

Flamingo Conservation at Sewri Bay:

An ambitious 5 year programme (2014-2019) was recently launched in collaboration with Mumbai Port Trust (MbPT) which aims to understand flamingo movement and undertake site specific conservation action. Flamingo movement will be monitored by putting 15 PTT. Parallel to the research part, degraded mangrove areas will be restored through mangrove afforestation. A mobile education unit will undertake education activities around sewri area for school students.

India is blessed with a long coastline that is very rich in coastal and marine biodiversity. The area has various habitats such as creek, mangroves, mudflats and salt marshes. Sewri, the western bank region of the creek is foreshore mudflat harbors, intermittent patches of mangrove vegetation which contains species like *Avicennia marina*, *Acanthus illisifolius*, *Salvadora persica*. The higher peripheral region of southern-most bank can be characterized by the presence muddy-sandy substratum. Despite being close to mega city, the mudflats and the shallows of the Creek are the foraging grounds for thousands of Lesser Flamingo, Greater Flamingos and, a multitude of water birds, both resident and migratory. Additionally, the margins of the Creek have extensive stretches of mangroves that support mangrove associate bird species.

There are three major aspects of this project

I Mangrove Restoration

Mangrove restoration is an important component of this programme. The restoration of degraded mangrove areas will be undertaken.

II Studies on Flamingo population at Sewri

Sewri-Mahul mudflats and the shallows of the Creek are the foraging grounds for about 40000 thousand Lesser Flamingo and Greater Flamingos and, about half a million waders. The region has been identified as an Important Bird Area (IBA) by BNHS and BirdLife International. It is also proposed as a Ramsar Site by BNHS. The area is an important habitat for Lesser Flamingo *Phoenicopterus minor* and Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*. Bird watchers flock in increasing numbers to catch a glimpse of the pink beauties. BNHS Flamingo Festival organized annually on Sewri Jetty for the past 10 years has become a major and much awaited event on the green calendar of Mumbaikars. Every year over 10,000 people turn up to see the flamingos on the day of the Festival. MbPT has played pivotal role in saving Sewri-Mahul mudflats and flamingos.

To understand about flamingo movement and undertake site specific conservation action. Flamingo movement will be monitored by putting 15 PTT and bird ringing will be done at these sites.

III Nature Education through mobile education unit and open air Mobile Interpretation Centre: The project aims to develop capacities of local communities, teachers, students and general public and motivate them towards mangrove, mudflats and flamingos conservation. The project's education unit also aims to

create a platform for likeminded corporate, to undertake mangrove plantation and to foster awareness about mangrove, mudflats and bird migration.



