

## **85 species identified in Pune Cantonment tree census**

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The tree census conducted in Pune Cantonment area last month has revealed that the green cover in the area is home to 85 tree species. The census also identified the largest banyan tree and the tree canopy on RSI road, informed a senior army official.

To convert the green area of the Pune Cantonment into a biodiversity hotspot, the Southern Command Army headquarters has undertaken various initiatives. As a part of this initiative, a tree census is being conducted in a phased manner and the first phase was completed in August.

The census was conducted on 21 roads by the Southern Command Army headquarters along with two NGOs- Society for Environment and Biodiversity Conservation (SEBC), Pune, and Trees for The Future (TFTF), Ratnagiri. The census has gathered crucial data about the region's flora, enabling better conservation strategies and promoting ecological preservation.

As per the tree census data, 85 tree species have been identified. Out of these, 59 are indigenous trees while 29 are exotic species. The largest population of trees was identified on 5 roads with 1,043 trees.

In this census, the largest banyan tree at a Girth breast height (GBH) of 61.3 ft was recorded on RSI road.

“Conservation of Biodiversity is a continuous process and therefore giving it a timeline will defeat the purpose of this unique initiative. However, some of the associated sub-projects have been undertaken and some others will be undertaken to convert Pune Cantonment into a biodiversity hotspot over the next six months to one year. Once these endeavors are rolled out successfully, thereafter, the focus will be to sustain them. Further improvements will be undertaken subsequently,” said Southern Command said in a statement.

As per the Southern Command, the Pune Cantonment is located on the edges of the Western Ghats, and a large number of Rare Endangered, and Threatened (RET) species are found here. Conserving these species is a major challenge. Moreover, the presence of heavy traffic and the resultant pollution has also created a challenge to the project. The strategies of the project are being prepared keeping these challenges in mind.

As per the census, the area has recorded 176 Banyan trees, 189 rain trees, 146 Karanj trees and 64 Vavala trees.

Source: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/pune-news/tree-census-reveals-85-tree-species-in-pune-cantonment-efforts-to-convert-area-into-biodiversity-hotspot-underway-101693938353240.html>