



ABSTRACT

Forests – Wild Life – Tiger Reserves - Declaration of Srivilliputhur Grizzled Squirrel Wildlife Sanctuary and Megamalai Wildlife sanctuary as “**Srivilliputhur Megamalai Tiger Reserve**” – Notification under section 38 V of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 - Orders – Issued.

ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (FR.5) DEPARTMENT

G.O. (Ms) No.14

Dated: 08.02.2021

சார்வரி, தை-26

திருவள்ளூர் ஆண்டு 2052

Read:

1. G.O. (Ms) No.399, Environment and Forests (FR.5) Department, dated: 26.12.1988.
2. G.O.(D) No.63, Environment and Forests (FR.5) Department, dated 26.06.2009.
3. From the Government of India, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change D.O. Letter No.15-43/2011-NTCA Dated 22.11.2011
4. From the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden letter No.WL5/430/2012 Dated 03.09.2018.
5. Government Letter Reference No.13781/FR.5/2020-1 dated 07.01.2021.
6. From the Government of India, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, National Tiger Conservation Authority Letter. Reference. No.15-30(8)2020-NTCA Dated 27.01.2021.

ORDER:-

In the Government Order first read above, the Government have notified an area of 48,520.22 ha in Madurai and the then Virudhunagar - Kamarajar District as Srivilliputhur Grizzled Squirrel Wildlife Sanctuary.

2. In the Government order second read above, the Government have notified an area of 26,910.81.5 ha in Theni and Madurai Districts as Megamalai Wildlife Sanctuary.

(P.T.O.)

3. In the D.O. letter third read above, the Minister of State (Independent Charge), Environment and Forests Department, Government of India, New Delhi has suggested that the Srivilliputhur Grizzled Giant Squirrel and the Megamalai Wildlife Sanctuaries, along with portions of the Theni Forest Division (Varushanadu Valley) adjoining Periyar Tiger Reserve may be declared as a Tiger Reserve. This would enable to provide central assistance to the State to upgrade the protection status of the said landscape under the ongoing Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Project Tiger, besides fostering the coexistence agenda with local people in its peripheral / buffer area.

4. Accordingly, in his letter fourth read above, the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden has furnished a detailed 'Concept note' for formation of Srivilliputhur Megamalai Tiger Reserve as 5th Tiger Reserve and has requested the Government to recommend the same to the National Tiger Conservation Authority for getting in-principle approval as enshrined under Section 38 V (1) of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. He has also furnished draft notification for declaration of Srivilliputhur Megamalai Tiger Reserve.

5. The salient features of the proposed Srivilliputhur Megamalai Tiger Reserve are as follows:-

- Tiger disperses in large areas. Such dispersals are important for the exchange of genes. This process is essential for long term growth of a population. In Tamil Nadu, Anamalai Tiger Reserve (ATR) provides one of the largest habitats for the tigers and other co-predators. However, environmental stress factors such as availability of prey, availability of potential males, and absence of human caused disturbances could make the tigers move and give rise to meta-populations that could generate more genetic resources for the populations to grow further. Tigers from the neighboring Periyar Tiger Reserve and the near Anamalai Tiger Reserve regions can find significant habitats and breeding and home ranges in the highly undulating terrains of Srivilliputhur and Megamalai hilly tracts. In fact, the forested habitats of the Srivilliputhur regions, which are largely uninhabited and undisturbed, could provide excellent buffering grounds to the tigers of Periyar Tiger Reserve as much as they can offer excellent genetic exchange grounds for the tigers of Anamalai regions. Tiger is an ecosystem umbrella species and survival and growth of several of the co-predators and other species could be directly correlated to the growth of tigers. Elephants move across much larger landscapes and, therefore, contiguous, secured and protected large habitats could be very helpful for their conservation and population growth.
- The Grizzled Squirrel Wildlife Sanctuary (GSWS), also known as Srivilliputhur Wildlife Sanctuary, was established in 1988 to protect the vulnerable grizzled giant squirrel (*Ratufa macroura*). Occupying an area of 485.2 sq km, it is bordered on the southwest by the Periyar Tiger Reserve (PTR) and is one of the best preserved forests south of the Palghat Gap. Srivilliputhur Grizzled Squirrel Wildlife Sanctuary forms an important landscape for elephant conservation in Periyar Tiger Reserve. Owing to its large contiguous forests and connectivity with adjoining Reserve Forests, this Wildlife Sanctuary has wide varieties of endangered species such as grizzled squirrel, elephant, tiger, leopard, Nilgiri tahr, Indian gaur, and lion tailed macaque among the large mammals. The

diversity of habitat has an assemblage of several species of rare plants, invertebrates, fishes, amphibians and reptiles. Srivilliputhur Grizzled Squirrel Wildlife Sanctuary has also got several species of endemic flora and fauna.

- Significant parts of the Megamalai landscape encompassing Varushanad Hills, Cumbam Valley, Highway vis mountains, and a portion of the northern slopes of the landscape together with Madurai Forest Division were declared as the Megamalai wildlife sanctuary, considering the conservation significance of the hill chain in having several endemic and threatened flora and fauna.
- The proposed tiger reserve will comprise of the existing Megamalai wildlife division and Srivilliputhur wildlife sanctuary extending the west up to Melagudalur Reserve Forests and up to Madurai – Cochin Highways that separates Megamalai wildlife division and Theni Forest division, in the southwest side of the proposed Tiger Reserve is bounded by Periyar Tiger Reserve (PTR) in Kerala state. In North eastern side of the proposed Tiger Reserve Elumalai Reserve Forest is covered by plains of Usilampatti taluk and Saptur Beat 7 covered by Periyar taluk areas. Kunnur and Rengertheertham beats of Srivilliputhur Grizzled Squirrel Wildlife Sanctuary in the south eastern direction. The proposed Srivilliputhur Megamalai Tiger Reserve is bounded by plain land parcels of Srivilliputhur taluk. South western side of the proposed area is limited by Gudalur, Cumbam, Uthamapalayam, and Chinnamanur plains. In the southern side Seithur Reserve Forest of Rajapalayam Range and in the south western side of the proposed area the Srivilliputhur Megamalai Tiger Reserve shares boundary with Periyar Tiger Reserve of Kerala state.
- Like any other Tiger Reserve, the proposed Srivilliputhur Megamalai Tiger Reserve could be headed by a Field Director (FD) in the rank of a Chief Conservator of Forests, who will be stationed at Madurai. The post of Chief Conservator of Forests, Madurai can be re-designated as Field Director of Srivilliputhur Megamalai Tiger Reserve and Chief Conservator of Forests, Madurai circle. At present the office of Chief Conservator of Forests Madurai is already having the required infrastructure. Hence, no major additional finance would be required to set up the Field Director's office. This location will be central to overseeing the two administrative divisions of Srivilliputhur Megamalai Tiger Reserve while keeping in close touch with the Periyar Tiger Reserve in the west, Nellai Wildlife Sanctuary in the south and other neighbouring forest and wildlife division of the region.

5. In the letter fifth read above, the proposal of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden was recommended to the Government of India, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, National Tiger Conservation Authority for their in-principle approval for notification of the Srivilliputhur Megamalai Tiger Reserve in accordance with Section 38 V sub-section (1) of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

6. In the letter sixth read above, the Government of India, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, National Tiger Conservation Authority have conveyed the approval of the Competent Authority for recommending the notification of the Srivilliputhur Megamalai Tiger Reserve in accordance with Section 38 V sub-section (1) of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

(P.T.O.)

7. Therefore, the Government after careful examination accept the proposal of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden for declaring an area of 101657.13 ha or 1016.5713 sq. km in Srivilliputhur Grizzled Giant Squirrel Sanctuary and Megamalai Wildlife Sanctuary as the “ **Srivilliputhur - Megamalai Tiger Reserve** ” under Section 38 V of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 in accordance with the recommendation made by the Government of India, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, National Tiger Conservation Authority and issue orders accordingly.

8. The Notification appended to this order will be published both in English and Tamil in the Extra-ordinary issue of Tamil Nadu Government Gazette dated 08.02.2021 and in Tamil in the District Gazette of the Virudhunagar, Madurai and Theni Districts.

9. The Tamil Development and Information Department is requested to send immediately a Tamil Translation of the Notification to the Works Manager, Government Central Press, Chennai for publication in the Tamil Nadu Government Gazette and in the District Gazette of Virudhunagar, Madurai and Theni Districts.

10. The Works Manager, Government Central Press, Chennai is requested to send 100 copies each of the Notification to the Government, the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests / Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden, Collector of Virudhunagar, Madurai and Theni District as soon as the notification is published.

(BY ORDER OF THE GOVERNOR)

SANDEEP SAXENA
ADDITIONAL CHIEF SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT

To

The Works Manager, Government Central Press, Chennai-01.

The Director of Stationery and Printing ,Chennai-2.

The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HoD), Chennai – 15.

The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden, Chennai.15.

The Secretary to Government of India,

Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, CGO Complex,

Lodhi Road, New Delhi.

The Member Secretary, National Tiger Conservation Authority, Government of India,

Ministry of Environment and Forests, New Delhi.

The Tamil Development and Information Department, Chennai-9

The District Collector, Virudhunagar / Madurai / Theni.

Copy to:-

Office of the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Chennai-9.

The Principal Secretary.II to Hon'ble Chief Minister, Chennai – 9.

Special Personal Assistant to Hon'ble Minister (Forests), Chennai-9.

Finance (AHD&F) Department, Chennai-9.

Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Department, Chennai-9.

All Sections, Environment and Forests Department, Chennai – 9.

SF/SC.

/FORWARDED BY ORDER/

B. Subochana
08/02/21
Section Officer
[Signature]

APPENDIX

NOTIFICATION

In exercise of the powers conferred under sub-section (1) of section 38 V of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 (Central Act 53 of 1972), the Governor of Tamil Nadu, on the recommendation of the Tiger Conservation Authority, hereby declares the area, the boundaries of which are specified in the Schedule below, as a Tiger Reserve on and from 08.02.2021.

THE SCHEDULE

1. Name of the Project Tiger : Srivilliputhur Megamalai Tiger Reserve.
2. Name of the Districts : Virudhunagar, Madurai and Theni.
3. Name of the Taluks : Rajapalayam, Srivilliputhur, Peraiyur, Uttamapalayam, Usilampatti and Andipatti.
4. Forest Divisions : Srivilliputhur Division and Megamalai Division.
5. Areas of the Forest Blocks: : Furnished below

Core Zone	Area (Hectares)	Buffer Zone	Area (Hectares)
Srivilliputhur Reserve Forest	12640.33	Srivilliputhur Reserve Forest	4817.55
Khansapuram Reserve Forest	77.94	Khansapuram Reserve Forest	160.54
Saptur	15601.84	Unnipathimalai Reserve Forest	222.75
Seithur Reserve Forest	5910.62	Saptur	6618.57
Seithur Additional Reserve Forest	28.23	Seithur Reserve Forest	1606.22
Erasakkananickanur Reserve Forest (Part)	3616.58	Kollankondan -I	77.00
Megamalai Reserve Forest	17710.809	Kollankondan-II	57.90
Dhonikaradu Reserve Forest (Part)	563.58	Kollankondan -III	43.76
Poovathikaradu Reserve Forest	380.740	Megamalai Reserve Forest	4737.1
Surulipatty Reserve Forest	1732.500	Gandamanur East Reserve Forest	10774.31

Pandarathurai Reserve Forest	15.540	Soolapuram Reserve Forest	299.52
Koothanathci Reserve Forest	523.780	Elumalai Reserve Forest (part)	1386
Vannathiparai Reserve Forest	4177.24	Anamalayanpatti Reserve Forest	90.83
Boothakaradu Reserve Forest	442.89	Koothanathci Reserve Forest	292.38
Kappuvamadai Reserve Forest	240.84		
Melagudalur Reserve Forest	522.75	Vannathiparai Reserve Forest	1942.6
		Poomarajapuram	17.09
		Myladumparai Reserve Forest	4252.08
		Erasakkanayakanur Exten.	3.37
		Ganthigramam	71.346
Total extent	64186.21		37470.92

Total core area : 64186.21 ha

Total Buffer area : 37470.92 ha

**Total Extent of the
Tiger Reserve: 101657.13 ha or 1016.5713 sq. km**

6. Boundary description:

North : Madurai Territorial Forest Division

East : Virudhunagar and Madurai Districts Revenue areas.

South : Tirunelveli Forest Division and Periyar Tiger Reserve (Kerala State).

West : Theni District Revenue areas, Theni Territorial Forest Division and partly Periyar Tiger Reserve.

Admitted Rights

7. (i) The National Highway road NH 220 Connecting Theni and Kerala State boundary Kottayam (6 kms).
- (ii) State High way road from Thenpalani to Maharaja Mettu road connecting Chinnmanuur and Private Estates (Kerala State boundary)(40kms).
- (iii) Estate road connecting Maharaja Mettu - Irvuagalaru – Upper Manalaru- (16 Kms) in Chinnamanur Range.
- (iv) State highway from Manjanoothu to Vellimalai connecting Kadamalaigundu to Kerala State boundary - (36 Kms).
- (v) A EB road from Kumuli to Forebay Dam -3.8 kms.
- (vi) A road connecting Tholu and Mudanari – 7 Kms. (3 kms Municipal Road and 4 kms EB Road)
- (vii) An EB road connecting EB colony to 12th Anchor road – 6 kms.
- (viii) A road from Reserve Forest boundary to Sasthakoil in Devaiar beat Rajapalayam Range – 1.9 Kms.
- (ix) A forest road connecting Mallapuram in Madurai District and Mayiladumparai in Theni District laid in Mallapuram beat of Saptur Range (5.0 Kms).
- (x) A PWD road connecting from Forest boundary to Kovilar Dam Watrap beat-III of Watrap Range (0.48 Kms).
- (xi) MFP collection: Tribal People living in hamlets viz., Ayyanarkoil, Shenbagathoppu, Athikoil, Thaniparai, Vinobanagar and Valliammai Nagar are assigned 4955 ha of Reserve Forest areas for collection of Minor Forest Produce for their bonafide purpose (Core area – 1089.32 ha and Buffer area 3865.68 ha) as per resolution passed in District Level Committee as per Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006. (Central Act 2 of 2007).

SANDEEP SAXENA
ADDITIONAL CHIEF SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT

//True Copy//

B. Subchana
Section Officer 08/02/21
[Signature]