



ABSTRACT

Forests - Wildlife – Announcement 2021-22- Declaration of Dugong Conservation Reserve in Palk Bay - Permission to prepare Detailed Project Report for declaration of the Dugong Conservation Reserve - Expenditure for preparation of Detailed Project Report - Sanctioned- Orders - Issued.

ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND FORESTS (FR.5) DEPARTMENT

G.O.(D).No.34

Dated: 15.02.2022

பிலவ, மாசி- 3

திருவள்ளூர் ஆண்டு- 2053

Read:

1. Announcement made by the Hon'ble Minister (Forests) on the floor of Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly on 03.09.2021.
2. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden letter No.WL6/17338/ 2021 dated 09.10.2021.
3. From the National Hydrographic Officer, Letter No.HO/H/1401/1A, Dehradun, dated 23.11.2021.

ORDER:

Palk Bay is a shallow sea located on the southeast coast of India. Its environment is unique in the sense that it is almost an enclosed bay with inflow from several rivers along the coast. The marshlands of its backwater system support lush growth of Mangrove forests which harbor a wide variety of birds, both resident and migratory. The backwaters act as breeding and feeding grounds for a wide variety of fin-fish and shell-fish varieties, including shrimps and variety of fishes. The enclosed nature of the bay provides protected waters that are frequented by dolphins, porpoises and turtles. Palk Bay is rich in biodiversity having all the important groups of flora and fauna in its environment.

2 The endangered species Dugong (*Dugong dugon*) lives in shallow waters near the coast up to a depth of 10 mts. It is the flagship species of the Palk Bay. Sea grass, *Cymodocea* is its primary diet. Due to uncontrolled fishing carried out till recently and reduction in their grazing area, their numbers have come down drastically. However, they are now protected by the Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972 and are listed in the endangered category. Therefore, there is an urgent need to create awareness among the public about Dugong conservation.

(P.T.O)

3. Government on 03.09.2021 had made announcement that, "In order to protect the endangered Sea Cow species and its marine habitats in Tamil Nadu, a "Dugong (Seacow) Conservation Reserve" will be established in the Gulf of Mannar, PalkBay".

4. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & Chief Wildlife Warden has submitted a concept note towards establishment of a Dugong Conservation Reserve and stated that the concurrence of Government of India needs to be obtained for notification of Dugong Conservation Reserve in Palk Bay. The Detailed Project Report shall be prepared by engaging a reputed Institution by calling for Expression of Interest for declaration of Dugong Conservation Reserve. The Detailed Project Report shall be prepared based on clearances obtained from Department of Fisheries, Chief Naval Hydrographer and other departments connected with marine activities.

5. In the proposal of Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & Chief Wildlife Warden, he reported that baseline data will be created by engaging professionals and reputed institutions engaged in the field of marine research. Regular monitoring of protection and conservation efforts shall be carried out by Forest Department. The initial projected cost towards the establishment of Dugong Conservation Reserve for five years would be Rs.5 crores. However, the actual yearwise and itemwise cost will be known only after completion of Detailed Project Report.

6. In the letter third read above the National Hydrographic Office has stated that the limits of proposed Dugong Conservation Reserve falls within the territorial waters of India.

7. The District Collectors of Thanjavur and Pudukkottai Districts were requested to hold a consultation with the officials of Fisheries Department and with local communities. The District Collector, Thanjavur has informed that a consultation meeting was held with 27 fishing village communities in Thanjavur District by the Fisheries Department and the fishermen communities have accepted the above proposal. The District Collector, Pudukkottai has informed that a consultation meeting was held with 18 fishing village communities in Pudukkottai District by the Fisheries Department and the fishermen communities have accepted the above proposal.

8. The Government, after careful examination have decided to accept the above concept note of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden for creation of Dugong Conservation Reserve in Palk Bay.

9. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden is directed to send Draft Notification for the proposal for obtaining the concurrence of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India.

10. The Government accord administrative approval for a sum of Rs.25.00 lakhs (Twenty-five lakhs) for preparation of Detailed Project Report and carrying out baseline field studies.

11. This orders is issued with the concurrence of the Finance department vide its U.O.No.119/J.S(GKT)/21, dated: 25.10.2021.

(BY ORDER OF THE GOVERNOR)

SUPRIYA SAHU
ADDITIONAL CHIEF SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT

To
The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests,
(Head of Department), Chennai-15.
The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and
Chief Wildlife Warden, Chennai-15.
The Accountant General, Chennai-18.
The Pay & Accounts Officer, Chennai -35.

Copy to:

Office of the Hon'ble Chief Minister,
Chennai-9.
The Senior Personal Assistant to Hon'ble Minister (Forests),
Chennai-9.
The Finance (AHF/BG.I/BGII) Department, Chennai-09.
The Private Secretary to the Additional Chief Secretary to Government,
Environment, Climate Change and Forests Department.
Chennai – 9.
SF/SCs.

/FORWARDED BY ORDER/

B. Subchang
SECTION OFFICER
BS