



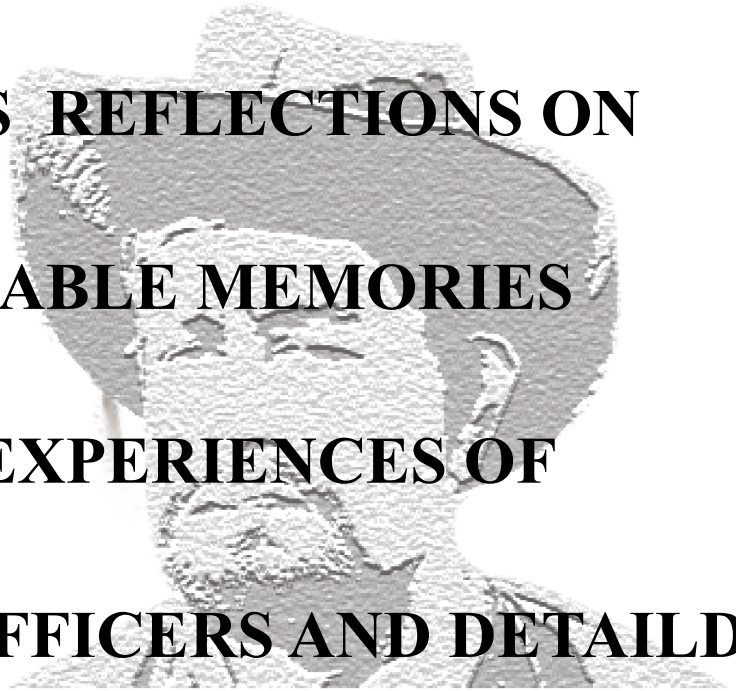
Ministry of Wildlife & Forest Resources Conservation

UNFORGETTABLE WILDERNESS RECOLLECTIONS



03
Volume

**IT CONTAINS REFLECTIONS ON
UNFORGETTABLE MEMORIES
FROM THE EXPERIENCES OF
WILDLIFE OFFICERS AND DETAILED
REVIEWS OF ALL THE RESERVES
BELONGING TO THE
DEPARTMENT
OF WILDLIFE
CONSERVATION.**



ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This e-Book, called Unforgettable wilderness recollections, is dedicated for children and the general public of the Nation.



Volume 2,

Ten Episodes of the Unforgettable Wilderness recollections series on National Parks, which were published on the website of the Ministry of Wildlife and Forest Resources Conservation.

<https://www.mwfc.gov.lk/wild-life-stories/>

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Foreword

There are 3 Strict Nature Reserves, 26 National parks, 09 Nature reserves, 02 Jungle corridors, 01 Marine National Park, 01 Marine reserve and 68 places are declared as sanctuaries or managed elephant reserves under the management of the Department of Wildlife Conservation covering an area of 1,258,997.55 hectares. All these forests are allocated for protection and conservation of animals. Most of them are open to visitors to entertain the beauty of the nature, thus directly contribute to the national income. These forests, rich in biodiversity, are valuable resources for research and education.

Protected by the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance No. (02) of 1937, there are about two thousand staff to protect these beautiful forests. Immeasurable work load have to be carried out by the staff to ensure the safety of forest and the animals living there. Minimize the risk of accidents to the wild animals, treatment for their injuries, provision of water and other facilities during the drought season, prevent entering of elephants to the neighbourhood villages, chase the elephants back to the jungles in such invasions, prevent hunting, prevent deforestation, avoid illegal encroachments to the forest lands and protect the boundaries, take necessary measures to replace animals in population declining situations and provide facilities for the visitors etc., are among the tasks of the staff.

When carrying out these unique jobs, wildlife officers occasionally encounter exciting unforeseen incidents. It might be exciting as well as unforgettable. Through these stories



others can experience the unforgettable moments felt by the wildlife officers. Collection of stories, with comprehensive details of relevant forested areas are being published on the website of the Ministry of Wildlife and Forest Resources Conservation aiming to enhance the knowledge of the readers.

Dedication and efforts of wildlife officers who described their real life experiences, Mrs. Rifna Rifai of the Ministry's Project Division, who has been working hard from the beginning to prepare each page, publicity officer Mrs. Hasini Sarathchandra and the assistance of the officer Mrs. Mahesha Chaturani Perera of the Wildlife Department, who provide the details should be appreciated since this publication would not have been possible without them. Also, we remember the late Mr. Rohitha Rajapaksa of the Wildlife Department who made the series beautiful by providing many photographs. Mr. Asoka Paliavadana, who translated this series into English , and Ms. Rifna Rifai, who translated it into Tamil, have immensely contributed with interesting language translations.

The work of Ms. N.I. Gayathri and Mr. Dimuthu Asanka Kollure of the Planning Division of the ministry who contributed to publish the series on the website should also be greatly appreciated. Although there are many discussions to publish the series as a book, since it is an expensive task, Mrs. Ruchini Senaviratne of the Project division gave the idea that the series could be published as an e-book. Ruchini, Rifna and Mrs. Thushara Wijeratne from the Project Division worked hard to create this e-book. The encouragement of Mrs. Chandra Herath, Secretary, Ministry of Wildlife and Forest Resources Conservation to publish this e-book is impressive.



This e-book is available in all the three languages. Those who want to read it have the opportunity to read it in the language of their choice. One book has 10 chapters and its details are about 10 forest areas. Volume I, the first volume will be released this year, the second volume in the middle of next year and the third volume in the end of next year. Information about the forests managed by the Department of Wildlife Conservation in Sri Lanka can be obtained by downloading the collection here,

Dammika Malsinghe

Additional Secretary (Project)

Ministry of Wildlife and Forest Resources Conservation



MESSAGE FROM THE HON.MINISTER....



Sri Lanka is one of the world's most beautiful, precious, and biologically diverse countries. We are all fortunate to have been born in a place like this, including the youth of this country. The forest resources and wildlife resources of this nation, which are rich in natural beauty, do an outstanding task of enhancing the value of this nation.

We currently face so many difficulties as a nation that it is crucial to safeguard Sri Lanka's wildlife resources. Unforgettable Wild Memories, a book based on the unique experiences of the officers of the Ministry of Wildlife and Forest Resources Conservation who carry out their duties relating to wildlife conservation, is published as an online book (e-book) in all three languages on the Ministry's website. This is done in consideration of the significance of ensuring that the young generation in Sri Lanka is self-sufficient in knowledge related to forests and wildlife in order to protect the wildlife resource for future generations. I'm hoping that by reading this, people in Sri Lanka would learn more about wildlife. The scope of wildlife resource conservation will be broadened as a result.

I appreciate the efforts and dedication of the staff of our Ministry as well as the staff of the Department of Wildlife Conservation who contribute to the publication of these series and works.

Hon. Pavitra Vanniarachchi, Attorney-at-Law

Minister of Wildlife and Forest Resources Conservation.



MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY



“I reflect on my experiences as a teacher and as a public official in my professional life. I met many people in many places. I enjoyed Sri Lanka's wildlife and forests. I am proud to think that an island with such beautiful and amazing nature has been created. It is also with pleasure that I reflect on the responsibility I have received as the Secretary of the Ministry of Wildlife and Forest Resources Conservation in a country with such a lovely heritage. We are carrying out that duty in a number of ways, and I would also like to extend my compliments to the "Unforgettable Wild Memories" book series, which will be released by capturing the memories of our officers.

My dear children, born, brought up and nurtured on this earth, if you want to fulfill your duty to your motherland, you should consider meritorious deeds by cultivating and preserving the plants and animals. For that, it is important to be nourished by the invaluable knowledge provided through such works.

I also deeply appreciate the dedication of the staff of our Ministry as well as the staff of the Department of Wildlife and Forest Conservation who are working hard to publish these series and this publication.

The conservation of wildlife and forest resources, which is our ministry's goal, will, in my opinion, be accomplished through such initiatives..”

R.M.C.M. Herath
Secretary,

Ministry of Wildlife and Forest Resources Conservation.



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION



The Department of Wildlife Conservation was initially established in the year 1949. The Department of Wildlife Conservation has the authority to implement the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance (FFPO) which was created in 1937. All the National Parks, Sanctuaries, Strict Nature Reserves (SNR's) that have been declared in the island come under this Department and the it has the authority to declare National Reserves.

The initial field staff consisted of two Wildlife Rangers , eight Guards and 48 watchers. Currently, there are about 2000 staff, of which 1350 are field staff.

The field of wildlife conservation that has an influence on the environment's attractiveness is distinct from other fields. Officers who have worked in minimal conditions while receiving a variety of experiences in the past have had an amazing duty life. Sharing such wonderful experiences is vital, as it helps streamlining the wildlife sector even further.

The Ministry of Wildlife and Forest Resources Conservation's website recently published a series of articles based on the fieldwork of wildlife officers, along with brief summaries of all the parks, sanctuaries, and protected wildlife forests in three languages. I applaud this initiative and think it is timely and worthwhile.

M.G.C. Suriyabandara

Director General

Department of Wildlife Conservation



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DELFT NATIONAL PARK



Experience - Lonely horses on Delft Island

• Description of the officer of his encounter -

Mr. G. U. Saranga

• Description of the Delft National Park



Lonely horses on Delft Island

Delft is a small Island where there are about 4000 to 5000 people live. It is also Divisional Secretariat area called Delft itself.

There are horses on Delft Island which were brought in to haul goods during Dutch era. Now they have adapted to native conditions in the Delft. It is estimated that there are about 400 to 500 medium sized horses live here.

This horse population is controlled naturally. The Delft region experiences a drought from June to September. With this drought, old animals and their young are died whilst the strong animals are survived. The Department of Wildlife bowsers supply water to tanks built in the park. However, during this period animals are died.

From Kalpitiya to Jaffna the sea is shallow. There are dugong mammals in this sea. They feed on sea grasses. The sea grasses grow from Jaffna to there in the bottom of the shallow sea. One dugong species is endemic to the area. Dugong is an endangered species as well.

There is a special tree called 'Baobab' on this Delft Island. This is a tree introduced from South Africa. There is a similar tree in Thalai Mannar as well. Sri Lanka has only these two trees.

Tourists are also visit to the island. They have private boats to travel. The Wildlife staff report to work in a boat belonging to the Wildlife Department. In addition, a boat which can carry about 100 people belongs to the Road Development Authority arrives on the island at about 8.00 am You can travel on that boat for free of charge. The boat is operated by the Navy.

Migratory birds also visit Delft Island. It is not a special case for the Delft Island, but it may have been a pleasure for the birds to be a part of it after the war, when the environment returned to normal.





Mr. G. U. Saranga

Mr. G. U. Saranga joined the Wildlife Department in 1983 as a Ranger and he was fortunate to work in various National Parks and Sanctuaries. He received his basic training at the Yala and Wilpattu Sanctuaries. He was in charge of the Sigiriya Sanctuary and later worked at the Minneriya National Park and then at the Wasgamuwa National Park for seven years. He also served as Park Warden at Horton Plains National Park from 2004-2005 and 2009-2002. Mr. Saranga was later promoted to Assistant Director and was in charge of the Kilinochchi area and later the Ampara area. He is currently in charge of the Vavuniya region.

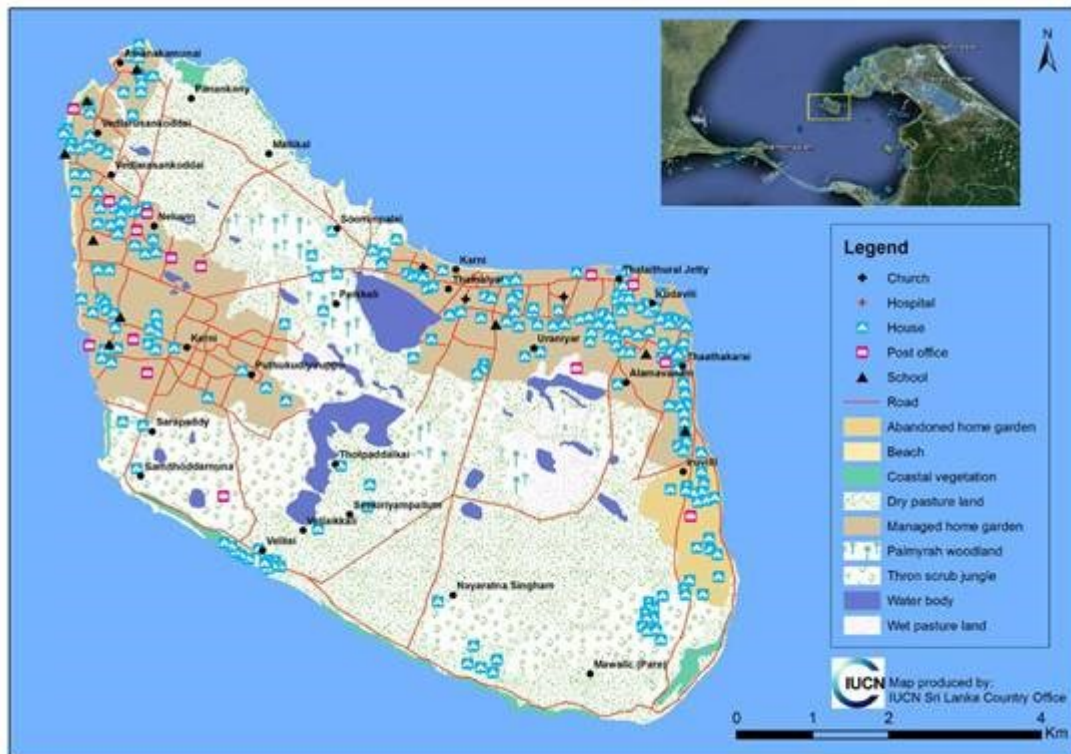
Mr. Saranga completed a 9-month Diploma course awarded by the Department of Wildlife in 1995 and trained for three months at the Wildlife Institute in Dehradun, India. He has also completed short training courses in countries such as Korea, the Philippines and Thailand.

Mr. Saranga's house is located in Katugastota, Kandy.



Delft National Park

Delft Island is located in the northwestern part of the country and south of the Indian Ocean, far away from the inhabited islands of Sri Lanka. Delft Island is an island with a long history which is fascinated by the natural beauty of the Jaffna Peninsula and shaped by the ruins of historic buildings.



Map of the Delft National Park

This island belongs to the Jaffna Administrative District of the Northern Province of Sri Lanka. An area of 1846.2 hectares on Neduntiv (Delft) Island has been declared as a National Park, in accordance with the provisions of the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance, by a special gazette notification dated 22nd June 2015.

Located 35 km southwest of Jaffna, the oval-shaped island covers an area of 50 square kilometers while the maximum length is 8 km and the width is 6 km. Delft Island, located at the western tip of the Jaffna Peninsula, 80 km off the Indian mainland, 42 km from Talaimannar and Rameshwaram, situated in the middle of the Palk Strait, is the second largest island in Sri Lanka.



All over Delft Island there are the ruins of the Portuguese and Dutch colonial era and the Buddhist ruins dating back to earlier times. The history of the island dates back to the Chola dynasty, about 1000 years ago, and ancient stupas can also be seen on the west coast of the island. The island became more famous during the Dutch era and is home to the only colonial fortress, the Mekhanam, which was used by the Portuguese and later by the Dutch. The Queen's Tower, a simple lighthouse built by the Dutch on the south coast of Delft Island.



Mekhanam fortress



Ruins Buddhist stupas



Ruins Buddhist stupas



Queen's Tower

The specialty of this park is that you can see wild horse type endemic to Delphi which are not found in other parks in Sri Lanka. The wild horses found in the park were brought from Arabia by the Portuguese in the 16th century and later bred by the Dutch and sold to ships passing through the seafront across Delft. After the Dutch left the country, these horses gradually became wild horses. These horses in Delft are often referred to as "ponies".



A shallow coastal region, the rainy season lasts from October to February, but there are also days when the sky is blue throughout the rainy season. Annual rainfall is about 750mm, and generally during the dry summer months of the northern hemisphere, this area receives a total lack of rainfall. Annual rainfall is very low and shows semi-arid zone characteristics. In the center of the island are two lakes, Vedduk Kulam and Periya Kulam.

Plants adapted to dry climates and Porous coralline soils set up in the area can be found in the garden. Early settlers seem to have fully exposed it, and local weather conditions seem to be at a standstill due to the harsh weather and grazing of herbivores. Among the identified species are 209 species of flowering plants, 29 species of shrubs, 67 species of non-flowering plants and about 70 species of herbs. The Palmyra palm (*Borassus flabellifer*) is abundant throughout the island. The garden plant Baobab (*Adansonia digitata*) is a species native to Ethiopia in tropical Africa. This plant is believed to have been planted here by Arab traders. The trunk of this plant has a large hole in it that is large enough for several people to easily stand on. The trunk is about 12 m high and 15m in circumference.



Baobab Tree





Palmyra Palm

Among the reported flowering species are the endangered *Fimbristylis dipsacea*, five endangered species of *Ipomoea coptica*, *Cocculus hirsutus* and *Peplidium maritimum*, as well as 11 endangered species. Among the marine plants, *Sargassum* and *Caulerpa* algae species are abundant. Among the animal species found in the park, there are 11 species of mammals, one species of amphibian, 08 species of reptiles, 101 species of birds, 15 species of butterflies and 10 species of dragonflies.

The Delph Pony (wild horse) or *Equus caballus* is the predominant mammal in Delft National Park. About 1000 of them live in the park. Also, small mammals include the Brown Mongoose (*Herpestes brachyurus*), Gray mongoose (*Herpestes edwardsii*), Black naped hare (*Lepus nigricollis*), and Flying fox (*Pteropus giganteus*).



Wild Horse





Black Napped Hare



Flying Fox

Reptile species include the saw-scaled viper (*Echis carinatus*), the common garden lizard (*Calotes versicolor*).



Saw-scaled viper



Common garden lizard

The park shows more bird diversity and is also a great resting place for many migratory birds. Common kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*), Little ringed plover (*Charadrius dubius*), Kentish plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*), Silver bill (*Lonchura malabarica*), Gray francolin (*Francolinus pondicerianus*), Eurasian collared dove (*Decoptera*), Black-crowned night-heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) are some of the bird species found here.





Common kestrel



Little ringed plover



Eurasian collared dove

Butterfly species include Crimson rose (*Pachliopta hector*), Striped pierrot (*Tarucus nara*), Small samon arab while (*Colotis amata*) and Pruinosed bloodtail (*Lathrecista asiatica*) are the common dragonflies in here.

Visitors from Colombo can reach Jaffna via the Kurunegala-Dambulla-Medawachchiya-Vavuniya-Kilinochchi-Elephant Pass-Kayts Road and the total distance from Colombo is 389km. From there you can reach reach the Kurikattuwan Naval Jetty of the Kayts Road for by travelling 31km. More than a hundred people are transported to the island at one time by two large Navy-controlled boats, the Vadataraki and the Kumudini, used by the Road Development Authority to reach Delft National Park from the jetty. Starting at around 8.30am, there will be about five boat trips, including these two boats. Delft Island can be reached after a 14kilometer voyage of about an hour by sea. A bus service is in operation on the island. Accommodation and tourist centers run by the Northern Provincial Council are also in operation for tourists visiting the island.



The developed area of the island, which suitable for the plant growth and not subject to flooding is about 1/4 of the total land area whilst the remaining is reserved for wildlife. The total population is approximately 5,000 persons.



Navy controlling boats



LAHUGALA KITULANA NATIONAL PARK



- **Experience - A new beginning**
- **Description of the officer of his encounter -
Mr. Pradeep Munasinghe**
- **Description of the Lahugala Kithulana
National Park**



A New Beginning

In the year 2002, I worked in Kitulana National Park in Lahugala. I served as a Park Warden in charge of this park, the Kumana and Panama parks. All these parks were closer to each other in the Eastern Province.

At the end of 2002, the then government signed a peace accord with the LTTE* organization.

With the peace treaty a new era of peace was dawned. The government took a policy decision to open the closed national parks.

I received an order from the Eastern Province Assistant Director to open the park which had been closed for about twenty years. This area was considered a very risky area. The road was not macadamized and the entire area was gone wild and the people of the village used to go to see the animals during the day. The people of Pottuvil and Akkareipattu used to go into the forest and to cook food in the forest while watching animals just for fun. We learned that animals can suffer a lot because of this practice.

We did not have a large staff and vehicle facilities were minimum. On the first day I cycled from Lahugala Kitulana, to Panama. That road was macadamized. We night stopped at the house of the Wildlife Guard, P. Jayawardene. The next day, I went to Kumana by road. Where the office buildings have been destroyed and only two ruined



buildings were there. The Okanda tank was also collapsed. Cashew trees were well established in the area. The soil was sandy in nature and area was covered with lantana bushes. I explained the situation to the Eastern Assistant Director and asked for his advice.

We had to depend on sponsorship and we needed to find sponsors by ourselves. They asked us to put a gate at the entrance utilizing government funds. A small watchers hut was built using clay by the Rural Development Society of Panama. This guardhouse marked the boundary between the village and the park. A gate was placed near the watcher's hut. There was an old well; we cleaned it and used it for our day to day needs. There was a protest in the village on the first day of the work. The protest is against opening political offices by the Karuna Amman's group in the province.

This incident happened in late September or early October of 2002. I don't remember the exact date. I was about 23 years old at that time. That evening, the minister's advisor came. He was an anesthetist named Mr. Ranjan Fernando and he wanted to go to Kuman from Lahugala-Kitulana office. It was around 3:30 pm and Driver, Wildlife Ranger Mr. Jayasena Sylvath, left by the Land Cruiser Jeep of the Department to go to Kumana. The jeep was given for the usage of the Advisor to the Department by the head office.

We traveled to the Kudumbigala Halava region about 4:30 p.m. The rain has now become very heavy. The path was unclear and the road was narrow. A torrent of water was gushing across the road. It has transformed into a pool of mud and the jeep has to drive across it. The stream flows from Kudumbigala to the estuary via Halava Lagoon.



Without submerging the Jeep in the mud, you are unable to continue. Unfortunately, as soon as the Jeep was inserted into it, it became immobile and could not move further. The stream is full to the brim. Additionally, the amount of rain was getting heavier, and the water level was progressively rising. Then water was above the windscreen of the Jeep. Fortunately, the engine was still running.

The vehicle was in the water for about 20 minutes. Can't open the door, the water was pouring inside. The vehicle was a "four-wheeler" one.

The driver tried with his full effort; cut back and forth, and finally he could pull over the vehicle. We heaved a sigh of relief.

Anyway, we managed to go to Okanda Temple on time. Okanda temple is a temple where people used to visit frequently.

During this time, we worked with great interest and dedication. By March 2003, the re-opening arrangements of the park was completed. The incident of vehicle getting stuck in the water is an incident I will never forget.

*the LTTE. - An organization designated as a terrorist organization.





Mr. Pradeep Munasinghe

In November 1998, Mr. Munasinghe joined the Department of Wildlife Conservation as a Grade 2 Wildlife Guard. He received a lot of experience through working in Kataragama and Bundala areas and then he assigned to Lahugala-Kitulana National Park. During this time, Panama Sanctuary and Kuana National Park was closed and their management was done by Lahugala-Kitulana National Park. Later, Mr. Munasinghe performed his duties in Horton Plains, Monaragala, Wellawaya areas. He has studied the Diploma offered by the Colombo University which is sponsored by the Department of Wildlife Conservation and he has participated in several foreign trainings as well.

It is Mr. Munasinghe's intention to apply the knowledge gained from his experience for the sake of conservation and management of nature.

Mr. Munasinghe is a father of three children. His wife is a government Nurse. His three children are studying for ordinary level examination.

Mr. Munasinghe's address is Wepatha Ira, Hakmana.



Lahugala Kitulana National Park

Lahugala-Kitulana National Park is one of the smallest National Parks in Sri Lanka. The total area is about 1,554 hectares. This park is located near Heda Oya, 16 kilometers inland from Pothuvil on the East coast. The park consists of three ancient reservoirs namely Lahugala, Kitulana and Sengamuwa. Lahugala Lake is a comparatively large lake of about 243 hectares in extent.

The Lahugala Kitulana area is an important habitat for Sri Lankan elephants and Sri Lankan endemic birds, was first designated as a wildlife sanctuary on July 1, 1966. Then on October 31, 1980, this reserve area was designated as a National Park. Located close to Kumana National Park, this park is flanked by the Pothuvil-Monaragala highway. The Lahugala-Kitulana National Park, which has been in ruins for a long time due to military conflicts, has recently been opened for people to visit.



Leopard



The Lahugala Kitulana National Park in the Eastern Province belongs to the dry zone. This National Park is located at a distance of nearly 318 km from Colombo. The average annual rainfall in the area is about 1,650 mm and the area get rain from November to December by the northeast monsoon. Dry climate prevails from May to October and from January to March. The temperature is between 26-29 degree centigrade. The land area of the park is flat with rocky terrain.



Night Sceneries

The site is a historical site with a massive ancient stupa dating back to the 1st century known as the Nilgiri Stupa. Standing 72 feet high and 597 feet in circumference, this massive stupa is believed to have been built by King Kavantissa (205-161 BC). This protected historical site is being excavated and restored and archaeologists in attempt to uncover its many mysteries. Magul Maha Viharaya is an ancient temple located on the northern edge of the park. At that time this temple was known as Uttar Sivali Pabbata Vihara. It is said that this is the place where the king Magul Mal Vihara Mahadevya. This temple is known as Uttar Sivali Pabbata Vihara. It is said that this is the place where the king married Vihara Mahadevya. The foundation of the "wedding shed" where the wedding took place is still visible in the temple premises. This temple



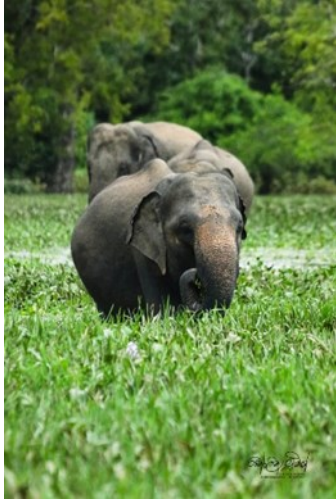
complex was spread over an area of about 10,000 acres, and the ruins of a palace, a moon stone, a monastery, a bodhigara, stupas, ponds, etc. are found everywhere. The Sandakada Pahana here is unique in the country because this is the only place where elephants and four mahouts are encarved in it.



The moon stone

The vegetation here is classified as Sri Lanka dry zone dry evergreen forest. Among the plant composition here are Palu (*Manilkara hexandra*), Weera (*Dryptees sepiaria*), Neem tree (*Azadirachta indica*), Satin (*Chloroxylon swietenia*), Halmilla (*Berrya cordifolia*), Milla (*Vitex altissima*). Beru Cupscale grass (*Sacciolepis interrupta*), a prominent grass species which is a favorite food of elephants near Lahugala, is frequented by elephants. This area is also known as the food store of elephants.





Elephants eating Cupscale grass

Toque monkey (*macaca sinica*), Sloth bear (*Melursin ursinus*), Golden jackal (*Canis aureus*), Rusty spotted cat (*Prionailurus rubiginosus*), Fishing Cat (*Prionailurus viverrinus*), Wild Boar (*Sus scrofa*), Asian elephant (*Elephas maximus*), Spotted deer (*Axis axis ceylonensis*), Sambar (*Rusa unicolor*), Mammals like Indian muntjac (*Muntiacus muntjak*), Sri lanka junglefowl (*Gallus lafayetii*), Purple heron (*Ardea purpurea*), Painted stork (*Mycteria leucocephala*), Lesser adjutant (*Leptoptilos javanicus*), white-bellied sea eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*), Gray headed Birds such as fish eagle (*Haliaeetus ichthyaetus*), Red-faced malkoha (*Phaenicophaeus pyrrhocephalus*), Sri Lanka Spurfowl (*Galloperdix bicalcarata*) can also be found here.



Aquatic birds on the tree top



(Bufo atukoralei), *(Fejervarya limnocharis)*, and *(Polypedates maculatus)* amphibians have been identified in the park. Sri Lanka python (*Python molurus*), Rat snake (*Ptyas mucosa*), Banded flying snake (*Chrysopelea sps.*), Cat snake (*Boiga sps.*), Russell's viper (*Vipera russelli*), Hard shelled terrapin (*Melanochelys trijuga*), Soft shelled terrapin (*Lissemys punctata*) and Star tortoise (*Testudo elegans*) are among the reptiles in the park.

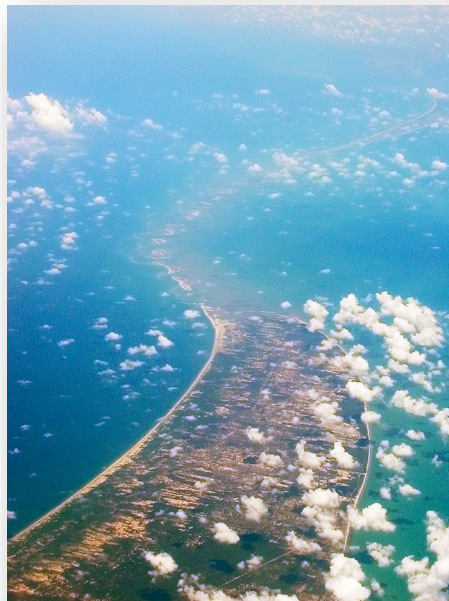
Lahugala Kitulana National Park is a hidden gem. It is one of the richest parks in terms of wildlife. The park is famous for Sri Lanka's large number of elephants, and between June and August, herds of around 150 elephants can be seen.

Circuit bungalows have been built near the Lahugala Maha Lake for the convenience of tourists so that visitors can have the best opportunity to enjoy the wildlife resources and the unique experience of living in a forest. Camps have also been set up at Karanda Oya, Kitulanagala, Bandara Pattiya to enjoy the beauty of nature freely.



23

ADAM'S BRIDGE MARINE NATIONAL PARK



Experience - Seeing the destruction of rare animals cannot be forgotten

• Description of the officer of his encounter -

Mr. K.W. Malshan

• Description of the Adam's Bridge Marine National Park



Seeing the destruction of rare animals cannot be forgotten

In January 2020, I started working at Adam's Bridge National Marine Park. It was my first assignment as a wildlife Ranger.

Thalaimannar was the island's southernmost point, and there are roughly 17 islands between there and Rameswaran in India. The eight islands that are located in Sri Lankan waters are owned by the island nation. The national marine park known as Adam's Bridge contains these eight islands. India owns the remaining 9 islands.

Here is a bit harsh environment. The people of Thalaimannar are mostly Tamil and Muslim. There are Sinhalese people in government institutions like the police and the navy. Because there are no elephants, tigers or bears in this area, the Department of Wildlife is not very connected with public life.

The islands of Adam's Bridge National Marine Park and the surrounding ocean are a beautiful ecosystem and also have seagrass beds. There are dugongs, turtles and fish. Dugongs and turtles go to other places to lay their eggs. They come here to reproduce and find food. That's why the ecosystem is important to them.

Around Welipara Islands 3, 4, 5, migratory birds lay their eggs for a period of time and they are mostly Sea gull species. At that time, there are too many eggs even difficult to set foot on the islands. There are about ten thousand birds in these eight islands. When the sun sets, you can see beautiful scenery.



The shape of these islands changes day by day. There are islands of about ½ square kilometer. The 1st island is attached to Mannar Island. However, Mannar Island does not belong to Adam's Bridge.

The total area of Adam's Bridge Park is about 18,000 hectares. A small extent of this area belongs to land and a majority area belongs to the ocean region. The wildlife department has a boat, we go on patrols in that boat. Therefore, it is difficult to go to the hurricane season and we go to the season when the sea is not rough. In the past, there were facilities to come to Thalaimannar by train and go by boat to Rameswaran and Dhanushkodi in India. There are still 2 dilapidated piers remain.

There are several legends about Adam's Bridge. After King Ravana brought Goddess Sita to Sri Lanka, it was said that Hanumanta and the monkey army were built it for Rama and his army. It is one legend.

In addition, there is another legend connecting it to "Adam" and "Eve". There were floating stone species here. Adam was able to find them by jumping from one stone to another.

This incident took place in "Nadu Kuda" in Thalaimannaram area. That day, on 12.12.2021, The National Park starts from Urumale area. Our office is situated in Urumale. From there, it is about 15 kilometers to Nduguda.

The office received a phone message from a fisherman saying that two big fish were entangled in his fishing net. We left to check; I went on a motorbike with the Field Assistant. Another Ranger and boat operator came in the bus.



When we went and looked, it was not fish but two dugongs caught in the net. There are only a few of them around the coast of Sri Lanka. There are no people here who have seen living sea pigs. We see only the carcasses washed ashore from the sea. But just only one within a year.

There was a female and a male animal. The female is large, about 4 feet 6 inches. The male is about 7 feet and looks like it's mother and son.

The fisherman had already freed the net when we arrived, and both creatures were lying on the ground. I understood that the calf must have been sucking milk from the mother when I noticed the milk streaming from her nipples. It's possible that the mother has the strength to get through the net. She might have continued to be with the infant even so.

I then asked for advice from the Assistant Director and the Head office. The head office advised that the two animals should be preserved. After that, we brought the bodies in a truck to the fish freezer in Thalaimannar.

The bodies were loaded and unloaded using a dozer. The Kilinochchi veterinarian performed the post-mortem examinations on the animals. The investigation provided proof that the animals were caught in the net and died from lack of oxygen. The two bodies were transported to the Kalpitiya Field Security Office for preservation following the autopsy. The preservation work is now being finished.

Dugongs are endangered, protected species. I was horrified by the deaths of these two animals. As a result, this experience will always be a memorable one for me.





Mr. K.W. Malshan

K.W. Mr. Malshan has joined the Department of Wildlife on 19.11.2019. G.E.C., having passed A Level in Biology stream, he appeared for the competitive examination and after passing an interview, he joined the Department of Wildlife as a Class 3 Wildlife Ranger.

After 6 months of training at Wilpattu Zone No. 4, Thanthirimale Site Security Office and Nallathenna Site Security Office, Mr. Malshan got his first appointment at Adam's Bridge Ocean Sanctuary.

Due to his love for animals, he joined the department of wildlife and performs his duties with joy and dedication. By now, he has received training related to law and weapons training in the same department.

Mr. Malshan studied at Central College, Anuradhapura.

Still unmarried, he resides at 127, Vata Vandana Road, Kuttam Pokuna, Anuradhapura with his mother, father and Sisiter.



Adam's Bridge Marine National Park

The Mannar Sea's Sand Dunes Islands, which are considered to be of historical, biological, and ecological significance, were designated Adam's Bridge Marine National Park on June 22, 2015. This is the only protected area that the Department of Wildlife Conservation has announced thus far that bears the word "marine" in the gazette. As a salt-water wetland ecosystem, Sand Dunes Islands extending includes 08 main islands and the surrounding shallow sea area from Thalaimannar Island in the Mannar District of the Northern Province of Sri Lanka to the border of the Dhanushkodi in India. As per the provisions of the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance, the total area is spread over 18990 hectares. The sea area around the archipelago that runs from Sri Lanka to India is shallow and the reason for this is the coral reef system that is spread around Mannar.

In the past from time to time, the border between Sri Lanka and India used to be a land or submerged by sea water. The relationship ended with the separation of the two countries during the Ice Age about 10,000-7,000 years ago. As mentioned in the Ramayana, Hindus believe that Sita was abducted by King Ravana from India and brought to Lanka and the bridge which is known as Hanuman Bridge or Rama Bridge was built by an army of over 40000 Apes, in order to bring the soldiers here from India by Prince Rama. It is also said that it has been called Adam's Bridge in later based on the various historical beliefs and phenomena of Muslims as well as Christians. Therefore, this is a culturally highly revered land.



A distinctive feature of Adam's Bridge National Park is its extended islands. Although predominantly identified as a salt marsh, some of the islands have low salinity seawater in their water holes. The shape of the islands is constantly changing, especially due to wind currents and sea waves. Although climatic condition is semi-arid, it is not felt that there is such a high temperature due to the constant sea breeze.

As a Salt water ecosystem, although it does not show as much plant diversity as other ecosystems, about 20 species have been identified. Here there is an ecosystem of grass species and salt marsh. These species of plants like to grow in saline water and are very helpful in controlling the salinity of wetlands. bay hops or beach morning glory (*Ipomoea pescaprae*), white flowered black mangrove (*Lumnitzera racemosa*), heen thakkada (*Scaevola plumieri*), ravan's mustache (*Spinifex littoreus*) etc. can be seen here.



Water holes seen in the islands



Environment with various plants



Among the animal species that can be seen mainly are bird species. About 38 migratory and resident bird species are recorded in wetlands. This area is a very sensitive breeding area where resident sea bird species build nests and lay eggs. Among them, there are thousands of egg nests of resident seabirds such as caspian tern (*Sterna caspia*), great crested tern (*Thalasseus bergii*), lesser crested tern (*Thalasseus bengalensis*) and whiskered tern (*Chlidonias hybrida*), etc. Second, third and fifth islands, can be mentioned as the largest breeding nesting area of sea terns recorded in our country. The extremely rare migratory birds such as eurasian oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) which is an oyster-dependent bird that lives only in swamps, terek sandpiper (*Xenus cinereus*), sanderling (*Calidris alba*), bar-tailed godwit (*Limosa lapponica*), dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) etc., are also found in the area.



Flocks of great crested terns

08 species of butterflies and 06 species of moths are found in this park. A very beautiful butterfly species, crimson rose (*Pachliopta hector*) is also found there. 07 species of frogs can also be seen in this environment. Common garden lizard (*Calotes versicolor*) and 02 species of marine turtles; green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) and olive ridley sea turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) as reptile species are easily observable.



In view of the biodiversity of the park, providing shelter for birds and is abundance of food, it is important to take measures to protect the nesting grounds of animals as well. It is also important to protect the habitats of animal species such as the sea horse, which is under severe threat. As all the turtle species reported in Sri Lanka use the surrounding area as breeding areas, it is very important to protect those areas. It is also special that migratory birds used to use the fourth island as their stopover when coming to and leaving the island.

Named as Setu Samudram, Hanumanta Bridge and Adam's Bridge, this group of sandbar islands is a unique product of nature built from a set of economic, social and culturally important ties between India and Sri Lanka. According to geological evidence, this bridge is an ancient land link between India and Sri Lanka.

A research team of the Wildlife Department conducted a biodiversity survey here and it was further discovered that there is significant biodiversity as well as ecological importance.



USSANGODA NATIONAL PARK



- **Experience - Ussangoda forest to become a
National Park**
- **Description of the officer of his encounter-
Mr. Vidanapathirana Ranjith**
- **Description of the Ussangoda National Park**



Ussangoda forest to become a National Park

In 2006, I was transferred to the Kalamatiya Beat Office. The Ussangoda area was close to the Kalamatia Beat Office. The Ussangoda area was conserved by the Department of Archaeology. The Department Forest Conservation has conserved around the reserve as a buffer zone.

Ussangoda is located on the main road between Ambalantota town and Hungama town, at a distance of about 2.5 km on the rural road from Nonagama towards the sea. There are two hillocks, a valley and two grasslands in the Ussangoda area. This is a forest cover and within this shrub forest cover, there are thorny plants that grow in the semi-arid zone, such as daluk, hinguruvel, kora kaha, cactus, karamba, andara, kukuruman, katupila, etc.

The edge of the forest cover is the sea and scenery of the blue sea waves come and hit the beach is charming. During the day, you can occasionally see turtles swimming freely in the shallow water. You can see many species of birds such as Golu kirala, Goma ritta, yellow-billed kirala, red-billed kirala, dumbonna, and beetle birds. It is possible to see the birds digging holes in the ground and building their nests. There is also a species of large dark colored lizards in this area. Also, you can see animals such as porcupine, spotted deer, mouse deer, rabbits, iguana and occasionally wild elephants.

There are many legends regarding the land of Ussangoda. In the story of Rama-Ravana, Hanuma was hiding in Ussangoda, and there is a legend that medicinal plants were brought from India to heal his wounds, and medicinal plants such as Vishnukranti and



Chandrakanti are those plants. Another legend is that this is the area of Lord Mangala and the lake is which the Lord Mangala's vehicle 'Bufalo' was bathed. Another idea is that this land is subjected to subterranean shift and Madunagala hot water springs in there are due to this subterranean shift. Another legend is that it is an area where mythical Kalu Kumara yaksha's influence is presence.

School children and young couples often came to visit the Ussangoda area. Stealing their valuables and hunting wild animals at night became widespread. It was also heard that drug addicts used to do these things. The agriculture committee meeting of Ussangoda area was held at Ambalantota Divisional Secretariat and I usually take part to it. One day in this meeting, the environmental officer in charge of the area reported that the Ussangoda area was subjected to illegal human activities. After discussing the importance of protecting the animals and plants and the environment there, everyone including the minister decided to assign Rumassala under the Department of wildlife. After that, the Kalamatia Beat Office of the Wildlife Department received a notice to specify the territory with a rough boundary in the area.

Accordingly, Departments of Wildlife, Archeology, Forest Conservation and the Survey Generals were requested to define the boundaries. The Survey Department requested to pay them 2 lakhs for boundary demarcations. Meanwhile, a private company requested 60 acres of this land to build a hotel. The people of the village protested against it.

At that time, I was a wildlife Beat Officer. Only correspondence is exchanged between the parties. I wondered what I should do. I took a bottle of water on my bike to have when I was thirsty and went to Rumassala. After talking to the senior citizens, I learned about the boundaries belonging to the Department of Archeology and the Department of



Forest Conservation. I crawled through the thorn bushes, went along the difficult roads and looked for the borders. Finally, I was able to know the area belonging to the both Departments. Because these areas belong to two Grama Seva domains, I noted that boundary in my mind.

In the office, I drew these borders on a piece of paper. It was actually a sketch, but I took my time with it. I later gave the Range Officer the sketch. But all he did was give it a quick glance before discarding it. The map had become divided in two, and I was in great panic. I took the two map pieces apart and carefully glued them back together.

Time was passed and the problem was aggravated. The people of the village are leading a series of protests. Colombo Kataragama main road was blocked at Lunama area. The authorities ended the protest by saying that this area has now been handed over to the Department of wildlife.

Then one day a senior lady official of the wildlife department came hurriedly with a group of officers. She has been asked to present the border of Ussangoda land to the Parliament soon. Letters sent to the Survey Department had not been answered. I brought the map I had drawn and showed it to her. She was very happy. I was picked up in the vehicle and came to Ussangoda land, and according to my map she recorded the G.P.S. readings starting from a corner of the land to the other.

Our lunch that day was only tender coconuts. The officer prepared the map and left for Colombo.

Ussangoda was declared as a National Park with 349.077 hectares in extent was declared on Thursday, May 6, 2010 by Gazette No. 1652/49. I am very happy for my contribution in this event.





Mr. Vidanapathirana Ranjith

On 01.12.1983, at the age of 17, Mr. Ranjith joined the Wildlife Department as a minor employee, on daily wages. The daily wage at that time was Rs. 22.50. His first duty at a Gampalagama camp was to drive elephants. Since then he worked at Wilpattu, Horton Plains, Kataragama, and Galge Beat Office. Mr. Ranjith became a permanent employee on 01.12.1988. He was promoted to Wildlife Assistant Range officer in 2014.

He had the opportunity to go on an educational tour in India during his tenure. Mr. Ranjith does his job with love and devotion. He says that he is very satisfied with his job.

Mr. Ranjith is a loving father of three children. His wife is not employed and daughter is studying in a private university. One of the two sons works at the Dubai Hilton Hotel. The other son works as a guide in the wildlife department.

Mr. Ranjith's address is W.D. Ranjith, No. 339, Mahayaya Road, Miriswatta, Beliatta.



Ussangoda National Park

The objectives of establishing National Parks are to provide long-term protection for the biological, archaeological and geographical values of the area. Bordering the Kalamatiya Wildlife Sanctuary in the east, Ussangoda, which is a wonderful creation of nature, is a unique piece of land that has a lot of folklore around it and is a rare ecosystem with archaeological value. This is the 21st National Park in Sri Lanka. This area, which is located above the Kalamatiya sanctuary, has been known as Ussangoda since ancient times.



Ussangoda is a unique ecosystem located in southern Sri Lanka. It is located near Nonagama beach in Ambalantota area in the southern part of Sri Lanka. This arid ecosystem spread over an area of 349.077 hectares has been designated as a National Park under Gazette No.1652/49 dated 05.06.2010.

Ussangoda land area has a dark red layer of soil. It is spread over several hectares. What makes this plain spectacular is its widespread brownish-red soil layer. Scientists researching Ussangoda are of the opinion that this unique land was created due to a



meteorite crash happened about 15 million years ago. Red colored soil and molten rocks from burning provide evidence to prove this hypothesis. A type of molten iron or rock can be seen in places on the red soil in Ussangoda. They are very heavy. According to scientific research, this soil contains 27% ferric oxide and 53% silicon oxide. Due to this high metal concentration, trees do not grow here. The brick-red soil bears witness to this. The rock fragments exposed on the surface of the plateau are brownish-red, almost black in color and show a molten and liquefied form. It is believed that the rocks were melted by the extreme heat released during a meteorite explosion.



This beautiful area consists of two small hills high above the sea, a valley and two meadows. Although plants do not grow because of the red soil, thorny plants are spread throughout this land. Plants grow very rarely in Ussangoda. A few small bushes have grown in only a few places. Deposition of other layers of soil on top of the red soil, created an environment suitable for plants adapted to the arid environment such as bush plum (*Carissa spinarum*), cactus (*Opuntia dillenii*), and eremina (*Ziziphus species*) etc. where they are appearing in places like Kalamatia



of the sanctuary. Medicinal plants such as Fleshy spurge tree (*Euphorbia antiquorum*), Hinguru wel (*Senegalia caesia*), Ironwood tree (*Memecylon umbellatum*), Andara (*Febacea sps*), Kukuruman (*Catunaregam spinosa*), Katupila (*Flueggea leucopyrus*), Surya Kranti (*Helianthus annuus*), Vishnu Kranti (*Volvulus alsinoides*), Chandra Kranti (*Ipomoea alba*) are also found in this land. It is difficult to see plants on the red colored land sections. Only a special kind of grass has grown on it. At one end of Ussangoda is the ocean. Therefore, it is also an area that sinks to the sea very quickly. Tourists from far and wide who come to visit the meadows can also see the charming sight of the waves like white cotton balls reaching to kiss the shore. You can occasionally see turtles swimming freely in the shallow waters during the day.



Bush plum



Cactus

Several species of birds can be seen. Eurasian thick- Knee (*Burhinus oediconemus*), Jerdon's bushlark (*Mirafrja affinis*), Yellow-wattled lapwing (*Vanellus malarbaricus*), Red- wattled lapwing (*Vanellus indicus*), Indian roller (*Coracias benghalensis*), Little green bee eater (*Merops orientalis*) birds abound. There are also cases where beetle birds dig holes in the ground and build their nests. As wild animals, you can see wild



boars (*Sus scrofa*), porcupines (*Hystrix indica*), spotted deer (*Axis axis ceylonensis*) to a limited extent, mouse or deer Spotted chevrotain (*Moschiola meminna*), Indian hare (*Lepus nigricollis*), Iguana (*Varanus bengalensis*), and water monitor (*Varanus salvator*) near the coast.

Ussangoda, which is the origin of many events in history as well as many legends, is bordered by a small plot of land of about one square kilometer. As shown in satellite images on the Internet, this plot is shaped like a seahorse.

While traveling towards Kataragama from the Colombo-Kataragama main road, this area can be reached by turning right before the Nonagama junction and driving towards the sea for about 2 km. This area, which is the foundation of many myths that evoke mystery and curiosity, is very scenic and mind-blowing. The plains, which are seen as far as the eye can see, on the ridge that stands in the middle of the plains, which are spread out on both sides, enhance its beauty more and more. There are many legends, archaeological remains and literary information about Ussangoda. Some of them have arisen due to the unique features of this land. But some legends say that this land was formed due to other events that happened in the past. According to Hindu mythology, Ussangoda is believed to be the place where King Ravana's Dandumonara chariot is grounded. There are also several archaeological sites runs up to prehistoric times.

The Ussangoda National Park, located in the Welipatanwila area of Ambalangoda, is controlled by the Kalamatiya Site Protection Office, which has been an area with great tourist attraction since the past.



HIKKADUWA MARINE NATIONAL PARK



- **Experience - How Hikkaduwa Sanctuary became a National Park**
- **Description of the officer of his encounter -
Mr. Asanka Gunawardane**
- **Description of the Hikkaduwa Marine
Natinonal Park**



How Hikkaduwa Sanctuary became a National Park

Hikkaduwa area is declared originally as a sanctuary. Then it was declared as a nature reserve and followed as a National Park. Hikkaduwa National Park was established as a full Marine National Park in 2002.

Before 1998, Hikkaduwa had more than 180 coral species belonging to 60 Genus. Corals were destroyed due to the warm water wave called "El Nino" that came in 1998. The density of some species decreased.

Although the ownership was transferred to the Department of wildlife technically, there was no building belonging to the Department. The office was maintained in a rented building. At the end of 2006, the Hikkaduwa Cooperative provided land to the Department. A small office was built there, but it was not enough for the scientific management.

At the end of 2008, I got a transfer from Yala National Park to Hikkaduwa National Park as the site manager.

During this period, nearly twelve fishing boats were anchored in a very irregular manner. The fish brought from the boats were also taken out from within the National Park. Swimming, snorkeling, and watching corals became dangerous for tourists.

We first prepared a formal plan. The Wildlife Department, the Coast Guard Department and the Police jointly developed a tourism management plan. This work also received support from local committees. At that time, the Director General of the Department of Wildlife was Mr. H.D Ratnayake.



We had a team of about twenty people for such operations. Veterinary Surgeon, Dharmakirthi was also there. On that day, we anesthetized the elephant, caught it, loaded it into a truck and took it to another area with the hope of releasing it.

According to this plan, we first registered the glass bottom boats used for coral watching. Initially 53 boats were registered. Also, fishing boats were removed from the national park. A zone has been set up for snorkeling and a zone for tourists to swim. At the same time, the route for boats was set up outside these zones. This ensured the safety of tourists as well.

A separate area was made to park the boats. There were protests against this. Boat owners pulled several boats on the road and staged a protest on the Galle-Colombo road. We took legal action in that regard.

We had bought a plot of land to build our office. For a long time, boats have been pulled ashore in this area during the stormy season of the sea. In 2010, we planned to build our new office on this land.

Two teams of Officers from Girithale training came to lay the foundation of the building. Also, officials came from Hikkaduwa Wildlife Office, Head Office and Kalamatia Wildlife Office. People staged a mass protest there that day. They did not allow us to construct the building. We stopped work at that time and retreated.

After that, he took the support of the ministry and went to the district committee to get the support. Started working again after a month. The monks who joined the campaign came and blessed us by chanting pirith.



By now, the construction of the wildlife office has been completed and all official work is being done from there. We had not been able to issue even a wildlife license. Along with this process, licenses were issued from there.

There was also a protest on the day the license was issued. We got support from the police and the committees of the Hikkaduwa Urban Council. With our licenses we were able to collect the ten percent entertainment tax that should be charged on boats.

During this time, from 2009-2014 I stayed in Hikkaduwa National Park. A series of unforgettable incidents stuck in my memory.

In the year 2023 again, I got a transfer to Hikkaduwa. Started collecting data on corals this year. It can be completed in July next year.

I hope to do many activities for the improvement of Hikkaduwa National Park.





Mr. Asanka Gunawardane

Mr. Asanka Gunawardena joined the Department of Wildlife Conservation in 1998 as an 11th Grade Wildlife Ranger Officer after being selected through a competitive examination.

He has completed 25 years of service in Lunugamwehera, Head Office, Udawalawa, Maduru Oya, Yala and Hikkaduwa National Parks.

Mr. Asanka Gunawardena, who was studying for a diploma in agriculture when he joined the service, has also studied the diploma course in wildlife management at the University of Colombo offered by the Department of Wildlife Conservation.

Mr. Asanka Gunawardena studied at St. Aloysius College, Galle from Kindergarten to Advanced Level.

He married Miss Sandamali Batuanthuduwa in 2004 and is currently the father of a daughter and a son. Wife Sandamali engaged in the beauty culture industry. The daughter is studying Advanced Level at Southlands College, Galle and the son is studying for the GCE Ordinary Level at St. Aloysius College.

His address is 551, Batugoda, Bussa.



Hikkaduwa Marine National Park



This area in Hikkaduwa, which was declared as a Sanctuary on 18th May 1979 and as a Nature Reserve on 14th August 1988, with the main objective of conserving coral reefs, was gazetted by the Gazette No. 1257/ 14 on 05th October 2002 under the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance as the Hikkaduwa Marine National Park. The Hikkaduwa Marine National Park is located in the Hikkaduwa Divisional Secretariat in the Galle District of the Southern Province. According to the Department of Wildlife Conservation, this 101.58 hectare park is one of the three National Marine Parks in Sri Lanka where you can see an ecosystem of marine life. The other two parks are Adam's Bridge Marine National Park and Pigeon Island National Park.



Wildlife office at Hikkaduwa



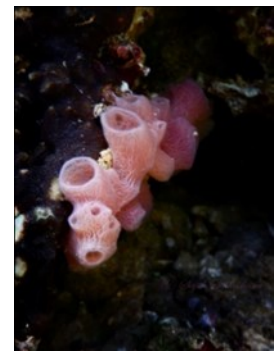
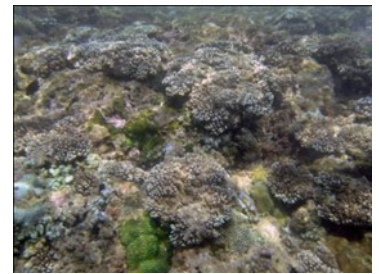
The beaches belonging to Hikkaduwa National Park stretch for 4 km and are narrow. Coral reefs here play an important role as a breeding ground for marine life. Coral reefs are also known as natural breakwaters as they act against natural coastal erosion.

This land belonging to the wet zone receives rain from the south-west monsoon and the north-east monsoon and the temperature is around 28° C. The average annual rainfall is 1,500 to 5,000 mm, fed by the southwest monsoon from mid-April to mid-June; it is fed by the northeast monsoon from mid-September to November. During the period of monsoon rains, the waves of the sea show a tendency to accelerate. The period from January to March has dry weather, and this period is an ideal time to visit the park. The temperature of the water here is up to 28° C-30°C.

The park is populated by sea grasses. Green macro algae (*Halimeda Sps.*), Sea water algae (*Caulerpa Sps.*), Sea lettuce -Edible green algae (*Ulva Sps.*) and Small brown algae (*Padina Sps.*) are the algae species found there. Green salt water algae; Sea water algae and Green macro algae are spread throughout the sea depth of 5 to 10 meters. Sea grass is a food source for many marine organisms. Sea grass traps silt and prevents erosion of the seabed. It also provides habitats for the endangered dugong and the protected sea turtle.

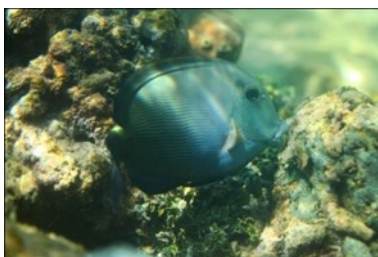
Corals that form coral reefs are often found in shallow water. In this National Park, which has been declared with the purpose of coral reef conservation, coral reefs are classified as fringing reefs, barrier reefs and atolls according to the nature of the corals. 60 species of corals belonging to 31 genera have been recorded; Stag Horn Coral (*Acropora Sps*), Elk Horn Coral (*Acropora Sps.*), Cabbage Coral (*Montipora Sps.*), Brain Coral (*Mussidae and merulinidae Sps.*), Table Coral Table Coral (*Acropora Sps.*), Star Coral (*Montastraea Sps.*) etc. A coral reef can be recognized as one of the most productive ecosystems in the world which provides habitats and food for many marine organisms including fish, i.e., an ecosystem that sustains life in the ocean. The appearance and size of corals are also influenced by external characteristics such as water temperature, amount of light received, and availability of food.





Coral species

In Hikkaduwa National Park, 113 species of reef associated fish species belonging to 48 genera and 8 species of colorful fish have been recorded.



Fish associated with coral reefs



Many invertebrates such as crabs, turtles, shrimps, lobsters, oysters and sea worms are also found. Three species of turtles are also found in Hikkaduwa Marine National Park.



A turtle

In particular, Hikkaduwa Coral Reef can also be called a breeding ground for marine life. Here, tourists have the opportunity to observe coral reefs from glass-bottomed boats as well as engage in water recreational activities such as snorkeling, scuba diving and swimming.



Snorkeling



Bottom Glass Boats



Sandy beach

Hikkaduwa Marine National Park can be reached by coming on the Colombo Galle Expressway. And also coming by to Galle from Colombo Galle expressway and again going back towards Colombo on the old Galle road.

The shallow beautiful coral reefs on the southern coast of Sri Lanka attract local and foreign tourists, but natural hazards and human activities are seriously affecting the destruction of coral reefs. The tendency of many fishermen to use dynamite to catch



fish is a reason for the destruction of fish populations and coral reefs. Illegal fishing practices thus destroy the spectacular coral reefs. Previously, glass-bottomed boats, which are used by local and foreign tourists to visit coral reefs, often run in the marine environment releasing water and oil, caused various threats to the corals and associated animals living there. Due to the breaking of coral reefs for a large period of time for local lime industry, the coral reefs have been severely damaged and many species of coral species have become extinct. In 1998, the El Nino event with warm sea currents destroyed many coral reefs. Coral reefs act as a strong barrier in situations like tsunamis.

It is a responsibility of all of us to protect the Hikkaduwa Marine National Park by understanding its environmental and aesthetic importance.

Excerpt-

National Parks of Sri Lanka -(by P.M. Senaratne)

the internet.



HOROWPOTHANA NATIONAL PARK



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Horowpatana National Park



- **Experience - The first elephant census in Sri Lanka.**
- **Description of the officer of his encounter -
H. Dayawan Rathnayake**
- **Description of the Horowpothana National Park**



The first elephant census in Sri Lanka.

While there have been several regional studies about the number of wild elephants residing in Sri Lanka, there has never been an island-wide elephant census covering the whole island. Thus, it was decided to carry out such a census in August 2011. I began this survey shortly as I was appointed Director General of the Wildlife Department in 2011. As a result, everyone participated in the initial proposal to undertake an elephant census that covered every corner of Sri Lanka. One of my most cherished recollections is of the elephant census.

Elephants have lived in Sri Lanka since ancient times. *Elephas maximus maximus*, one of the three Asian elephant subspecies, is only found in Sri Lanka. The number of elephants live in Sri Lanka is always a guess. It is said that there were 15,000 - 10,000 elephants at each time, but this is not correct. Until now, the elephant census had been done only on a regional basis. In the past, elephants were spread all over Sri Lanka, but after the British rule, this distribution changed with the plantation economy. The elephants in the hilly region were killed by the British rulers, so that region became an area without elephants. There are currently eighteen elephants at the Adams peak site and two elephants around Sinharaja. All the remaining elephants are in the dry zone and the intermediate zone.

In solving the long-standing elephant-human conflict in Sri Lanka, facts such as how many elephants are there in Sri Lanka? how are they spread? what is the female to male ratio? what is their population percentage? what the population density of elephants? and whether there is a healthy elephant population? needed to be find out.



Due to the war situation in the North and East, it was difficult to collect data about the number of elephants in those areas. Although the war ended in 2009, it was risky to go into the jungle due to problems such as landmines in those areas. By 2011, most of the mines had been cleared. Therefore, those areas were also able to be surveyed.

In planning the elephant census, our primary focus was on conducting the survey to cover the entire forested areas of Sri Lanka. Due to the facts that this is different from a normal population census and the number of officers working in the Department of Wildlife Conservation was limited, officers and civilians from other agencies had to be engaged from outside. It was challenging as they needed to spend at least two full days in the jungle. Also, one should have understanding and knowledge about the identification of elephants.

During the planning days of this survey, the total staff of the Wildlife Department was nearly one thousand. Only a part of them could be used for this task. Therefore, it was necessary to find a large group of officials from outside.

We invited groups such as voluntary organizations, rural organizations, armed forces, police and university students to join this. A large number of them expressed their willingness to provide support. In particular, voluntary organizations expressed their willingness to provide material support as well as labor contribution. Universities also showed great support. Experts such as Dr. S. Vijaya Mohan, Prof. U.K.G.K. Padmalal, Prof. Charles Santhia Pillay, who have constantly researched elephants, volunteered for this purpose.

The initiative of the elephant survey was entrusted to Mr. N.R.B Dissanayake, who was a Deputy Director at that time. Mr. Chandana Suriya Bandara, Mr. Ranjan



Marasinghe, Mr. Manjula Amararatne, Mr. W.N.K Pathiratne, Veterinary Surgeon Mr. Taraka Prasad, Mr. U.L Tawfik, Ms. Chandani Wilson and Mr. P.M.U. from Dharmathilaka who were Deputy Directors at that time were entrusted with the responsibility at the provincial level. Also, providing necessary training to the armed forces and police officers, Civil Defense Officers, university and voluntary organization participants and Department officials was a tedious task. But we were able to do all those activities successfully.

As we expected, there was a long dry season in 2011. I was hoping to use a day with good moonlight for this purpose. This work was done according to the scientific method called Water hole counts method. The elephant will visit the drinking place at some point of the day within a day. Then they can easily be included in the calculation. We selected 1553 such drinking spots. A set of field tools needed to stay in the jungle for three days was given to the officials and dry food, necessary communication facilities, flashlights etc. were also provided as needed.

We also gave extensive media publicity in this regard. But when the census was 2-3 days away, many of the voluntary organizations which were supporting the census announced that they would not participate, by expressing different opinions regarding the way the census was conducted.

If the census is stopped at this point, it will go back for years and the money spent will be wasted. In consultation with the senior officers of the department, we took immediate decisions and brought in more forces, police and university students. More interested persons were contacted and all of them were again given rapid training. All



the forests, farmlands, semi-populated areas, etc., which belong to and do not belong to the Departments Wildlife and Forest Conservation were surveyed to cover all the areas. As planned, scheduled elephant census was conducted on 11th, 12th and 13th August 2011 from 1553 monitoring stations. Those who took part in the wild elephant census faced various kinds of difficulties not only from wild elephants as well as other animals. But task was completed without physical injury to anyone.

All information was analyzed at the National Wildlife and Training Center in Giritale. Ranjan Marasinghe, the then Deputy Director of the Department, and Dr. Vijayakone provided a lot of support for these analyses. The largest number of elephants recorded within a day was taken into consideration here. Here the repetitions are removed and the minimum number of elephant population is obtained. Finally, a complete data sheet was prepared. It was scientifically concluded that the minimum number of elephants in Sri Lanka was 5871, which means there are almost 6000. Of these, it was found that about 67.17% of the elephants were inside the wildlife reserves, about 29.78% were inside the reserves and about 3.03% were outside the reserves. Among these elephants, the ratio of male elephants to female elephants is 1:1.09, 3285 adult elephants, 1487 young elephants, 731 calves and 376 babies were found. Also, other data was taken regarding the number of tuskers. Accordingly, it was found that 5.3% of the males were young males, 7.7% of them and 8.4% of the cubs were tuskers.

According to these surveys, about 200 wild elephants were found live outside the reserves and closer to villages. These elephants frequently visit villages and damage property and crops. Even if they are moved to other places, they return to their original



places. Also, the people in the places where the elephants were taken away were subjected to troubles. Therefore, the people of the regions do not like this. Therefore, it was proposed to establish four elephant conservation centers in Horovpothana closer to Anuradhapura, Maduruoya, Lunugamwehera and Wilpattu.

As a first step, it was planned to build the first elephant conservation centers for 40 elephants in an area of 1000 hectares at Horopathana National Park in Anuradhapura district. The Minister in charge at that time, the Secretary and the Department officials provided a lot of support in this regard and the elephant conservation center was able to be completed in 2015.





H. Dayawan Rathnayake

Mr. H. Dayawan Rathnayake, who joined the Department of Wildlife Conservation as Deputy Director (Research and Training) on January 10, 1996, was promoted to the post of Director Operations (Sri Lanka Scientific Service) and appointed as the Director General of Wildlife in 2011. He has been assigned with the Ministry of Wildlife and Forest Resources Conservation since 2016 as an Additional Secretary. He has additionally held the position of Conservator General of Forests in the Department of Forest Conservation during this period.

During his tenure, Various activities were carried out such as to management and conservation of the network of wildlife reserves, working to reduce human-elephant conflicts, establishment of the Horowpothana Elephant Rehabilitation Camp, introduction of management methods to prevent the spread of fire, revision of the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance (FFPO), introducing necessary rules and regulations for watching marine mammals such as whales and dolphins and thereby making the government get a lot of revenue locally and abroad, introducing conservation methods for marine mammals



, elephants, turtles and birds etc. and working on protected area management and wildlife conservation projects under the assistance of the Asian Development Bank, making preliminary arrangements to get assistance for the ESCAMP project under the assistance of the World Bank, starting marine conservation activities and under the expanding the reserve network, during his tenure the four National Parks at Adam's Bridge, Madupara, Chundikulam and Delft were established and Nagarkovil Nature Reserves was established on 22.06.2015. He also took the lead in carrying out the renovation activities of the Yala, Wilpattuwa, and Marandamadu circuit bungalows in Wilpattuwa National Park, which collapsed due to terrorist attacks. The establishment of the office building in Hikkaduwa National Park, the repair work of many office buildings and circuit bungalows, and the purchase of many new vehicles for the institutions were some of the activities he has rendered. Under his leadership, a number of welfare measures were taken for the benefit of the officers.

Mr. Dayawan Ratnayake, who studied at Dharmaraja College, Kandy, is a graduate of Peradeniya University, specializing in Botany. He has also completed a PhD in Ecology from the same university and a PhD in Wildlife Conservation and Management from the **University of Reading** in the UK with excellent results. **Wild Flowers of Sri Lanka** and **Common Wayside Trees of Sri Lanka** are two books authored by him. He has published research papers and reports in various disciplines. In addition to his scientific knowledge, he is also a scholar of law. Mr. Ratnayake is a law graduate of the Open University of Sri Lanka, and he is a Supreme Court lawyer as well.



Mr. Dayawan Ratnayake is a father of two daughters. His wife, W.R.D.M.U.P. Ratnayake, is a lecturer; his eldest daughter, H. Anushi Udanga Ratnayake, graduated from Moratuwa University and is working as a Fashion Designer in the garment industry; and his second daughter, H. Dilushi Vishwani Ratnayake, is a medical student at the University of Ruhuna.

Mr. Dayawan Ratnayake's contact number is 0714465444 and his email is dayawanratnayake@yahoo.com



Horowpothana National Park

As a solution to the human - elephant conflict in Sri Lanka, Horawpothana National Park was established in Horawpothana Divisional Secretariat area located on the eastern border of Anuradhapura District, with the primary objective of maintaining it as a rehabilitation center for identified endangered elephants. Furthermore, on 06.12.2011, under Gazette No. 1735/21, Horowpothana National Park was declared with an area of 2570 hectares, with the objectives of conserving wild animals and ecosystems, promoting environmental conservation, and upliftment of the social and economic conditions of the surrounding villagers.

Horowpothana National Park is one of the prominent places in Sri Lanka that nature lovers love to visit. This park, is another location which emphasizes natural beauty of Sri Lanka, is a habitat for wildlife including elephants, bears, leopards, deer and many birds etc. The park is famous for its elephant population whereas grazing and interacting large number of elephants can be seen there.

Apart from large mammals, the park is home to many small animals including reptiles, amphibians and insects etc. The park also provides habitat for several species of migratory birds, including the peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*) and the gray heron (*Ardea cinerea*) etc. Thus the flora and fauna of the park help greatly in beautifying and maintaining the balance of its ecosystem. Being part of Sri Lanka's network of protected areas, this is also of great conservation importance. The ecosystem of this park is very important to the biodiversity of the region.



The plant community belongs to the category of mixed dry evergreen forest. Ceylon Iron wood (*Manilkara hexandra*), Satin (*Chloroxylon swietenia*) and Hedge box wood (*Drypetes sepiaria*) are commonly found while Ebony (*Diospyros ebenum*), Wood apple (*Feronia limonia*), Milla (*Vitex altissima*), *Syzgium Sps.* and Indian Mahogani (*Chukrasia tabularis*) as well as Mila (*Bauhinia racemosa*), Fishing rod tree (*Pterospermum suberitolium*), (*Cassia fistula*) and Sickie bush (*Dichrostachys cinerea*) plants are also found in the area.

Due to the development projects started along with the population growth of the island, the wild population decreased and the migration patterns of elephants also started to change. Due to this, elephants broke into villages, behaved violently and damaged property and human lives. By around 2010, this led to a severe escalation of elephant-human conflict, resulting in the annual loss of approximately 100 to 130 human lives and 200 to 400 elephants and, a large amount of physical, property and crop damages.

The human-elephant conflict can be pointed out as the most serious challenge identified by the Department of Wildlife Conservation at that time. In order to reduce the loss of life, property and crops damages, the need to build an elephant rescue center to rehabilitate violent elephants was recognized.

Accordingly a wild elephant sanctuary was established in the Horawpothana National Park in the Anuradhapura region as the first phase to detain and rehabilitate the wild elephants that cause great trouble to the neighbourhood. The forest in Horawpothana Elephant Reserve is secondary mixed dry evergreen forest. In 2015, Horawpothana was



established as the country's first Elephant Holding Ground (EHG), keeping violent elephants from across the country.



Entrance



Plaque in front of the entrance

Horawpothana Elephant Sanctuary (EHG) is the world's first elephant sanctuary and it has the capacity to retain about 30 elephants, and if additional elephants are kept, food has to be provided for them from outside. Five tanks and pastures have been prepared to provide water and food to the elephants. Special security measures are used to prevent captive elephants from escaping. About 64 elephants have been sheltered since its inception.



Sheltered elephants



The management of the park is committed to preserve the park's natural resources and maintain a delicate balance with tourism. We should respect the rules and regulations of the park and try to preserve its natural beauty for future generations. Horawpothana National Park is a wonderful place for nature lovers. Its stunning scenery, diverse wildlife and commitment to its conservation will make unique and unforgettable memories for visitors. Horawpotana National Park, which is currently not open for tourists, is being prepared to open for tourists in the future.



27

KAHALLE PALLEKELE SANCTUARY



- **Experience - Chased by a marsh crocodile**
- **Description of the officer of his encounter -
Vehan Sahanjith Weragama**
- **Description of the Kahalle Pallekele Sanctuary**



Chased by a marsh crocodile

This incident occurred at the start of my career.

The Wilpattu National Park was divided into eight divisions. I had started as a Third Grade Ranger in one of those divisions, called 'Pomparippuwa'. In those days we were not assigned vehicles for field work by the Sri Lankan government. We were left with the choices of cycling or walking.

Anyways, an old paddy field was located at the pathway which rendered it virtually impossible for a vehicle to cross over it. In addition, this pathway also composed of a sandy area of about 20 square kilometers which caused any vehicle to sink into the earth.

Normally, when we conduct a raid, the suspects will have to be brought before the court. In those days, we could only obtain a vehicle from the main entrance at Wilpattu National Park to transfer any suspects before the court. Thereafter, we had to walk when called upon the day of the hearing to the court on foot.

A 46-kilometer distance separated the Pomparippu area, where I was assigned, to the entrance of the Wilpattu National Park. We walked this distance every morning the day we were to be present at court. We only carried a backpack with documents and other necessities. We would stop for a quick rest and refresh at the Thalawila bungalow, located 7 kilometers from Pomparippuwa, before embarking on the remaining 39-kilometre walk to the entrance at Wilpattu, whose area was known as 'Hunuwilagama'.



A “Kokariya Wila’ (water tank) was located along the path after passing the Thalawila bungalow. This tank consisted of brackish water. The road in this area was particularly sandy, which resulted in your legs sinking into the ground.

One such morning, I embarked on the journey to present myself at court. At around 6:00 am I found myself at the Kokariya Wila. The day had barely begun to break and all I had in my possession were a few ‘thunder flashes’ used to intimidate and chase away wild elephants. All around me, there was not a soul in sight.

I barely noticed the huge Marsh Crocodile basking nearby. When I passed, the enormous reptile, around fifteen meters in length, jumped awake and charged at me. I was fortunate enough to barely avoid its closing jaws. I forced my legs to run as fast as possible on the sinking path, I looked around to see this ferocious beast still chasing me which filled me with even more terror. With all the energy I could muster, I was able to put some distance between me and the fearsome predator. Looking back, I reckon this enormous crocodile chased me for more that eighteen meters.

Ever since, whenever I found myself on that path, I always kept an ever-wary eye for any crocodiles.





Vehan Sahanjith Weragama

Vehan Sahanjith Weragama joined the Department of Wildlife Conservation on November 1981, as a 3rd Grade Ranger when he was less than 20 years of age. After passing his 1st and 2nd efficiency barrier exams, today, he serves as an Assistant Secretary of the Anuradhapura Division. His loving family consists of his wife, daughter and son. They reside in at Galagedara in Kandy, whereas Mr. Weragama conducts his duties while staying in the Anuradhapura quarters.



Kahalle Pallekele Sanctuary

Kahalle Palle Kele Sanctuary is spread over the Kalagam Palata, Palagala and Kekirawa Divisional Secretariat Divisions in the Anuradhapura District of the North Central Province and the Galgamuwa and Polpithigama Divisional Secretariat Divisions of the Kurunegala District in the North Western Province. The boundary of the Matale District of the Central Province is located in the south east direction of this sanctuary.

.The total land area is 216.9 square kilometers or 26690 hectares, which was declared on 1st July, 1980. Due to its location, settlements are located around the sanctuary and Hakwatuna Oya and Siyambalangamuwa Lake are also located in this vicinity. The road from Ibbangamuwa to Moragollagama *via* Polpithigama and the road from Galewela to Negama are the main access roads to the sanctuary. There are a number of by roads connecting Madatugama and Kekirawa via kalawewa are located in associate with this sanctuary.

The sanctuary was established in the vicinity of Hakwatuna Oya, Kalawewa and Balalu Oya with the aim of providing habitat to wildlife including wild elephants that have lost their habitats due to agricultural activities, settlements and development activities in the area under the Mahaweli 'H' Zone.

Kahalle Palle Kele Sanctuary is rich in biodiversity in terms of its size. Public lands as well as private lands may be located in a sanctuary declared under the Fauna and Flora Ordinance. However, if any construction or development work is to be carried out on

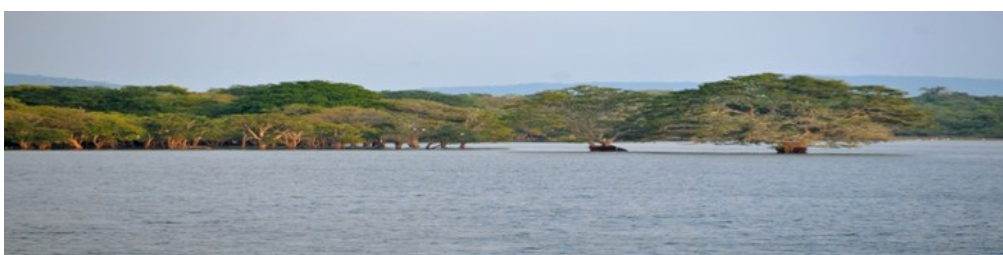


such private lands, the approval of the Director General of the Department of Wildlife should be obtained.

There are about 50 villages in the Kahalle Palle Kele Sanctuary and many villages around the sanctuary boundary. All these villages existed before the declaration of the sanctuary. These ancient villages are located in the vicinity of small lakes and home gardens such as coconut, banana and fruit are also cultivated here. The Ritigala reserve is also located close to this sanctuary.

The climate of the sanctuary is dry throughout the year and the annual temperature of the sanctuary is around 32 degrees Celsius. Rainfall occurs during the months of April-May and October-November of the year and there is a long dry climate from June to the end of September. Monsoon rains from November to January. Annual rainfall is between 1450 mm and 1650 mm.

There are four main streams in the Kahale Palle Kele Sanctuary. Moragolla Oya flows into Kalawewa from the eastern slope of Kahalla. Hakwatuna Oya flows from the southern slope and Mee Oya flows from the western slope of Pallekele. The main source of water here is Siyambalangama Oya. In addition, many tanks such as Balalu Wewa, Bogahapattuwa Wewa, Adiyagala Wewa, Divul Wewa, Ulpath Wewa, Rambewa Wewa and Millagoda Wewa have been constructed for agricultural purposes.



Kalawewa



The sanctuary is home to 256 species of plants, including high canopy primary forests, low canopy mountain ranges, middle tier forests, shrubbery, wetlands, paddy fields, and mountain ecosystems. A large number of species associated with these ecosystems are found here.

Many species of mammals, fish, reptiles, amphibians, birds, butterflies, insects and mollusks are found here. Elephants, bears, black monkeys, leopards mouse deer,,loris and pangalin are endangered species. Deer, sambur, wild buffalo, fox, toddy cat, mongoose, porcupine and giant squirrel are some of the other species that live here. The Kahalle Palle Kele Sanctuary is home to 150-200 elephants and about 10 tuskers. Abandoned chenas, tanks and teak plantations are the favorite habitats of the elephants. During the day, elephants roam freely in the shade of trees in the bush. In the evening they come to the grasslands in the lakes and meet the water requirement from the lakes. The grasslands as well as the teak plantations provide them with excellent food.



Grizzled Giant Squirrel (*Ratufa macroura*)

The sanctuary is home to a large herd of deer and several herds of sambur. They can be found in the lower layer forest as well as in the upper layer forest. Seven or eight leopards as well as several bears live here. About 427 species of birds are recorded in Sri Lanka, of which about 189 are migratory birds. There are about 236 species of



migratory birds living in Sri Lanka, 34 of which are endemic to Sri Lanka. Many native as well as migratory birds can be identified in the Kahalle Palle Kele Sanctuary. Many of these bird species can be found in the primary forests. Chena lands, scrublands, wetlands and reservoirs are their habitats.



Orange Breasted Green Pigeon (*Treron bicinctus*)

About 165 species of reptiles are recorded in Sri Lanka, of which about 75 are endemic. Many species of reptiles can be seen in the Kahalle Palle Kele Sanctuary and many endemic species are endangered. Among 45% of all species endemic to Sri Lanka are reptiles. Star tortoises, lizard species as well as water monitor, iguana, crocodile as well as gecko species can be seen here. There are also many species of snakes such as sand viper, python and cobra.

One hundred seven (107) species of fish are recorded in Sri Lanka. Of these, 20 species are recorded from the Kahalle Palle Kele Sanctuary and 4 of them are endemic species. Forty-seven (47) species of butterflies are found in the jungles of Kahalle Palle. Five (5) of them are endemic species and 3 species are endangered. Blue Moth, Common Banded Peacock, Blue Admiral are some of the endangered species.



Common Indian Crow, Bush Grown are endemic species found here. Many of these butterfly species are also found in the scrubland in the sanctuary.

Kahalle Palle Kele Sanctuary is a very important sanctuary located between the North Western and North Central Provinces. The sanctuary is home to a wide variety of species, including elephants, and consist of a number of wildlife-friendly ecosystems.



The main threat to the sanctuary is the use of the land for agriculture. Clearing of the forest by the settlers pose a threat to wildlife habitats as well as exacerbate the human-elephant conflict. Cattle are being sent to sanctuary, leaving elephants and other wildlife facing food shortages. Also, although poaching in the sanctuary is prohibited under the *Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance*, poaching is still practiced here at least occasionally. There are many medicinal plants in this sanctuary. Among them are Sandalwood, Aralu, Bulu, Mee, Olinda, Elabatu, Elanedun, Wadakaha, Rasakida, Kohomba, Aloe vera, Adathoda, Kapu Kinissa, Venivel, Watake and Walkaduru. Unauthorized activities such as sand mining, felling of trees for firewood, etc., cause damage to the natural resources of the sanctuary and their depletion. Attempts to use the sanctuary for various development activities and attempts to encroach on the sanctuary are another threat to the sanctuary.





Peacock Royal (*Tajuria cippus*)

Unlike National Parks, there are no provisions in the *Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance* for tourism in the sanctuaries. A sanctuary is a place where wildlife habitats are protected. Doing anything that could harm wildlife habitats in a sanctuary, destroying nests, destroying chicks and eggs, and killing animals is strictly prohibited.



28

ADAMS PEAK WILDERNESS RESERVE



- **Experience - The Black Leopard**
- **Description of the officer of his encounter -
Mr . Prabhash Aruna Karunathilake**
- **Description of the Adams Peak Wilderness
Reserve**



The Black Leopard

When I was first assigned to the ‘Nallathanni’ wildlife sanctuary as a Ranger, I found the mountainous setting and the cold climate a rather pleasant retreat from the hustle and bustle of the city. Tea plantations were situated along the border of the Nallathanni forest, with tea plucking being the major source of income for the residents of the area – workers would start plucking tea leaves at the crack of dawn and would go on until dusk, when it was finally time to head home.

The abundance of people also meant the abundance of dogs, domesticated as well as strays. Along with the obvious benefits incurred by having man’s best friend close to one’s side, this also comes at a heavy price – the attention of the Sri Lankan leopard. Although leopards aren’t the only wild predators in the area, which is also home to fishing cats and rusty-spotted cats, leopards pose the most dangerous threat. The big cats of the forest cannot resist the easy prey of a dog, whose size and speed are no match for the jungle’s apex predator.

It is not uncommon to hear stories of people having to ward off leopards to rescue their beloved pets, with some situations involving a physical altercation with the beast. As expected, the people harbored an aversion to the leopards and continuously set up traps, which our wildlife officials had to disarm due to the high frequency of animals sustaining severe injuries from crudely built traps. Therefore, we thought it was high time we conducted several awareness programs in the area, educating the populace on leopards and how to protect themselves without hurting these beautiful



creatures. A few uneventful days following the completion of an awareness session, we received a report of a sighting of a rare black leopard in the area. We promptly alerted the veterinary unit of the Department and got acquainted with Dr. Malaka, who had been studying the leopard and had a keener awareness of its comings and goings. As soon as news of the next confirmed sighting hit, we were all planned and prepped to go.

Then, as fate would have it, the COVID-19 pandemic hit Sri Lanka two months into 2020, and the consequent health protocols warranted strict restrictions to the number of people working in the Department. With limited staff, our task of tuning into news of the elusive black leopard was made very difficult. But despite the quarantine protocols, far from the urban setting, life for the villagers continued as it always has, with the daily task of tea harvesting going on with seldom interruptions. With the residents frustrated with the slow response from authorities to their plight, there were those who were always on the lookout to trap the rare feline, and it became a race against time as to who would get their hands on the big cat first. This tense period went on, until the 20th of May at around 9.45 am. when we heard what we were dreading to hear. The black leopard was finally caught.

Immediately, we were on our way to the scene and arrived thirty minutes later to see a crowd huddled together. Hastily calling the onlookers to disperse, I waded through the crowd to lay eyes upon the spectacle only to have my worst fears confirmed. It was a rather pitiful situation to witness. The trap had ensnared the cat's neck, and it was roaring in fear and anguish and desperation; flailing helplessly with



the snare stubbornly showing no sign of even the slightest budge – it seemed the more it struggled, the more pathetic its predicament became. The chokehold got tighter and tighter, as evidenced by its raspy breaths, and bulging terror-stricken eyes. The snare cut deeper into its skin, giving its black coat a maroon tinge. The metallic odor of blood stung the air, and its pleading cries drowned out all external noise.

With great trepidation and the utmost care, we managed to reach out towards the now tiring beast, and with the aid of a long, sturdy tree branch, managed to lodge it in a secure position to hold the animal down just long enough for us to reach down and loosen the snare's grip to drive another wedge between the wire and neck. It seemed to take forever, but with great effort, we managed to apply the necessary leverage to finally free-up the neck and lessen the burden on the creature. By the time we were done, the Head Ranger, Mr. Siyasinghe, had arrived on the scene along with Dr. Malaka and another veterinary surgeon, Dr. Akalanka, and several aides. With no time to lose, the veterinarians went to work on the leopard immediately by anaesthetizing the beast so that we can safely remove the entire trap to liberate the now motionless cat.

By the time we managed to load the animal into a crate to be moved for further treatment, it was well into the afternoon. With the animal in a secure location, the necessary remedies were administered and by around 9.00 pm. the veterinarians were satisfied with the situation and deemed the big cat to be in a stable condition. The leopard was again moved to the 'Udawalawe' veterinary unit for further treatment. Only time could now tell just how well the leopard responded to the medication. With



continuous care, the cat was able to cling to life for four days, before finally succumbing to its wounds. The reason for death was declared to be from a hemorrhage it suffered while ensnared in the trap.

I, along with all my colleagues was upset with the situation. The entire visceral ordeal is still engrained in me, and I doubt the memory of it will leave anytime soon. Being a true and tested Ranger, it is still hard to come to terms with the fact that despite our best efforts, we still fell short of saving the life of one of Sri Lanka's most precious creatures. Even though we never found the perpetrators responsible for the cruel trap, the authorities are still on the lookout and the case is still open. As wildlife officials on the frontline in the human-animal conflict, we hope to arrive at a solution to appease both the frustrated residents protecting themselves and the animals driven to forage near human settlements because their territory is continuously being receded due to human activity.

To look back at the history of the Sri Lankan leopard is to look back at the history of Sri Lanka. With documented instances of leopards even being adopted as pets by Sri Lankan royalty, it truly is amazing to reflect on how our stories are entwined.





Prabhash Aruna Karunathilake

Mr. Prabhash Aruna Karunathilake was appointed to the service of the Department of Wildlife and Forest Conservation on 02.06.2003 as an Apprentice Animal Keeper. He reported to Yala National Park for employment and worked there until 2008. He has also worked at the Gampaha Assistant Director's Office and Yala National Park and he reported for duty in 2014 as a Site Assistant at the Moragolla National Park.

Prabhash Aruna Karunathilake was promoted to Ranger of the Nallathanni area in 2017 and returned to work there. He has completed quarterly residential training at the Giritale Training Center conducted by the Department of Wildlife and the Wildlife Management course at the Open University of Sri Lanka. He also holds a Diploma in Landscaping and a Diploma in Civil Engineering from Belihuloya University.

He is a loving father of three sons. His wife Charika Tennakoon works as a Development Officer at the Gannoruwa National Resource Center of the Department of Agriculture. They are currently residing at H 129, Mawela, Hindula.



Adams Peak Wilderness Reserve

Devotees sing devotional songs and climb Samangira to worship the left Siripathula of the Lord Buddha. Foreigners also flock to Sripada Mountain to see the magnificent sunrise and the beauty of the magnificent mountains. The Central Highlands of Sri Lanka are the latest World Heritage Site in Sri Lanka. On 31st July 2010, the World Heritage Committee declared the Adams Peak Reserve as a World Heritage Site. This is the first World Heritage Site to be declared in Sri Lanka 22 years after the Sinharaja Forest Reserve was declared in 1988.



Adams Peak Wilderness Reserve

The Adams Peak Nature Reserve (Samanala) covers an area of 22,380 hectares and was declared as a sanctuary by the British Government on 25th October 1940. Subsequently, due to the importance of the sanctuary, the Adams Peak Nature Reserve Sanctuary was established in 2007 considering the need for conservation. 12979 hectares (32448 acres) selected by the government have been declared as Nature Reserves. Accordingly, the courtyard at the top of Mountain where Sri Pada Padma



(height 2243 m / 7360 ft.), which is revered by local and foreign pilgrims as a place of worship, common places such as the mountain track system of devotees etc. belong to the Adams Peak Nature Reserve Sanctuary.

Cone Shaped Adams Peak is the third highest mountain in Sri Lanka, is a sacred place situated in the middle of Ratnapura and Nuwara Eliya Districts dating back more than 2500-year history of Sinhala Buddhists.

The Siripada Range entirely belongs to the Adams Peak Nature Reserve and its Eastern boundary is connected to the Horton Plains National Park in the Piduruthalagala Range in the Central Highlands. This nature reserve covers the Sabaragamuwa and Central Provinces and belongs to the Nuwara Eliya, Kegalle and Ratnapura Districts. The reserved area belongs to Ambagamuwa, Deraniyagala, Ratnapura, Imbulpe, Balangoda and Kuruwita Divisional Secretariats areas. 4897 hectares (12243 acres) of the reserve belong to the Nuwara Eliya District and 17483 hectares (43707 acres) belong to the Ratnapura District. Meanwhile, a 1: 50000 map examination shows that the reserve extends beyond the boundaries of the Kegalle district.

The Adams Peak is a highly sensitive high water catchment area with dense forest cover which is considered as a mountain forest. The three rivers Kalu, Walawe and Kelani originate directly from this forest and 295 small waterfalls connected to these rivers originate from the springs of the area. Mohini Falls, Laxapana, Yaka Adu Falls, Mapanana Falls, Murray Falls, Gatmore Falls, Deeyan Falls, Alupola Falls are the waterfalls cascade down from various places in the Siripa Range.



The Samanala Range receives an average annual rainfall of 5,000 mm during the six months of the year and the highest rainfall is received during the Southwest monsoon months of May-June-July. Due to the low rainfall during the Northeast monsoon from December to January and February, the Sri Pada pilgrimage season begins with the Unduvap Poya and continues until the Vesak Poya. During the southwest monsoon season, heavy mist is observed in the Samanala Range and during this period very cold weather is reported from the area and the Sri Pada compound. The average annual temperature is 15 degrees Celsius. But in May - June - July, the temperature can drop to 5–10 degrees.

This Siripa Samanala Reserve, which belongs to the wet zone mountain ecosystem, is also home to a number of specialized flora. Due to its high humidity orchid species and many species of green algae and rare medicinal plants have been reported on rocky as well as wet ground. This group of plants adds beauty to the forest.



Bird nest fern



Maha hadaya



Ground orchid



Iru raja



Mesuwa spp.na



It is possible that the Samanala Range got its name from the presence of many species of butterflies in the forest. Many people say that butterfly's worship Sripa (Lord Buddha's Foot Print) because of the variety of butterflies that can be seen with the onset of Sripa season. Great bird father Papilia sri lanka birdwing (*Troides darsius*), Indian red admiral (*Vanessa indica*) Butterflies as well as insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals. Animals such as in dry zone parks are not easily seen here. The largest common mammal found here is the common langur (*Semnopithecus entellus*).

Birds are the most endangered species reported from the Samanala Range. 160 species of birds have been recorded here and 25 out of 34 endemic birds have been identified at the Samanala Siripa site. It showcases the important diversity of wild birds, including endemic birds, migratory birds and migratory birds. Sri Lanka yellow eared Balbul (*Pycnonotus Penicillatus*), Sri Lanka White eye (*Zosterops ceylonensis*), Sri Lanka Hanging parrot (*Loriculus beryllinus*), Emerald collared parakeet (*Psittacula calthropae*) are some of the most commonly seen birds. One of the most striking phenomena is that birds often tend to act as collective herds in search of food. Such a swarm often consists of the Great Drongo and the Oranger-billed Babbler (*Turdoides rufescens*). The Great Drongo, which takes the lead in such a flock, is known as a violent bird, and the Oranger-billed Babbler as a noisy bird.





Black eagle



Blue magpie



Orange breasted flycatcher



Yellow fronted barbet

The number of elephants living in the wet zone forests of Sri Lanka is limited and it is estimated that about 10 to 11 Asian elephants (*Elephas maximus*) roam the Samanala rainforest Range. Elephants which have become endangered in the Wet Zone It can be can be observed at the Samanala Range. Many other mammals, such as the Wild Boar (*Sus scrofa*) is another common four-legged animal found here but is difficult to find at the Siripa site. Leopard (*Panthera pardus kotiya*) Fishing Cat (*Prionailurus viverrinus*), Grizzled giant Squirrel (*Ratufa macroura*), Sambar (*Rusa unicolor*), Toque Macaque (*Macaca sinica*), Common Mongoose (*Herpestes edwardsi*), Jungle cat (*Felis chaus*) and spotted cat (*Felis rubiginosa*) also survive here.



The wetland region is home to a number of unique amphibian and reptile species that can be observed at this Range, as well as 21 species of amphibians. About 38 species of reptiles and reptiles are recorded here. Blyth earth snake (*Rhinophis blythii*), Boie's rough-sided snake (*Aspidura brachyorrhos*), Common Roughside (*Aspidura trachyprocta*), Sri Lankan Kangaroo lizard (*Otocryptis wiegmanni*), Rough horn lizard (*Ceratophora aspera*), Cal Garden Lotes, Common Garden Lizard (*Calotes Versicolor*), Hump nosed Lizard (*Lyiocephalus scutatus*) are prominent among these reptiles.



Sri Lankan Kangaroo lizard

Endangered fish species such as Cherry barb (*Puntius titteya*), Black ruby barb (*Puntius nigrofasciatus*) are found in the Samanala sanctuary. The Department of Conservation carries out various conservation activities to protect such environmental assets.

In the past, firewood from nearby forests was used for cooking in food stalls, but today the use of firewood has been significantly reduced due to the intervention of the Wildlife Department. Only gas is used for cooking in the shops above the Sitha



Gangula. It is the result of a successful program implemented by the relevant sectors. Unauthorized entry into the Samanala Nature Reserve of the Department of Wildlife Conservation, damaging its flora and fauna, and polluting the ecosystem are illegal activities under the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance.

Among the many lands in the hills that have been cleared with the inception of plantation crops Siripada Wilderness Range was able to protect itself unharmed. No matter how beautiful the past, the future of the Siripa site is uncertain. According to a survey conducted by the World Conservation Union (IUCN), many rare species of plants and animals are threatened with extinction due to environmental pollution in the foothills. Among them are 14 endemic bird species (IUCN).

Therefore, the Department of Wildlife Conservation is currently carrying out the task of conserving such an ecosystem with a unique biodiversity and the Department is committed to bequeath such ecosystems to future generations.



SAND DUNE ISLANDS



- **Experience - Conserving Sri Lanka's Marine Ecosystems**
- **Description of the officer of his encounter - Mr. Channa Suraweera**
- **Description of the Sand Dune Islands**



Conserving Sri Lanka's Marine Ecosystems

I joined the Department of Wildlife Conservation in 1999 as a Ranger after getting through a grueling, competitive all-Island examination. After joining, I served in the *Wasgamuwa*, *Maduru Oya*, *Girithale*, and *Kaudulla* national parks before earning an opportunity to serve as the Assistant Director (Natural Resources) at the Colombo Head Office. In 2013, I left Sri Lanka for further studies and did not return until 2015.

Before 2015, there was no specific governing agency for marine life conservation in Sri Lanka under the Department of Wildlife Conservation. However, the government was in the preliminary stages of enacting such a program and I was tasked with the responsibility of heralding the whole enterprise. The establishment of an entire marine unit from the ground up was no easy task. A big hurdle to overcome was research; by acquainting our sapling program with renowned institutions, both governmental and non-governmental, and experts on marine life, we were able to cultivate inter-departmental relations and share knowledge and resources.

In the end, our list of allies included several government bodies such as the National Aquatic Resources Research & Development Authority (NARA), National Aquatic Development Authority (NAQDA), Department of Coast Conservation & Coastal Resources Management (CCCRM), Marine Environment Protection Authority



(MEPA), Coast Conservation Department (CCD), and the Sri Lankan Navy. We were also successful in establishing ties with the universities of Colombo and Peradeniya, along with several non-governmental organizations such as the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Dugong & Seagrass Conservation Project.

Notable persons, without whose contributions this project would not have been a success, were: Arjan Rajasuriya on corals, Dr. Lalith Ekanayaka on turtles, Ranil Senanayake on marine mammals, Dr. Asha Devos on whales, Daniel and Nishan of Blue Resource Trust on sharks, Dr. Gihan Dahanayaka of NARA, Dr. Ananda Mallawathanthri of IUCN, Dr. Turney Pradeep of MEPA, and Navy Commissioner Piyal De Silva.

We delved into our work right away by breaking down our analysis on conservation into distinct subgroups. To name a few are: marine mammals, coral reefs, sea turtles, mangrove habitats, and the effect of conservation on Sri Lanka's tourism industry. Our work was indeed taxing with all the meetings and numerous field inspections, most of which took place under the unforgiving coastal Sun, but the result was worth it. We identified several iconic locations in need of immediate intervention and action to prevent further degradation such as the *Kayankarni* area in the north of Pasikuda, Batticaloa, and coral reefs in between the *Kuda Rawana* and *Maha Rawana* lighthouses situated near *Yala* national park, where thanks to our



intervention, these vulnerable areas were declared sanctuaries, and as such, was awarded protection by the state from any detrimental activity harming the ecosystems.

The most prominent example which stands out from the crowd is when our inspections found a significant amount of damage sustained by the reefs surrounding a dune located several kilometres into the sea, off the coast of Kalpitiya. The main reason for this damage is an increase in oceanic temperature. To the alarm of all conservationists, some areas of coral reef were completely decimated, with powerful water currents and excessive commercial fishing exacerbating the already dire condition. All our partner institutions shared our grave concerns, and an emergency was declared. A massive coordination campaign between all departments found us pooling our expertise and resources together to mitigate and alleviate the grim situation in arguably, Sri Lanka's most splendid coral reef. We identified places where life is slowly but surely, starting to make a comeback in the defeated and weathered reefs, and placed buoys to deter fishermen.

On a more personal note, an incident vividly seared into my memory is when one typical sunny afternoon found us sailing to the dune for a routine inspection. Once we arrived at our destination, I looked around to find my friend, Argen Rajasuriya - an expert on corals and a skilled diver - who accompanied me on this visit, already off the boat and in the water. I put on my snorkeling gear and was set



to jump off the boat and into the water to join him when I slipped and my lower left leg got dislocated from the knee joint, causing me to fall awkwardly into the water. I was barely able to distinguish my colleagues panicking and scrambling to help me, while the excruciating pain in my leg was compounded by struggling to stay afloat, a fact not helped by the unusually strong current. In no time at all, I found myself drifting away from my company, and soon, I couldn't recognize their faces from the distance, but fortunately, that is where the current ceded to calmer waters. All the time spent diving with Argen in prior visits was not in vain and proved especially handy in coordinating my movements just long enough to stay afloat and pop my leg back into the joint. The burst of agony gradually subsided and I gingerly waded back to my friends with the dawning relief upon realizing that everything is going to be all right.

This is just one story out of many, and I am content because, in the end, everything indeed did turn out to be all right. The newly resurgent coral reefs in the area teeming with life are a testament to the effort and dedication that went into protecting one of Sri Lanka's most marvellous ecosystems.





Mr. Channa Suraweera

After passing an island-wide competitive examination, Mr. Suraweera joined the Department of Wildlife Conservation as a Grade 1 Wildlife Ranger in 1999, before which he worked as a teacher. He was first appointed to the Wasgamuwa National Park, secondly as the Park Warden of the Maduru Oya National Park, while he served as the Resource Person of the Giritale Training Center, then as the Parks Warden of the Kaudulla National Park, and later he served as the Assistant Director of the Natural Resources Division at the Colombo Head Office in 2011.

During the period, Mr. Suraweera, completed a special Diploma in Wildlife Management at the University of Colombo and a nine-month Postgraduate Diploma in Wildlife Management at the National Institute of Wildlife, India. Later he was selected to pursue a degree in Forestry, Water and Landscape Management in the Czech Republic from 2013 to 2015.



Mr. Suraweera was given the opportunity to follow a PhD by the Czech Republic due to his research skills and excellent results.

After arriving in the island in 2015, with establishing of the Maritime Unit from that year onwards, he was able to complete a five-year Maritime Management Plan from 2017 onwards. He has been the Assistant Director in charge of the Southern Region since 2020.

Channa Suraweera's wife is a teacher and they have three children. All three children are still school going.

His address is 28D, Walpitamulla, Dewelapola.



Sand Dune Islands

Coral reefs are one of the most biologically diverse and productive ecosystems on Earth and are known as marine rainforests. Coral reefs are like a rainbow of intricately shaped marine life. Coral reefs cover only a small percentage of the ocean bed, but are home to about 25 percent of the world's marine life.



Extensive thickets of Staghorn coral

Coral reefs, also known as 'Rain forests in sea', are an underwater ecosystem built up by colonies of tiny creatures called Coral Polyps. These coral reefs gradually form a limestone outer shell on the seabed of shallow coastal waters to protect their delicate structures. Thousands of coral reefs of the same species combine to form a coral colony, and when it becomes a coral reef, different coral reefs are a collection of many species of coral colonies. Many coral reefs contain photosynthetic algae called zooxanthellae, which live in the tissues of multiple corals. There is an interrelationship between corals and algae. Provides an environment conducive to coral algae and the compounds needed for photosynthesis. Algae produce the oxygen and nutrients needed by many and help remove waste. Coral reefs are one of the largest producers of oxygen in the ocean.





***Pocilloporadamicornis* at Hambanthota**

Corals come in a variety of shapes, sizes, and colors, and there are two types of corals. They are soft corals and hard or strong corals. Coral reefs in Sri Lanka are classified as fringing reefs, patchy reefs, sandstone reefs and rocky reefs. Sri Lankan coral reefs are generally off shore reefs. True barrier reefs do not exist in Sri Lanka, so they are considered close to the shore. They occur in different habitats but are also mixed.

Bar Reef is one of the most famous and largest coral reefs in Sri Lanka. Declared a Marine Sanctuary in 1992, under the jurisdiction of the Department of Wildlife Conservation, it covers an area of 306.7 square kilometers (118.4 square miles), consisting of shallow coral reefs, sea grasslands, and deep sand dunes. This bar reef sanctuary is located in the middle of the sea a few kilometers off the coast, this is a reef complex that stretches from the Northern tip of the Kalpitiya Peninsula to the islands separating the Gulf of Mannar from the Gulf of Portugal. This is an area in the Mannar District of Northern Sri Lanka, close to Jaffna, inhabited by 156 species of coral and 283 species of fish of high ecological, biological and aesthetic importance. Sand Dune Marine Sanctuary (N8 ° 22.57 'E79 ° 44.35') Kalpitiya is the only Marine Protected



Areas in Sri Lanka with a depth of up to 3 m, including various marine habitats. Sand Dune Marine Sanctuary covers the northern part of the Kalpitiya Peninsula, the Mutwal Peninsula and the Karaitivu Islands. It consists of 11 Grama Sevaka (GS – Grama Niladhari) Divisions (the smallest administrative division in Sri Lanka) north of the road that runs east-west to the Kandakuli fishing harbor. Hikkaduwa Marine National Park, Pigeon Island Marine Park, Sand Dune Marine Sanctuary and Rumassala Marine Sanctuary can be identified as the four marine protected areas of the island.



Montipora aequituberculata at Hambanthota

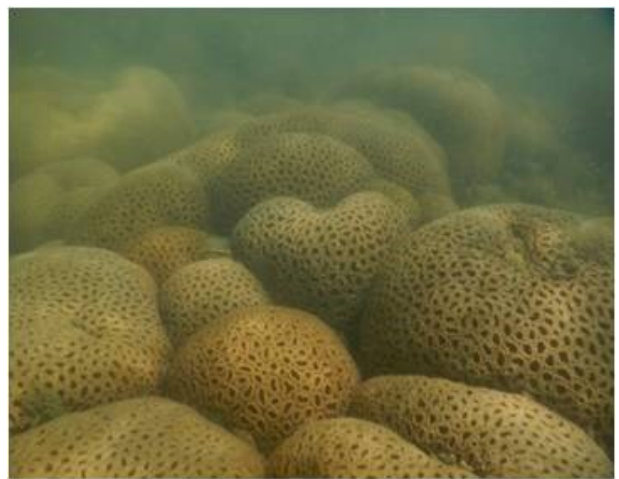
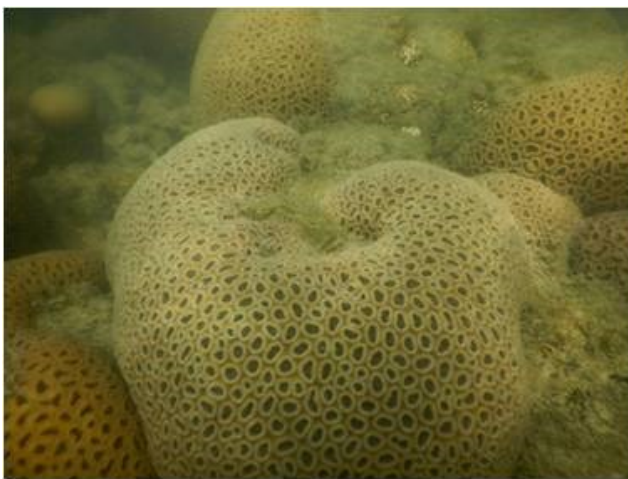


Corralimopharia at Pigeon island - They grow over dead coral and rocks like a carpet

The Kalpitiya sand dune coral reef is the largest spotted reef coral reef. The shores of our island are also surrounded by many coral reefs. With the Kalpitiya coral reef being the largest reef system in Sri Lanka – it plays a significant role in the marine biodiversity of our country.



Coral reefs are beautiful places that offer an entertaining value. After an hour boat ride from Kalpitiya, you can reach the 300 km long Sand Dune Marine Sanctuary, the largest protected maritime area in Sri Lanka. It is best to dive or use a Glass Bottom boat to visit the Welipara Marine Sanctuary. Not only coral reefs but also various ornamental fish can be seen swimming in the coral reefs. Snorkeling is the best way to view shallow coral reefs and fish. Snorkeling is also recommended only for those with good swimming ability. The sand dunes are accessible during the Northeast monsoon season from late October to mid-April, but strong winds can occur during the months of December and early January and can be quite problematic during boating. The best time to visit is February and March, when light winds bring calm sea and good underwater transparency. It is best to try to get there in the morning as the trade winds are high in the afternoon.



***Faviaspeciosa* at Moldivabank – Close to Wedithalathive area**

The growth of coral reefs around Sri Lanka is mainly affected by the monsoon weather and the increase in turbulent coastal waters during the southwest monsoon season also hinders coral reef growth. Almost all the reefs in Sri Lanka are located



within 40 km of the coast and make a significant contribution to marine fish production. These reefs, which create comfortable habitats for a variety of marine life, are home to a number of species of invertebrates, including commercially important thorn lobsters, prawns and crabs, as well as marine grasses and algae. Dolphins, whales and sea turtles are also found along the coast and in the reefs, and several species of butterfly fish have been reported.



Porites species at Moldivabank



Staghorn coral (Acropora Formosa) at Moldivabank

Although the sand dune sanctuary has been in a state of pristine for many years due to limited human population and limited fishing in the area, many of the reefs near the coast today have been severely damaged by human activity. Mainly marine coral mining, destructive fishing practices, fishing gear and uncontrolled harvesting of reef resources have contributed to the overall deterioration of the marine environment. Global warming in 2018-2019 also destroyed many coral reefs in the Sand Dune Marine Sanctuary area.





***Symphyllia radians* Moldivabank**

Legislation to protect marine life in Sri Lanka was enacted over a century ago. All coral species are protected by the Department of Wildlife Conservation through the Wildlife Conservation Ordinance. Areas to be conserved from Puttalam, Kalpitiya to Point Pedro via Mannar have been identified under the project for the conservation of dugong and sea grass. Coral reefs are also protected under the Coast Conservation Act, but are restricted to coastal waters within 2 km of the Medium Low Water Line (MLWL). Several coral reef areas have been designated as National Parks and Sanctuaries. Hikkaduwa National Park, Pigeon Island National Park, Bar Reef Marine Sanctuary and Rumassala Marine Sanctuary can be identified as reefs in the four marine protected areas of the island.

In addition, the 953-hectare Kayankarni area on the 11.04.2019 and the coral reef between the small Rawana Maha Ravana lighthouses covering 67,282.3 hectares on 11.10.2019 have been declared enacted as Marine Sanctuaries.



In 1999, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) launched the Coastal Resource Management Project (CRMP) in Sri Lanka and established integrated management to improve the sustainability of coastal resources. It addressed coastal erosion, pollution, unmanaged fishing, over-exploitation of resources and poverty in coastal areas. A Field Project Implementation Unit (FPIU) was set up at Kandakuli to develop a sustainable development plan for the region.

Undoubtedly, it is the duty of each and every one of us to protect such precious natural resources, which are rarer than rainforests.



Staghorn coral (*Acroporaformosa*) at Pigeon Island National Park



SANCTUARIES IN AMPARA DISTRICT



- **Experience - Vigilance prevents a serious accident**
- **Description of the officer of his encounter -
Prashantha Lakpriya Wimaladasa**
- **Description of the Sanctuaries in Ampara
District**



Vigilance prevents a serious accident

I was appointed to Ampara on January 4, 2022, as the Assistant Director in charge of Ampara-East. At that time, my service period was 23 years. Ampara East has a substantial extent of forest, including three National Parks and four significant sanctuaries.

The three National Parks are Maduru Oya, Kumana and Lahugala-Kitulana. The four main Sanctuaries are Kudumbigala, Sagama, Buddhangala and Ampara Sanctuaries. Kudumbigala sanctuary is located near the National Park. Sagama Sanctuary is located near the Lahugala National Park. Buddhangala Sanctuary is located closer to Ampara Sanctuary. Buddhangala Forest is located inside the Buddhangala Sanctuary. The Ampara sanctuary is the same Galoya Sanctuary Northeast. Most of Ampara city area belong to this Sanctuary. Elephants cross to Buddhangala and Vellaveli in Batticaloa through the Ampara Sanctuary .

This sanctuary starts from the North-eastern corner of Galoya Park and an electric fence has been installed there to prevent elephants from entering into to the village. But the elephants come from the Namal Oya direction very trickily and sneak through the electric fence from eastern side. Ampara main road runs through Arantalawa area.



We were especially concerned about the herds of elephants that come out of the forest during children sitting for exams. This was the time the advanced level examination was held in January 2023. The Director General had also sent us a letter asking us to keep an eye on wild elephants.

Anyway, when children go for high school exams, they leave home early in the morning. On 23rd January, several of our mobile groups leave to check the situation in different places. I also left in a cab with our group around 4 a.m in the morning. I was accompanied by Wildlife Warden Vishmitha, Field Assistant Ashan and Driver UpulShanta.

It was dark even at six in the morning in those days of the year. It was a dangerous day as several herds of elephants came out of the jungle. We saw a herd of 6 to 7 elephants and two male elephants together. Male elephants together are dangerous. After a while we heard the sound of elephant gunshots in the distance. That's our other team. They had shot elephants to drive away the herd.

It's almost five o'clock then. The children who are going to the exam are almost coming to the road. Our vehicle started at Namal Oya lake embankment and went near Inginiagala about half a kilometer. A single big elephant ran towards the forest almost hitting our vehicle. Those elephants that came out now running to inside of the jungle.



By around 5.15 in the morning, our teams were able to chase all the elephants into the forest. Then there was a relief. I think we did a great service that day. we could save lives of children. If a single child is attacked by an elephant, it will be a big offence. When I remember that day, I feel a great satisfaction.





Mr. Prashantha Lakpriya Wimaladasa

Mr. Prashantha Lakpriya Wimaladasa joined the Wildlife Department on 09.11.1998 as a Science Graduate Staff Officer.

Initially, he was employed in Yala National Park. After working there for 4 years, he worked as a park warden at Hikkaduwa, Maduru Oya, Lunugamwehera, Udawalawa, Kaudulla National Parks, Bellanwila Atthidiya Sanctuary and Giritale Training Field.

In 2011, from 2017 to 2019 served as an Acting Assistant Director in charge of 2 zones in Uva Province. He fondly remembers joining the Hambantota Elephant Relocating Mission in 2006.

Mr. Prashantha Wimaladasa is a science graduate from Ruhunu University. He has pursued a Post Graduate Diploma in Wildlife Management sponsored by the Department of Wildlife in the University of Colombo and a Diploma in Wildlife Management in India.



At present, Mr. Prashantha has written for the final examination of the Master's Degree in Environmental Science at the Open University.

Mr. Prashantha's wife Mrs. Utpala Nilawala is a science teacher at Kegalle College. Their son, Pulmed Chandika Wimaladasa is an 8th year student at Kegalu Vidyalaya.

His address is Kanda Pitiya Watta, Molagoda, Kegalle.



Sanctuaries in Ampara District

There are several National Parks and Sanctuaries under the management of the Department of Wildlife Conservation within the Ampara District of the Eastern Wildlife Zone, which was declared under the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance. Among them, Maduru Oya, Kumana and Lahugala-Kitulana are National Parks. Kudumbigala-Panama, Buddhangala, Galoya Northeast Ampara, Sagamam etc. are sanctuaries. The plant community in these areas is dry mixed evergreen forest and plants like Palu (*Manilkara hexandra*), Hedge Box wood (*Drypetes sepiaria*), Divul (*Limonia acidissima*), Neem (*Azadirachta indica*), Satin wood (*Chloroxylon swietenia*) are the dominants. Medicinal plants like Aralu (*Terminalia chebula*), Bulu (*Terminalia bellirica*), Nelli (*Phyllanthus emblica*) and Gal siyambala (*Dialium ovoideum*) are not found in these forests. A specialty of the forests is the presence of small grasslands known as 'Palassa'. Mana (*Cymbopogon confertiflorus*), Guinea grass (*Megathyrsus maximus*), Illuk (*Imperata cylindrica*), and Pohon (*Pennisetum polystachion*) are the main plants of the grasslands. Shrubs like Lime (*Citrus sps.*), Kukurumana (*Caturunaregam spinosa*), Conker (*Carissa carandas*) are abundant and their fruits provide tasty food for birds. Asian elephant (*Elephas maximus*), Sambar (*Cervus unicolor*), Spotted deer (*Axis axis ceylonensis*), Spotted chevrotain (*Moschiola meminna*), Barking deer (*Muntiacus muntjak*), Wild boar (*Sus scrofa*), and Porcupine (*Hystrix indica*) are abundant mammals. There are traces like footprints of Leopard (*Panthera pardus kotiya*) in these forests but no one has reported seeing leopards.

There are legends that dwarf human community called 'Nittheva' lived here.



About 80 species of birds live in this area. Spot-billed pelican (*Pelecanus philippensis*), Heron family (*Ardeidae Sps*), Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax Sps.*) as well as Sri Lanka Gray Hornbill (*Ocyeros gingalensis*), Blue-faced malkoha (*Phaenicophaeus viridirostris*) can be observed living near the reservoirs. But migratory birds cannot be commonly observed. Among such migrants, Blue tailed bee eater (*Merops philippinus*), can be seen only rarely.



Peacock



Crested serpent eagle



An aquatic bird

About 15-20 species of butterflies can be found in these forests and Estuarine crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*), Sri Lankan flapshell turtle (*Lissemys ceylonensis*), Indian black terrapin/turtle (*Melanochelys trijuga*) and Star tortoise (*Testudo elegans*) are common reptile species.

Many reservoirs are located in the forest. A small amount of fresh water fishing is done in connection with that. Introduced fish like Tilapia Tilapia are common in these reservoirs.

In these sanctuaries, people cultivate paddy fields in an amazing way. The main corridors through which wild elephants travel are through rice paddies. Wild elephants should pass from Gal oya area through Sagamam sanctuary and pass



Buddhangala sanctuary and then Samanthure and Walasapitiya areas. These areas are paddy cultivation areas. While going to Lahugala via Dighavapiya, one has to pass Akkareipattu and Tirukkovil which are paddy growing areas. These wild elephants pass through paddy fields only after harvest. Then the weeds in the fields are their food. Realizing the migration of elephants to start successful crops, the farmers first plant rice near the sanctuary and then those far away from the sanctuary and harvest accordingly. With that method, it is possible to protect the plantation and give it to the elephants in the stubble. Since the paddy fields are cultivated under the Gal Oya project, the farmers have been able to take water and harvest the crops using the guard system. The wild elephants have had the opportunity to eat Ipanella in an area of about 300-400 acres in the harvested areas. The months of February, March, April, July, August and September are the times when wild elephants can be observed eating the Ipanella after finishing the harvest. Around 30 elephants can be seen on both sides of Akkareipattu, Nedavur, Karthivu, Samanture roads during these periods.

1. Panama - Kudumbigala Sanctuary

Located close to Sri Lanka's famous Kumana National Park, Panama-Kudumbigala Sanctuary is a place of natural beauty. Covered with lush vegetation and greenery, the sanctuary is home to a variety of birds and animals. Kudumbigala Sanctuary is a wonderful place to get away from the hustle and bustle of the city and spend time closer to nature. This holy place is considered as a blessed place where many great arahants have touched.



This was published by Gazette No. 1433/3/79 dated 20th February 2006 and covers an area of 6533.91 hectares. Kudumbigala Arama Bhumiya located in this sanctuary is situated on a beautiful rock in the middle of a Nature Reserve, about 22 km from Yala Kumana National Park and about 22 km from Pothuvil in Ampara. It has the sacred Kudumbigala Monastery on the top of the hill and the road leading to it is quite steep but gives you an opportunity for a challenging climb. However, all the efforts will be worth it in the end as beautiful scenarios will greet you upon reaching the top.



Established as a refuge for Buddhist monks who want to escape the hustle and bustle of the cities, it is home to meditative yogi monks. A shrine that must be visited at least once in a lifetime. The Chethia Pabbata temple, which is believed to have been offered to the Maha Sangha during the reign of King Kavantissa, is located in the Kudumbigala Tapovana sanctuary. It is acknowledged that it was later restored by General Nandimitra who contributed to the unite of the country with King Dutugemunu. The distance between Colombo and Kudumbigala Sanctuary is 350 km. It is not advisable to visit after 5 pm as the wild animals roam freely here in the evening.

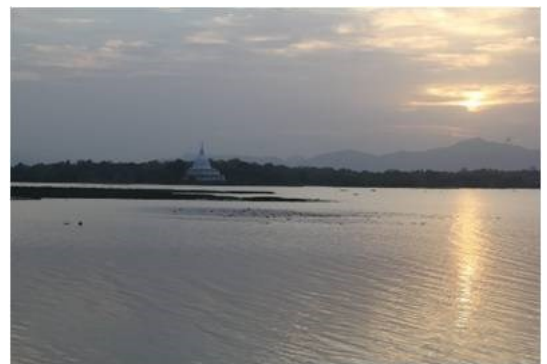


Stone mountains like Kudumbigala bring a strange charm to the forest. A unique area; its geological, biological and archaeological features are yet to be properly explored. Important archaeological sites are Kudumbigala Pagoda, Tapo Forest and Murugan Temple. A part of this forest including these places has been designated as an archaeological reserve. A major geological feature of the sanctuary is the picturesque lagoon near its border. It also has several geologically unconformable sand dunes with unique biodiversity.

2. Galoya Northeast or Ampara Sanctuary.

Galoya Northeast or Ampara sanctuary was declared as a sanctuary on February 12, 1954 by the gazette numbered 10640. Later again it was renewed on 11.06.1998 vide Gazette No. 1031-12. The area covered by this sanctuary is 124.32 hectares. This is a watershed as well. Ampara Lake, Ponduvatwana Lake, Thero Durawa Lake and Namal Oya Lake which is at the edge of Gal Oya National Park are the main lakes located here.

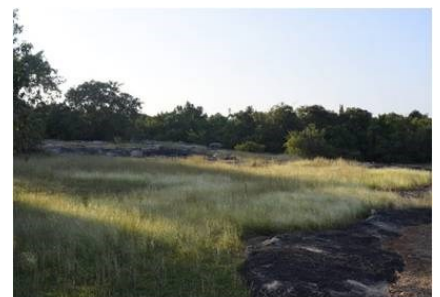
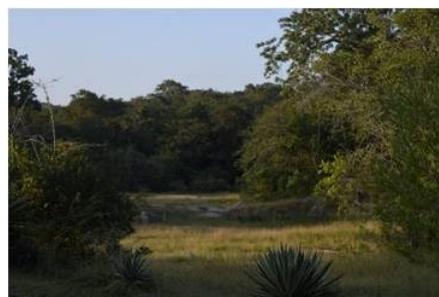
The main transit route for elephants from Gal Oya National Park to Batticaloa passes through the Ampara Sanctuary. Through this sanctuary, wild elephants travel freely to Mangala village, Arantalawa, Uhana road to Vellavali and Shantamale areas of Batticaloa.



3. Buddhangala Sanctuary

This sanctuary located in the Ampara area is a sanctuary with an area of 1841.3 hectares which was announced by Gazette No. 136 on 01 November 1974. One of the four protected areas that make up the Galoya National Park, the Buddhangala Sanctuary has a stupa and the remains of other buildings are dating back to the 2nd century BC. The ruins of this forest are spread over an area of 200 acres. It is believed that Lord Buddha visited this place during his last visit to Sri Lanka.

A serene beauty pervades this forest. The trees of the dry mixed evergreen forest are also more closely spaced. Also, 'Palasi' is located in the South East area. These palasis are used by elephants to travel Walanapitiya area through Buddhangala. Palu (*Manilkara hexandra*), Hedge Box wood (*Drypetes sepiaria*), Malittan (*Salvadora persica*), Divul (*Limonia acidissima*), Kukurumana (*Caturunaregam spinosa*) are commonly found in Buddhangala Sanctuary. Kumbuk (*Terminalia arjuna*) and Mee (*Madhuca longifolia*) are scattered in the sanctuary. About twenty forest-dwelling monks live in the Buddhangala Forest Senasana, and devotees regularly come to the Buddhangala Forest to make offerings.



4. Sagamma Sanctuary

Sagamam Sanctuary is another sanctuary located in Ampara district. A sanctuary with an area of 616.4 hectares was declared on 21.06.1963. It is a forest with its own unique beauty. Two main elephant corridors are fallen across the Sagamam sanctuary. Wild elephants coming from Galoya National Park travel to Batticaloa and wild elephants from Buddhagala to Lahugala use these two trails.



සතුන්ගේ විද්‍යාත්මක නම් ලැයිස්තුව

Sinhala Name	Tamil Name	English Name	Scientific name
කැලෑ අශ්වයා	காட்டுக் குதிரை	Wild Horse	<i>Equus caballus</i>
වල් හාවා	காட்டு குழி முயல்	Black Naped Hare	<i>Lepus nigricollis</i>
බොර මුගටියා	குட்டைவால் இந்திய சாம்பல் கீரிப்பிள்ளை	Brown Mongoose	<i>Herpestes brachyurus</i>
අලු මුගටියා	சாம்பல் கீரிப்பிள்ளை	Grey Mongoose	<i>Herpestes edwardsii</i>
මා වවුලා	பெரிய வெளவால்	Flying Fox	<i>Pteropus giganteus</i>
ගරා කටුස්සා	பொதுவான தோட்டப்பல்லி	Common Garden Lizard	<i>Calotes versicolor</i>
වැලි පොළොහා	சுருட்டை விரியன்	Saw- Scaled Viper	<i>Echiscarinatus</i>
පොදු උකුසු ගොයා	சாதாரண சிற்றெழால்	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
පුංචි මාල ඔලෙවියා	சிறிய வளையம் கொண்ட பிளவர்	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Chara driusdubius</i>
කෙන්ට් ඔලෙවියා	கென்டிஷ் ப்ளோவர்	Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>
වී කුරුල්ලා	நெற்குருவி	Silverbill	<i>Lonchura malabarica</i>
අළු උස්සවවුලා	கௌதாரி	Grey Francolin	<i>Francolinus pondicerianus</i>
මාල කොබෙයියා	யுரேஷியா காலர் புறா	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
මහා කොණ්ඩ මුහුදු ලිහිණියා	பெரிய முகடு டெர்டன்	Great Crested Tern	<i>Sterna bergii</i>
රැකණ කොකා	கறுப்பு கிரீடம் அணிந்த நைட் ஹெரான்	Black-crowned Night – Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>



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අරුණු සෙවිවන්දියා	சிவப்புடல் அழகி	Crimoson rose	<i>Pachliopta hector</i>
ඉරි කෝන්ගියා	தருகஸ் நாரா	Striped pierrot	<i>Tarucus nara</i>
මලිතරිසියා	சிறிய சால்மன் அரபு	Small samonarab	<i>Colotis amata</i>
කුරන් විශේෂයන්	தும்பி இனங்கள்	Pruinosedbloodtail	<i>Lathrecista asiatica</i>
ශ්‍රීලංකා දිවියා	சிறுத்தை	Leopard	<i>Panthera pardus kotiya</i>
අලියා	ஆசிய யானை	Asian elephant	<i>Elephas maximus</i>
වලහා	தேன் கரடி	Sloth bear	<i>Melursus ursinus</i>
නරියා	நரி	Golden jackal	<i>Canis aureus</i>
වල් ඌරා	காட்டுப்பன்றி	Wild boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>
හඳුන් දිවියා	மீன்பிடிப்பூனை	Fishing cat	<i>Prionailurus viverrinus</i>
කොළදිවියා	துரும்பன் பூனை	Rusty spotted cat	<i>Prionailurus rubginosus</i>
මුවා	இலங்கைப் புள்ளிமான்	Spotted deer	<i>Axis axis ceylonensis</i>
ගෝනා	மரை	Sambar	<i>Rusa unicolor</i>
මීමීනා	கேளையாடு	Indian muntjac	<i>Muntiacus muntjak</i>
ලංකා වළි කුකුළා	இலங்கை காட்டுக்கோழி	Sri lankaJunglefowl	<i>Gallus lafayetti</i>



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කරවැල් කොකා	செந்நாரை	Purple heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
ලකු වැකියා	மஞ்சள் மூக்கு நாரை	Painted stork	<i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>
හීන්මානාවා	சிறுத்த பெரு நாரை	Lesser adjutant	<i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>
සුදු පපුව සහිත මුහුදු රාජලියා	வெள்ளை வயிறு கொண்ட கடல்	white-bellied sea eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>
වැව් රාජාලියා	சாம்பல் தலை மீன்பிடி கழுகு	Grey headed fish eagle	<i>Haliaeetus ichthyaetus</i>
වතරතු මල්කොහා	செம்முகப் பூங்குயில்	Red-faced malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus pyrrhocephalus</i>
හබන් කුකුලා	இலங்கைச் சுண்டங்கோழி	Sri lankaSpurfowl	<i>Galloperdix bicalcarata</i>
ඇමිබියා (ගෙමිබන්) විශේෂ	எமிபியா (தவளை) இனங்கள்	Amphibians Sps.	<i>Bufo atukoralei</i>
			<i>Fejervarya limnocharis</i>
			<i>Polypedates maculatus</i>
පිඬුරා	மலைப்பாம்பு	Sri Lanka python	<i>Python molurus</i>
ගැරඬියා	சாரைப்பாம்பு	Rat snake	<i>Ptyas mucosa</i>
මල්සරා	இரட்டைப்பட்டை மரப்பாம்பு	Banded flying snake	<i>Chrysopelea sps.</i>
මාපිලා	இலங்கை பூனைப்பாம்பு	Cat snake	<i>Boiga sps.</i>
තින් පොළොහා	கண்ணாடி விரியன்	Russell's viper	<i>Vipera russelli</i>



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ගල් ඉබ්බා	கறுப்பு ஆமை	Hard shelled terrapin	<i>Melanochelys trijuga</i>
කිරි ඉබ්බා	பால் ஆமை	Soft shelled terrapin	<i>Lissemys punctata</i>
තාරකා ඉබ්බා	நட்சத்திர ஆமை	Star tortoise	<i>Testudo elegans</i>
කැප්සියා මුහුදුලිහිණියා	கஸ்பியன் ஆலா	Caspian tern	<i>Sterna caspia</i>
මහ කොණ්ඩ මුහුදුලිහිණියා	பெரிய கொண்டை ஆலா	Great crested tern	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>
හින් කොණ්ඩ මුහුදුලිහිණියා	சிறிய கொண்டை ஆலா	Lesser crested tern	<i>Thalasseus bengalensis</i>
අළුපිය කාන්ගුල්ලිහිණියා	மீசை ஆலா	Whiskered tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>
යුරාසියා බොලොල්ලා	ஐரோவாசியா சிப்பி பிடிப்பான்	Eurasian oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>
ටෙරෙක් සිලිබිල්ලා	தெரக்கு உள்ளான்	Terek sandpiper	<i>Xenus cinereus</i>
වැලිහින්තා	வெள்ளை உள்ளான்	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>
වයිරපෙද ගොහොදුවින්නා	பட்டைவால் மூக்கன்	Bar-tailed godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>
දුඹුරු හින්තා	உள்ளான்	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>
සෙවිවන්දියා	சிவப்புடல் அழகி	Crimson rose	<i>Pachliopta hector</i>
කොළ කැස්බෑලා	தோணியாமை	Green sea turtle	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>
බටු කැස්බෑලා	ஒலிவ நிறச் சிற்றாமை	Olive ridley sea turtle	<i>Lepidochelys olivacea</i>
ඉත්තෑලා	முள்ளம்பன்றி	Porcupine	<i>Hystrix indica</i>



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මීනින	புள்ளி சருகு மான்	Spotted chevrotain	<i>Moschiola meminna</i>
හාඩා	முயல்	Indian hare	<i>Lepus nigricollis</i>
කලගොයා	இந்திய உடும்பு	Iguana	<i>Varanus bengalensis</i>
කඹරගොයා	நீர் உடும்பு	Water Monitor	<i>Varanus salvator</i>
ගෙඵ් කිරලා	ஐரோவாசியா நத்தைக் குத்தி	Eurasian thick- Knee	<i>Burhinus oedicephalus</i>
පළුරු ගෙමිරිටා	வானம்பாடி	Jerdon's bushlark	<i>Mirafra affinis</i>
හොට් කහ කිරලා	மஞ்சள் மூக்கு ஆள்காட்டி	Yellow-wattled lapwing	<i>Vanellus malarbaricus</i>
හොට් රතු කිරලා	சிவப்பு மூக்கு ஆள்காட்டி	Red- wattled lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>
දුම් බොන්නා	பனங்காடை	Indian roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>
පුංචි බිහුහරයා (කුරුමිණි කුරුල්ලා)	பச்சைப் பஞ்சுருட்டான்	Little green bee eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>
මොනරා	மயில்	Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>
අළු කොකා	சாம்பல் நாரை	Grey heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
දඬු ලේනා	பழுப்பு மலை அணில்	Grizzled giant Squirrel	<i>Ratufa macroura</i>
රිලවා	செங்குரங்கு	Toque Macaque	<i>Macaca sinica</i>
චල්බළලා	காட்டுப்பூனை	Jungle cat	<i>Felis chaus</i>
කොළඳිවියා	துரும்பன் பூனை	Rusty- spotted cat	<i>Felis rubiginosa</i>



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ශ්‍රී ලංකා අළු වදුරා	இலங்கை சாம்பற் குரங்கு	Common langur	<i>Semnopithecus entellus</i>
මුගටියා	இந்திய சாம்பல் கீரிப்பிள்ளை	Common Mongoose	<i>Herpestes edwardsii</i>
පිතකන්කොණ්ඩියා	மஞ்சள் காதுள்ள புல்புல்	Srilanka yelloweared Balbul	<i>Pycnonotus penicillatus</i>
සිතැසියා	இலங்கை வெள்ளைக் கண்	Sri Lanka White eye	<i>Zosterops ceylonensis</i>
ශ්‍රී ලංකා මලිනි	இலங்கை தொங்கும் கிளி	Sri Lanka Hanging parrot	<i>Loriculus beryllinus</i>
අළු රිරවා	லேயார்டின் கிளி	Emerald collared parakeet	<i>Psittacula calthropae</i>
රතුදෙමළුව	ஆரஞ்சு படியாக வாயாடி	Oranger-billed Babbler	<i>Turdoides rufescens</i>
මහ කවුඩා	துடுப்பு வால் கரிச்சான்	Greater raked tailed drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>
කළුකුසියා	கருங்கமுகு	Black eagle	<i>Ictinaetus malaiensis</i>
කැහිබෙල්ලා	இலங்கை நீலச் செவ்வலகன்	Blue magpie	<i>Urocissa ornata</i>
ටිකල් නිල් මැසිමරා	செம்மஞ்சள் மாற்பக ப்ளாகேச்சர்	Orange breasted flycatcher	<i>Cyornis tickelliae</i>
මුකලන් කොට්ටෝරුවා	மஞ்சள் நிற பர்பர்ட்	Yellow fronted barbet	<i>Megalaima flavifrons</i>
මහ කුරුලු පිය පැපිලියා	இலங்கை அழகி	Sri lanka birdwing	<i>Troides darsius</i>
ඉන්දියානු රතු අඳ්මිරාල්	இந்திய சிவப்பு அட்மிரல்	Indian red admiral	<i>Vanessa indica</i>
රළු අං කටුසියා	இலங்கை கருங்காலி பல்லி	Sri Lankan Kangaroo lizard	<i>Otocryptis wiegmanni</i>
කහ මුව අං කටුසියා	முரட்டு மூக்கு கொம்புப் பல்லி	Rough horn lizard	<i>Ceratophora aspera</i>



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පලා කටුස්සා	பொதுவான பச்சை வனப் பல்லி	Green Garden Lizard	<i>Calotes calotes</i>
කරමල් බෝදිලිමා	ஹம்ப்மூக்குப்பல்லி	Hump nosed Lizard	<i>Lyiocephalus scutatus</i>
බලශිතේ පෘථිවි සර්පයා	பிளைத் பூமிப் பாம்பு	Blytheearth snake	<i>Rhinophis blythii</i>
ලේමැඩිල්ලා	பாயின் கரடுமுரடான பாம்பு	Boie's rough-sided snake	<i>Aspidura brachyorrhos</i>
දලව මැඩිල්ලා	தலவமெடில்லா	common roughside	<i>Aspidura trachyprocta</i>
ලේ තින්නයා	லே தித்தயா	Cherry Barb	<i>Puntius titteya</i>
බුලත් හපයා	புலத்ஹபயா	Black ruby barb	<i>Puntius nigrofasciatus</i>
කකුළුවා	நண்டு	crab	<i>Brachyura sps.</i>
කැස්බැව්	கடலாமை	turtle	<i>Testudine sps.</i>
ඉස්සා	இறால்	Prawns	<i>Dendrobranchiata sps.</i>
පොකිරිස්සා	பாறை இறால்	lobster	<i>Nephropidae sps.</i>
බෙල්ලා	சிப்பி	oyster	<i>Ostreidae sps.</i>
මුහුදු පණුවා	கடல் புழு	sea worm	Belong to six phyla
මුව අං කොරල්	மான் கொம்பு பவளப் பாறை	Stag Horn Coral	<i>Acropora Sps</i>
ගෝන අං කොරල්	மரை கொம்புப் பாறை	Elk Horn Coral	<i>Acropora Sps.</i>
ගෝවා හැඩැති කොරල්	கோவா வடிவமுள்ள பாறை	Cabbage Coral	<i>Montipora Sps.</i>



Sinhala Name	Tamil Name	English Name	Scientific name
මොළ හැඩැති කොරල්	මුඟේ වැඩිවැඩි පැළපිටි පාත	Brain Coral	<i>Mussidae and merulinidae Sps.</i>
මේස ආකාර කොරල්	මේසේ වැඩිවැඩි පැළපිටි පාත	Table Coral	<i>Acropora Sps.</i>
තාරකා ආකාර කොරල්	තරුකැවි වැඩිවැඩි පැළපිටි පාත	Star Coral	<i>Montastraea Sps.</i>
ඕලු මුවා	කේළයාටු	Barking deer	<i>Muntiacus muntjak</i>
පෙලිකන්	සාම්පල් තාරා	Spot-billed pelican	<i>Pelecanus philippensis</i>
කොකුන් විශේෂ	කොකුන් ඉනික	Heron family	<i>Ardeidae Sps</i>
දියකාලා	තීර්කකාකම්	Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax fuscicollis</i>
අළුකැටුණ	ඉලිකික සාම්පල් ඉලිකිකාසි	Sri lanka Grey Hornbill	<i>Ocyrceros gingalensis</i>
වන නිල් මල් කොහා	තීර් මුකුසි සෙන්නපකම්	Blue – faced malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus viridirostris</i>
පෙද නිල් බිඳුහරයා	තීර්වැල් පිණිසුරුද්දාන	Blue tailed bee eater	<i>Merops philippinus</i>
සර්ප උකුසි	කොන්නද පාම්පිණිකි කුකු	Crested serpent eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>
ගැට කිඹුලා	උවර්තීර් මුතල	Estuarine crocodile	<i>Crocodylus porosus</i>
කිරි ඉබ්බා	පාල් ආම	Sri Lankan flapshell turtle	<i>Lissemys ceylonensis</i>
ගල් ඉබ්බා	කුහුඬු ආම	Indian black terrapin/ turtle	<i>Melanochelys trijuga</i>
තිලාපියා	තිලාපියා	Tilapia	



වෘක්ෂයන්ගේ නම් ලැයිස්තුව

Sinhala Names	Tamil Names	English Names	Botanical Name
තල් ශාකය	ஆசியப்பனை	Palmyra Palm	<i>Borassus flabellifer</i>
බයෝබැබ්	பெருக்க மரம்	Baobab	<i>Adansonia digitata</i>
මල් විශේෂයන්	பூ வகைகள்	Flower Sps	<i>Fimbristylis dipsacea</i>
මල් විශේෂයන්	பூ வகைகள்	Flower Sps	<i>Ipomoea coptica</i>
වැල් විශේෂයන්	கொடி வகைகள்	Creeper Sps	<i>Cocculus hirsutus</i>
මල් විශේෂයන්	பூ வகைகள்	Flower Sps	<i>Peplidium maritimum</i>
ප්‍රභූත ශාක විශේෂ	கடற் தாவர வகைகள்	Ocean plant Sps	<i>Sargassum</i>
ප්‍රභූත ශාක විශේෂ	கடற் தாவர வகைகள்	Ocean plant Sps	<i>Caulerpa</i>
පලු	பாலை	Palu	<i>Manilkara hexandra</i>
වීර	வீரை	Hedge Box wood	<i>Drypetes sepiaria</i>
කොහොඹ	வேம்பு	Kohomba	<i>Azadirachta indica</i>
බුරුත	முதிரை	Satinwood	<i>Chloroxylon swietenia</i>
මිලේ	காட்டு நொச்சி	Milla	<i>Vitex altissima</i>
හල්මිලේ	சாவண்டலை மரம்	Halmilla	<i>Berraya cordifolia</i>



Sinhala Names	Tamil Names	English Names	Botanical Name
බෙරු	கப்ஸ்கேல் புல்	Cupscale grass	<i>Sacciolepis interrupta</i>
ප්‍රභූතිම නමුරු	அடும்பு	Bay hops or beach morning glory	<i>Ipomoea pescaprae</i>
බැරිය	தீப்பரத்தை	White flowered black mangrove	<i>Lumnitzera racemosa</i>
හින් තක්කඩ	—	—	<i>Scaevola plumieri</i>
මහ රාවණ රවුල	இராவணன் மீசை	Ravan's moustache	<i>Spinifex littoreus</i>
මහ කරඹ	கிளா	Bengal thorn karanda/Jamson	<i>Carissa carandas</i>
හින් කරඹ	சிறு கிளா	Bush plum	<i>Carissa spinarum</i>
පහොක්	நாகதாளி	Cactus	<i>Opuntia dillenii</i>
එරමිණියා	இலந்தை	—	<i>Ziziphus species</i>
දළක්	சதுரக்கள்ளி	Fleshy spurge tree	<i>Euphorbia antiquorum</i>
හිගුරු වැල්	ஈங்கை	—	<i>Senegalia caesia</i>
කොරකහ	காசன்	Ironwood tree	<i>Memecylon umbellatum</i>
අන්දර	பனை	—	<i>Febacea sps</i>
කුකුරුමාන්	மலைமாதுளை	Spiny randia emetic- nut, false guava	<i>Catunaregam spinosa</i>



Sinhala Names	Tamil Names	English Names	Botanical Name
කටුපිල	வெட்டிலா	Katupila	<i>Flueggea leucopyrus</i>
සූර්ය ක්‍රාන්ති	சூரியகிராந்தி	Sun flower	<i>Helianthus annuus</i>
විෂ්ණු ක්‍රාන්ති	விஷ்ணுகிராந்தி	Slender wart morning glory	<i>Volvulus alsinoides</i>
චන්ද්‍ර කාන්ති	சந்திரகிராந்தி	Moon flower	<i>Ipomoea alba</i>
		Green macro algae	<i>Halimeda Sps.</i>
		Sea water algae	<i>Caulerpa Sps.</i>
		Sea lettuce-Edible green algae	<i>Ulva Sps.</i>
		Small brown algae	<i>Padina Sps.</i>
කළුවර	கருங்காலி	Ebony	<i>Diospyros ebenum</i>
දිවුල්	விளா	Wood apple	<i>Limonia acidissima</i>
මිලේ	காட்டு நொச்சி	Milla	<i>Vitex altissima</i>
දඹ	நாவல்	Damba	<i>Syzgium Sps</i>
හුළං හික්	வெடிவேம்பு	Indian Mahogani	<i>Chukrasia tabularis</i>
මයිල	ஆத்தி	Mila	<i>Bauhinia racemosa</i>



Sinhala Names	Tamil Names	English Names	Botanical Name
වෙලන්	வெண்ணங்கு	Fishing rod tree	<i>Pterospermum suberifolium</i>
ඇහැල	கொன்றை	Golden shower tree	<i>Cassia fistula</i>
කපු අන්දර	விடத்தலை	Sickle bush	<i>Dichrostachys cinerea</i>
උඩ-වැ-ඩියා විශේෂ	ஓக்கிட் வகைகள்	Orchid species	
ඇල්ගී විශේෂ	பாசி வகைகள்	Algae species	
බිම් උඩ-වැ-ඩියා	தரை ஓக்கிட்	Ground orchid	<i>Spathoglottis plicata</i>
ඉරු රාජ	இரு ராஜ	Iru raja	<i>Zeuxine regia</i>
මහ හැඩයා	மஹ ஹெடயா	Mahahadaya	<i>Hupergia phlegmaria</i>
නා විශේෂ	நாக வகை	Mesuwa spp.na	
කුරුළු කුඩු මීවණ	குருவிக்கூடு கலன்றாவரம்	Bird nest fern	<i>Asplenium nidus</i>
අරළු	கடுக்காய்	Aralu	<i>Terminalia chebula</i>
බුළු	தான்றி	Bulu	<i>Terminalia bellirica</i>
නෙල්ලි	நெல்லி	Nelli	<i>Phyllanthus emblica</i>
ගල් සියඹලා	பட்டு புளியம்பழம்	Gal siyambala	<i>Dialium ovoideum</i>



Sinhala Names	Tamil Names	English Names	Botanical Name
මාන	மானா	Mana	<i>Cymbopogon confertiflorus</i>
ගිනිගාස්	கினியா புல்	Guinea grass	<i>Megathyrsus maximus</i>
ඉලුක්	தர்ப்பைப்புல்	Illuk	<i>Imperata cylindrica</i>
පොහොන්	நேப்பியர் புல்	Pohon	<i>Pennisetum polystachion</i>
දෙහි	எலுமிச்சை	Lime	<i>Citrus sps</i>
කුකුරුමාන	மதுக்காரை	Kukurumana	<i>Caturunaregam spinosa</i>
කරඹ	கிளா	Conker	<i>Carissa carandas</i>
මලිත්තන්	உகாய்	Malittan	<i>Salvadora persica</i>
කුඹුක්	வெண்மருது	Kumbuk	<i>Terminalia arjuna</i>
මී	இலுப்பை	Mee	<i>Madhuca longifolia</i>



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Unforgettable wilderness recollections

The officers in the Department of Wildlife and Forest Conservation engage in their duties with absolute dedication. From ferocious predators on the hunt for prey, to herbivores on the run from predators, Sri Lanka's forests offer an extravagant theatre to observe the fascinating behavior of its diverse wildlife.

Unfortunately, the forests' grandiosity attracts the attention of poachers and trophy hunters. This inevitably leads to hostile interactions between the officials of the Departments of Wildlife and Forest Conservation and the poachers are not uncommon.

This article offers the reader a glimpse into the harrowing experiences of these officials and serves as a testament to their courage and fortitude in the presence of danger to raise public awareness to the perils involved when these dedicated public servants carry out their duty.

