



Figure 2. Piles of nets and bamboo canes used for traditional fishing in the shallow waters of the bay, Chilika Lake, a Ramsar site in India (photo by Najam Khurshid).

under mangrove followed by Gujarat (90,475 ha), Andaman and Nicobar Islands (66,101 ha), Andhra Pradesh (41,486 ha), Maharashtra (30,238 ha) and Orissa (23,395 ha). Coral reefs are obser-

ved in Lakshadweep (55,179 ha), Andaman and Nicobar Islands (49,378 ha), Gujarat (33,547 ha) and Tamil Nadu (3899 ha). Total area under coral reef is 142,003 ha. There are 178 lagoons hav-

ing an area about 246,044 ha, which is 1.61% of the total wetland area of the country. Orissa has 89,023 ha area under lagoons, followed by Andhra Pradesh (47,407 ha) and Kerala (38,442 ha). Inter-tidal mudflats are observed in all the coastal states, except Lakshadweep and Kerala. Gujarat has a large area under inter-tidal mudflats (2,260,365 ha) followed by Tamil Nadu (33,164 ha) and Andhra Pradesh (31,767 ha). In the North East States 4.1% of the total geographic area (1.07 m ha) is under wetlands. Assam has about 9.7% area under wetlands, whereas Mizoram has only 0.66% area under wetlands.

1. The Convention on Wetlands text as amended in 1982 and 1987. Director, Office of International Standards and Legal Affairs, and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 13 July 1994.
2. National Wetland Inventory and Assessment, Information Brochure, Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India, 9 June 2011.

Jaimini Sarkar

The Animal Welfare Act, 2011

The Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) has come up with an Animal Welfare Act, 2011 to prevent the infliction of trauma and unnecessary killing of animals¹. The scientific community has expressed concern over certain aspects of the draft as harsh provisions of the draft might affect research in the country where more than 500 institutions including biomedical research centres, pharma companies and scientific institutions use experimental animals.

The AWBI under this Act can issue directions in writing to any person and have the powers of enquiry into any complaint, to compel the discovery and

production of documents and material objects and to receive and record statements. The Board may constitute as many subcommittees as it thinks fit for exercising any power/discharging any duty of the Board.

Every State/Union Territory shall constitute the State Animal Welfare Boards which shall be constituted not later than six months after this Act comes into force and shall make rules in which the State Animal Welfare Board may function. Members of such board are subject to rules made by the State/Union Territory Government and may appoint members necessary for the exercise of powers

with the prior approval of the State/Union Territory government.

Under this act, no person/institution shall perform an experiment on animals unless permitted by the committee for the control and supervision of experiments on animals and shall have power to regulate its own procedure in relation to the performance of its duties.

1. Draft – The Animal Welfare Act, 2011, Arrangement of sections. Ministry of Environment and Forests, New Delhi.

Jaimini Sarkar (*S. Ramaseshan Fellow*)
e-mail: jaimini_dhane@hotmail.com