

3.4 Managing invasion of Suckermouth Catfish

Eradication of Suckermouth Catfish is regarded difficult, potentially time consuming and not feasible economically and hence efforts should be focused to contain the current established populations and preventing future introductions. So, to prevent new introduction, EKW farmers are sieving sewage water through multilayer screen before taking it to their ponds and also practicing intensive netting to limit upsurge of existing population. It is proposed to undertake further research on the invasion pathways, and undertake screening at various points along the DWF to prevent further spread of this fish invasive.

3.5 Rehabilitation of aquatic vegetation

It is proposed to revegetate peripheral areas of Nalban, Goltala, Captain Bheri and some identified locations with Phragmites, Typha, Shola and other native species to improvise habitat of marsh mongoose, amphibian and reptilian species which prefer impounded water of submerged vegetation for breeding.

There should be complete ban on removal of vegetation from the bheri designated for biodiversity conservation and allow natural regeneration through protective measures. The underground rhizomes, turions and other vegetative parts should be used for propagation of these plant species. It is recommended that economically important plant species should be grown on the banks of bheri.

3.6 Communication and education facilities

3.6.1 Interpretation centre

A wetland interpretation centre is proposed to be constructed at Bantala sedimentation tank (defunct) area near Bantala lockgate on the land belonging to KMC and Irrigation and Waterways Department subject to their approval. A 12-hectare land for this purpose has been identified by the KMC, and will be transferred to the EKWMA for this purpose.

The following facilities are proposed to be developed in the interpretation complex:

Exhibits including posters, models, flying patterns hanging from ceiling, wetland birds interactive panel and ecosystem food chain.

Self-learning devices including touch screen kiosks and maps for self-guided walks.

Viewing Gallery comprising panels highlighting the ecological, socioeconomic and cultural aspects. Desks fitted with adequate displays, bird identifications books and wooden benches should be constructed along the gallery.

Watchtower to enable visitors to have a view of the EKW landscape. The watchtower would be equipped with binocular facilities.

Cycling tracks

Waste recycling model of East Kolkata Wetlands indicating treatment of wastes through natural processes and functions of wetlands.

Children's Play area consisting of open dioramas and floorings with underwater paintings should be developed as a special section to cater to the young visitors. The area should have several innovative environment-oriented games and interactive food chain, fish trap games, jigsaw puzzles etc.

Auditorium having audio-visual facilities for screening documentaries and arranging talks / workshops / meetings.

Souvenir Shop for visitors having wetland products, wetland biodiversity replicas, reading materials, photographs, maps for the visitors to take away on payment basis as memorabilia from the visit.

3.6.2 Bheri showcase

It is proposed to develop a showcasing of wastewater utilization in bheri to the visitors. Local communities would be trained to guide visitors about the process of wastewater recovery system and values and function of this special ecosystem. East Kolkata Wetlands Management Authority will develop some models, aquarium, herbariums and boards to describe their operations.

Four to six bheri have been proposed for this purpose - Nalban Bheri, Goltala Bheri, Captian bheri, Charcharia Bheri, Jhograshisa and Gompota Bheri.

3.6.3 Guided boat rides

Restoration of hydrological regimes and the consequent enhancement in water spread area would provide an opportunity for boating for the nature lovers. Guided boat rides shall be arranged for nature lovers to help them explore various aspects of EKW. While cruising through wetlands, the tourists will enjoy the beautiful view of birds as well. Local community groups shall be trained to take up interpretation activities. Guided boat rides are proposed at Nalban Bheri, Goltala Bheri and Charcharia Bheri. Six boats are proposed to be used for these activities.