

# Waterbodies in forest areas in Kerala rejuvenated

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THE HINDU BUREAU

The Forest department has completed rejuvenation of around 1,500 waterbodies in forest areas as part of efforts to minimise wildlife incursions into human habitations.

Forest Minister A.K. Saseendran reviewed the progress of projects that were finalised at a recent high-level meeting chaired by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan to mitigate human-wildlife conflicts in the State.

The State has 1,434 ponds (waterholes) and 574 'vayals' (swamps) spread over 2,741.584 ha in forest areas. The department has rejuvenated over 75% of such water sources and ensured sufficient water.

The activity has been taken up in anticipation of a severe drought scenario in the next few months. A project with an estimate of ₹45 lakh, sourced through corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds, has been prepared for the project. An amount of ₹3 lakh has been sourced from the CSR funds for the Aralam wildlife sanctuary.

The department has also undertaken various other activities, including cleaning of check-dams, establishment of Brushwood check-dams, and desilting operations across forest areas.

The meeting also assessed other steps adopted to prevent wildlife incursions. As part of such efforts, a list of experts has been prepared to enlist their services for the unfolding crisis.