

TAMIL NADU TOPS THE RAMSAR SITES IN INDIA

The Government of Tamil Nadu is committed to protect its wetlands through a comprehensive conservation and management plan. Tamil Nadu has also launched the “Tamil Nadu Wetlands Mission” a one of its kind Mission for protection, conservation and restoration of 100 wetlands at a cost of Rs.115.15 crore.

Ramsar convention on wetlands is an International Convention on wetlands that provides the Framework for National action and International Cooperation for conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. India became the contracting party of the Ramsar Convention on 1st, February 1982. After a long gap of two decades, the Government of Tamil Nadu under the leadership of the Hon’ble Chief Minister, Thiru. M. K. Stalin, had obtained notification for 13 new Ramsar sites in 2022 making the State of Tamil Nadu the leading State in India with the already existing Ramsar sites at Point Calimere, Kodiakkarai which was notified in the year 2002.

The Government of Tamil Nadu had sent proposals for two more sites to be declared as Ramsar sites i.e., Karaivetti Bird Sanctuary and Longwood Shola Reserve Forest. The proposals have been accepted by MOEFCC and the Ramsar sites Secretariat and these sites have been designated as Ramsar sites on 31.01.2024. With this the total number of Ramsar sites in the State of Tamil Nadu now stands at 16 i.e., which is highest in the Country.

The newly declared Karaivetti bird sanctuary is located in Ariyalur District and covers an area of 453.7 ha. The wetland is one of the Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas of Tamil Nadu. The site acts as home for more than

500 species of flora and fauna. The Sanctuary lies in the Central Asian Flyway and is an important breeding and foraging ground for water bird species. The wetland also helps in irrigation and recharge of the ground water of the area.

Longwood Shola Reserve Forest is located in the Nilgiris District and covers an area of 116.007 ha. The site is one of the Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas of Tamil Nadu. The site acts as home for more than 700 species of flora and fauna. Out of 177 bird species found in the site 14 species are endemic to the Western Ghats. The area is rich in herpetofauna diversity of which several species are endemic to the Western Ghats and are also considered as threatened species by IUCN. The Longwood shola is an integral part of the very fragile Nilgiris eco-system. This sylvan retreat is a major water source for Kotagiri by supplying water to 18 villages downstream. The Department of Environment, Climate Change & Forest has undertaken the task of preparing the Integrated Management plans for its Ramsar sites in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India.

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