

Tamil Nadu notifies “Cauvery South Wildlife Sanctuary” in Krishnagiri and Dharmapuri Districts as its new Wildlife Sanctuary

On 08th Nov 2022, Government of Tamil Nadu notified an area of 686.405 sq,km Reserve Forests in Krishnagiri and Dharmapuri Districts as Cauvery South Wildlife Sanctuary under Sec 26-A of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. The Government has already notified Kazhuveli Bird Sanctuary in Villupuram and Cuddalore Districts, Nanjarayan Bird Sanctuary in Tiruppur District, Kadavur Slender Loris Sanctuary in Karur and Dindigul Districts and Dugong Conservation Reserve in Palk Bay recently.

The Cauvery South Wildlife Sanctuary will connect Cauvery North Wildlife Sanctuary of Tamil Nadu with the Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary in the State of Karnataka thereby forming **a large, contiguous network of Protected Areas for wildlife.**

This area has unique ecological, faunal, and floral significance and is also an important elephant habitat in Southern India. The area is critical for a large number of riverine species dependent on River Cauvery like Leith's Soft-shelled turtles, Smooth-coated Otter and marsh crocodile etc.,

This landscape maintains further continuity to the Nilgiri Biosphere through Malai Mahadeshwara Wildlife Sanctuary, Billigiri Rangaswamy Temple (BRT) Tiger Reserve in Karnataka and Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve and Erode District. This provides sufficient area for the conservation of the varied and rich biodiversity of the region. Efforts taken to conserve tigers in contiguous areas such as BRT Tiger Reserve, Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve have created a spill over effect and tigers have begun to occupy their traditional ranges where they had been locally extinct for a few decades. The forested areas of this Sanctuary are part of the of prey base and the area can support

tigers once again as it had in the past. It will also support conservation of leopards and other red-listed large carnivores.

This area has two important and large elephant corridors namely, the Nandimangalam - Ulibanda Corridor and the Kovaipallam - Anebiddahalla Corridor.

The New Sanctuary is rich in biodiversity with at least 35 species of mammals and 238 species of birds. Some animals such as Leith's Soft-shelled turtles, Grizzled Giant Squirrel, Smooth-coated Otter, marsh crocodile, Four-horned Antelope, Lesser Fish Eagle etc., are almost exclusively dependent on the Cauvery River and its riverine forest ecosystem. They are also red-listed and in urgent need of focused conservation efforts and protection of their habitat;

The forests in the Sanctuary form a unique ecosystem of the Cauvery basin and constitute the last forested low-lying stretches of the Cauvery River before it enters the Stanley Reservoir. Enhanced protection and restoration of habitat will help in reducing soil erosion and siltation of downstream reservoir namely Stanley Reservoir.

**Additional Chief Secretary to Government
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