



TAMIL NADU GOVERNMENT GAZETTE

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Part II—Section 2

Notifications or Orders of interest to a Section of the public
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NOTIFICATIONS BY GOVERNMENT

ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND FORESTS DEPARTMENT

DECLARATION OF DUGONG CONSERVATION RESERVE IN PALK BAY OF THE WILD LIFE
(PROTECTION) ACT, 1972

[G.O. Ms. No.165, Environment, Climate Change and Forests (FR.5), 21st September 2022,
புரட்டாசி 4, சுபகிருது, திருவள்ளுவர் ஆண்டு-2053.]

No. II(2)/ECCF/768(a)/2022.

WHEREAS, the Government of Tamil Nadu considers that the area described in the Schedule below is of adequate ecological and biological significance for the purpose of protecting, propagating, developing wildlife and its environment.

AND WHEREAS, Palk Bay is a shallow bay located on the southeast coast of India. Its environment is unique in the sense that it is almost an enclosed bay with input from several small rivers along its coast. The marshlands of this backwater system support lush growth of mangrove forests which harbour a wide variety of birds both native and migratory. The backwaters act as breeding and feeding grounds for a wide variety of fin-fish and shell-fish. The enclosed nature of the bay provides the ideal habitat for dugongs, dolphins, porpoises and turtles to frequent the region.

AND WHEREAS, the region is rich in biodiversity having all the important groups of flora and fauna in its environment. The total number of species and their endemic form given in parentheses are Foraminifera 51 (2), Tintinnids 12, Flora 143 (1), Sponges 275 (31), Coelenterates other than corals 123 (49), Stony corals 128 (43), Polyzoa 100 (15), Polychaeta 75 (22), Insecta 1 (1), Crustacea 651 (159), Mollusca 733 (26), Echinodermata 274 (2), Prochordata 66 (41), Fishes 580, Turtles 5, Birds 61, and Mammals 11.

AND WHEREAS, the endangered species Dugong (*Dugong dugon*) lives within 10 metre depth not far from the shore, usually in groups limited to 5 to 7 individuals among the sea grass beds. The sea grass, *Cymodocea*, is their primary diet. Their presence has been continuously recorded in the Palk Bay. Dugongs can grow to a size of over 300 kilograms measuring 3.0 to 3.5 metre in length. Due to uncontrolled fishing carried out in the past and also due to reduction in their grazing area viz., the sea grass *Cymodocea*, their numbers have come down drastically.

AND WHEREAS, it was scientifically proved that the coastal areas of Thanjavur and Pudukottai districts in Palk Bay is covered by around 12,250 hectares of seagrass beds, and protecting seagrass beds and dugongs in this area, will also help for the breeding of commercially valuable finfishes, crabs and shrimps, thereby benefitting thousands of small scale and marginal fishermen, who depend on fishery productivity for their daily livelihood in the nearshore areas.

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[1]

AND WHEREAS, it is necessary to conserve and sustain this area in Palk Bay as a conservation reserve from an ecological as well as environmental point of view.

NOW, THEREFORE, in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (1) of Section 36A of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972(Central Act 53 of 1972), the Governor of Tamil Nadu, after having consultations with the local communities hereby declares the areas of Palk Bay, as specified in the Schedule below, as "Dugong Conservation Reserve" on and from the date of 21st September 2022.

THE SCHEDULE

The area comprises of a polygon formed by the coastal boundaries of Thanjavur and Pudukkottai Districts, starting from Adirampattinam in Thanjavur District to Ammapattinam in Pudukkottai District, also bounded by the contour at a distance of 10 kilometres or 5.3996 nautical miles from the coastal boundary, towards the sea.

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| 1. Name of the Districts | : | The Coastal waters of Thanjavur and Pudukkottai Districts. |
| 2. Location | : | Along Palk Bay from Adirampattinam to Ammapattinam |
| 3. Boundary Description | : | |
| Northern Boundary | - | Starting from Adirampattinam (A) Coastal Village in Thanjavur District runs towards southwest along the coast of Palk Bay to a distance of 33.68 kilometres vide points A1 to A19 and reaches Kattumavadi (B) Village in Pudukkottai District. |
| Western Boundary | - | Starting from Kattumavadi (B) Village in Pudukkottai District runs towards south east along the coast of Palk Bay to a distance of 11.9 kilometres vide points B to B8 and turns gradually towards south west direction along the coast of Palk Bay and joins Ammapattinam (C) Village in Pudukkottai District vide point B8 and B9 at a distance of 6.5 kilometres. |
| Southern Boundary | - | Starting from Ammapattinam (C) Coastal Village in Pudukkottai District reaches point D towards eastern side of the conservation reserve area at a distance of 10 kilometres in sea water. |
| Eastern Boundary | - | Starting from point D in coastal waters of Palk Bay runs towards northern direction along the sea waters from D to E vide points D1 to D5 at a distance of 22.10 kilometres and from E to F vide points E1 to E3 at a distance of 17.20 kilometres and joins Adirampattinam (A) Coastal Village in Thanjavur District which is in the northern side of the conservation reserve area. The distance from point F to A is 10 kilometres. |