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# Tamil Nadu: Nanmangalam forest to be declared a sanctuary

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CHENNAI: The 273.8-hectare Nanmangalam reserve forest along the Velacherry-Tambaram road is to be declared a sanctuary.

State forest secretary Supriya Sahu said an advisory committee for the purpose had been constituted with Jayashree Vencatesan of Care Earth Trust, K Sankar, former director of Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History, C Arivazhagan of Indo-American Wildlife Society, and former chief wildlife warden R Sundarraju as members.

The committee will also draft a proposal to declare Pulikundram reserve forest in Tiruvallur as a conservation reserve.

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"It will take at least a year for the proposals to get ready and after that both the places will get the new status," Sahu said.

Nanmangalam forest is a breeding ground for the endangered Eurasian Eagle Owl (formerly known as the great horned Indian owl). It is also home to jackals, mongooses, black-naped hares, monitor lizards and porcupines.

K V R K Thirunaranan, who regularly monitors the area, said 100-plus types of birds have been spotted at Nanmangalam. They include raptors such as white-eyed buzzards, oriental honey buzzards and barn owls.

Other birds include miniveta, orange-footed pigeons, Indian pittas, green-billed malkohas, chestnut-winged cuckoos and orange-headed thrushes.

The lake on the periphery of the forest attracts migratory birds from October to March.