

Mangrove cover in state drops by 4sqkm in 2 years

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Coimbatore: The mangrove cover in the state has reduced by 4sqkm between 2017 and 2019, according to the Forest Survey of India statistics. This is when the mangrove cover in the country has increased by 54sqkm during the period, says Kannan C S Warriar, senior principal scientist, Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding (IFGTB), which celebrated the International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem recently.

Speaking at the event that was conducted on IFGTB campus, Warriar said the Forest Survey of India has assessed the mangrove cover across the 12 major mangrove habi-

tats in the country. "While the cover has increased by 37sqkm in Gujarat, 16sqkm in Maharashtra and 8sqkm in Odisha, Tamil Nadu along with three other states saw a drop in the mangrove cover by 4sqkm."

Referring to the importance of mangroves, he said they were effective carbon sinks. "Mangroves act as a form of natural coastal defence against storm surges, rising sea levels, tsunamis and soil erosion."

IFGTB director C Kunhikannan said mangroves also provide a valuable nursery habitat for fish and crustaceans. Hence, it is essential to plant more mangrove species and increase their density, he said.