of Environment, communication between key stakeholders and management of wetlands, upgrading the technical and professional knowledge of media activists to address the issues, problems and challenges that wetlands are facing. Courses such as "Content Production for Social Networks", "Graphics in Image-Based Media", "Basic and Advanced News Writing", "Editing Clips", "New Approaches in Wetland Conservation", "Water and Wetland Structure", "Wetlands and Sustainable Development", "Legal and Economic Dimensions of Wetlands" and "New Approaches in Water Resources Planning and Management" have been presented by experts in this program.



Webinars for the Media

سه شنبه ۲۵ شهریور ۹۹ : ساعت ۱۰ تا ۱۲

دکتر علی باقری

استاد گروه آب دانشگاه تربیت مدرس

یکشنبه ۲۳ شهریور ۹۹ : ساعت ۱۰ تا ۱۲

دکتر منصور ساعی

استاد پژوهشگاه علوم انسانی و مطالعات فرهنگی



Clips, Animations and Documents for Awareness raising, Education and Training

In today's world, transmitting messages through video and audio-visual media will have the greatest impact on the audience. In order to increase the level of public awareness about the importance of conservation and sustainable use of wetlands and the introduction of their services, functions and threats, several educational and media clips were produced with the following titles; Virtual Water, Ecosystem Approach, interview with National Project Director and National Project Manager, Micro-credit funds for women and Livelihoods Compatible with Water Shortage, Sustainable Agriculture,

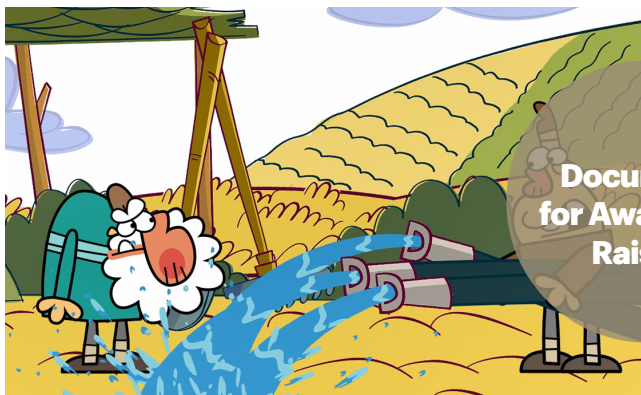
Payment for Ecosystem Services - Kani Barazan wetland and Satellite Wetlands of Urmia Lake.

Also, six pieces of comic animations from the "Dirin Dirin" series with the topics of land use of wetlands, adapting to water shortages, and the role of wetland rangers in conservation of wetlands was produced and welcomed by the audience.

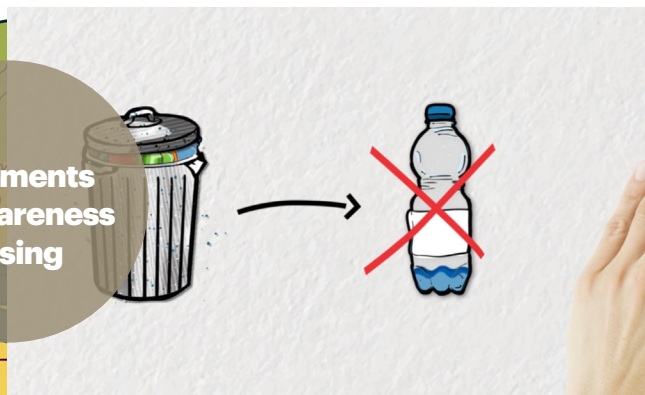
The media productions of the project are available on the project website and Aparat web page;

www.iranianwetlands.ir

aparat/iranianwetlands



Documents
for Awareness
Raising



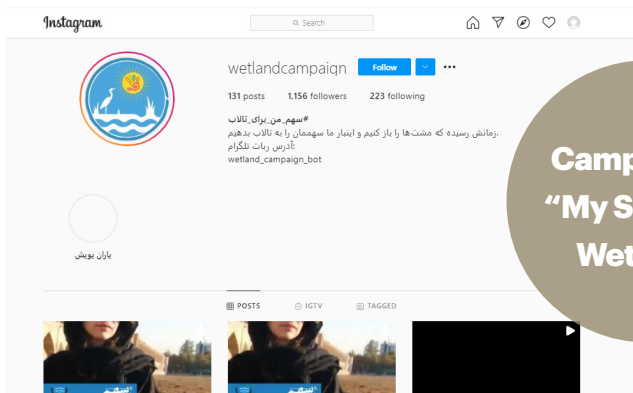
National Campaign of “My Share for Wetland”

In recent years, many of the country’s wetlands have faced serious challenges. In addition to the problems of water scarcity and drought, people and local communities also play an important role in conservation of the wetland. The national campaign of “My Share for Wetlands” with a series of promotional and informative activities, was implemented with the aim of increasing public awareness for 26 wetlands in the country. The campaign seeks to mobilize the public, celebrities, and local environmental activists in the field of wetland conservation and restoration to improve

the condition of the country’s wetlands. Also, in order to increase sensitivity between the cultural and literary communities, the short story festival “Narrators of the Wetland” was held simultaneously throughout this campaign. The campaign has launched an Instagram page and a website under the name of “wetlandcampaign”.



My Share in Wetland
#سهم_من_برای_تالاب
WetlandCampaign.ir



CIWP Knowledge Management and Public Participation Toolkit

From the beginning of the project, all the small and big achievements of the CIWP have always been available to the audience, experts and interested individuals, but considering the need to organize project documents and achievements, especially in the component related to modeling public participation in wetland restoration, preparation of a codified and practical toolkit for different target groups was included in the project work plan.

This toolkit would attract people's participation in the restoration of wetlands and presenting the project achievements to the audience and interested individuals in the form of software, multimedia CD, application and web and a mobile application. One of the main areas of the CIWP focus in recent months were gathering the data needed to produce the content and design the layout of this toolkit.



The 50th Anniversary of the Ramsar Convention and World Wetlands Day

The Ramsar Convention is the oldest international treaty with the emphasis on nature conservation in the world. It started on February 2, 1971 in the city of Ramsar, from which the convention took its name. Emphasizing on the role that wetlands playing in human communities, this convention has



made the conservation of wetland biodiversity its main goal. Iran played a key role in the formation of the Ramsar Convention and was one of the first seven countries to join it. In February 2021, the 50th anniversary of the Ramsar Convention and World Wetlands Day was commemorated with the slogan “Inseparable; Water, Wetlands and Life” in the presence of the First Vice President, the Vice President and Head of the Department of Environment, the UNDP Resident Representative in the Islamic Republic of Iran and other national and international officials and authorities.

The video messages of the Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran were screened at the ceremony. During this ceremony, “the Wetland Champions” and the “the Wetland Guards” were introduced and awarded as well.

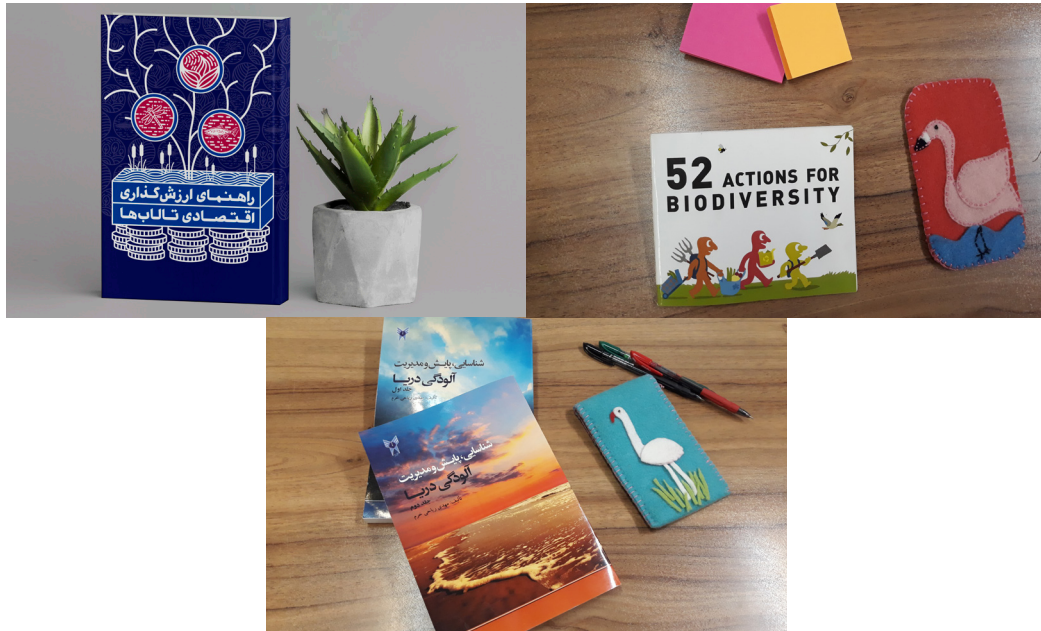
On the sidelines of the ceremony, in order to pay more attention to the protection of picturesque and valuable wetlands of the country, the third round of photography competition for Iranian wetlands was held under the title of “Mehr Wetland” and the best and selected works were displayed in the side exhibition.



CIWP Book Publishing

Production and publication of technical and general books in order to raise the awareness and education, as well as reflect

and document the activities and achievements of the CIWP, are among the activities of the project in the last six months.



Links related to CIWP programs

The Second Festival on Iranian Wetlands Conservation Initiatives

<https://b2n.ir/a20730>

50th anniversary of the Ramsar Convention and the World Wetlands Day was celebrated by The the Department of Environment -DoE

<https://b2n.ir/h93645>

26th Meeting of the Project Steering Committee- Conservation of Iranian Wetlands Project

<https://b2n.ir/k37219>

Achievements of Lake Urmia Rehabilitation in the way to Rehabilitate Wetlands in Fars Province


<https://b2n.ir/z45664>

Symposium on Consolidation and Generalization of the achievements of the CIWP by Reviewing the Experiences of the Urmia Lake Rehabilitation Project

<https://b2n.ir/u77431>



**Conservation of
Iranian Wetlands Project**
"Saving Wetlands: for People, for Nature"

 www.wetlandsproject.ir

 www.instagram.com/iranianwetlands

 www.aparat.com/iranwetland

 <https://ir.linkedin.com/in/conservation-of-iranian-wetlands-project-ciwp-b353271a2>



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