



Indus Forever

A Quarterly Newsletter of the Indus for All Programme, WWF - Pakistan

Volume II Issue 5 | Jan - March 2008

EDITORIAL BOARD

Syed Ghulam Qadir Shah
Manager, Conservation-Sindh
WWF - Pakistan

Ali M. Khan Dehlavi
Programme Economist
(Indus for All Programme)

A. Karim Gabol
Communications Officer
(Indus for All Programme)

EDITOR

Muhammad Zafar Khan
Manager, Communications and Environmental
Education (Indus for All Programme)

CONTENTS

- **Editorial**
The Declining State of Natural Resources and Human Activities
- **Programme Highlights**
Indus for All Programme Organized an Event Marking World Wetlands Day 2008
GIS Training for Partner Organizations
NRM Training for District Government Officials of Thatta
Detailed GIS Survey of the Sites Held
Vegetation Survey Continued
Wildlife Survey of Nara Canal Held
GIS Lab Established at the Sindh Forest Department Office, Hyderabad
Ecosystem Valuation Survey at Pai Forest
- **The Policy Monitor**
Mainstreaming Indus Ecoregion Priorities into the Sindh Vision 2030
Indus for All Programme Continues to Strengthen Partnerships and Outreach
- **The Poverty-Environment Watch**
Payment for Environmental Services--an Introduction
- **Glimpses from the Programme Implementation Units**
- **HR News**
- **Other News**

Indus Forever is the quarterly newsletter of the Indus for All Programme; the first five-year (2007-2012) implementation phase of a 50-year vision of the Indus Ecoregion Conservation Programme. Funded by the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Pakistan, the Programme is being implemented by WWF- Pakistan in close collaboration with the Government of Sindh. The Programme aims to conserve rich biological diversity of the Indus Ecoregion through livelihoods improvement of the local communities. The newsletter aims to keep the stakeholders of the Programme, other concerned organisations and individuals updated about the activities, progress and future endeavours of the Programme.

The Declining State of Natural Resources and Human Activities

Ecological surveys carried out under the Indus for All Programme reveal that human activities are pressuring natural resources. Study findings show that a number of plant and animal species are increasingly under threat of extinction.

It is reported that a number of reptile species are particularly vulnerable due to their commercial value for their use in traditional medicines. A Dawn newspaper report on 7 April 2008 indicates that in many cases these species are being hunted and caught with the support of influential locals. Plant species are similarly sought after for their use as herbal medicine. Furthermore, the population of different wildlife species historically found in the Indus Ecoregion has greatly declined. Some of these species, including the Marbled Teal, Hog Deer, and the Great Bittern, can now only be seen in private sanctuaries. Gharial, which once was found in Sindh, has now become extinct from our part of the world. Some of the last reported sightings of Gharial were in Nara, a wildlife sanctuary, itself under threat from oil exploration activities.

It is widely known that Thatta, Sanghar, Nawabshah and other areas alongside the Indus Basin have for many years been rich in natural resources. In addition to the impacts of global climate change, our own neglect and unsustainable practices are to blame for the rising loss of this cultural and economically significant landscape. Mangrove cover continues to vanish at an alarming rate and has caused a decline in the production of resources linked to it such as fisheries. A number of fish species once abundantly found in our waters are now declining. *Palla* is a case in point.

These facts further underline the importance of making a sincere commitment and coordinated efforts for the protection of our natural resources before it is too late.



Programme Highlights



Indus for All Programme Organized an Event Marking World Wetlands Day 2008

The Indus for All Programme, in collaboration with the Pakistan Wetlands Programme organized a variety of activities in Karachi to commemorate World Wetlands Day 2008.

The activities were concluded in a ceremony organized on 2 February 2008 at WWF-Pakistan's Wetlands Centre at Sandspit, Karachi. The events included two separate Art Competitions involving both government and private school students; a beach cleaning activity involving The Citizen Foundation (TCF) School students; a speech competition among government schoolteachers; and the release of turtle hatchlings by the Chief Guest along with other distinguished guests. The Consul General of the United States in Karachi Ms. Kay L. Anske was the Chief Guest on the occasion who distributed shields among winners of the competitions.

At the concluding ceremony, the Director of the Indus for All Programme, Dr. Ghulam Akbar, delivered a presentation on WWF-Pakistan's nature conservation activities. In her speech, Ms. Kay L. Anske emphasized the need for conserving wetlands through collective efforts. Mr. Mir Hussain Ali, Secretary Environment & Alternate Energy, Government of Sindh, and Mr. Mahboob Alam Ansari, Secretary Forest and Wildlife, Government of Sindh, also spoke on the occasion. The event was attended by senior government officials, students, corporate members and a large number of media personnel.



The Programme Director presenting a memento to the US Consul General in Karachi

GIS Training for Partner Organizations

A training course on 'Natural Resource Management Using Geographical Information System (GIS) and Satellite Remote Sensing' was held at the GIS Lab of the Sindh Forest Department, Hyderabad from 11-14 March 2008. The course was arranged jointly by WWF Pakistan/Indus for All Programme and Sindh Forest Department. GIS experts from the Indus for All Programme and WWF-Pakistan Head Office facilitated the training, which was attended by 18 officials from the Sindh Forest Department and WWF-Pakistan.

Satellite Remote Sensing is a form of contemporary technology, used to measure and monitor the Earth's resources, using satellite datasets and Digital Image Processing Techniques (DIP). The introduction and use of such techniques in government departments is a positive step with expected far reaching results.

The four-day event was inaugurated by Mr. Najumuddin Vistro, Chief Conservator Forest, Sindh Forest Department on the first day whereas the concluding session was chaired by Mr. Mahboob Alam Ansari, Secretary Forest and Wildlife Department, Government of Sindh who also distributed certificates among the participants.



Participants of the GIS Training at Hyderabad

NRM Training for District Government Officials of Thatta

The Indus for All Programme envisages building the competencies of the district officers in planning, implementation and monitoring of NRM programmes. For this purpose, a two-day training programme was conducted on 29-30 January 2008 in Karachi for the district government officers of Thatta.

The training was designed to enhance knowledge and understanding of the participants in planning, implementation



Participants of the Training on NRM Programme, Karachi

Programme Highlights

and monitoring of NRM programmes with a focus on fisheries, forest, wildlife, land and water resources of the Indus ecoregion. A total of ten participants representing Fisheries, Irrigation, Agriculture and Livestock and Poultry departments of District Government Thatta attended the training, along with three field staff of the Indus for All Programme's Implementation Unit Keenjhar Lake.

Dr. Lekhraj Kella, (Retd.) Chief Conservator of Forests, Sindh Forest Department, Dr. Ghulam Rasool Keerio, (Retd.) Conservator of Forests, Sindh Forest Department along with the officials of WWF-Pakistan facilitated the training. Mr. A. B. Kalhoro, Director General, Coastal Development Authority attended the concluding ceremony as the Chief Guest and distributed certificates to the participants.

Detailed GIS Survey of the Sites Held

With a view to investigate the correlations between land cover types and sample major gaps in natural resource data across the study areas, a detailed GIS survey of all the four sites was conducted in February 2008. The focus of this survey was to gather information to support future data acquisition and analysis. A proportional sampling strategy was used in this regard to identify sampling priorities for each stratum.

The Programme's GIS Analyst, Mr. Mustafa Abbasi, and Mr. Hammad and Ms. Urooj Saeed from WWF-Pakistan's Head Office, Lahore participated in the surveys. Two field teams undertook fifteen -day field trips to all four sites. The teams collected samples of soil, vegetation, coordinates and pictures of the sampled areas. The collected data has been compiled and maps are being developed to support further studies



Members of GIS survey team during the visit of Chotiari Wetlands Complex

Vegetation Survey Continued

The Natural Resource Management teams of the Programme along with other vegetation experts conducted the third detailed field vegetation survey in the Programme sites. The survey, carried out during the month of February, also included an additional site—Keti Shah, a riverine forest—having great potential as a forest ecosystem and a habitat for a number of animal species.



Vegetation Survey Team Carrying out the Study at Keti Bunder

The team is responsible for documenting previously unrecorded plant species at the different sites. The survey team also discovered 3 new-to-science species. Out of these, 2 species (*Fimbristylis* and *Tamarix*) were found in Chotiari area while 1 species (*Sporobolus*) was found at Keenjhar Lake site area. *Tamarix* was also found in Keti Bunder.

Wildlife Survey of Nara Canal Held

A wildlife survey, focusing on Nara canal and its surrounding wetland complexes, was carried out jointly by the Indus for All Programme, the Pakistan Wetlands Programme (PWP) and Sindh Wildlife Department (SWD). The objective of the survey was to search for the reportedly extinct Gharial, and other species such as Marsh Crocodile, Indian smooth-coated Otter and Marbled Teal. Nara canal and its adjoining wetlands such as Deh Akro are famous for wildlife, as they represent some of the most unique habitats in Pakistan. Apart from its ecological importance, Nara Canal is a part of Pakistan's history and heritage, providing a lifeline in the otherwise barren landscape. Unfortunately, oil exploration activities have begun in the area threatening its sanctity.

The survey team was unable to record Gharial despite visits to several wetland complexes. Traveling from Sukkur Barrage to Head Jamrao, the team, however, recorded a good number of Marsh Crocodiles along the canal and Marbled Teal near Chondko.

Programme Highlights

GIS Lab Established at the Sindh Forest Department's Office at Hyderabad

The Sindh Forest Department (SFD) and Indus for All Programme jointly developed a proposal for the revival of the Sindh Forest Department's GIS Lab, Hyderabad which was approved in December 2007. Equipment, software and data was purchased accordingly and installed at the lab. The newly revived and modernized lab was formally inaugurated by Mr. Mahboob Alam Ansari, Secretary Forest and Wildlife Department Govt. of Sindh, on 14 March 2008. This initiative will help the SFD in monitoring forest cover and mapping, change-detection and management of forests and related resources in the Province.



A view of the GIS lab established at Sindh Forest Department Office, Hyderabad

Ecosystem Valuation Survey at Pai Forest

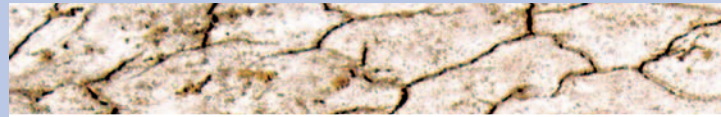
An Ecosystem Valuation Survey at Pai Forest was held from 11-13 February 2008. The survey was conducted with the support of Quaid-e-Awam Engineering University (QUEST) Nawabshah. As many as 24 students from the Civil Engineering and Environmental Sciences departments of the university cooperated with the Programme team in conducting the survey. Apart from the first day of orientation for the students, the 2-days field visits were conducted in seven villages around the forest.

The main objective of the survey was to assess the value of forest products for livelihood dependency and economic conditions of the communities around Pai Forest in addition to assessing the issues and threats to the forest.

Glimpses from the Programme Implementation Units

Second Meeting of Programme's District Coordination Committee (DCC) Sanghar Held

The second meeting of the District Coordination Committee was held on 10 March at DCO Office, Sanghar. The meeting was chaired by the District Coordination Officer, Sanghar. The objective of the meeting was to share the Programme's implementation progress with the committee and record their feedback for participatory programme planning. The representative of Chotiari

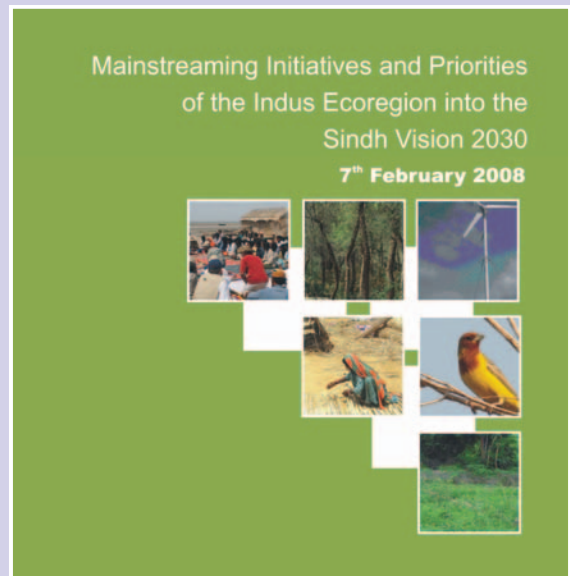


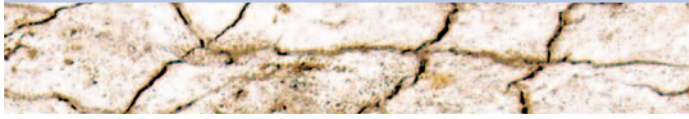
The Policy

Mainstreaming Indus Ecoregion Priorities into the Sindh Vision 2030

Government of Sindh is in the process of finalizing the "Sindh Vision 2030", a long-term development framework that aims to identify sector-wise priorities and opportunities for sustainable development in Sindh. On 7 February 2008, the Indus for All Programme submitted a chapter to Government of Sindh on—"Mainstreaming Initiatives and Priorities of the Indus Ecoregion into the Sindh Vision 2030"—recommending the application of poverty-environment nexus as a guiding principle for combating poverty and environmental degradation in the province. Through a comparative review of the Sindh Vision 2030 and WWF-Pakistan's 50-year Indus Ecoregion Programme, synergies and gaps were identified to strengthen the Sindh Vision 2030 document and form a basis for long-term collaboration between Government of Sindh and WWF-Pakistan.

The chapter can be downloaded from the Programme's website at www.foreverindus.org/pdf/indus-ecoregion-programme-and-sindh-vision.pdf.





The Poverty-Environment Watch

M o n i t o r

Indus for All Programme Continues to Strengthen Partnerships and Outreach

In order to strengthen partnership in implementation of the Indus for All Programme, WWF-Pakistan and the Planning and Development (P&D) Department, Government of Sindh signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) setting out the terms and conditions for exchange of technical and institutional support to each other. The signing ceremony of the MoU—aimed at building and strengthening long-term collaboration between WWF-Pakistan and the P&D Department—took place in Karachi on 11 January 2008, in the Committee Room of P&D Department.

The Programme has also signed MoUs with Sindh Coastal Development Authority and Environment and Alternate Energy Department for cooperation in different areas. Apart from the above partnership initiatives, one of the MoUs has also engaged the UNDP/GEF for setting up a Wind Energy Project at Keti Bunder area. Moreover, 13 more MoUs with different Community Based Organizations (CBOs) at Programme Sites have also been signed to foster Programme activities at local level.



The Programme Director swapping documents with the Additional Chief Secretary (Dev.), P&D Department

Payment for Environmental Services—an Introduction

A wide range of mechanisms have been developed in recent years to finance conservation. One such mechanism is Payment for Environmental Services (PES). The idea is simple and begins by recognition on our part that nature provides a number of economically significant services. For example, mangrove trees at Keti Bunder provide a shelter for fishermen's boats and act to stabilize the shoreline and save people's homes and cultivable land. Payment and Funding should therefore be devoted to protecting nature and ecosystem services like those provided by Keti Bunder mangroves.

What features define a PES? There are two main ones. First, make sure that he who is responsible for ensuring preservation of ecosystem services is paid or compensated (to encourage future provision of the service). Second, those who benefit from the ecosystem services should provide the revenue for the payments. A possible PES scheme that is often discussed is the payment by Karachi residents for freshwater ecosystem services provided by Keenjhar Lake. Residents of towns that drain their sewerage into the lake could be compensated if they stopped the practice and protected the lake from other threats. The payment or compensation in such a case could be administered on behalf of Karachi residents by the Government through tax collection.

WWF-Pakistan has extensive experience with PES schemes, including in Nathiagali (biodiversity and landscape ES), Miandam (watershed ES), Astore (medicinal plants ES), and Khunjerab National Park (ongoing). There are several challenges to implementing PES schemes. For example, revenue collection and compliance with conditions of any payments or in kind compensation (e.g., building of a school) require strong legal and institutional structures. The Indus For All Programme will soon consult stakeholders in Pai, Keti Bunder, Keenjhar, and Chotiari for the development of PES plans.

Development Organization, a CBO, gave a detailed presentation on socio-economic and environmental problems of the area. The Committee, after discussion, approved the Programme's Site Work Plan for the year 2008. The members of the DCC in each district include stakeholders from District Government, concerned departments of the Government of Sindh, civil society organizations and community representatives.



A view of the DCC meeting at Sanghar

Glimpses from PIUs

Easy Access to Potable Water for Creek Areas Ensured

Owing to their resource and financial constraints, the people of Keti Bunder are often unable to overcome their problems linked to the basic needs of life, including water. People in general have no access to potable water. The local people have to purchase water for their use from privately operated water tankers. The water cans are then transported to villages inside the creeks through boats. Thus, to assist the local people in overcoming their daily problems, the Indus for All Programme has embarked upon several initiatives among which provision of water tanker boat to the people of creek areas is a major step.



Dwellers of Hajamro Creek benefited from the boat water tank provided by the Programme

A total of four villages, Khariyoon, Phirt, Tippun and Siddique Dablo of Hajamro creek area have been provided access to water through Rehabilitation Livelihood Project. A potable water tanker boat was handed over to Hajamro Mahol Dost Committee (HMDC)—a local CBO—at a meeting held at Tippun village on 8 February. About 35 community members from all 4 villages attended the meeting. A formal MoU in this respect was signed between HMDC and the Indus for All Programme for the proper management and lookafter of the water tanker boat. Four fixed water tanks, with the capacity of 4000 litres each, have already been provided to these villages. The water tanker boat will carry 16,000 litres of water to supply to these 4 villages which will now have easy access to water for their consumption.

PIU Chotiari Reservoir Celebrates World Water Day, 2008

PIU-Chotiari Reservoir commemorated World Water Day, 2008 under the theme of "Sanitation" with the students of local schools. The programme was organized at Molvi Khair Muhammad High School Bakhoro, on 22 March 2008 in collaboration with the Education Department, Sanghar (Government of Sindh), Nara Canal Area Water Board Sanghar, Women Welfare Association Sanghar, and Mansoor Public School Chotiari. The programme was aimed at raising awareness among school students on the importance of water and sanitation for life and to secure commitments for nature

conservation from them. The main features of the programme were a multimedia presentation with focus on water filtration



A group photo of students and teachers after participation in World Water Day celebrations

and improved sanitation practices at household level; school cleaning activity with students, teachers and NGO representatives; and tree plantation by students within the school boundary. The programme received media coverage on "Voice of America" Radio Service with the support of Nara Canal Area Water Board.

H R N E W S

Training and Capacity Building Initiatives

- Mr. Adnan Hanif, Coordinator Finance and Administration attended the International Orientation Workshop organized by WWF-International at Gland, Switzerland, from 18-20 February 2008. The workshop included a course on "Introduction to WWF" and a Workshop on "Finance and Network Standards" designed by the People Development Team of WWF-International.
- The Secretary to the Director Indus for All Programme Ms. Fauzia Masood participated in a 3-month Diploma Program on "Modern Secretarial Practices" offered by Pakistan Institute of Management from 19 November to 29 February 2008. The course was aimed at enhancing the Communication, IT and Technological skills of professionals from corporate and other organizations.
- Mr. Mustafa Abbasi and Mr. Farooq Laghari, GIS Analysts, participated in a 5-day training course on "Principles and Application of Conservation GIS" organized by the Pakistan Wetlands Programme from 25-29 February 2008. The course was conducted at National Council for Conservation of Wildlife, Islamabad.
- The Programme Management Officer, Ms. Meherunissa Hamid, attended a 4-day "Report Writing Skills" training course organized by the Ministry of Environment's Pakistan Wetland Programme (PWP) from 19-22 March 2008 at PWP office, Islamabad.



Other News

Documentary on Wetlands Centre

A famous documentary programme—Baghbani—of Hum satellite TV channel telecasted its three episodes on the Wetlands Centre and mangrove forests at Sandspit. The 70 minutes long programme contained information on the Wetlands Centre, its objectives and its functioning. Viewers were also sensitized about the significance of mangroves and wetlands ecosystem through an interactive discussion with Mrs. Rahat Najam, the In charge of the Centre.

“An Eye Opening Visit”

As a pledge to care for the environment, Engro Polymers & Chemicals has shown its interest to join hands with WWF-Pakistan for mangrove plantation at creeks of Ketu Bunder. In this connection, a team from Engro visited the creeks in March.

The visiting team identified two potential locations for mangrove plantation; one at village Cheerh Dablo and the other at village Guli Sholani in Khobar Creek.

The visit proved to be so informative about the natural resources and socio-economic conditions of the area that the Engro officials described it as "an eye opening visit". They also observed that there was a great potential for collaborative interventions



Engro and WWF-P officials with community representatives at plantation site

Internship Programme

The internship initiatives of the Programme also continued to engage and groom young graduates:

- Ms. Afshan Ayub completed internship with the Communication Department, from 24 December to 23 January 2008.
- Ms. Samreen Sarfaraz completed internship with the Programme's GIS Department, from 21 January to 21 March 2008.
- Mr. Shehzad Naqi, a student of Botany Department of University of Karachi, worked with the Indus for All Programme as an intern from 20 January to 20 March 2008.
- Ms. Ameera Ikram Faridi supported Programme Sociologist as an intern from 21 January to 21 March 2008.

Welcome onboard.....

- Mr. Zahid Hussan Jalbani has joined the Indus for All Programme as Site Manager, Ketu Bunder since 03 March 2008.
- Mr. Amanullah Mahar joined the Programme on 10 March 2008 as Natural Resource Management Officer (NRMO).
- Mr. Sajid Ullah Jan joined the Indus for All Programme on 10 March 2008 as an Assistant Manager Finance.
- Mr Faisal Khan joined Programme on 22 February 2008 as Finance Officer.

Programme Supports Local Fishermen Organization Hold a Workshop on Wetlands

Sindh Taraqi Pasand Mallah Tanzeem (STPMT), a local organization working for the rights and well-being of fishermen, celebrated World Wetlands Day 2008 in Hyderabad on 2 February. In this regard, a one-day workshop on the importance of wetlands was held by STPMT to mark the signing of the Ramsar Convention. The Indus for All Programme supported the local organization in holding the workshop. The Workshop, addressed by Mr. Arab Mallah of STPMT, Mr. Usama Anwar, Site Manager of Pai Forest, Indus for All Programme and representatives of various other organizations, was aimed to



Mr. Usama Anwar, the Site Manager of Pai Forest is addressing the Workshop

Newsletter Indus Forever

Other News



Wetlands Gala 2008 Pakistan Wetlands Programme Celebrates World Wetlands Day 2-10 February 2008

Thousands of visitors were lured to the Pakistan Wetlands Programme's Nation-wide Wetland Gala 2008 as it toured four of the country's major cities, regions and wetland complexes casting its net of wetlands awareness and environmental protection.

The Federal Ministry of Environment's Pakistan Wetlands Programme collaborated with the Capital Development Authority in Islamabad and partnered with provincial departments at regional level to celebrate the World Wetlands Day WWD 2008, by organising a wide array of engaging and educational activities over a week-long 'Wetlands Gala'.

This year the Wetlands Gala adopted the international theme for the World Wetlands Day 2008 i.e. 'Healthy Wetlands Healthy People' which emphasises the strong relationship between maintaining functional wetland ecosystems and human health. The Gala was organised with an objective to raise awareness about the importance of wise-use of wetlands resources among the youth and general public and highlight

the value and benefits of wetlands and associated biodiversity. The nation-wide celebrations began on 2 February this year and continued throughout the week with a grand finale in Islamabad on 10 February. Various activities were organised in this regard to reach out to a diverse set of audience. These included art and essay competition for students, advocacy walk, play performances, documentary screenings, a puppet show and conservation messages on the radio and TV in Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Gilgit, Swat Nowshera, Rahim Yar Khan, Gwadar, Jiwani and Pasni

Information panels, display boards, and the emblems of the donors and partners of the Pakistan Wetlands Programme were prominently displayed at various venues. Moreover, members of the public and local communities received information about the role that each participating donor and partner plays in the creation, facilitation and implementation of the PWP's activities.

By: Marriyum Aurangzeb, Coordinator, National Awareness-raising and Communication, Pakistan Wetlands Programme.

Indus for All Programme, WWF - Pakistan Programme Management Unit (PMU)

606, 607 Fortune Centre, Block-6 P.E.C.H.S., Shakra-e-Faisal, Karachi.
Tel: 021-4544791-92, Fax: 021-4544790
www.foreverindus.org

Programme Implementation Units (PIU)

Chotiari Wetlands Complex
House # 129/2, Housing Society,
Near Government Boys High School,
Nawabshah Road, District Sanghar, Sindh.
Tel: 0235-542837,
Fax: 0235-542791

Keenjhar Lake
House # B/112,
Hashimabad Society Makli,
District Thatta, Sindh.
Tel: 0298-772318, 772319, 610426

Keti Bunder
Adnan House, Rano Mori Stop,
P.O. Keti Bunder
via P.O. Mirpur Sakro,
District Thatta, Sindh.
Tel: 0298-620406, 610976, 619366

Pai Forest
House # A-3, M.U.C.E.T. Employees
Co-operative Housing Society,
District Nawabshah, Sindh.
Tel: 0244-366364, Fax: 0244-282496

*"Endangered species are sensitive indicators of how we are treating the planet, and we should be listening carefully to their message."
- Donald A. Falk*