

CITIZEN'S CHARTER - 2006
Environment and Forests Department
Forests

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Forests are the Earth's largest and most productive eco-system, and constitute the second largest land-use in India after agriculture. Forests are great collectors and storehouses of water. Besides this, they are the Earth's air purifiers, due to the large amounts of carbon dioxide they absorb from the atmosphere and emit oxygen. Forests provide habitats to diverse animal species, and form the source of livelihood for millions of people. Forests are vital to maintain global food production and contributes significantly to world trade and economic growth. Forests play a key role in protecting the global environment and help contribute to rural development and upliftment of the families below the poverty line.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE FORESTS DEPARTMENT

Forests in Tamil Nadu are being managed with the following main objectives:

- To ensure environmental stability by restoring ecological balance in forest ecosystem.
- To increase the forest cover/tree cover in the state, and enhance the quality of forests.
- To conserve the wide array of Bio diversity through scientific management and improve habitat conditions for improved forest health.
- To protect and develop the forest catchment area of rivers, lakes, reservoirs and all aquatic eco systems.
- To meet the genuine requirement of fuel, fodder, non-wood forest produce and small timber to the extent possible on a sustainable basis through the principles of watershed development and Joint Forest Management.
- To sensitise all sections of the society for forest / tree conservation through planning, interpretation, integration and collaboration.
- Increase forest based entrepreneurship to support improved livelihood and develop efficient marketing strategies.
- To make available the traditional forest produce to the tribal people living inside the forests and make them partners in forest management.
- To develop non-conventional renewable alternative energy sources to meet the energy requirement of remote villages.
- Scientific management of forests for multiple objectives and to strengthen growth, yield and productivity systems.
- Stabilising coastal eco-systems for ensuring protection from natural calamities like cyclones, tsunami, etc.,

3. Statement of services provided

Forest department provides the services to support

- Afforestation, soil conservation, land use planning, preservation of flora and fauna, regeneration of degraded ecosystems, Management of Wetlands, Urban tree planting Management Plans etc.
- Programmes, which attempt in arriving at appropriate solutions to environmental problems and to regenerate environmental natural resources,
- Research in the areas of sustainable management of forest eco-system and technology to mitigate problems arising from degradation of environment,
- Programmes for improving the quality of life of the people living below the poverty line.

4. ADMINISTRATIVE SET UP

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests is the head of Tamil Nadu Forest Department. Five Additional Principal Chief Conservators of Forests and 8 Chief Conservators of Forests function under his control in the head office. All the Chief Conservators of Forests are assisted by the Conservators of Forests and Deputy Conservator of Forests in the head quarters.

FUNCTIONS: Functions of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Additional Principal Chief Conservators of Forests of different wings of this department are narrated below:

1. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests

He is the overall incharge of the Tamil Nadu Forest department, who advises the Government on the policy of the department. He is the Chief administrator of the Forest department.

2. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & Chief Wildlife Warden

He is the Chief Forest Officer on wildlife matters of the State as per Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. He controls the administration of wildlife including their protection, both inside and outside wildlife sanctuaries and National Parks.

3. Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Afforestation)

He plans, monitors and controls all Afforestation programmes under State Scheme, Central assistance and externally aided Tamil Nadu Afforestation Project, Social Forestry, Wasteland Development programmes, harvest, disposal, etc.

4. Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Planning & Budgeting)

He is in charge of the formulation of projects, plan schemes, perspective plan, five year plans, etc., besides preparation of budgets, control of expenditure, re-appropriation of funds, Public Accounts Committee, correspondences and preparation of management plans.

5. Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Research & Working Plans)

He is in charge of all research programmes, Forestry Extension, Training, besides preparation and revision of Working Plans.

6. Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Forest Administration)

He is in charge of the personnel management (i.e., the service matters of Indian Forest Service and State Forest Service, Field staffs, Ministerial staffs and all other staff), vigilance cases and Human Resources Development.

7. Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Forest Conservation Act)

He takes care of clearance, monitoring cases under Forest Conservation Act and acts as nodal officer to Government of India. He monitors protection of forests and wildlife, intelligence and crime records, organising raids, checking of vulnerable forest areas and any other sensitive issues regarding protection. He also monitors the functions of all Forest Protection Squads in the State.

There are twelve (12) territorial circles in the State which are headed by Conservators of Forests besides four (4) Working Plan circles at Coimbatore, Trichy, Vellore and Salem, headed by Conservators of Forests. In addition to these, there are five other circles viz., Forestry Extension, Kolapakkam, Research, Kolapakkam, Project Tiger, Kalakkad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve, Tirunelveli, Arignar Anna Zoological Park, Vandalur and Tamil Nadu Forest Academy, Coimbatore headed by Chief Conservators of Forests.

The twelve territorial circles are allotted to the following six Regional Chief Conservator of Forests as mentioned below:

Chennai region

1. Chief Conservator of Forests (Social Forestry)
 - a. Chennai Circle.
 - b. Vellore Circle.

Trichy region

2. Chief Conservator of Forests (Personnel and Vigilance)
 - a. Trichy Circle.
 - b. Villupuram Circle.

Madurai region

3. Chief Conservator of Forests (Planning and Development)
 - a. Madurai Circle.
 - b. Dindigul Circle.

Salem region

4. Chief Conservator of Forests (Headquarters)
 - a. Salem Circle.
 - b. Dharmapuri Circle.

Tirunelveli region

5. Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife)
 - a. Virudhunagar Circle.
 - b. Tirunelveli Circle.

Coimbatore region

6. Chief Conservator of Forests (Tamil Nadu Afforestation Project)
 - a. Coimbatore Circle.
 - b. Erode Circle.

5. FOREST MANAGEMENT - FOR THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE

Implementation of Schemes

5.1. Joint Forest Management under TAP

5.1.1. The Government of Tamilnadu is committed to involve local people in re-afforestation and protection of degraded forests and to share with them the sustainable benefits from these forests. This arrangement known as "*Joint Forest Management*" ensures the involvement of the people through Village Forest Councils. The unit of management under Joint Forest Management is a hamlet/group of hamlets/entire village, the abutting degraded forests, community and private lands. In each of the identified Management unit, people's representative body called '*Village Forest Council*' (V.F.C) is formed which is fully involved in the planning and execution of works, protection, harvesting and benefit sharing in the management unit, with focus on the degraded forests. The Forest Ranger concerned initiates the process of formation of Village Forest Council. The Village Forest Council meets atleast once in three months. Each Village Forest Council elects an "*Executive Committee*" in such a manner that one hamlet elects atleast two members, one of whom is a woman. Each Village Forest Council elects a minimum of 5 (five) and a maximum of 15(fifteen) members to the Executive Committee. The villagers living adjacent to degraded Reserve Forests may approach the local forest range office for getting more details about the project.

5.1.2. Benefit sharing

Sharing the sustainable benefits from the rejuvenated degraded forests, Government lands and Community lands lying within the management unit with the members of Village Forest Council is the most important component of Joint Forest Management. The guiding principle of this benefit sharing is equitable distribution and the Executive Committee decides the individual beneficiaries.

5.1.3. District/Divisional Forest officers conduct sample survey of the unit of management and decide about the quantity of firewood available for supply to poor households after assessing the demand.

5.1.4. Fodder and Green leaf manure is given free of cost to members of Village Forest Council except big farmers, subject to availability.

5.1.5. Grazing is allowed free of cost depending on the carrying capacity except in regeneration areas, where grazing will be closed for 3 years.

5.1.6. All Non-wood Forest produces (Minor Forest Produce) for domestic consumption are given free of cost to the members of Village Forest Council subject to availability. Executive Committee sells any surplus quantity. District/Divisional Forest Officer ensures sustainable Non-wood Forest Produce (N.W.F.P.) availability. The Executive Committee as decided by the District/ Divisional Forest Officer sells any other sustainable yield from the Management unit. The Executive Committee distributes the sale proceeds so received equally among the members of Village Forest Council after remitting 25% to the Village Forest Development Fund.

5.1.7. A joint account in the name of Village Forest Council is opened in local or nearest bank or post office with the President and Member-Secretary as signatories. All the Village Forest Council funds are kept in this account. The President and Member-Secretary are responsible and accountable to the Village Forest Council for all financial transactions.

5.2. Creation of Forest Development Agencies under National Afforestation Programme

The scheme titled National Afforestation Programme (NAP) is being operated by the National Afforestation and Eco-Development Board, Government of India as a 100% Centrally Sponsored Scheme and being implemented from 2002-03 through FDAs with the view to check forest degradation and loss of bio-diversity. Funds are released directly to the FDAs, registered under Registration of Societies Act, headed by respective Conservators of Forests as chairperson with District Forest Officers as chief executive officer. Each FDA has 20-50 villages with a Joint Forest Management Committee formed in each village to ensure people's participation. JFMC members are partners in the forest management and benefit sharing in the project.

5.3. Forestry Extension

5.3.1. The objective is to enhance tree cover in the private lands and thereby achieving the required extent of tree cover / forest cover to 1/3rd of the total geographical area envisaged in the National Forest policy. The Forestry Extension wing undertakes Extension and Interpretation activities throughout the State. The Government have established 23 Extension and Interpretation centres throughout the State with the objectives of motivating people to adopt tree growing culture and for providing technical knowledge to the farmers to create resources for meeting the requirement of fuelwood, fodder, etc. Farmers and other user groups will be provided with opportunities for discussions and exchange of views through institutions like Forestry Extension Centres located in the Districts. The Forestry Extension Centres have also established demonstration plots for providing the demonstration of requisite technological inputs, which the farmer need. There is a Seed Centre at Coimbatore under the Research wing and supplying quality seeds to the public.

5.3.2. Agro-Forestry Model Plots

29 Agro-forestry Model plots have been established in 29 districts by the Forestry Extension Officers. In addition publicity boards conveying the message of afforestation programmes have been erected in villages for creating awareness to the farmers. The strategy adopted for extension and awareness creation activities through the centres is identification of 4 to 5 villagers per centre based upon the potential for extension forestry and for formation of village groups, production of seedlings on farmer's choice and marketing through various outlets. The village groups are trained in nursery raising and marketing with technical support and feedback from the Extension centres.

5.4. Tank foreshore plantations

Tamil Nadu Forest Department was implementing the SIDA aided Social Forestry Project during the period from 1981-1996. Among other components, karuvel plantations were raised in lakes and tank foreshores under this project to meet out fuel, fodder and small timber requirements of the State. As per the existing Government Orders, 60% of the revenue realised through sale of these plantations will be paid to the panchayats towards their share for taking village developmental works.

5.5. Raising teak on padugais

A statewide project is being implemented on planting of teak on padugais at an outlay of Rs.21.39 crores for a period of five years. (2003-2004 to 2007-2008)

5.6. Biodiversity conservation and ecological security of coastal eco-system.

(Emergency Tsunami Reconstruction Project)

The shelterbelt plantations and mangroves along the coastline of Tamil Nadu protected the people and their property from the recent tsunami disaster. During 2005-06, 2000 ha. of shelterbelt and 700 ha. mangrove plantations have been raised in the coastal districts of Tamil Nadu to protect the people and their properties from the natural calamities like Tsunami.

Further, there is also scope to cover the remaining length with this Bio-shield in phased manner. The main objective of the scheme is to give permanent protection from the natural calamities like Tsunami.

5.7. Raising *Jatropha Curcas*

The seedlings produced are to be distributed free of cost for cultivation in waste and common lands of Tamil Nadu. The main objective of the scheme is for economic development of farmers. The appropriate '*package of practice*' for establishing successful plantations will be provided by Forest Department.

5.8. National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project

The main objective of this project is to provide permanent protection to the people living in the coastal areas from natural calamities viz. cyclone and tsunami, by raising shelterbelts and Mangrove Plantations.

6. ACTS AND RULES

6.1. Tamil Nadu Forest Act, 1882

The forests in Tamil Nadu are being managed in accordance with Tamil Nadu Forest Act, 1882.

6.2. Timber Transport

6.2.1. The following Acts and Rules regulate the tree felling and transport of timber in Tamilnadu.

1. Tamilnadu Preservation of Private Forest Act, 1949.
2. Tamilnadu Hill Areas (Preservation of Trees) Act, 1955.
3. Tamilnadu Rosewood (Conservation) Act, 1994.
4. Tamilnadu Timber Transit Rules, 1968.
5. Tamilnadu Sandalwood Rules, 1967.
6. Tamilnadu Sandalwood Possession Rules, 1970.
7. The Tamil Nadu Timber (Movement Control) Order 1982, annulled during May 2003 for movement of timber outside State.

6.2.2. To cut any trees in the areas notified under Tamilnadu Preservation of Private Forest Act, 1949 and Tamilnadu Hill Areas (Preservation of Trees) Act, 1955, prior permission should be obtained from the committee constituted under the said Acts, under the Chairmanship of District Collector concerned. Petitions for cutting trees are decided by the committee, which may meet as often as necessary and shall not be more than two months between two meetings.

6.2.3. There is a ban on felling of trees of spontaneous growth in forest area as per the interim directions of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in W.P. 202/95 dated 12.12.96.

6.2.4. According to Tamilnadu Forest Act, 1882, the following tree species are notified as Scheduled Timber.

1. Blackwood
2. Red Sanders
3. Rosewood
4. Sandalwood
5. Teakwood

6.2.5. To cut and remove the Rosewood tree from any forest, which includes waste land or community land containing trees, shrubs and roads, pasture land and any other class of land declared by notification by the Government to be a forest, prior permission should be obtained from the Collector under Tamilnadu Rosewood (Conservation) Act, 1994. No person shall possess a quantity of any scheduled timber, more than 0.50 cubic meters unless the scheduled timber bears distinguishable Government mark or property mark affixed under the Tamilnadu Timber Transit Rules, 1968 as the case may be. However, there is no bar to grow any species including scheduled timber species in private lands.

6.2.6. No person shall move timber into or from or within the State by land, water or air unless such timber is accompanied by a permit issued by the Tamilnadu Forest Department. A Form-II permit for the movement of timber fuelwood, bamboo from private lands to market or depot, shall on application be issued by the Ranger having jurisdiction on payment of prescribed fee at the rate of Rs.50/- per lorry load.

6.2.7. The permit shall be valid only of the specified time mentioned in the permit by the issuing authority. No permit is necessary for the transport of timber within the limit of municipality or Corporation. The following species are exempted from the purview of Tamilnadu Timber Transit Rules and permit to transport them is not required.

1. Small quantity of bamboo and fuelwood.
2. Firewood purchased for domestic consumption.
3. Parambai, Karuvel and Velikaruvai.
4. Casuarina (Savukku)
5. Savundal (Subabul)
6. Eucalyptus Hybrid.

7. Palmyrah.
8. Poovarasu.
9. Kalayana murungai.
10. Odai.

6.2.8. Sandalwood sale, possession and transport

Sandalwood occurs extensively mostly in the Eastern Ghats ranging from Vellore district in the North east of Tamilnadu to the Nilgiris in the west in the dry deciduous forests of the region. In Tamilnadu only dead and drying sandal trees are uprooted and brought to depots for rough and final cleaning. The final cleaned sandalwood is sold in public auction in three sandalwood depots at Tiruppattur, Salem and Sathyamangalam at regular intervals. To participate in the sale, firm or individual must register their name with the respective District Forest Officers.

The retail sale of sandalwood shall be ordered by the following officers to meet the bonafide local demands.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| a) District Forest Officer | - Upto 5 Kilograms to private individuals |
| b) Conservator of Forests | - Upto 10 Kilograms to private individuals
- upto 100 kilograms to temples. |
| c) Chief Conservator of Forests | - Upto 50 kilograms to private individuals
- Upto 500 kilograms to temples |

The sale rates are fixed by the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and communicated to all officers once in a year. Based on the rate the sandalwood is sold in retail sale.

For extraction of Sandalwood trees from private lands application shall be made to the District Forest Officer concerned in Form IV as specified in Tamilnadu Sandalwood Transit Rules, 1967. The District Forest Officer or his authorised officers shall inspect the trees and with the consent of the owner of the land affix the departmental hammer mark on each tree and issue written permission for the extraction of the trees and grant a certificate of registration property mark in Form V for the transport of the trees by the owner to a central place for final cleaning. The pattadars will be permitted to dispose off the wood or to transport it to any other place from the Central place wherein it has been stored after obtaining specific orders of the Government.

The possession and movement of sandalwood in Tamilnadu is regulated under (Tamilnadu Sandalwood Transit Rules, 1967), Tamilnadu Sandalwood possession Rules, 1970. As per Rule 3 (1) of Tamilnadu Sandalwood possession Rules, 1970 no person

shall possess sandalwood in excess of five kilograms without a licence issued by District Forest Officer. If any person intends to possess or store sandalwood in excess of 5 kilograms he shall apply to the District Forest Officer in Form I and obtain a licence after paying the fees prescribed in sub rule (7) of rule 4.

According to Tamilnadu Sandalwood Transit Rules, 1967, no person shall import sandalwood into or export sandalwood from or move sandalwood from one place to another place in the State unless such sandalwood is accompanied either Form I / II permit referred to in Rule 4 or by a Form III way permit referred to in rule 6. The sandalwood must bear the mark of the Government Origin as provided in rule 7 of the property mark in respect of such sandalwood.

The Forest Department issues the permits mentioned above after collection of necessary fees.

6.2.9. Sandalwood trees in patta lands

Every person who grows trees on any patta land held by him as owner, tenant, lessee and mortgage with possession or otherwise shall be the owner of such sandalwood trees. The sandalwood tree grown on any patta land shall be sold only to the Government (The Government have issued the said order vide Act No.33 of 2002 which was published in the Tamil Nadu Government Gazette Extra-ordinary No. 582, dated 03.09.2002). The date from which this Act shall come into force is to be notified by the Government. Other than these, there is no restriction for growing sandalwood in patta lands.

6.3. Sale of Timber

In Tamilnadu, the trees from natural forests are not felled to cater to the needs of timber. However, the dead, wind fallen trees are sent to Forest Depot, and sold in public auction. The teak trees cultivated along canal banks in Thanjavur district, aged over 30 years and above, are extracted and sold in auction. The pulpwood plantations raised in Kodaikanal and Nilgiris plantations are allotted to pulpwood industries.

6.4. Lifting the ban on movement of Timber outside the State of Tamil Nadu

Government have lifted the ban on movement of Timber outside the State of Tamil Nadu in G.O.Ms.No.43, E&F (FR-IV) dated 22.02.2003. Hence any person can transport timber outside the State duly obtaining the permit under Timber Transit Rules.

6.5. Minor Forest Produce

6.5.1. Minor Forest Produce are permitted to be collected from Forest areas (excluding wildlife sanctuaries). Minor Forest Produce in Joint Forest Management watersheds under Tamil Nadu Afforestation Project are exclusively given to Village Forest Councils. 25% of the sale proceeds to be credited to Village Forest Development Fund and the balance distributed among the Village Forest Council members. Nearly 23 NTFP from reserve forest are made available to the tribals living in the forest for their bonafide needs.

The Minor Forest Produce units were being allotted to LAMP societies on their requisition and after obtaining orders from the Government as per section 130 (a) of Tamil Nadu Forest Department code at concessional rate of 10% deduction from the fair price fixed by the Department. Subsequently the coupes were allotted to the above societies based on their requisition once in 3 years.

The allotment of MFP units is given to the tribals free of cost by forming Village Forest Council to improve their economic condition vide G.O.Rt.No.79, E&F dept. dt. 29.04.2003.

Further, in a tribal village, if a Village Women's Council is in existence, (Women Self Help Group under Swarna Jayanthi, Swaroj Ghar Yojana (SJGSY) MFP allotment will be given as per fair price fixed by the Village Forest Committee. The allotment of MFP given to LAMP societies at 10% concessional rate, as ordered in G.O. Rt. No. 286, E&F Department, dt. 25.09.1998 has been cancelled.

7. WILDLIFE POSSESSION AND TRANSPORT

7.1. The matters related to Wild Animals are dealt under the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. This is a Central Act, which provides protection to the wild animals. As per this act, hunting of wild animals has been completely banned. All wild animals are Government property, other than the ones obtained through proper possession licences. Trade of animals or their derivatives has also been banned under the provisions of this act, except where it is permitted under a proper licence. Hence no member of the public can own a wild animal or indulge in trade of such animals or their derivatives.

7.2. Any animal or its derivatives, if comes into possession by any member of the public, is required to be surrendered to the wildlife authorities immediately, since possession of such animal or article shall be in violation of the provisions of this Act.

7.3. All members of public, living within 10 kms. of the boundary of Sanctuary or National Park, have to register their weapons with the wildlife authorities in case they are holding any arms licence. No new licence under arms act is to be granted within 10 kms. of any Sanctuary or National Park without prior concurrence of State Chief Wildlife Warden.

7.4. Most of the wild animals have been listed under six different schedules according to their population status and ecological importance. These animals are supposed to be given special protection. However, protection is available to all wild animals under the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 whether they are scheduled or not.

8. MAN - ANIMAL CONFLICT

8.1. The Government has been paying more attention towards man-animal conflict. The conflict between man and animal is caused mainly due to the encroachment into the wildlife habitat and also because the animal tend to move out of their habitat for fodder, water, etc., adjacent to their habitat. These palatable crops attracts the animals and in turn not only they damage the crops / area but also sometimes cause human death / injury.

In order to control this conflict, emphasis being given for habitat improvement by undertaking water and fodder, food augmentation measures inside the forest areas in addition to fencing wildlife habitat. However, whenever the wild animals stray out of their habitat, measures to drive them inside or trap and leave them into the habitat are being done.

In spite of the above, if the carnivores such as Tiger, Panther and herbivores i.e. Elephants cause any death / damage to human / crops / livestock, the Government takes immediate action to grant compensation vide G.O.Ms.No.205, Environment and Forests (FR-V) department, dated 12.09.2000. As per the G.O. the entitlement for payment of compensation is as following:

1. Human death / Permanent incapacitation	Rs. 1,00,000/-
2. Major injuries	Rs. 20,000/-
3. Damage to the crop	Rs. 15,000/-
4. Damage to tiled house	Rs. 5,000/-
5. Damage to thatched house	Rs. 5,000/-
6. Damage to tiled shop	Rs. 2,500/-
7. Damage to thatched shop	Rs. 1,500/-
8. Loss of earning assets like vehicle, boats, cattle	Rs. 2,000/-
9. Damage to drinking water well, tube well, electric motor fitting, fruit bearing trees, etc.	Rs. 1,000/-

The affected person may immediately approach the Range Officer concerned for relief.

8.2. DOs and DON'Ts

Restriction on entry into a Sanctuary

No person other than a person who has been permitted under Section 28 of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 by the Chief Wildlife Warden or the authorized officer to reside within the limits of the Sanctuary, shall enter or reside in the sanctuary.

DOs

- Every person shall, so long as he resides in the Sanctuary, be bound to prevent the commission in the sanctuary, of an offence against this Act. Where there is reason to believe that any such offence against this Act has been committed in such Sanctuary, to help in discovering and arresting the offender.
- To report the death of any wild animal and to safeguard its remains until the Chief Wildlife Warden or the Authorized Officer takes charge thereof.
- To extinguish any fire in such sanctuary of which he has knowledge or information and to prevent from spreading by any lawful means in his power, any fire within the vicinity of such sanctuary of which he has knowledge or information.

DON'Ts

- No person shall tease or molest any wild animal or litter the grounds of sanctuary.
- No person is allowed inside the sanctuary to destroy any wildlife or forest.
- No person is allowed inside the sanctuary to set fire or kindle any fire, or leaves any fire burning inside the sanctuary.
- No person is allowed inside the sanctuary with a weapon without the previous permission of the Chief Wildlife Warden.
- No person shall use chemical explosives or any other material which cause injury to endanger / wild animals.
- No grazing is permitted inside the Sanctuary.

8.3. Transit permission

- As per Wildlife (Transit) (Tamil Nadu) Rules, 1991 and G.O.Ms.No.447, E&F (FR-V) Dept. dt. 19.07.91, no person shall transport any wild animal within the State or outside the State wildlife product without the prior permission of the Chief Wildlife Warden or an authorized Officer.
- The applicant should fill up the prescribed form mentioning the place from where the animal is to be transported along with date from which transported, route, etc.

- If the Chief Wildlife Warden is satisfied with the applicant's authenticity the Chief Wildlife Warden may grant permission to transport the wild animal with prescribed time limit.
- As per G.O.Ms.No.133, E&F (FR-V) dept. dt. 23.07.2003 transit fee for elephant Rs.300/- and Rs.100/- for other scheduled animals.

9. DETAILS OF SANCTUARIES, NATIONAL PARKS AND ZOOS

Name of the sanctuary	Sanctuary area (in ha.)	Park area (in ha)	Name of the District	Whom to contact	Visiting Season
Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park	21776	10323	Nilgiris	Wildlife Warden, Udagai	Throughout the year except June-August
Kalakkadu-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve	80565	-	Tirunelveli	FD & CCF, Project Tiger, Tirunelveli	October to March
Vedanthangal Birds Sanctuary	30.00	-	Kancheepuram	Wildlife Warden, Chennai	November to February
Point calimere wildlife sanctuary	1726	-	Nagapattinam	Wildlife Warden, Nagappattinam.	Throughout the year
Guindy National Park	-	282	Chennai	Wildlife Warden, Chennai	Throughout the year
Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park	84149	11710	Coimbatore	Wildlife Warden, Pollachi	Throughout the year
Kanyakumari Wildlife Sanctuary	45777.57		Kanyakumari	District Forest Officer, Kanyakumari Dn., Nagercoil	--
Vettangudi Birds Sanctuary	38.40	-	Sivaganga	District Forest Officer, Sivaganga Dn.,	November to February
Mukkuruthi National Park	-	7846	Nilgiris	Wildlife Warden, Udhai	Throughout the year except February to May
Pulicat Lake Birds Sanctuary	15367	-	Tiruvallur	Wildlife Warden, Chennai	November to February
Grizzled Giant Squirrel Sanctuary, Srivilliputhur	48520	-	Virudhunagar	Wildlife Warden, Srivilliputhur	Throughout the year
Karikili Birds Sanctuary	61.21	-	Kancheepuram	Wildlife Warden, Chennai	October to April
Kanjirankulam Birds Sanctuary	104	-	Ramanathapuram	Wildlife Warden, Ramanathapuram	October to February
Vallanadu Black buck Sanctuary	1641	-	Tuticorin	District Forest Officer, Tirunelveli	Throughout the year
Gulf of Mannar Marine	-	52602	Gulf of Mannar,	Wildlife Warden,	Throughout the

Name of the sanctuary	Sanctuary area (in ha.)	Park area (in ha)	Name of the District	Whom to contact	Visiting Season
National Park			Tuticorin & Ramanathapuram	Ramanatha-puram	year
Udhayamathandapuram Birds Sanctuary	45.28	-	Thiruvarur	Wildlife Warden, Nagappattinam	November to February
Vaduvoo Birds Sanctuary	128.10	-	Thiruvarur	Wildlife Warden, Nagappattinam	November to February
Karaivetti Birds Sanctuary	453.71	-	Perambalur	Wildlife Warden, Nagappattinam	November to February
Vellode Birds Sanctuary	77.18	-	Erode	District Forest Officer, Erode	November to February
Koothankulam, Birds Sanctuary	129.00	-	Tirunelveli	District Forest Officer, Tirunelveli	November to February
Melaselvanur-Keelaselvanur Birds Sanctuary	593.08	-	Ramanathapuram	Wildlife Warden, Ramanatha-puram	November to February
Chitrangudi Birds Sanctuary	47.63	-	Ramanathapuram	Wildlife Warden, Ramanatha-puram	October to April
Arignar Anna Zoological Park	510	-	Kancheepuram	Chief Conservator of Forests and Director, AAZP, Vandalur.	Throughout the year

Besides the above, the following eight mini zoos are educating the public about the awareness of wildlife conservation.

Sl. No	Name of the zoo	Name of the District
1	Amirthi zoo	Vellore
2	Hogenekkal Crocodile Bank	Dharmapuri
3	Kurumpampatti Wildlife Park	Salem
4	Yercaud Deer Park	Salem
5	Mukkombu Deer Park	Tiruchi
6	Sathanur Crocodile Bank	Tiruvannamalai
7	Ooty Deer Park	Nilgiris
8	Amaravathi Crocodile Bank	Coimbatore

10. FOREST CONSERVATION ACT

User groups should submit applications to the District Forest Officers having jurisdiction of that area. Detailed guidelines including the proforma for application

and forest clearance can be obtained from all District Forest Officers or from the Technical Section under the control of Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Forest Conservation Act) in head office, Chennai. These applications are forwarded to State Government through Principal Chief Conservator of Forests.

For diversion of forestland upto 40 hectares, State Government will forward the application to Regional Office located at Bangalore and the proposals above 40 hectare will be forwarded by the State Government to the Ministry. The Regional Offices have been empowered to clear the proposals upto 5 hectares, except in respect of proposals for regularization of encroachment and mining. Detailed guidelines including proforma for application and for the forest clearance have been laid down.

All proposals which are complete in all respects and which relate to diversion of forestland are disposed of within the stipulated time limit of 90 days from the date of receipt of proposal under Forest Conservation Act guidelines.

11. ACCESSIBILITY TO INFORMATION

11.1. Launching website of Forest Department

Information about Forest Department could be sought from Department's website at URL <http://www.forests.tn.nic.in/>

11.2. Publishing Citizen's Charter

To share the information about Forest Department, Citizen's charter is being prepared and published.

12. TRANSPARENCY

Right to Information Act

The Right to Information Act was passed by Parliament to enable citizens to exercise their fundamental right to information held by public authorities all over the country (except Jammu and Kashmir.) The Right to Information Act aims to bring about transparency in the functioning of public authorities to contain corruption and hold Government and their instrumentalities accountable to people. It creates a process for providing information to people. The Right to Information Act places a duty on offices to provide information to people both proactively and upon request. It provides for a two -tier appeals mechanism to deal with complaints of unreasonable denial of information by public authorities. This law will have an overriding effect vis-a-vis the official Secrets Act, 1923 and all over laws and orders passed by Government that restrict information flow to people.

The following Officers are responsible for providing information both at Secretariat Level and at HOD Level:

(a) At Secretariat Level:

Designation	Office of the Secretary ,Environment and Forests Department, Secretariat.
Public Information Officer	Under Secretary to Government , Environment and Forests Department, Secretariat, Chennai -9.
Appellate Authority	Additional Secretary to Government, Environment and Forests Department, Secretariat, Chennai -9.

(b) At Head of the Department Level:

Designation	Office of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests	Office of the Conservator of Forests	Office of the District Forest Officer / Wildlife Warden, etc.,
Public Information Officers	Conservator of Forests (Publicity) office of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests ,Chennai -15.	Superintendent	Superintendent
Appellate Authorities	Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Forest conservation Act) office of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests ,Chennai -15.	Conservator of Forests	District Forest Officer

Time limits: Section - 7

- 30 days from the date of application.
- 48 hours for information concerning the life and liberty of a person.
- Time taken for calculation of fees and intimation of the same to the applicant will be excluded from the 30 days period.
- If the interests of a third party are involved then time limits will be 40 days. (maximum period + time given to third party to make representation)
- No action on application for 30 days is a deemed refusal.

Fees:

For providing the information under sub -section (1) of section 7 of the Act, a fee shall be charged by way the of proper receipts or by demand draft or banker's cheque payable in the head of account, as specified by the Public Authority for followings rates

- rupees two for each page (in A-4 or A-3 size paper) created or copied;
- actual charge or cost price of a copy in large size paper;
- actual cost or price fir samples or models ; and
- for inspection of records, no fee for the first hour, and a fee for rupees five for each fifteen minutes (or fraction thereof) thereafter.

For providing the information under sub -section (5) of section 7 of the Act, the fee shall be charged by way of cash against proper receipts or by demand draft or banker's cheque payable in the head of account, as specified by the Public Authority for followings rates

- for information provided in diskette or floppy rupees fifty per diskette or floppy;
- for information provided in printed form at the price fixed for publication.

12.1. Publicity on project execution

In all the scheme execution areas hoardings are erected providing information of the respective schemes, cost of the scheme, progress made etc.

12.2. Open auction

Sales of timber, minor forest produce, fuelwood, sandalwood etc., are conducted in open auction and total transparency is maintained in all aspects.

13. GRIEVANCES REDRESSAL MECHANISM

13.1 Grievances Day

In order to redress the grievances of the public, "*Grievance day*" is being conducted in the Forest Department, as indicated below:

- 1) O/o Forest Range Officer - Once in 15 days
- 2) O/o District Forest Officer - Once in a month
- 3) O/o Conservator of Forests - Once in two months
- 4) O/o Principal Chief Conservator of Forests - Once in three months

13.2. Grievance Cell

Grievance cell has been opened at district / circle / head office level to redress the grievances.

13.3. Redressal of public grievances and enquiry of petitions of a particular region is being monitored by the concerned regional Chief Conservator of Forests at head office.

S. No.	Name of the Officer	Region	Address
1.	Chief Conservator of Forests (Social Forestry)	Chennai	Office of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, #1, Jeenis Road, Panagal Building, Saidapet, Chennai - 600 015.
2.	Chief Conservator of Forests (Personnel & Vigilance)	Trichy	
3.	Chief Conservator of Forests (Planning & Development)	Madurai	
4.	Chief Conservator of Forests (Headquarters)	Salem	
5.	Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife)	Tirunelveli	
6.	Chief Conservator of Forests (Tamil Nadu Afforestation Project)	Coimbatore	

13.4. Chief Minister's Cell Petitions

All petitions / grievances received from Chief Minister's Cell are being followed up and reviewed by Conservator of Forests, Human Resources Development in the head office. Conservator of Forests, Human Resources Development has been nominated as Nodal Officer in respect of Chief Minister's Cell petitions.

13.5. Visitors to all offices of Forest Department in the State are being treated with courtesy and heard patiently to facilitate solving their problems.

13.6. In case of non-fulfillment of the commitments, the users / public should approach the head of the department.

14. EXPECTATION FROM CITIZENS

We expect every organization, public or private and all citizens.

- To interact with the Department to understand the role and functions of the department in conservation.
- To imbibe the spirit of conservation of natural resources and respect for the laws of nature and co-operate with the department in all its conservation endeavours.
- To honour and abide by the Rules and Regulations framed by this Department towards protection of environment flora and fauna,
- To share information with other citizens in order to encourage sustainable development and improve our habitat,
- To offer suggestions to streamline the functioning of the existing institutions, promote accountability and responsibility, and
- To adopt the precepts of "*Environmental Ethics*".
- To Co-operate in the departments efforts to increase the tree and forest cover to over 33% of the land area by 2012 by supporting tree planting programme in the State.

15. CONCLUSION

Forest operations are mostly labour oriented. Every extra investment leads to larger employment opportunities, particularly to the poor people in rural and hilly areas. All necessary steps will be taken to continue to generate remunerative employment for the weaker sections of people, particularly to tribals. On the whole, this Government is wedded to cause of social and economic upliftment of those living below the poverty line.