Pallikaranai Marshland

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance | Environment*

Why in news?

The southern bench of the National Green Tribunal has ordered a halt in all construction activity within 1 km of the Pallikaranai Marshland.

- Pallikaranai Marshland is a ***freshwater marsh*** and ***partly saline wetland***.
- **Location –**Chennai, Tamil Nadu.
- It encompasses 65 wetlands through two outlets viz., ***Okkiyam Madavu and the Kovalam creek*** and falls into the Bay of Bengal.
- **Wetland –** It is one of the 94 wetlands identified under the ***National Wetland Conservation and Management Programme (NWCMP).***
- **Ramsar site –** In 2022, this marsh was recognized as a Ramsar Site.
- **Habitat –** It has a diverse habitat including large and deep reservoirs with several inlets and surrounding irrigated agricultural fields, which provide good nesting and foraging habitats for birds.
- **Diverse ecosystem –** The marshland supports some 115 bird species, ten mammals, 21 reptiles, ten amphibians, 46 fish, nine molluscs, five crustaceans, and seven butterfly species.
- These include notable species including birds such as the glossy ibis, grey-headed lapwings and Pheasant-tailed jacana, and most endangered reptiles such as the Russels Viper, etc.,
- **Unique feature –** The Marsh is so close to the sea and yet not fully estuarine is a unique character indeed.
- Although ***tropical*** in bio-climate, the influence of the Bay of Bengal has been significant on the Marsh.
- **Aquatic buffer –** It serves as an aquatic buffer of the flood-prone Chennai and Chengalpattu districts.
- About 54 large and small satellite man-made waterbodies are located around Pallikaranai marsh which releases surplus water during monsoons.
- It plays a vital role in the prevention of flooding for the city of Chennai.
- **Threats –** The Site is threatened by invasive and non-native species,

household sewage, urban wastewater and droughts.

- **Conservation –** The Conservation Authority of Pallikaranai Marsh of State Government is currently implementing a site-specific management plan for conserving the marshland.

References

1. The Hindu | NGT bars construction activity in Pallikaranai Marshland
2. Ramsar Site | Pallikaranai Marsh Reserve Forest
3. Tamil Nadu Wetlands Mission | Pallikaranai Marsh Reserve Forest

