

**NEYYAR
WILDLIFE
SANCTUARY**

Introduction : Neyyar Wildlife Sanctuary is situated in the extreme southern tip of Kerala State, 30 kms away from Thiruvananthapuram, the capital city. This area was notified as a Wildlife Sanctuary in 1958 and forms the catchment of Neyyar Reservoir.

The Sanctuary is located between 8° 30' and 8° 38' N. Lat. and 77° 8' and 77° 17' E. Long. covering an area of about 128 km². It is contiguous with Kalakkadu Tiger Reserve and Mundanthurai Wildlife Sanctuary of Tamil Nadu. The famous Agasthya malai is a part of the Sanctuary.

A good number of people have settled in and around the tract. There are 14 settlements of the Kani tribe within the Sanctuary. Both tribals and non-tribals exert biotic pressure on the Sanctuary.

The tract abodes substantial natural forests ranging from montane sub-tropical and tropical evergreen to degraded moist deciduous types. The complexity and diversity of flora make it an ideal Sanctuary. The main attractions of Neyyar Sanctuary are floral and faunal diversity, trekking to Meenmutty falls and Agasthyar peak, Lion Safari Park and Crocodile farm.

Topography : The topography is rugged with flat meadows and gentle to steep slopes. The altitude ranges from 90 m to 1,868 m.

Climate : The climate is moderately hot and humid. The temperature varies from 16° C to 35° C. The mean an-



The lake view

nual rainfall is 2,800 mm and the tract receives both south-west and north-east monsoons.

Forests : Due to the varied climatic and topographic conditions, the Sanctuary presents very remarkable diversity in vegetation. The forest types in the area are West coast tropical evergreen, West coast semi-evergreen, Southern hill-top tropical evergreen, Southern wet temperate, Southern moist mixed deciduous and Southern montane grasslands. At elevations between 100 and 800 m, moist deciduous and semi-evergreen forests dominate, the latter mostly confining to river courses and streams. From 700 to 1300 m, the vegetation is predominantly evergreen. Above 1,300 m, the vegetation includes several temperate elements forming shola forests along the valleys with grasslands occupying the hill-tops. A small area is planted with eucalypts and teak. These are in an abandoned state and have profuse secondary growth.

Flora : The flora is very diverse with a relatively high percentage of endemism. It is estimated that there are over 1,000 species of flowering plants in the Sanctuary and about 12% of them are endemic to the region. A note-worthy feature of the vegetation is the preponderance of orchids. About 125 species have been recorded from the Sanctuary. The area abodes several rare, endemic plants which are grouped under the category of threatened plants (Eg. *Bentinckia condapana*, *Poeciloneuron pauciflorum*, *Humboldtia unijuga*, *Eugenia floccosa*, *E. discifera*, *Ardisia missionis*, *Eria bonaccordensis*, *Janakia arayalpatra*, *Dialium travancoricum*, *Semecarpus auriculata*, *Polyscias acuminata*, *Paphiopedilum dru-*



An endangered flower

ryi, *Eulophia macro-stachya*, *E. cullenii*, *Hetaeria ovalifolia*, *Chiloschista glandulosa*).

Fauna : The Sanctuary has a variety of animals. The evergreen forests contiguous with the adjoining protected areas of Tamil Nadu, support viable populations of the endangered Lion-tailed macaque and Nilgiri langur. The other arboreals include Bonnet macaque and Malabar giant squirrel. Nilgiri tahr is also seen in the higher peaks of the area. Elephants and Sambar deer are the most commonly seen animals. Gaur, Barking deer, Mouse deer and Wild boar are the other major herbivores. Tiger and Leopard are also reported from the Sanctuary.

Avifauna of the Sanctuary is highly diverse and rich. Darter, Little cormorant, Hill myna, Little green heron, Brahminy kite, Racket-tailed drongo, Emerald dove and Grey jungle fowl are a few to mention.

A variety of snakes like python, cobra, viper, etc. are also seen. The reservoir of the Neyyar Dam supports a good population of crocodiles and otters.

Administration : The Neyyar Wildlife Sanctuary comes under Thiruvananthapuram Wildlife Division and is administered by an Assistant Wildlife Warden at Neyyar Dam site.

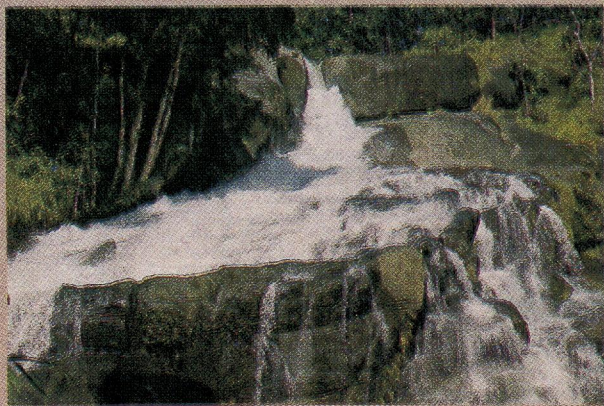


Shoot us with a camera

Wildlife Tourism : The magnificent waterfall at Meenmutty and the trekking to Agasthyar Peak are added attractions to wildlife enthusiasts. In addition, the Sanctuary manages a Lion Safari Park and a Crocodile farm. *Lion Safari Park*, situated in an island near Neyyar is open to tourists on all days except Mondays. The lions in the park roam freely in an area of about four hectares. The visitors are taken in a bus. *The Crocodile farm* was established in 1977 and is located near the administrative complex at Neyyar. The main objective of the farm is to establish a breeding stock of this endangered reptile for reintroduction in its known former ranges. More than a hundred crocodiles of different age groups are kept in specially designed tanks.

Boating in the Neyyar Reservoir is a fascinating experience. A rest house and youth hostel are available for tourists near the dam site. At Meenmutty, there is another rest house in the wild.

The Sanctuary is approachable from Thiruvananthapuram by road. Thiruvananthapuram city, 30 kms away, is the nearest airport/rail head. Link services are available throughout the day and the Kerala Tourism Development Corporation arranges conducted tours to Neyyar. Nature education camps are organised at the Sanctuary by the Wildlife Wing of the Kerala Forest Department. **December - May is the appropriate season for visiting the area.**



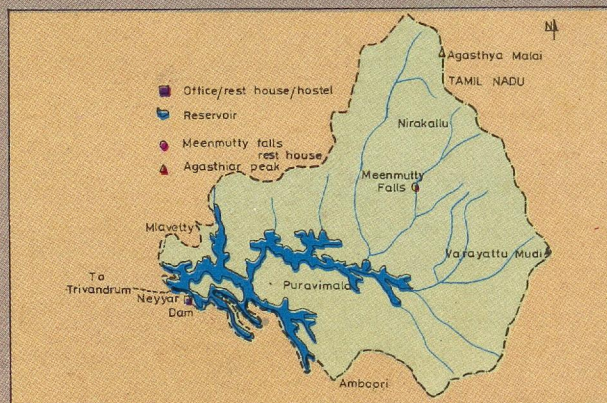
The enchanting falls

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Designed & Produced by Publicity Wing,
Kerala Forest Research Institute



The Editor - ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

15.6 ✓

LIONS IN TROUBLE

Neyyar

(Neyyar Sanctuary adjacent) NEYYAR

392

After the Crocodile of the Neyyar Dam in Kerala it is now the Lions of Neyyar in trouble.

One of the best safari safaris in the Southern India, the four acre safari of Neyyar adjacent to Sanctuary is over Crowded violating the CZA Rules the area is only 4 acres while the actual should be Twenty (20). The Lions today face threat from the adjacent villagers. The numbers which are increasing.

② As the lion have started
existing the lions may jump
out any time resulting in
the death of the lions if
being attacked by the villagers.
Similar to, the threat to the
Crocodiles in Neyyar
Dam. The overcrowding
may lead to the big
fight between the lions.

The increasing population
in the near by villages are
affecting the safety of
the lions in the safari.

The Malapuram SPCA is
intending to take up the
matter along with the
friends of Elephants Forum
with the "Animal Board
of India" but we also
requesting the

Protected Area
update

to interper in the matter
before it is too late for
the lions safety.

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673006
Not
613006

VINOD KUNAL DAMODAR
Asst: president
friends of Elephants forum
BREEZE. CALICUT
673006.

PS

This could be used for
PA update?

My new address! c/o A. K. Ghosh
F/6/B/2/1 Sector - 8 Khanda
Colony, New Panvel (W) -
410206

KK
12/9/02

PAN 33

DESPATCH

SHANKER



SPACE CONSTRAINTS: Crocodile attacks have maimed 30 already

Unsafe Sanctuary for Man and Beast

Thiruvananthapuram: The crystal-clear waters of the reservoir at the nearby Neyyar wildlife sanctuary were a beacon to tourists who wanted to get away from it all. They probably don't know how close they really came to doing that. The crocodiles introduced to the reservoir in 1983—when the sanctuary's crocodile farm became overcrowded—have been coming to the surface rather too frequently. Sukumaran Nadar, 68, was killed by a mugger crocodile in August, and P. Rajamma, 52, met with the same fate in January this year. The 8-sq km reservoir is the only source of water for

the more than 5,000 people living on its banks, and more than 30 of them have lost their limbs in crocodile attacks. While hunting crocodiles or destroying their eggs still remains punishable under the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, the state Government has decided to offer a reward of Rs 4,000 to anyone who captures a crocodile and returns it to the farm. Experts say selective culling is the only solution, but for that the law will have to be amended. Perhaps what's needed is a real-life *Crocodile Dundee* in Kerala.

—M.G. Radhakrishnan

OBITUARY



DASARI MINU and MEKHALA ABHINAV



Viswanathan Anand was her favourite player, and on September 25, Dasari Minu would meet him at the All India FIDE Rating Chess Tournament to be held in Puri. But it was not to be. Even before she and 10 other players reached Puri, the Tata Sumo they were travelling in collided with a bus near Sakhigopal, 40 km from Bhubaneswar. Minu was among the five chess players who died on the spot. The others were Mekhala Abhinav, Maturi Hemamadhuri, Haricharan and Kasipeta Sekhar, all young achievers who had big dreams to fulfil. Minu, a Class VII student from Ongole, won the under-10 Asian Championship held at Bikaner last year. She was scheduled to play at the World Youth Championship in Spain next month.

Abhinav, 11, from Nalgonda district, won the Asian boys under-10 title in Iran last year. The children were regarded as successors to the most outstanding player from the state, the youngest Indian Grandmaster ever, P. Harikrishna. After the tragedy, the tournament was cancelled.

SIGNPOSTS ELECTED

Smita Thackeray, president of Indian Motion Pictures Producers' Association, the oldest representative body of the film industry in



India. She is Bal Thackeray's daughter-in-law.

BROKEN

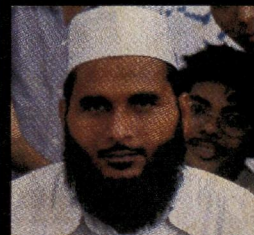
After 37 years, Gurbachan Singh Randhawa's national record in the 110-m hurdles, by Gurpreet Singh. The Northern Railways ticket collector clocked 14.07 seconds, beating Randhawa's 14.09 second record set at the 1964 Olympics.

CROSSED

Masudur Rahman Baidya from Kolkata, the Straits of Gibraltar. Both his legs are amputated at the knee. He is the first person with such a disability to complete the feat. Baidya has also crossed the English Channel.

ABSCONDING

SHAHID BADRA, Students' Islamic Movement of India chief, after a non-bailable warrant was issued against him and three other SIMI activists for anti-India rhetoric. SIMI is known to lionise Osama bin Laden.



MANEESH AGNIHOTRI

WORLDWATCH

Map by NILANJAN DAS



long border with its troubled eastern neighbour, and is home to 20 lakh Afghan refugees. It has long been a key supporter of the anti-Taliban forces, particularly the Hizb-i-Wahadat, the Shia militia led by Karim Khalili. Hostilities between Iran and the Taliban had nearly led to war in 1998.

Iran: Among the players in the current "Great Game" afoot in Afghanistan, Iran has a crucial role to play. The country has a

The US, called the Great Satan by Ayatollah Khomeini, has been trying to enlist Iran's support in the current fight,

but without much success. British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw visited Teheran, followed by EU representatives. Their efforts were met with Ayatollah Ali Khomeini refusing any help and asking the US, "How dare you, who have caused blows to Iran's interest, request our help in attacking the innocent Muslim nation of Afghanistan?" There are moderates in Iran who would like to see the country rehabilitated in the international arena. The massive Caspian oil reserves are a factor for both Iran and the West. However overt rapprochement is ruled out.

In 1997, a group called the 6+2 was formed at the United Nations under the UN secretary general to seek a solution to the Afghan conflict. The "6" are the countries that border Afghanistan. The US and Russia are the other "2". That leaves out some interested parties, including India. On the diplomatic front this kind of formula may be most palatable for Iran. Covert support to the Shia militias will probably continue. Apart from the refugee problem, Iran has many strategic and economic reasons for wanting a friendly regime in Afghanistan.

—Samrat Choudhury

SPOTLIGHT

Which Way Will Bangladesh Go?

THESE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS MAY DECIDE WHETHER THE COUNTRY BECOMES MORE HARDLINE ISLAMIC

SAIBAL DAS



The outcome of the general elections in Bangladesh on October 1 has one certainty: the next prime minister is either Sheikh Hasina Wajed (Awami League) or Khaleda Zia of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). Both have tasted power, Khaleda between 1991 and 1996 and Hasina after that.

Regarded since its birth in 1971 as an international basket case, Bangladesh began clawing its way back from abject poverty under Hasina's rule, recording almost 6 per cent annual growth and putting a brake on inflation. It is doubtful, however, if these achievements will bring her any electoral

dividends. Khaleda leads an opposition more united than ever before, with her BNP, which has its own middle-class following, joining up with all shades of pro-Islamist parties and groups. Khaleda is the front-runner, with Hasina having shown the first symptom of failing nerves by calling the caretaker government names. The election this week may determine if Bangladesh is prepared to adopt an Islamic character. It will depend on whether Khaleda becomes prime minister and how much bargaining power she retains in Parliament vis-a-vis her fundamentalist coalition partners.

—Sumit Mitra

DEFENCE

After Sanctions

C. RAMESH



Many critical projects should see progress

- The flight control system for the light combat aircraft, which was impounded while under development by DRDO and Lockheed Martin, may be returned.



- The engines for India's advanced light helicopter may be made available from US firms.
- Weapon-locating radars, used to locate enemy artillery guns, may be sold to India.
- Crucial spares for Sea King helicopters and Sea Harrier jets become available. —Shishir Gupta

Neyyar forest officials to get rich
of Crocodiles!

PAV32

The Forest-wild life authorities of Neyyar wild life sanctuary in 'TRIVANDRUM' district is facing trouble. They are today trying to get rid of the crocodiles in the 'Neyyar Reservoir'. The Neyyar Reservoir was converted into a Crocodile breeding center in 1983.

The 128 km² Neyyar Sanctuary is abundant with wild life including TIGER. The only "lion safari" of Kerala is situated in the Sanctuary area. The Sanctuary was having crocodiles in the wild earlier also. However now the number has increased in such a way the Human-Crocodile conflict has increased.

The area's only source of drinking water is the Reservoir & the people going to the area is caught by the Crocodile. The human rights commission has now to interfere in the matter has given ultimatum to the forest officials.

2000

VINOD KUMAR DAMODAR

Breeze

Friends of Elephants
forum

Near Cherooty Nagar

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Kerala