

BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL

SOUTHERN ZONE, CHENNAI

Original Application No. 250 of 2024 (SZ)

In the matter of:

Tribunal on its own motion
Suo Motu News item appearing
in The Hindu dated 18.06.2024
titled "Fish kill near Adyar ecopark
highlights persisting sewage contamination".

Versus

Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board,
Through its Member Secretary, Chennai and Ors. ...Respondent(s)

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

DATE:12.10.2024

**BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
SOUTHERN ZONE, CHENNAI**

**Original Application No.250/2024 (SZ)
Earlier OA. No. 821/2024 (Principal Bench, New Delhi)**

IN THE MATTER OF:

Tribunal on its own motion on the
News item titled 'Fish Kill near Adyar Eco Park highlights persisting sewage contamination'
appearing in the Hindu
Dt. 18.06.2024

.....Applicant(s)

Versus

Member Secretary
M/s. TNPCB
Govt. of Tamil Nadu, Chennai & ors.

Member Secretary
M/s. Chennai Rivers Restoration Trust for R5

STATUS REPORT FILED BY CHENNAI RIVERS RESTORATION TRUST

We state that in the respect of this Original Application No.821/2024, the issue taken up as suo –motu on the basis of the news items 'Fish kill in the Adyar near Eco-park highlights persisting sewage contamination' appearing in the Hindu dated 18.06.2024.

The matters in the above captioned news items occurred in Adyar River stretch between Kotturpuram Bridge and Thiru.Vi.Ka Bridge (i.e) close to Kotturpuram Urban Tree Park located on River view road.

Restoration of Chennai's major waterways is a top priority for the Government of Tamil Nadu and towards that end, river restoration plans of both Cooum and Adyar rivers have been drawn up and are currently under implementation by various line departments such as Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (CMWSSB), Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC), Water Resources Department (WRD), Directorate of Municipal Administration (DMA),

Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (DRD) and Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Development Board. Chennai Rivers Restoration Trust is entrusted with coordinating and monitoring the projects.

On the day of the news items published, the CRRT and CMWSSB Zone IX officials have immediately inspected the spot and took immediate measures to arrest the outfalls flowing into the river. When reviewed with the CMWSSB vide of our office letter (enclosed) and the CMWSSB submitted their action taken report with the following details;

i) Under the Adyar River Restoration Project (ARRP), CMWSSB taken up the work of laying of interceptor and diversion pipelines in Kotturpuram and Gandhi Nagar Depot 170 and 173, to plug the three outfalls (ID No.AR-680, AR-683 and AR -687) from the Chainage 2000 to 4000 Right Bank.

ii) Also, completed the allied works such as construction of 51 Nos machine holes, laying gravity sewer main for a length of 1396m, construction of sewage pumping station, laying of 15mm dia pumping main for a length of 850 m up to Kottupuram Modular STP of 0.6 MLD capacity. All these works have been completed and put into operation since 22.11.2022.

iii) Meanwhile, on 16.06.2024, the operation of Interceptor and Diversion at the Sewer Pumping Station located at the Lock Street Junction on River View Road, Kotturpuram was affected due to electrical short circuit and damages caused at multiple locations in the power cable which resulted in the outburst. Temporary pumping arrangements was made immediately to restore the operations and completely resumed on 20.06.2024

iv) Now, there is no sewage outflow in that particular Adyar River stretch and the CMWSSB assured to take necessary measures to avoid reoccurrence of it. In the article, there is also a mention on Tilapia fish kill floating near compound wall of Adyar Ecopark and a note on Tilapia is submitted before the Hon'ble NGT.

Removal of Invasive Species at the Creek and Estuary:

a) Tilapia (*Oreochromis mosambica*) is a tropical freshwater fish species belonging to the Cichlidae family and native to Africa and the southwestern Middle East and introduced in India in 1950s. Hence, it was considered as an invasive species occupied


almost all the water bodies and having the nature of high adaptation due to genetic changes induced by the habitat.

- b) They have high reproductive rate and capable to live in low oxygen levels water, tolerate pollution and temperature fluctuations. They become heavy competitor for the native fish species and suppress the growth and eliminating the indigenous fish populations. Sometimes, over population will also lead to massive fish kills.
- c) In order to avoid such conditions, CRRT scientifically carryout the selective culling of overpopulated Tilapia's at Adyar Eco Park as part of water management activity. Since, the date of completion of the eco-restoration project in Phase I and II, the water quality been maintained at the Adyar Eco Park and completely prevented from the outfalls. As reported in the Hindu caption on 16.06.2024, few Tilapia fish kills near the compound wall of Adyar Eco Park was not because of contamination and it was resulted due to sudden increase in the salinity because of high tidal influx towards the creek and this was submitted before the Hon'ble NGT, Southern Bench.

In compliance with the directions of the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (NGT), Principal Bench, New Delhi vide Order dated 13.02.2019, the Chief Secretary is regularly conducting monthly meetings to review the progress of the river restoration works and to ensure that Chennai's waterways are restored, in keeping with the stated commitment of the Government of Tamil Nadu.

Yours Faithfully

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Date : 19.09.2024


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CHENNAI RIVERS RESTORATION TRUST

Report on study of Pisces of Adyar Eco Park (Adyar Creek – Phase I) during the year 2024 -2025

The total estuarine area of Tamil Nadu was estimated to be 56000 ha, which accounts for 3.88% of the total estuarine area of India. In which, Adyar Creek and Estuary is one of the estuaries and brackish water wetlands in Chennai. Estuarine are important buffer zone as it is transition zone between freshwater environments and subject to marine influences such as tides, waves and influx of saline water, freshwater and sediments. Being a dynamic ecosystem, provide habitat for proliferation of diadromous and estuarine resident fish species to complete their life cycle. Also form a significant component of coastal ecosystem due to their immense biodiversity values in aquatic ecology.

Since, we have restored the urban coastal wetland in a phased manner, to observe and record the progress of eco-restoration success; we are conducting fish survey in the creek ecosystem every year during the month of June. Accordingly we have conducted a fish meta population study at the 58 Adyar Creek. Fish were caught by using gill nets, hook and line net by hiring fisherman and boatman. Eleven species belonging to Eleven Families were encountered over two days.

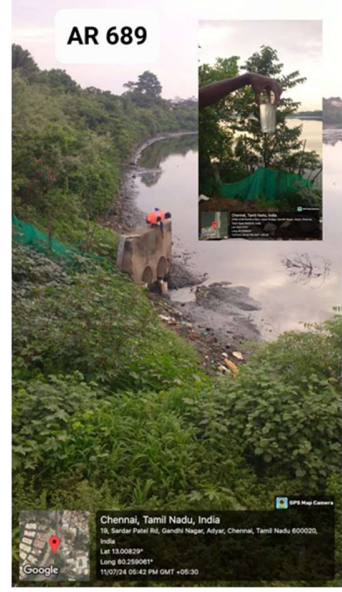
1. Family: Megalopidae - Indo-Pacific Tarpon *Megalops cyprinoides* (Broussonet)
2. Family: Anguillidae - Indian Shortfin Eel *Anguilla bicolor* McClelland
3. Family: Chanidae - Milk Fish *Chanos chanos* (Forsskal)
4. Family: Mugilidae - Flathead Mullet *Mugil cephalus* Linn.
5. Family: Carangidae - Scad *Caranx para* Cuiver
6. Family: Leiognathidae -Toothed Ponyfish *Gazza minuta* (Bloch)
7. Family: Gerridae - Common Mojarra *Gerres oyena* (Forsskal)
8. Family: Teraponidae -Target Perch *Terapon jarbua* (Forsskal)
9. Family: Cichlidae -Egyptian Mouthbreeder or Tilapia *Oreochromis mossambica* (Peters)
10. Family: Channidae - Striped Snake-head *Channa striatus* (Bloch)

As per the capture, we caught 10 species from 10 families and all of them in the storm water retention zone. The highlight of the fishing exercise was that 706 specimens were collected accounting for a total biomass of over 150 kg.



Though the alien invasive species *O. mossambica* dominated numerically, they accounted for a biomass of more than 120 kg (average weight per fish 140 g). One hundred and fourteen *M. cyprinoides* caught and this accounted for a biomass of more than 30 kg (average weight 160 kg). Another notable finding was an *estuarine fishes such as* Target perch, Whipfin Mojarro also caught and released back into the water body. *M. cyprinoides* and *O. mossambica* are the two dominant species recorded in the east of the spillway and accounted for the greater biomass (40 specimens weighing 28 kg at an average weight of 700 g each and the culled species was buried. Though, the water body is restored, bottom sediments may be accumulated with traces of pollutants. Hence, it was not suitable for consumption and the culled out samples has recommended to burry.

Plugged outfalls at the Adyar River between Kootupuram Bride to Thiru.Vi.Ka. Bridge



Electrical Repair works attended by CMWSSB at the Interceptor and Diverter

