Sustainable Tourism Practices in Wetlands of Sri Lanka

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Organization of the presentation

- Strengths of Sri Lanka
  - Physical strengths and diversity of Sri Lanka as a wetland country
  - Positive political and economical focus on nature and nature based tourism
  - Socio-cultural strengths' towards sustainable wetland use.

- Existing sustainable tourism practices
  - Actions taken to minimize impacts of tourism

- Future potentials
International Ramsar Sites of Sri Lanka
# International Ramsar Wetlands of Sri Lanka

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Extent/ha</th>
<th>Date Declared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bundala National Park</td>
<td>6,210</td>
<td>15-06-1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anawilundawa Sanctuary</td>
<td>1,397</td>
<td>03-08-2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhu Ganga Sanctuary</td>
<td>915</td>
<td>11-12-2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vankalai Sanctuary</td>
<td>4,839</td>
<td>12-07-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumana wetland cluster</td>
<td>19,011</td>
<td>29-10-2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Wetland coverage of Sri Lanka

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wetland type</th>
<th>Extent (km²)</th>
<th>% of Total Land Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brackish water</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagoons, estuaries, salt marshes, mangroves</td>
<td>1,780</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fresh water</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivers &amp; Streams</td>
<td>10,500</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reservoirs, Tanks</td>
<td>2,600</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>14,880</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Being a country small in size coupled with higher biodiversity, Sri Lanka has the opportunity of blending wetland tourism with many other arms of nature based tourism activities such as wildlife tourism, archeological tourism, cultural tourism etc.
Positive political and economical focus

- Peaceful country, after ending of 30 years civil war

- “Mahinda Chitana” – The Policy of the Government
  - “…..aim is to promote sustainable development in close liaison with the land, fauna and flora, and to bestow our natural heritage to our future generations. ....the State ownership of our oceanic resources, water, aquatic life, forests and natural resource will be ensured”
Socio-cultural strengths' towards sustainable wetland use.
Sustainable Tourism Practices

- Wildlife watching
- Boating (engine/paddle)
- Coral watching-glass bottom boats
- Bird watching
- Holiday bunglows/Night camping
- Snorkeling & diving
- Nature trails
Actions taken to minimize environmental impacts

- Spatio-temporal regulations
- Zonation
- Promotion of low power and environment friendly engines for powered boats
- Awareness/Conservation Education
- Law Enforcement
Future potentials

- Crocodile park at Muthurajawela sanctuary
- Turtle watching at Bundala National Park & Rekawa sanctuary
- Opening Flood Plain National Park for visitors
- Declaration of new National Parks / PA’s in Northern province
Thank You