

SHENDURNEY WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Shendurney Wildlife Sanctuary was constituted as per Government order dated 25th August 1984, considering its ecological, faunal, floral and geomorphological importance. The etymological meaning of the name “Shendurney” has been derived from a tree locally called ‘Chenkurinji’ or ‘Chenkurunji’ (*Gluta travancorica*), which is an endemic tree confined to this tract. The sanctuary is a valley of green splendour acclaimed for its rich biodiversity lying on either side of the Shendurney river.

Location and extent : Shendurney wildlife sanctuary, is located in Kollam District and comes under the control of Agasthyavanam Biological Park Circle. It covers an area of 171 sq. km with extension of 76° 59’ 30 “ and 77° 16’ 30 “ East Longitude and 8° 44 ‘ and 9°14’ North Latitude.

Topography : The whole area is hilly in character with a gentle slope towards the west. The eastern portion near the high hills is very irregular being interspersed with ravines. Altitude ranging from 100 to 1550m . Highest Peak is Alwarkurichi (1550m)

Temperature : The climate is hot and humid in general, but fairly equable. There is no appreciable variation in temperature both seasonal and diurnal. The hottest months are March to May and the coldest, December and January. Summer rains bring down the temperature slightly during June and July. The maximum temperature during daytime in the hottest month of the year is about 39°C. The temperature varies between 17°C to 35°C . The hot and humid climate favours luxuriant growth of vegetation in the tract.

Rainfall :

Annual rainfall varies from 2600 to 3000mm. This area receives both southwest and northeast monsoon rains of which the former, with a longer duration, lasting from May to August and even extending up to September, is important. During the season the sky is generally overcast and there may be incessant rains for days together resulting in high floods. The northeast monsoon is intermittent and usually occurs in the afternoons during late September, October and November. The rainfall is fairly well distributed almost throughout the year, but in certain years it is reported to be somewhat erratic.

Drainage and rivers : The major rivers are Shendurney, Kazhuthuruthy and Kulathupuzha which join together to form the Kallada river. Important tributaries are Umayar, Parappar, Uruliar, and Pasmankandamthodu. The watershed of Kallada reservoir roughly coinciding with the boundary of the sanctuary is an important source of water for irrigation purposes to the districts of Kollam and Pathanamthitta.

Flora: Forest Types include West coast tropicalevergreen, Southern hilltop triopical evergreen, West coast tropical semi-evergreen, Southern secondary moist mixed deciduous forest, Myristica swamp forest, Southern sub-tropical hill forests, Reed brakes and grassland. It is a treasure house of plant diversity. About 951 species of flowering plants belonging to 150 families are reported from this sanctuary of which 309 species are endemic to Western Ghats. Occurrence of more than 100 species of threatened plants within the sanctuary, which is the type locality of several endemic and threatened species. Presence of unique vegetation of Myristica swamps. Tropical evergreen and semi evergreen forest comprises three fourth of the total area of the sanctuary. Common tree species are Gluta travancorica, Terminalia paniculata, T.ballerica, Pterocarpus marsupium, Cullenia exarillita, Palanquium ellipticum, Mesuaferrea, Poeciloneuron indicum, Elaeocarpus tuberculata, Mangifera indica, Vateria indica, Dipterocarpus indicus, Vitex altissima etc.

Fauna : A total of 34 species of mammals including large and smaller ones are identified in Shendurney Wildlife Sanctuary. Among this Nilgiri langur, Lion-tailed macaque and Brown palm civet are endemic to Western Ghats. 35 species were recorded from Shendurney Wildlife Sanctuary. Of these, *Calotes elliotti*, *Ristella beddomii* and *Brachiophidium rhodogaster* are endemic to Western Ghats. 22 species of amphibians were identified from Shendurney Wildlife Sanctuary. *Gegenophis ramaswami*, *Indirana beddomii*, *Indirana leithii*, *Rana semipalmatus*, *Rana temporalis*, *Philuatus leucorhinus*, *Micrixalus fuscus*, *Nyctibatrachus major* and *Rhacophorus malabaricus* are the endemic species to Western Ghats. 42 species of fishes were identified in Shendurney Wildlife Sanctuary. *Batasio travancoria*, *Parambassis thomassi* are the species endemic to Kerala . *Batasio travancoria* and *Tor kudree* are the endangered species seen in Shendurney and associated streams. 245 species of birds were identified to be existing in Shendurney Wildlife Sanctuary. New species like Ceylon Frogmouth, Forest Eagle Owl, Brown Wood Owl, Short-Toed Eagle, Yellowcheeked Tit etc. are found

during this year. The Travancore Laughing Thrush is another valuable member of this Sanctuary. The breeding and nesting of River Tern and Little Pratincole is periodically observed and established here. The rare and endemic butterflies include Southern birdwing, Malabar rose, Malabar tree nymph, Blue oakleaf, Red Helen, Budha and Blue banded peacock, Spotted puffin, Southern duffer, Blue pansy, Malabar raven and Map butterfly. *Aristolochia indica* a plant used in traditional medicine and the food plant of the largest butterfly in the Indian region, Southern Birdwing, is found in the undergrowth of this forest.

Ecotourism : The first eco-tourism project in India, Thenmala Eco-tourism Project making use of land and water area of the sanctuary add colour to the prominence of the sanctuary, its role in the nature education and promoting ecologically sustainable tourism. Trekking to the forests. The eco-tourism packages offered a present are Dharbakulam trail, Kallar trail and Kattilappara – Choodal bird watching trail. Boating in the reservoir operated jointly by the Department and Thenmala Ecotourism Promotion Society.