सत्यमेव जयते

Government of India
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change



Handbook on Important "Days" of Environmental Significance

Environment Education Division



अरविंद कुमार नौटियाल
Arvind Kumar Nautiyal

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संयुक्त सचिव
भारत सरकार
पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय
Joint Secretary
Government of India
Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change



Message

Environmental awareness is essential to harmonize patterns of individual behaviour with the requirements of environment conservation. Sensitizing citizens, especially youth, about the environmental challenges and its management is the need of the hour. In this context, this handbook on Important 'Days' of Environmental significance has been brought for the Ecoclub students across the country. Students would celebrate these events by organising debates, quiz, slogan competitions, drawing/poster competitions etc, on the related themes.

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(Arvind Kumar Nautiyal)

इंदिरा पर्यावरण भवन, जोर बाग रोड़, नई दिल्ली-110 003, फोन : 011-24695340, फैक्स : 011-24695268
INDIRA PARYAVARAN BHAWAN, JOR BAGH ROAD, NEW DELHI-110 003, PH. : 011-24695340,
FAX : 011-24695268, E-mail : arvind.nautiyal@gov.in



ENVIRONMENT DAYS & DATES

International Day of Education	January 24
World Wetlands Day	February 2
National Science Day	February 28
World Wildlife Day	March 3
World Sparrow Day	March 20
International Day of Forests	March 21
World Water Day	March 22
World Heritage Day	April 18
World Fish Migration Day	April 21
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International Day for Biological Diversity	May 22
World Turtle Day	May 23
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World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought	June 17
International Mangrove Day	July 26
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World Lion Day	August 10
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International Day of Education

January 24



Education is a human right, a public good and a public responsibility. The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 24 January as International Day of Education, in celebration of the role of education for peace and development. Inclusive and equitable quality education will help countries in achieving gender equality and breaking the cycle of poverty that is leaving millions of children, youth and adults behind.

Education is key to sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the international community recognized that education is essential for the success of all 17 of its goals. Sustainable Development Goal 4, in particular, aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" by 2030. Education offers children a ladder out of poverty and a path to a promising future.



World Wetlands Day
February 2

This day marks the date of adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971. This day raises public awareness about the importance and value of wetlands.

Wetlands are critical part of our natural environment. They protect our shores from wave action, reduce the impact of floods, absorb pollutants and improve water quality. They provide habitat for animals and plants and contain a wide diversity of life. Wetlands provide an important range of environmental, social and economic services. Wetlands are areas of land where water covers the soil all year or just at certain times of the year. They include swamps, marshes, lakes, lagoons, mangroves, coral reefs, bogs, fens, and peatlands.

The international theme for World Wetlands Day 2019 is 'Wetlands and climate change'. Wetlands can be vulnerable to climate change, being impacted by changes in temperature, rainfall, sea level rise and extreme events.



National Science Day
February 28



This day is celebrated on 28th of February every year all over India with great enthusiasm. This day commemorates the invention of the Raman Effect (effect on scattering of light when passing through different materials) by Indian physicist, Sir Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman in the year 1928.

For his contribution in the field of science, he was awarded and honoured with the Nobel Prize in Physics in the year 1930.



World Wildlife Day
March 3

This day is celebrated to raise awareness on the world's wild animals and plants. The date marks the day of adoption of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 1973. World Wildlife Day plays an important role in ensuring that international trade does not threaten the species' survival.

The theme for World Wildlife Day 2019 is 'Life below water: for people and planet', which aligns with Goal 14 - Life below water - of the Sustainable Development Goals.



World Sparrow Day
March 20

This day is designated to raise awareness about the house sparrow and other common birds to urban environments, and threats to their populations.

The house sparrow was once the most common bird in the world. However, in the past few years, this bird has been on the decline over much of its natural range, both in the urban and rural habitats.

The decline of house sparrow is an indicator of the continuous degradation of the environment around us. It is also a warning bell that alerts us about possible detrimental effect on our health and well being.



International Day of Forests
March 21

This day is held annually on 21st March to raise awareness about the importance of forests to people and their vital role in poverty eradication, environmental sustainability and food security.

Forests are the most biologically-diverse ecosystems on land, home to more than 80% of the terrestrial species of animals, plants and insects. Yet despite all of these priceless ecological, economic, social and health benefits, global deforestation continues at an alarming rate - 13 million hectares of forest are destroyed annually. Deforestation accounts for 12 to 20 percent of the global greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change.

The International Day of Forests, 2019 promotes education to 'Learn to Love Forests'. It underscores the importance of education at all levels in achieving sustainable forest management and bio-diversity conservation. Healthy forests mean healthy, resilient communities and prosperous economies.



World Water Day
March 22

World Water Day is celebrated on 22nd March throughout the world for creating awareness towards the importance of water in various field of life including environment, health, agriculture etc. Freshwater was recommended at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro. The United Nations General Assembly responded by designating 22 March 1993 as the first World Water Day.

Water is an essential building block of life. Environmental damage, together with climate change, is driving the water-related crises around the world. Floods, drought and water pollution are all made worse by degraded vegetation, soil, rivers and lakes. The theme for World Water Day 2019 is 'Leaving no one behind,' which is the central promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: as sustainable development progresses, everyone must benefit.





World Heritage Day
April 18

This day is celebrated on 18th April to appreciate that Heritage is the shared wealth of humankind and of societies. Natural and cultural heritage together reflect the interlinked economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and provides base to our diverse lived identities.

World Heritage Day encourages us to celebrate all the world's cultures, and to bring awareness on important cultural monuments and sites, and to espouse the importance of preserving the world's cultures.

It tells us our past, shapes our environment and provides the essential resources for the development of our societies. Hence understanding, valuing and safeguarding the natural and cultural heritage is of great importance.



World Fish Migration Day
April 21

This day is for global celebration to create awareness on the importance of free flowing rivers and migratory fish. Migratory fishes are fishes that swim short or long distances daily, yearly or annually, as a way to complete their life cycle. Some migratory fishes migrate up and down rivers, others between rivers and oceans, and others across the oceans.

Many migratory fish species are critically endangered or threatened. The main causes are man-made barriers which disrupt the natural flow of rivers and prevent their usual migratory routes. Many fish need to migrate to reproduce, feed and complete their life cycles.

Migratory fish are a crucial link in the food chain and play an important role in creating healthy and productive river systems. Furthermore, they provide an important food supply and livelihood for millions of people around the world. They are ecologically, culturally, economically, and recreationally important.



Earth Day
April 22

Earth Day is an annual event celebrated on April 22. The event is held worldwide to celebrate support for protection of the environment.

Earth Day brings attention to a large number of issues, such as:

- ✓ pollution of the ocean,
- ✓ debris left over on land,
- ✓ climate change,
- ✓ conservation of the Earth's ecosystems, energy conservation, soil corruption,
- ✓ corrosion, overpopulation, nuclear issues,
- ✓ depletion of the ozone layer,
- ✓ depletion of Earth's natural resources,
- ✓ introduction of wastes and toxicants into the wilderness and the
- ✓ seas, and the deforestation of rain forests.

Theme of Earth Day 2019 is “Protect Our Species”.



International Day for Biological Diversity

May 22

The United Nations proclaimed May 22nd as 'The International Day for Biological Diversity' to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues.

The day was proclaimed with an aim to commemorate the adoption of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on May 22, 1992. The Convention on Biological Diversity is the international legal instrument that has been ratified by 196 nations. The convention calls for:

- Conservation of biological diversity
- Sustainable use of its components
- Fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources.

Theme for 2019 is - Our Biodiversity, Our Food, Our Health.



World Turtle Day
May 23

"World Turtle Day" is an annual event that has been taking place since 2000. It was founded by American Tortoise Rescue.

The purpose of World Turtle Day is to educate people about the things that they can do to protect the habitats of turtle and tortoises.

It is also a celebration of the joy that these reptiles bring to so many people on a daily basis. This is an important step in raising awareness among the future generation about the threats that turtles and tortoises face.



World Environment Day
June 5

This day encourages worldwide awareness and action to protect our environment. Since it began in 1974, the event has grown to become a global platform for public outreach that is widely celebrated in over 100 countries.

Each World Environment Day is organized around a theme that draws attention towards a particularly pressing environmental concern. The theme for 2019 is "Air pollution".

Every 'World Environment Day' has a different host country, where the official celebrations take place. This year's host is China. The focus on the host country helps highlight the environmental challenges it faces and supports worldwide efforts to address them.



World Oceans Day
June 8

"World Oceans Day" is celebrated to remind everyone about the major role that oceans play in everyday life. They are the lungs of our planet, providing most of the oxygen we breathe.

The purpose of the day is to inform public about the impact of human action on the ocean, develop a worldwide movement of citizens for the ocean, and mobilize and unite the world's population on a project for the sustainable management of the world's oceans.

They are a major source of food and medicines and a critical part of the biosphere. It is a day to celebrate together the beauty, the wealth and the promise of the ocean.



World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought

June 17



This day is observed every year to promote public awareness on international efforts to combat desertification. Desertification is the degradation of land in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas. It is caused primarily by human activities and climatic variations. Desertification does not refer to the expansion of existing deserts.

It occurs because dryland ecosystems, which cover over one third of the world's land area, are extremely vulnerable to overexploitation and inappropriate land use. Poverty, political instability, deforestation, overgrazing and bad irrigation practices can all undermine the productivity of the land.

The day is an opportunity to remind everyone that land degradation neutrality is achievable through problem-solving, strong community involvement and co-operation at all levels.

World Day to Combat Desertification (WDCD) 2019 marks the 25th anniversary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), so this year's campaign will be run under the slogan "25 YEARS – Let's grow the future together". The global observance of WDCD will be hosted by the Government of Turkey in Ankara. Further India is hosting 14th Conference of Parties to UNCCD from 2-13 September 2019 in Greater Noida.

International Mangrove Day
July 26

The "International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem", adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 2015 is celebrated each year on 26 July. This day aims to raise awareness on the importance of mangrove ecosystems as "a unique, special and vulnerable ecosystem" and to promote solutions for their sustainable management, conservation and uses.

Mangroves are rare, spectacular and prolific ecosystems on the boundary between land and sea. These extraordinary ecosystems contribute to the well being, food security, and protection of coastal communities worldwide. They support a rich biodiversity and provide a valuable nursery habitat for fish and crustaceans.

Mangroves also act as a form of natural coastal defence against storm surges, tsunamis, rising sea levels and erosion. Their soils are highly effective carbon sinks, sequestering vast amounts of carbon.



International Tiger Day
July 29



Every year, July 29 is celebrated as the "International Tiger Day" to raise awareness about the endangered big cats.

As per the assessment of the Status of Tigers, Co-predators and Prey (2014), the number of tigers in India is estimated at 2,226 as compared to the 2010 estimate of 1,706.

Poaching, prey depletion and loss of habitat continue to be major threats to their survival. This day was created when thirteen countries came together in 2009 and pledged to double the world's Tiger population by 2022.



World Lion Day
August 10

World Lion Day is celebrated on August 10th which aims to raise awareness on 'king of the jungle'. Lion numbers have dramatically declined and needs immediate attention. As per IUCN Red list, Lion is under the Vulnerable category.

To strengthen the ongoing measures for conservation of Asiatic Lion in the country, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has launched 'Asiatic Lion Conservation Project'. The project activities involve habitat improvement, scientific interventions, disease control and management of Eco-tourism.

World Elephant Day
August 12

This day is celebrated across the world on August 12 and is dedicated to the preservation and protection of elephants. The goal of "World Elephant Day" is to create awareness about the plight of elephants and to share knowledge and positive solutions for their better care and management of captive and wild elephants.

African elephants are listed as "vulnerable" and Asian elephants as "endangered" in the IUCN Red List of threatened species. As per the available population estimates, there are about 400,000 African elephants and 40,000 Asian elephants.

This day bring the attention of various stakeholders in supporting various conservation policies to help protect elephants. This includes improving enforcement policies to prevent illegal poaching and trade in ivory, conserving elephant habitats, providing better treatment for captive elephants and reintroducing captive elephants into sanctuaries.





International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer, (World Ozone Day) September 16

The United Nations' International Day for the Preservation of Ozone Layer is celebrated on the 16th September every year. Commemorating the 1987 signing of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, this day promotes activities that create awareness on issues related to climate change and ozone depletion.

The ozone layer, a fragile shield of gas, protects the Earth from the harmful portion of the rays of the sun, thus helping preserve life on the planet.

The phase out of controlled uses of ozone depleting substances and related reductions have not only helped protect the ozone layer for the present and future generations, but have also contributed significantly to global efforts to address climate change. Furthermore, it has protected human health and ecosystems by limiting the harmful ultraviolet radiation from reaching the earth.



World Rhino Day
September 22



September 22nd has been celebrated annually as World Rhino Day. This day generates awareness on issues regarding well-being of Rhinoceros. In recent years, rhinos have been threatened by poaching, urbanization and pollution, which have left certain rhino species on the brink of extinction while leaving other species severely endangered.

There are five species of rhino – white and black rhinos in Africa, and the greater one-horned, Javan and Sumatran rhino species in Asia. The greater one-horned rhino or Indian rhino were once abundant in alluvial plains of India. But due to uncontrolled poaching, degradation and loss of available habitats, rhino populations are threatened. As per the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2018, this species is in Vulnerable category.

During the year 2019, MoEF&CC has launched National Conservation Strategy for Indian Rhino towards rhino conservation.

World Migratory Bird Day
October 12

This day is celebrated each year to highlight the need for the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats.

The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (also known as CMS or Bonn Convention after the city in which it was signed) aims to conserve terrestrial, aquatic and avian migratory species throughout their range.

It has a global outreach and is an effective tool to help raise global awareness on the threats faced by migratory birds, their ecological importance, and the need for international cooperation to conserve them.



National Education Day
November 11



National Education Day of India is celebrated every year on 11 November to commemorate the birth anniversary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the first Education Minister of Independent India.

He laid the foundation for national education system with free primary education and modern institutions of higher education. He is also credited with establishment of Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and University Grants Commission.

This day is celebrated to strengthen educational institutions and to raise quality of education to greater heights.



World Soil Day
December 5

This day flags the importance of soil as a critical component of natural system and as a vital contributor to human well being.

Soil has great potential to filter and buffer contaminants, degrading and attenuating the negative effects of pollutants. Most of the pollutants originate from human activities, such as unsustainable farming practices, industrial activities and mining, untreated urban waste and other non-environmental friendly practices.

"World Soil Day (WSD)" is a means to bring the attention on the importance of healthy soil and advocating for the sustainable management of soil resources.



International Mountain Day
December 11



"International Mountain Day" has its roots in 1992, when Chapter 13 of Agenda 21 "Managing Fragile Ecosystems: Sustainable Mountain Development" was adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. This is considered a milestone in the history of mountain development.

The increasing awareness about the importance of mountains led the UN General Assembly to declare 2002 as the UN International Year of Mountains. On this occasion, the UN General Assembly has designated 11 December, from 2003 onwards, as "International Mountain Day".

Almost one billion people live in mountain areas, and over half the human population depends on mountains for water, food and clean energy. Yet mountains are under threat from climate change, land degradation, over exploitation and natural disasters, with potentially far-reaching and devastating consequences, both for mountain communities and rest of the world.



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NOTES



CONTACT:

Sh. Arvind Nautiyal
Joint Secretary
&
Dr. Ritesh Joshi
Scientist 'E'
Environment Education Division
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
Indira Paryavaran Bhawan
Jorbag, New Delhi 110 003
Tel: 011-24695359
Email: ritesh.joshi@nic.in



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