



# **Wetland, New, Monitor**

**May - June 2017**

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*News brief on Threatened Wetland, Wetland Encroachments, Wetland Birds, Crocodile, Climate Change, Wetland Event, Wetland Pollution*



## Research site – A Threat to Wetland!

A research site threatens a prime wetland ecosystem in Udthagamandalam after the research wing of the Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Conservation and Greening Project planted around 3,000 eucalyptus trees in Aramby reserve forest, near RC Colony, in the Nilgiris in 2015. Around 3,000 *Eucalyptus Globulus*, *Eucalyptus Grandis* and *Eucalyptus eugenioides* saplings have been planted on one hectare plot on a piece of wetland by the Forest Genetics Circle, Coimbatore under a project tailored to study ways to “maximise fuel wood production.” The project is said to have been funded by the Japanese International Cooperation Agency. The area is home to many species of wild animal, including deer and gaur, while there are pockets of shola trees also nearby. The decision to grow eucalyptus at the site by the forest department has been met with widespread criticism by activists, who have for years been trying to get the department to restore grasslands and native shola tree species to the landscape, and instead, will now have to fight to get rid of more invasive tree species which this time have been introduced by the forest department itself.

Gokul Halan, an additional co-ordinator working at the Keystone Foundation in Kotagiri reported that wetlands are a very important ecosystem which also plays a key role in supporting other ecosystems. The eucalyptus trees, if left alone for the next decade, will suck up a lot of water from the ground and have a massive impact on water tables and perched aquifers. He added that in plantations of eucalyptus and wattle, the soil can also eventually turn acidic and won't allow anything to grow and to reverse such effects it will also take a very long time. Similarly, Vasanth Bosco, a conservationist working at restoring grasslands in the Nilgiris stated that the presence of sedge and pennisetum at the site are indicators of a wetland ecosystem. He said that eucalyptus saplings use plenty of groundwater during their growing phase leading to watershed depletion. He added that once the trees grow larger, and start shedding leaves, there would be very little chance for any grasses to grow underneath them.

Forest Department officials reported that the site was used purely for research purposes to study ways in which the production of fuel wood can be maximised. A top official said that the department had stopped planting of eucalyptus since 1996, and that this project was purely research oriented. However, conservationists still questioned the need to study ways to maximise generation and use of fuel wood, as more renewable energy resources have been in use for many

decades. They added that there was plenty of fuel wood that can be harvested from eucalyptus plantations in the Nilgiris itself, and that there was little need to explore possibilities of growing more such trees.



The wetland in Aramby Reserve Forest where around 3,000 eucalyptus trees have been planted.

Source: The Hindu Dt.: May 18, 2017

#### Source:

- <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-tamilnadu/research-site-threatens-wetland-in-the-nilgiris/article18477379.ece>

## A Report on Encroachments on Wetland

To eradicate the illegal occupation and constructions on the banks of Vembanad Lake, the Special Task Force (STF), which was formed for surveying the lake as instructed by the Supreme Court, has drawn up an action plan and approached the State government for funds. It would take 1,428 survey days and ₹45 lakh to complete the job. Though the STF had sought financial support from the local bodies, only a few offered to loosen their purse strings.

The lake system, which touches 38 local self-government institutions in Alappuzha, Kottayam, and Ernakulam districts, has been identified as a hotbed of Coastal Regulation Zone violations and encroachments. It was following a suo moto order from the Supreme Court in 2013 that the STF was formed with the Fort Koch RDO as its head. The Kerala Coastal Zone Management Authority had earlier compiled a list of over 10,000 “land modifications” on the banks of the lake with the help of the National Centre for Earth Science Studies (NCESS). The NCESS relied on high resolution images from Google map and historical images to identify the changes in the coast, which was mostly in the form of reclamation of wetlands and constructions in CRZ area. Although the KCZMA had asked the local bodies to verify the land modifications to segregate legal and illegal ones, there was no much progress.



The Vembanad lake system has been identified as a hotbed of CRZ violations and encroachments.

Source: The Hindu Dt.: May 15, 2017

Adeela Abdullah, leader of STF listed out the mandate of the STF and said eviction or removal of encroachment from the banks of the lake was not the job of the team. The Supreme Court has directed the authorities to carry out a survey of Vembanad Lake and report back. Hence, the STF would focus on identifying the boundaries of the lake and fix boundary stones as indicated in the records. He added that the details will be submitted to the apex court. During the



survey, the officials also verify the title deeds and puzha pattayams that were issued on the banks of the lake. Of late, the government has stopped the practice of issuing puzha pattayam.

While issuing the order, the Bench consisting of Justice K.S. Radhakrishnan and Justice A.K. Sikri had said it was inclined to issue notices to various “authorities to explain the steps they have taken to implement Coastal Regulation Zone, in the lake and Islands as a whole, steps they have taken to restore the illegally reclaimed banks of the lake, steps taken to avert pollution etc. within a period of six weeks”. The court observed that “Vembanad Backwaters was presently undergoing severe environmental degradation and there has been large scale encroachment and illegal constructions are going on in violation of the CRZ Notifications”.

Construction of single and two-storeyed houses have recently mushroomed across East Kolkata Wetlands, irreversibly altering its character, endangering the biodiversity and threatening the prestigious Ramsar tag. In moujas like Dhapa Manpur, Bhagabanpur, Kumar Pukuria, Tardaha Kapasati, Kheyadaha, Haatgachha and Beonta, hundreds of brick-and-mortar houses have cropped up in the past couple of years with the local administration turning a blind eye to blatant violation of legislations in place to protect and preserve the wetlands. Of the 264 bheris or fish farms, more than 64 have disappeared with land sharks in connivance with a section of local politicians, musclemen and cops. The cops' reluctance to act in the initial stages of construction has led to allegations of their tacit involvement in the land grab. Additionally, East Kolkata Wetland Management Authority's failure to carry out spot inspections when they first receive complaints and the consequent delay in filing FIRs have emboldened land sharks to encroach further.

Not only have bheris been encroached upon, paddy fields and embankments between bheris have also been usurped to construct houses. Dhruva Dasgupta, researcher and project director of Society for Creative Opportunities and Participatory Ecosystems that works extensively in EKW reported that once people begin living on the embankment, it is a matter of time before the adjoining wetlands are lost as solid waste is continuously dumped into the water. Activist Shantanu Chacraverti pointed to a graver problem. Most of the new houses are inhabited by those who are not traditional residents of EKW and have nothing to do with its waste water ecology which led to a demographic and situational problem.

## Source:

- <http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Kochi/vembanad-under-the-scanner-too/article18459984.ece>
- <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/spurt-in-construction-destroying-ekw-ecology/articleshow/59209704.cms>

## News on Wetland Birds

The Vellayani-Punchakari wetlands, which have come to be known as a haven for birdwatchers, have witnessed yet another rare sighting. A group of zoologists spotted a leucistic common moorhen at the Vellayani Lake during an expedition. R. Sreejai, Assistant Professor at the Department of Zoology, St. Stephen's College, Pathanapuram, and V.S. Chithra, Project Associate at the Kerala State Biodiversity Board, have reported the rare presence of the bird among purple moorhens and common moorhens. It was found to have white plumage with black patches in contrast to the regular presence of coloured bill and feet. According to Mr. Sreejai, common moorhen (Scientific Name: *Gallinula chloropus*) is a medium-sized, ground-dwelling water bird belonging to the family Rallidae.



The leucistic common moorhen that was spotted in Vellayan

Source: The Hindu Dt.: May 10, 2017



The species is easily recognised by its vivid red shield, short yellow bill, black or dark brown plumage and white under tail. The sighting of bird with abnormal pigmentation is considered to be rare even though this species is common in our wetlands. These omnivorous moorhen species inhabit reedbeds, freshwater wetlands, marshes and irrigated lands. Common moorhen species are categorised as ‘least concern’ by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), considering its wide range of distribution and increasing population trends. While several species of leucistic birds have already been reported worldwide, the photographic record of a leucistic common moorhen could be among the first ones from the country. Leucism is an abnormal partial loss of pigmentation that is caused by genetic mutation. The condition is caused by a reduction in multiple types of pigment, including melanin.

While most lakes in Bengaluru have dried up or are choking with toxic waste, Puttenahalli Lake in south Bengaluru stands apart. The Puttenahalli Neighbourhood Lake Improvement Trust (PNLIT) has been working to clean it up and the flurry of avian visitors touching down on the wetlands is proof of their success. Birdlovers have spotted a purple and grey heron, a little egret, two spot-billed ducks, a bronze-winged jacana and a night heron. Madhurima Das, a resident of L&T South City reported that they have spotted 102 bird species since 2010. The bronze-winged jacana has now become a resident of the lake and a lot of these birds nest in the swamplands around the lake. The residents restored the wetland area in June 2016 by cultivating aquatic plants on floating platforms. The platforms are made of PVC pipes and the plants are grown within two nets, helping purify the water. L&T South City provides treated water to the wetland area, which then goes through bio-filtration before flowing into the main lake. Residents and corporate volunteers have helped build these floating islands. There are about half a dozen floating platforms and the goal is to make 120 of them. They're also in the process of reinforcing the fence surrounding the lake to prevent dogs from entering and disrupting the habitat.

Sarus birds in Sarsai Nawar area of Etawah are facing threat as major portions of natural wetland are parched, with temperature touching 44 degrees. Wildlife experts and environmentalists claim that around 100 birds have been sighted this year and blame the extreme hot condition that have turned away the state birds from Sarsai Nawar wetland. Forest officials reported that out of the total 10,000 Indian sarus, nearly 1,500 to 2,000 nests in and around Etawah. Of the total 1,500 to 2,000, about 100-200 Sarus birds are a regular feature in Sarsai



Nawar wetland. But the count has gone down drastically with the rise in temperature in the past few days. Environmentalist Rajiv Chauhan said that due to excess heat, the sarus bird count has gone down considerably.

The re-sighting of ringed/colour tagged birds in the wetlands of Mumbai has spread a wave of enthusiasm and happiness among ornithologists. Curlew Sandpipers and Plovers were a few of them which were spotted recently. The re-sighting of these birds reinforces the importance of ringing studies being undertaken over the years. Moreover, bird ringing studies help to understand the paths used by birds over long journeys of migration, their stop-overs and preferences.

### **Significance of the re-sighting:**

- Re-sighting of ringed birds highlights the site fidelity of these birds, that is, they choose to spend the winters in same wetlands year after year. Thus current re-sighting of birds from Mumbai after spending summers in their breeding grounds in Arctic Russia assumes significance of these mudflats as important wintering and staging site for long-distance migratory birds.
- The Curlew Sandpipers ringed/colour tagged in the wetlands of Mumbai between December 2014 and February 2015 were spotted by Dr Raju Kasambe, a bird expert with BNHS (at Sewri) and birders S. Krishnan and Mr Ashwin Mohan (at Navi Mumbai).

### **Importance of mudflats:**

Mudflats offer a valuable food source derived from their high productivity and the resultant high quantity of prey items for fish and waterbirds. This makes mudflats significant as feeding and roosting grounds for local as well as migratory birds. Mudflats also play a crucial role for habitat specialist waterbirds which travel over long distances by helping them gain the body mass required to complete their migratory movements. Mudflats are usually inaccessible and less disturbed which enhances their importance as resting, roosting and feeding sites for birds. The mudflats in Mumbai host a large congregation of waterbirds every year which includes both local as well as migrant birds.



## **Bird Ringing:**

BNHS has been engaged in bird ringing studies since 1927 with over a million birds being ringed in various parts of the country. All of these studies were undertaken with continuous support and cooperation from the state forest departments. Owing to the vast experience in bird ringing and training volunteers for these studies, BNHS was recently designated as the state nodal agency for bird ringing studies by the Maharashtra forest department, and Mangrove and Marine Biodiversity Conservation Foundation has recently provided grant to map the important coastal wetlands in the context of Central Asian Flyway (CAF). From September 2017, BNHS starts large-scale bird ringing along coastal areas of Maharashtra.

## **Understanding Flyways:**

The specific paths used by birds during migration are known as 'flyways'. The study of flyways forms an important part of ornithology as it helps to understand the challenges birds face during migration. Identification of movement routes and stopover sites of birds is important to develop appropriate strategies for conservation of migratory birds. BNHS has engaged in bird migration studies and collected data over the past 70 years to draw in-depth knowledge about the migration of birds. BNHS is set to map Central Asian Flyway with large scale ringing of birds along the coast of Maharashtra in order to study the current status of globally threatened and rare bird species (if any) to Indian wintering grounds. It would also help to study the movement and dispersal pattern of short and long distance migrants and to document the existence of important staging/wintering areas along Indian coast.

The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) is set to map the Central Asian Flyway (CAF) with large-scale ringing of birds along the coast of Maharashtra to study the status of globally-threatened and rare species moving to Indian wintering grounds. Deepak Apte, director, BNHS reported that they have received permissions from Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Himachal Pradesh, to begin the study by September-end. He added that the ringing of birds will help them to study the movement and splitting pattern of short and long distance migratory birds and document their staging in the wintering areas along the Indian coast.

Nearly 1,500 birds, including curlew sandpiper, were ringed between December 2014 and February 2015. During the flamingo festival in April, experts from BNHS have spotted the ringed curlew sandpipers at Sewri jetty wetlands and said for curlew sandpipers, Mumbai is the stopover. Tuhina Katti, a scientist with BNHS stated that ringing is important in two ways. Firstly, we come to understand the health of the habitat in which the birds have stayed. It is also significant in studying the lifespan of a particular bird, and if the species are abundant in number or have become extinct.

Ms. Katti said another aspect of bird monitoring is to understand the specific paths used by birds during migration. Birds use pathways to complete their annual migration and these routes support millions carrying out a strenuous journey of thousands of kilometres every year. Moreover, the species become the controlling agent of the pests in the region. In case of an outbreak of bird flu or any such disease, if the pathways are known, the model for how the disease spreads can be generated and action taken. Since 1927, the BNHS has ringed over a million birds in various parts of the country. The process is important to study the migration of birds.



The birds were ringed by the BNHS between December 2014 and February 2015.

Source: The Hindu Dt.: May 09, 2017



Painted storks and spot-billed pelicans through Kokkarebelluru, Karnataka during their annual migration attracts more tourists and leads to better job opportunities for locals. The community reserve got a revamped Interpretation Centre, developed by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and HSBC. At the centre, visitors viewed and learned about the reserve's two guests: the spot-billed pelican and the painted storks, both classified as 'Near Threatened (NT)' by the International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Despite drought looming large over the State, more of these birds seem to have thronged the reserve that is spread across 3.12 sq. km. WWF found 121 pelican nests during a study in February 2017. At the same time in 2016, only 50 nests were found. Apart from this, 504 nesting sites of painted storks were found. Lohit Y.T. from WWF reported that there is a banyan tree that can hold up to 150 nests, however only 50 nests were made on it.

For the Tourism Department, the presence of the birds implies an opportunity to draw more tourists, especially, since the connectivity between the village and Bengaluru-Mysuru Road has improved. M.H. Harish, Deputy Director, Tourism, Mandya, said that they have plan to invest ₹1 crore to provide tourist facilities to make the reserve on a par with Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary in Rajasthan. The area is threatened by a growing human population. The loss of large trees here too has had an effect. In the neighbouring village of Bannahalli, the loss of a banyan tree resulted in birds completely avoiding the area. There is fear among conservationists that the increase in the built-up area is seeing a loss of wetlands that are crucial for these birds. During Diwali, the village does not burst crackers, so that the birds are not scared away. For the past year, the villagers have also been using borewells to fill up small ponds. Electric wires have been insulated into aerial bunching to prevent cases of electrocution of birds. With hundreds of birds roosting in the hamlet, their droppings (guano) have become crucial for the local economy. Guano is mixed with manure to grow ragi, paddy, sugarcane, mulberry and coconut.

BirdLife International, world's largest nature conservation organization has granted the status of important bird and biodiversity areas (IBA) to the Navelim wetland and wildlife sanctuaries of Bondla and Neturlim. The inclusion of these three areas has taken the total number of IBAs in Goa to seven. The recognition follows systematic data collection by Goa Bird Conservation Network (GBCN). As India's nodal agency and BirdLife International's global partner for the IBA programme, Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), had approached GBCN for proposals.



## Source:

- <http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Thiruvananthapuram/rare-bird-sighting-at-vellayani-wetlands/article18418365.ece>
- <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/bengaluru/restored-puttenahalli-lake-once-again-draws-birds/articleshow/58690818.cms>
- <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kanpur/sarus-face-harsh-weather-water-scarcity/articleshow/58744658.cms>
- <http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/mumbai/bnhs-to-study-migratory-birds-along-maharashtra-coast/article18421455.ece>
- <http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/mumbai/birds-ringed-by-bnhs-spotted-at-sewri/article18411277.ece>
- <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/winged-visitors-revisit-mumbai/articleshow/58631477.cms>
- <http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/bangalore/as-more-birds-fly-in-the-hope-is-more-tourists-arrive-too/article18710059.ece>
- <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/goa/goa-gets-3-new-bird-sanctuaries/articleshow/59126727.cms>

## Report on Crocodile

Rise in crocodile nestings in Odisha elates ecologists. The steady increase in sightings of salt water crocodile nests in the swampy creeks of the Bhitarkanika National Park on the Odisha coast for three consecutive seasons has elated ecologists, who have hailed this achievement as the outcome of long-term conservation efforts. The wildlife wing of the State Forest Department has come across 80 crocodile nests in their wild habitats in 2017 in Bhitarkanika, compared with 75 in 2016 and 70 in 2015. Bimal Prasanna Acharya, Divisional Forest Officer of the Rajnagar Forest Division reported that the number of crocodile nests could be more as they could not trace all of them due to inaccessibility. Of the 80 nests, 70 are in the Kanika range. For the first time, three crocodile nests in the Gahirmatha range were discovered. Bhitarkanika is said to house 70% of India's estuarine or salt water crocodiles, conservation of which was started over four decades ago in 1975. When the Government of India and the United Nations Development

Programme focussed on saving crocodiles in Bhitarkanika, there were hardly three or four nests sighted in the area and the population of salt water crocodiles was estimated to be 95, including 34 adults. Now, the numbers have grown to 1,682.

Since 1977, salt water crocodile eggs have been collected and young crocodiles have been released in the creeks and the estuaries of Bhitarkanika. A decade ago, this practice was discontinued, allowing crocodiles to grow in their natural habitats. Sudhakar Kar, a former scientist with the Odisha Forest Department and an expert on crocodiles with the International Union for Conservation of Nature reported that more than 3,000 crocodiles have so far been released into the waters of the Bhitarkanika and they have been able to reverse the trend of a declining crocodile population and make the area a safer habitat for the reptile.



Source: The Hindu Dt.: June 27, 2017

The Bhitarkanika National Park is a place where the rivers Brahmani, Baitarni, Dhamra and Pathsala meet the Bay of Bengal. The mangrove wetland and large number muddy creeks provide perfect conditions for estuarine crocodiles to nest. Moreover, the nesting sites of crocodiles are located at places where tidal waves cannot wash away the eggs. Unlike other crocodiles, estuarine crocodiles lay eggs by creating a mound made of leaves of a particular mangrove species, which are plentifully available in Bhitarkanika. Other crocodile species dig the soil for laying eggs. Crocodiles start laying eggs by mid-May, with an incubation period of 75 days. The female crocodile guards the nest devotedly for three months. During this period,



she tends to attack anything that approaches the nest. Hatchlings come out in the month of August. An average of 25-30 eggs are found in a nest and 30% of hatchlings may finally survive.

Dr. Kar said that there are large habitats for salt water crocodiles in the Sundarbans in West Bengal, and in the large mangrove wetlands of the Andaman Islands, but they cannot match the density and population of crocodiles in the wild habitats of Bhitarkanika. The national park is also home to the only white-coloured captive crocodile named Gori. Many albino crocodile species can be found in the Bhitarkanika's waters. The park also houses the world's largest salt water crocodile, measuring about 23 feet — this was recorded in 2006 in the Guinness World Records.

Dr. Kar added that salt water crocodiles devour predatory fishes. Hence, more fish thrive with the presence of crocodiles in the water. The existence of salt water crocodiles depends on dense wet mangrove forests and the steady discharge of fresh water into the sea. Odisha has the distinction of having all three Indian species of crocodiles.

**Source:**

- <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/steady-increase-in-crocodile-nestings-in-odisha-elates-conservationists/article19155877.ece>

## News on Climate Change

Marine reserves can mitigate climate change. Evaluating 145 peer-reviewed studies, a research team has concluded that “highly protected” marine reserves can help mitigate the effects of climate change. “Marine reserves cannot halt or completely offset the growing impacts of climate change,” said Jane Lubchenco, a professor in the College of Science at Oregon State University (OSU) and co-author of the study published recently in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. “But they can make marine ecosystems more resilient to changes and, in some cases, helps to slow down the rate of climate change.” Xinhua reported that around the world, coastal nations have committed to protecting 10% of their waters by 2020, but so far, only 3.5% of the ocean has been set aside for protection, and 1.6%, or less than half of that, is strongly protected from exploitation.



Lubchenco, who previously worked as National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Administrator, quoted as saying in a news release that the protecting a portion of our oceans and coastal wetlands will help sequester carbon, limit the consequences of poor management, protect habitats and biodiversity that are key to healthy oceans of the future, and buffer coastal populations from extreme events. The study also notes that ocean surface waters have become on average 26% more acidic since pre-industrial times. By the year 2100, under a “business-as-usual” scenario, they will be 150% more acidic, while coastal wetlands, including mangroves, seagrasses and salt marshes have demonstrated a capacity for reducing local carbon dioxide concentrations because many contain plants with high rates of photosynthesis. Coastal wetlands, along with coral and oyster reefs, kelp forests and mud flats, can help ameliorate impacts of rising sea levels and storm surge. The dense vegetation in coastal wetlands can also provide protection against severe storms, which are increasing in intensity in many parts of the world.

**Source:**

- <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-features/tp-sci-tech-and-agri/marine-reserves-can-mitigate-climate-change/article18958405.ece>
- <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-in-school/help-at-hand/article18952675.ece>

## **Information on Wetland Event**

Concerned over the rampant encroachment of East Kolkata Wetlands, students of Mahadevi Birla World Academy have dedicated an entire day to the Ramsar site and invited ecologists and academicians to speak on the threats that urbanization poses to it. The school principal Anjana Saha said that the students have seen the threat that unbridled urbanization poses to EKW's ecology and want to understand how it can be conserved. Responsible urbanization is the theme of the two-day science seminar in which an entire day has been devoted to EKW. Ecologist Dhrubajyoti Ghosh, Jadavpur University professor emeritus Sukanta Chaudhuri, West Bengal State University Associate Professor Subhamita Chaudhuri, wetland activist Dhruba Das Gupta and EKW fish farmer Sujit Mondol spoke to the students on the subject.



The students had written to Mamata Banerjee on the year 2016 and environment minister Sovan Chatterjee earlier in the year 2017, urging them to take steps to preserve the wetlands. In the letter to Chatterjee, they pointed to the construction going on in Mukundapur mouza even though promises had been made that not a single water body will be filled up. 'Take Pride in the East Kolkata Wetlands' was a call by Dhrubajyoti Ghosh that created the spark. Sudeshna Ghosh, geography teacher and departmental head for humanities, became the life force behind the movement at the school. Ghosh stated that all the students know about their cause for the wetlands as they included student's research, photographs and interviews taken by them during their visit in the pages of the school almanac.

**Source:**

- <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/kids-lead-from-front-in-drive-to-save-wetlands/articleshow/59303498.cms>

## News on Wetland Pollution

The destroying and encroaching mangroves across the city Kamothe, Navi Mumbai continues to be a threat. Debris dumping has been prevalent in several places of the city. At Kamothe, a land shark has illegally barricaded a significant chunk of wetlands and has also installed a gate there to state that this is 'private property'. At another wetland site, a massive debris dumping has been noticed. TOI had carried out a series of reports as to how the mangroves in Khandeshwar-Mansarovar region were being systematically destroyed and the land illegally converted into agricultural farms. Also, how a large patch of mangroves off Palm Beach Road was deliberately set on fire in broad daylight by encroachers.

**Source:**

- <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/navi-mumbai/land-shark-encroaches-wetland-at-kamothe-activists-allege-authorities-passing-buck/articleshow/59302239.cms>