

## 3-lakh plan to restore bird sanctuary

BANGALORE, Aug. 18. (UNI) — An elaborate plan has been prepared to restore the famed Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary near Mysore, ravaged by the floods of the Cauvery, to its original splendour.

The Rs. 3-lakh plan drawn up by the Karnataka Forest Department envisages restoration of two islands worst-hit in the floods, camping sites and facilities for tourists. Construction of granite walls around the island to prevent damage in future floods has been proposed in the plan detailed by Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) U.T. Alva after his visit to the sanctuary, Forest Department

sources told UNI.

This picturesque abode is the haven for many a winged species. The white ibis, the catal egret, the cormorant, the open bill stork, the spoon bill, the night heron, the daughter of snake bird and the great stone plover breed here. The common sandpiper and green sandpiper, the Blyth's reed warbler, and the greenish leaf warbler migrate to the sanctuary from the Arctic region during the winter.

On July 28, the flash floods in the Cauvery wrought havoc to the sanctuary. The islands came under the swirling waters. The vegetation was affected and 500 to 600 nestlings of

the white ibis, the egrets and cormorants washed away. Many young crocodiles were also washed downstream, but were rescued from the fields along the banks of the Cauvery and released into the river.

The sources said the damage caused by the floods at the sanctuary was around Rs. 1.5 lakh. The restoration plan has proposed to improve the tree-cover on the islands by planting saplings of ficus and salix species, which develop big crowns to shelter the birds.

**ADAPTABILITY:** Meanwhile, Dr. R.J. Ranjit Daniels of the Centre for Ecological Studies (CES) at the In-

dian Institute of Science (IISc) here said there was no reason for alarm at the loss of the young ones. First, the species that breed at Ranganathittu were resident water birds and not the migrants. Birds of all species were adopted to meet the fluctuation in the population dynamics caused by natural calamities, he told UNI.

Dr. Daniels said whenever a catastrophe occurred, the birds fly away and nest elsewhere or return to the original place to lay the eggs. Though this was the first calamity in Ranganathittu, sanctuaries in other parts of the country had witnessed problems caused by vagaries of nature.