

RECOMMENDATION REPORT OF WILDLIFE WARDEN, CHENNAI

Vedanthangal is one of the oldest people protected bird area of Tamil Nadu. More than 30 species of migratory birds from different countries in about 40000 numbers, visit, roost and nest in the Vedanthangal lake and local people are known for their social protection to birds since two centuries.

As per G.O.Ms.No.199, Environment & Forest Department dated 08.07.1998, Vedanthangal Reserve Land / Lake with an area of 29.51 ha and surrounding 5 km area all around (comprising revenue area of 28 villages) was declared as Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary. And, whole Sanctuary is treated as Core Zone for management and there is no buffer zone.

Over the years, it has been noted that, local people around Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary express their displeasure with the Forest Department. Except few adjoining villages, no other villages in the surrounding 5 kms zone co-ordinate with the Department for carrying out any management or outreach activities like de-silting of water channels, carrying out eco development works, awareness activities, etc and people participation for management of Sanctuary is less or nil in most of the surrounding villages except for few.

Any land conversion, diversion, construction of own houses, farm house, commercial constructions, establishment of in-house/closed industrial units and any other activity deemed to disturb wildlife habitat is prohibited as per Section 29 & Section 33 and all such proposals have to undergo long process of applying to National Board of Wildlife for clearance and moving ahead, which is discouraging to general public as well as entrepreneurs and industries.

It is practically difficult to impose and monitor Wildlife Protection Act prohibitions, regulations in 5kms surrounding private land holdings, farmers area and this is leading to lot of conflict, agitation and non co-operation from local people.

The protection force in the Bird Sanctuary is mainly diverted to keep vigil on diversion activities in the 5kms surrounding villages than focus on actual patrolling, anti-poaching monitoring, sanctuary improvement activities, regular monitoring of birds and visitor management.

As per the recent observations by local protection staff, Range Officer and Wildlife Warden, it is seen that, most of the farmers have abandoned agriculture in the outer 3-5 kms area nearing highway and the land is lying barren or it is mostly non agriculture private land holdings which is well secured and lying as such. **This zone is not preferred by birds for any activity too since they are cleared and barren with secured walls around.** The villages around 1-3 around the Sanctuary like Vedanthangal, Valayaputhur, Vinayaganallur, Andavakkam, Vedavakkam, Pasumbur, Chittathur, Pilanjikuppam, etc are agriculture oriented.

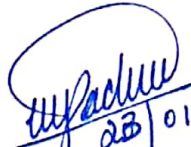
It has also been observed during good nesting season that, about 40000 Birds from various countries come to Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary and all of them use trees inside the Sanctuary area for perching, roosting and nesting. And no nesting is noted in any village areas or other surrounding tanks too. Some of the late arrival nesting birds, ducks, teals and other small birds prefer Karikili lake as Satellite Station and for the same reason Karikili has been declared as Bird Sanctuary, which is about 8 kms from Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary.

All the nesting birds go for feeding early morning in the surrounding 1-2 kms agriculture fields as observed by the staff and another cycle is noted that, birds go to long distance and arrive by early evening. Most of the birds also collect nesting materials from the peripheral trees in the Sanctuary tank and local areas. Based the same birding observations, **eco sensitive zone proposal for Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary is also proposed Zero kms** which is yet to be notified.

Any Protected Area success is seen not only through the management initiatives taken by the Managers of Protected Area in the Sanctuary but also through the people participation in the Protected Area Management and livelihood support which is created through management. And, villagers around Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary have been extremely supportive for the Bird Conservation except for their displeasure for getting tied up with regulations and prohibitions in their own patta land and private property, especially in the outer periphery of 5 kms zone.

With all the above observations and facts, it is proposed that, for the main lake area of 29.51 ha, surrounding 5 kms zonation of Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary may be brought down to 3 kms in which first 1 km zone may be notified as Core Zone

including main lake/tank and next 2 kms may be notified as Buffer Zone (Annexure III). And, outer 2 kms zonation of the existing 5 kms boundary shall be de-notified. This redefining of boundary of Vedanthangal will not only help in better management of the Sanctuary by concentrating on actual birding activity area but also will bring back the local community for the cause of bird conservation in the very famous Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary.


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