

THATTEKKADU BIRD SANCTUARY

This is the only Bird sanctuary in Kerala which was constituted during 1983. Thattekkadu bird sanctuary is also known as Dr. Salim Ali bird Sanctuary which is India's largest bird sanctuary. The Thattekkad Bird Sanctuary was designed by Dr. Salim Ali, the renowned ornithologist.

Location and extent : It is located in Kothamangalam Taluk of Ernakulam District and extends to an area of 25.16 sq.km. i.e. 76°40' and 76° 45' East Longitude and 10° 7' and 11° North Latitude.

Topography : Altitude ranging from 35 to 488 m. Major peaks in the sanctuary is Thoppimudi and Njayapilli. The highest point is the Njayapilli peak (523 m).

Temperature : Temperature varies from 20°C to 32°C. Hottest period is April-May and coolest period is December- January

Rainfall : Rainfall varies from 1400 to 2300 mm.

Drainage and rivers : Several marshy land/vayals are found in certain areas bordering with the Periyar and Idamalayar Rivers. A part of the sanctuary is submerged due to Bhoothathankettu Irrigation Dam. The lake skirting the Thattekkadu bird sanctuary is the one formed by the Bhoothathankettu dam.

Flora : Forest Types includes Tropical Evergreen Forests, Tropical Semi-evergreen forests, Moist Deciduous forests, Riparian Forests, Plantations of Teak, Rosewood, Mahogany and Fruit Orchard. Common tree species are *Eleocarpus tuberculatus*, *Canarium strictum*, *Evodia aiunenkanda*, *Nephelium longata*, *Dipterocarpus indicus*, *Palanquium ellipticum*, *Myristica dactyloides*, *Hopea parviflora*, *Tetrameles nudiflora*, *Dysoxylum malabaricum* and *Lagerstroemia microcarpa*, *Tectona grandis*, *Dalbergia latifolia*, *Terminalia bellarica*, *T. paniculata*, *T. chebula*, *Bridelia retusa*, *Emblica officinalis*, *Grewia tiliaefolia* etc.

Fauna : There are 34 species of mammals, 270 species of birds, 30 species of reptiles, 15 species of amphibians and 47 species of fishes reported from the sanctuary. The common animals found are Leopard, sloth bear, porcupine etc. Elephants are occasional visitors. There are more than 300 Bird species here at Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary. He identified about 167 bird Species and his

student, Dr. Sugathan, identified about 207 species of birds. The Bombay Natural History Society has also identified about 300 species of birds here. Common birds are Indian roller, Cuckoo, common snipe, crow pheasant, grey drongo, Malabar trogon, wood peckers, large pied wagtail, Indian hill myna etc. Rare birds found are Ceylon Frogmouth, Bourdillon's Long eared Indian Nightjar, Peninsular Bay owl, Crimson throated barbet, Malabar hornbill, Malabar hornbill, Malabar shama, Greyheaded fishing eagle etc.