

BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL

SOUTHERN ZONE, CHENNAI

Original Application No.13 of 2025 (SZ)

In the matter of:

Tribunal on its own motion - SUO MOTU based on the News item in The New Indian Express newspaper, Chennai e-edition dated 16.01.2025, titled, "Experts are alarmed as 350 turtles was ashore dead till January 15".

Versus

Union of India, Represented by its Secretary,
MOEF & CC, New Delhi and ors.

...Respondent(s)

REPORT FILED BY 6TH RESPONDENT-
THE PRINCIPAL CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF FOREST AND CHIEF WILDLIFE
WARDEN, CHENNAI.

INDEX

S. No.	Date	Description	Page No.
1	17.03.2025	Report Filed By 6 th Respondent- The Principal Chief Conservator Of Forest And Chief Wildlife Warden	1-4
2	11.03.2025	Annexure 1	5-8

(Note: The page numbers are at the top centre of every page)



Through
Dr. D. Shanmuganathan
Standing Counsel of Tamil Nadu
National Green Tribunal
Southern Zone, Chennai

DATE: 17.03.2025

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IN THE MATTER OF:

Tribunal on its own motion SUO MOTU
based on the News Item in The New Indian
Express newspaper, Chennai e-edition dt.16.01.2025,
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dead till January 15"

And

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MOEF & CC, New Delhi and others.

....Respondent(s)

STATUS REPORT FILED BY THE 6th RESPONDENT

I, Rakesh Kumar Dogra, I.F.S., Son of Late M L Dogra, Hindu, aged about 57 years, residing at A-1204, AIS Housing Complex, TAISHA, Nerkundram, Chennai-92, and presently working as Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden, Chennai do hereby solemnly affirm and sincerely state as follows:

1. It is respectfully submitted that I am the 6th respondent herein, and I am acquainted with the facts of the case based on the available records. I am filing this counter on behalf of Tamil Nadu Forest Department.
2. It is respectfully submitted that due to special efforts taken by the department in wake of recent high mortality of sea turtle, it has been possible to bring down the mortality count of sea turtles as on date.
3. It is respectfully submitted that a High-level consultative meeting to

mitigate turtle mortality in Tamil Nadu with members of State Board for Wildlife and experts was held at 03:00 pm on 14-02-2025 under the chairmanship of Hon'ble Minister for Forests and Khadi and the Additional Chief Secretary to Government, Environment Climate Change and Forests Department in Secretariat, Chennai.

4. It is respectfully submitted that the following long term actionable points were decided to mitigate Sea Turtle mortality in the State of Tamil Nadu.
 - i. It was decided that a long-term strategy was required to mitigate Turtle Mortality in the State of Tamil Nadu for which the Wildlife Institute of India would be requested to conduct an extensive telemetry study about Turtle conservation areas through a comprehensive survey and assessment. This would give an idea about protection measures to be taken where Sea Turtle prefer to congregate during the nesting season. This will also provide invaluable information about Turtle movement and their migratory behaviour.
 - ii. The Government will consider providing legal support for protecting such identified critical sea turtle congregation and nesting areas as Conservation reserve to have a focused approach.
 - iii. It was also decided to undertake long-term fishermen education and orientation programme on Turtle conservation, making them stakeholders in the programme. A collaborative project would go a long way in sustainable conservation efforts for Sea Turtles.
 - iv. It was also decided in the meeting to strengthen surveillance mechanism jointly by the Forest, Fisheries, Coast Guard and Coastal Security group of the Tamil Nadu Police.
 - v. To further strengthen surveillance, the Forest Department would

- induct specialized boats to be operated jointly for the purpose of patrolling.
- vi. The use of Turtle excluder devices (TED) has been mandatory for fishing so as to conserve turtles. It was decided to enforce its use strictly.
 - vii. The local administration including Corporations, Municipalities and Rural local bodies will take steps to keep nesting beaches clean from garbage, unauthorized construction to prevent damage to nests from stray dogs.
 - viii. The ABC (Animal Birth Control) programme to be especially implemented comprehensively on priority in these areas to keep the stray dogs population in check, which pose a great threat to the nesting turtles.
 - ix. One of the most important steps towards protecting turtles from loosing their direction would be to switch-off bright lights from beaches for which Government orders are already in place. Local bodies would take steps to either change the direction of the light away from the beach or switch them off during night hours during the nesting season to prevent disorientation of turtles.
 - x. A large group of volunteers are already working in the turtle conservation programme. This could be further expanded, and their services could also be utilized towards community surveys.
5. It is respectfully submitted that the details of Sea turtle hatchlings released during 2024-25 in comparison with previous year is tabulated below

i.

Year	Nests	Eggs	Hatchlings
2023-2024	2364	258907	215778
2024-2025	2442	272382	22270 (as on 13.03.2025)

6. It is noticed that consequent to concerted efforts of Government of Tamil Nadu and action coordinated by the Forest Department through Turtle Task Force, Fisheries department and various law enforcement agencies including Coastal Security Group, Marine Enforcement wing of fisheries, Indian Coast Guard and various NGOs support from grassroots, there is a great improvement in turtle conservation as seen from the record number of turtle nests and eggs during the current year in spite of initial high mortality noticed in recent times. The season is still continuing, and department has increased the number of hatcheries to accommodate new nest discoveries.

In light of the above facts and circumstances, it is humbly prayed that this Hon'ble Tribunal may pass any direction or order as it may deem fit, in the interests of justice and ecological preservation.

**Signed by Rakesh Kumar
Dogra**

Date: 15-03-2025 10:20:04

Date:-15-03-2025

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
& Chief Wildlife Warden



**Environment, Climate Change
and Forests (FR.5) Department,
Secretariat, Chennai-9.
Phone:- 044-25671511
E-mail:-eccfd@tn.gov.in**

Letter No.327/FR.5/2025-3, dated 11.03.2025

From
Thiru.U.Viswanathan, M.B.A., B.L.,
Additional Secretary to Government.

To
The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and
Chief Wildlife Warden,
Chennai – 32. (w.e.)

All the members of Standing Committee for
State Board for Wildlife (w.e.)
(Through The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and
Chief Wildlife Warden)

Sir/Madam,

Sub: Forests – Wildlife - High Level Consultative Meeting held on
14.02.2025 – Minutes communicated - Regarding.

Ref: 1. Government letter No. 327/FR.5/2025-2, dated 13.02.2025.
2. Your letter Ref.No.WL5/HOTNFE/261/2024, Dated 15.02.2025.

I am directed to enclose a copy of the approved minutes of the meeting
of the High Level Consultative Meeting held on 14.2.2025 under the Chairmanship of
Hon'ble Minister (Forests and Khadi) for necessary action and request you to send
your action taken report to Government immediately.

Yours faithfully,

P. Selvi
11-3-25

for Additional Secretary to Government

Copy to:-

The Special P.A. to Hon'ble Minister (Forests and Khadi),
Chennai – 9. (w.e.)

The Private Secretary to Additional Chief Secretary to Government,
Environment, Climate Change and Forests Department,
Chennai – 9. (w.e.)

**MINUTES OF THE HIGH LEVEL CONSULTATIVE MEETING HELD
ON 14.02.2025 AT 03:00 PM UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF
HON'BLE MINISTER FOR FORESTS AND KHADI**

A high-level consultative meeting to mitigate Sea Turtle mortality in Tamil Nadu with members of State Board for Wildlife and experts was held on 14.02.2025 at 03:00 pm under the chairmanship of Hon'ble Minister for Forests and Khadi in the old conference hall, 2nd Floor, Old Building, Secretariat, Chennai – 600 009.

The list of participants is annexed

At the outset, the Additional Chief Secretary to Government welcomed the Hon'ble Minister for Forests and Khadi and all the Members and gave an outline for discussion on imperative of sea-turtle conservation and special efforts required to be taken in the wake of recent high mortality of Sea Turtles. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden appraised the members on sea turtle conservation and action taken by the Forest Department and Nodal Task force constituted by the Government for this purpose. The views of experts and members were elicited during the meeting.

With detailed deliberations during the meeting, the following long term actionable points were decided to mitigate Sea Turtle mortality in state of Tamil Nadu:-

1. It was decided that a long-term strategy was required to mitigate turtle mortality in Tamil Nadu for which the Wildlife Institute of India would be requested to conduct an extensive Telemetry study to find out areas where turtles congregate in large numbers in Tamil Nadu coast for feeding, breeding and nesting through comprehensive survey and assessment. This would give an idea about protection measures to be taken where Sea Turtle prefer to congregate during the nesting season. This will also provide valuable information about Turtle movement and their migratory behaviour.
2. The Government will consider providing legal support for protecting such identified critical Sea Turtle congregation and nesting areas as Conservation reserve to have a focused approach.
3. The high-level Consultative meeting also decided to undertake long-term fishermen education and orientation programme on Turtle conservation making them stakeholders in the programme. A collaborative project would go a long way in sustainable conservation efforts for Sea Turtles.
4. It was also decided in the meeting to strengthen surveillance mechanism jointly by the Forest, Fisheries, Coast Guard and Coastal Security group of the Tamil Nadu Police, along with volunteers and NGOs.
5. To further strengthen surveillance, the Forest Department would induct specialized boats to be operated jointly for the purpose of patrolling.

6. The use of Turtle Excluder Devices (TED) has been mandatory for fishing so as to conserve Turtles. It was decided to enforce its use strictly.
7. The local administration including Corporations, Municipalities and Rural local bodies will take steps to keep nesting beaches clean from garbage and unauthorized construction to prevent damage to nests from stray dogs.
8. The ABC (Animal Birth Control) programme to be implemented comprehensively on priority basis in these areas so as to keep the stray dogs population in check, which pose a great threat to the nesting Turtles and hatchlings.
9. One of the most important steps towards protecting Turtles from losing their direction would be to switch-off bright lights on beaches for which Government orders are already in place. Local bodies would take steps to either change the direction of the light away from the beach or switch them off during night hours during the nesting season to prevent disorientation of turtles.
10. A large group of volunteers are already working in the turtle conservation programme. This could be further expanded, and their services could also be utilized towards community surveys.
11. Also decided to take up a comprehensive study on population and habitat availability of Green turtle and Hawksbill turtle along Tamil Nadu coast.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair and other participants.

SUPRIYA SAHU
ADDITIONAL CHIEF SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT

/ TRUE COPY /

P. Sahu
11.3.25
SECTION OFFICER
SP

List of Participants

Sl. No.	List of Participants	Designation
1.	Hon'ble Minister for Forests and Khadi	Chairperson
2.	The Additional Chief Secretary to Government, Environment, Climate Change and Forests Department, Fort St. George, Chennai.	Member
3.	The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HoFF), Chennai.	Member
4.	Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden, Chennai	Member Secretary
5.	Superintendent of Police Coastal Security Group, Chennai	Special Invitee
6.	Assistant Commandant, Indian Coast Guard	Special Invitee
7.	The Additional Director, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Science Department, Chennai.	Member
8.	The Joint Director and Assistant Director, Fisheries Department, Chennai.	Member
9.	Dr. Ramesh, Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun (through VC)	Member
10.	Thiru. R. Sundararaju, I.F.S., PCCF (Retd), Chennai	Member
11.	Thiru. D. Boominathan, WWF Coimbatore.	Member
12.	Thiru, Pratim Roy, Keystone Foundation NGO/Ecologist	
13.	Thiru. Antony Clement Rubin, Chennai.	Member
14.	Thiru. K. Kalidasan, President, OSAI Environmental Organization	Member
15.	Thiru. Tarsh Thekaekara, Gudalur (through VC)	Member
16.	Thiru Shraavan Krishnan, The Director, Besant Memorial Animal Dispensary	Member
17.	Tmt. S. Savithiri, Servalar Kani Kudiurppu, Tirunelveli.	Member
18.	Thiru. S. Thangapandi, Theni District	Member
19.	Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (WL)	Special Invitee
20.	Special Secretary (Forests), Secretariat, Chennai	Special Invitee
21.	Additional Secretary to Government, Secretariat, Chennai	Special Invitee
22.	Dr. R. Suresh Kumar, Scientist – F, Wildlife Institute of India (through VC)	Special Invitee
23.	Dr. N.V.K. Ashraf, Senior Director and Chief Veterinarian, Wildlife Trust of India (through VC)	Special Invitee
24.	Ms. Akila Balu, Trustee, The Forest Way Trust	Special Invitee
25.	Dr. Supraja Dharini, Founder and Chairperson, TREE Foundation	Special invitee