



22 May 2012  
INTERNATIONAL DAY  
FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY  
Marine Biodiversity



## Sikkim Celebrates International Biodiversity Day 2012

United Nation declared the International Biodiversity Day, 22 May with this year's theme **“Marine and Coastal Diversity”**. A rally on the theme **“Saving Lake Gyam Tsona-Sikkim's Ocean in the Sky”** was organised by Forests, Environment and Wildlife Management Department (FEWMD) to bring awareness among the general public.

Recognising that Sikkim has lakes having enormous ecological and aesthetic values and source of livelihoods to the residents, the Forest Department has focussed its conservation efforts to draw attention of the common masses, govt. institutions and private sectors of the state on restoration of Gyam Tsona (a source of the Teesta River).



To begin with, 100 students and teachers from schools around Gangtok took part in the awareness rally displaying placards with catching slogans and messages and chanting slogans to draw the attention of the people, tourists, shopkeepers, car drivers and others.

Rally passed through the 31 A National Highway and concluded at Forest Conference hall, Deorali where a brief discussion on issues, constraints and opportunities related to biodiversity conservation with special reference to conservation of Gyam Tsona lake was held.

Dr. Anil Mainra, APCCF and Project Director, SBFP while delivering opening remarks thanked students and teachers for participating in creating awareness for such a noble cause. He remarked that Forest Department is committed towards conservation of the precious biodiversity of this state including lakes and reservoirs which are pride of the Sikkim. But dying Ocean lake Gyam Tsona cuts a sorry figure, he remarked and emphasized on efforts by all to save the lake which is a unique brackish water lake in our cold desert; the only remnant of the prehistoric Tethys Sea in this part of our world. He said that Sikkim is not only committed to the people of the state and India but under the international Ramsar Convention to which India is signatory, committed to the international community for protecting Lake Gyam Tsona, Sikkim's only lake with noisy waves below the sky. Once a paradise for shepherds and yak herders since centuries are dying slowly in want of care and restoration initiatives, globally threatened Snow Leopard, Lynx, Pallas's Cat, Tibetan Wolf and Tibetan Fox, all 'Schedule-1' protected are decreasing in numbers with pace of time which is painful and is a concern for all of us. Concluding his opening remark, he invited each and every individual and organisations to join the department in restoration efforts of the lake and revive the natural state and beauty which used to be years ago.

Mr. Peter McCarter, Team Leader, Project Management Consultant SBFP, briefed the gathering on concept and importance of biodiversity, present conservation scenario and needs for conservation within global perspective.

Ms. Katherine Lepcha, DFO, Biodiversity Conservation, SBFP informed participants about the biodiversity of Sikkim, its value to the ecosystem and public welfare. She emphasized on the needs of conservation of each and every plant and wildlife species of Sikkim and urged the people to be conscious on preserving the same.

**Mr. Manjit Singh, PCCF cum Additional Chief Secretary**, while lauding the efforts of the Forest Department in conserving biodiversity, specially forest and Lake Biodiversity congratulated students and schools for coming forward to spread the message of biodiversity conservation among the people of Sikkim. The young generations have to play crucial roles and responsibilities in not only engaging themselves for conserving the natural resources but also in educating others in doing the same.

The program concluded with prize distribution to the best posters prepared for the occasion.