

MANGALAVANAM BIRD SANCTUARY

The Mangalavanam Bird sanctuary, the green lung to the city of Kochi, is a patch of natural greenery comprising mainly of mangrove species in the small tidal wetland. This has been declared as a protected area on 31st August 2004. Of the 26 biogeographic zones in India, Kerala has three major zones viz., Western Ghats Malabar Plain (5A), Western Ghats Mountains (B) and West Coast (8A). Mangalavanam falls under West Coast (8A) biogeographic zone.

Location and Extent : Mangalavanam area is situated in the Ernakulam district in Kerala 900 59' 13.4" N latitude and 760 16' 26.1" E longitude. Currently the area under protection is only a small patch of greenery with a tidal wetland with an extent of 2.74 ha.

Drainage and River: A shallow tidal pond occupying part of the sanctuary has the periphery covered by dense growth mangrove vegetation and is connected with Cochin backwaters by a feeder canal.

Flora: The total extent of 2.74 ha. of declared as Protected Area consist of a small pond with its edges covered with mangrove vegetation and the surrounding area with other trees species that can grow coastal region.

It is reported that 17 true mangrove species and 23 semi-mangrove species occur in the state. The true mangrove and mangrove associate species that exist in the sanctuary are *Avicennia officinalis*, *Rhizophora mucranata*, *Acanthus ilicifolius* and *Acrostichus aureum* are the species of conservation importance. Of the recorded species *Acanthus ilicifolius* is considered to be Endangered and *Rhizophora mucranata* as a Vulnerable according to IUCN.

Fauna: Though the extent region is comparatively small, a large number of birds and other faunal elements were reported from the Protected Area. In a study revealed that a total of 6 species of mammals (Indian flying fox- *Pteropus giganteus*, painted bat- *Kerivoula picta*, three striped palm squirrel – *Funnambulus sublineatus*, house rat- *Rattus rattus*, bandicoot rat- *Bandicota indica*, and otter *Lutra* sp.). Two species of amphibians (*Limnonectes limnocharis* and *Bufo melanostictus*), and seven species of fishes (*Anabas testudines*, *Aplocheilichthys lineatus*, *Etropterus maculatus*, *E. suratensis*, *Monopterus*

fossorius, *Rasbora daniconius* and *Sarotherodon mossambica*). Mangalavanam is primarily a bird refuge. A bird survey conducted in the month of May 2006, and found that 194 birds belonging to 32 species. The total number of bird species recorded so far from the area is 72. During a study conducted on 2006, 17 species of butterflies were recorded in the Protected Area. 51 species of spiders belonging to 40 genera and 16 families were recorded from the Protected Area. This represented 27% of the total families reported from India.