

Arittapatti in Madurai District gets Notified as the first Biodiversity Heritage Site in Tamil Nadu

On 22nd Nov 2022, Tuesday, the Government of Tamil Nadu Notified 193.215 ha of area in Arittapatti and Meenakshipuram villages in Madurai District as the "**Arittapatti Biodiversity Heritage Site**" under the Biological Diversity Act of 2002. This is the first Biodiversity Heritage Site (BHS) notified in the State.

The village Arittapatti consists of a chain of seven barren granite hillocks. The distinctive landscape of rocky hills acts as a watershed and supports 72 lakes, 200 natural spring pools, and 3 check dams.

One of the water bodies, viz., Anaikondan lake was built under the reign of Pandiyas in the sixteenth century. Hillocks in Arittapatti village have rich biological and historical significance with the presence of around 250 bird species, including 3 flagship Raptor species – Laggar Falcon (*Falco jugger*), Shaheen Falcon (*Falco peregrines*), and Bonelli's Eagle (*Aquila fasciata*) and wildlife such as Indian Pangolin (*Manis crassicaudata*), Python (*Python molurus*), and Slender Loris (*Loris spp*). Arittapatti also has to several other bird and animal species. The site also features various megalithic structures, Tamil Brahmi inscriptions, Jain Beds, and 2200-year-old rock-cut temples, lending it historical value.

The decision to declare Arittapatti as a Biodiversity Heritage Site was made after consulting local communities, the Department of Archaeology, Tamil Nadu Minerals Ltd., (TAMIN) and other stakeholders.

This Notification will strengthen the bio-diversity conservation efforts with the participation of local communities. This will also help to preserve the rich biological and historical repository of the area.

Additional Chief Secretary to Government,
Environment, Climate Change &
Forests Department

Issued By: - DIPR, Secretariat, Chennai - 9.

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