

'Water schools' to connect kids with nature

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In line with its catchphrase 'Building a future in which humans live in harmony with nature', the World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) India jointly in collaboration with the Punjab Forest, Wildlife Preservation Department and DCB Bank has come up with 'water school' programme around the Beas river and the Harike wetland.

Under this joint venture, schoolchildren are enabled to explore wetland treasure, while nurturing them to respect and conserve nature and biodiversity.

At present, students who are on the last leg of their course special sessions, have been undergoing field visit along the Harike wetland that supports rare, vulnerable and endangered species like the Indus river dolphin, gharials, testudine turtle and the smooth-coated otter.



JOINT VENTURE

Under the joint venture of the World-Wide Fund for Nature India with the Punjab Forest, Wildlife Preservation Department and DCB Bank, schoolkids are enabled to explore wetland treasure, while nurturing them to respect and conserve nature and biodiversity.

« Schoolkids during a visit to Harike wetland. TRIBUNE PHOTO

The water education programme is implemented in at least 10 schools around villages near the Beas like

Harike, Chamba, Kambo Dhaiwala, Gadka, Munda Pind, Bhail Dhaiwala, Goindwal Sahib and Dhunda.

Gitanjali Kanwar, WWF senior project officer, said five months curriculum was aimed to create awareness and appreciation among students and teachers regarding the use and management of water

resources and enable them to take action to address the challenge of water conservation.

Though this course, they get specialised training to conduct an assessment of the health of the river using pre-designed scientific assessment kits so that they can communicate water issues accurately and effectively.

"The water schools programme was introduced in December 2018. Our trainers conduct sessions in schools,

train teachers who further make students aware of the water-related problems faced by the riverine system and wetlands and most importantly the role that they could play in solving these issues. We aim to train 30 teachers and more than 500 students every year. We plan to extend it in next 10 schools from December," she said.

Gitanjali said a series of programmes was in the pipeline in the long run where highly

motivated students would be chosen for involving them in studying migratory birds, gharials and Indus dohpin scenario. "At present we have 50-60 students from each of 10 schools belonging to riparian belt. We are preparing their background through this programme. Further, we propose to pick up the most motivated children for extensive course in wetland study, including bird watch, Indus dolphin, gharial etc," she said.

