# Pallikaranai marsh: interim 'Zone of Influence' cut from 8,397 acres to 316.76 acres

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## News

The Tamil Nadu State Wetlands Authority told the Madras High Court in a status report (Oct 2026; decided at a 30 Sept 2026 meeting) that the interim 'Zone of Influence' around Chennai's Pallikaranai marsh will be cut from the 8,397 acres covered by the National Green Tribunal's 1-km zone to 316.76 acres across 36 survey numbers. It said the area was drawn using hydrological links, drainage paths and satellite imagery, and that the final boundary will follow scientific study. PMK president Anbumani Ramadoss criticised the move.

## Key facts

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| **Cut** | 8,397 acres (NGT 1-km zone) → 316.76 acres (interim; 36 survey numbers) |
| **Body** | Tamil Nadu State Wetlands Authority – status report to the Madras High Court |
| **Case** | Challenge to the NGT Southern Zone's 1-km Zone of Influence order (24 Sept 2025) |
| **Rules in zone** | Construction regulated, not banned – NOC from the District Wetlands Management Committee needed; no sewage, dumping or Red-category industry |

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| **Ramsar** | Pallikaranai Marsh Reserve Forest – Ramsar site (8 Apr 2022), 1,247.5 ha |

## Background

- Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules 2017 (replacing the 2010 Rules) – State Wetlands Authority (chaired by the State Environment Minister); a 'Zone of Influence' is the area around a wetland where activities are regulated.
- Ramsar Convention – 2 Feb 1971, Ramsar (Iran); 2 Feb is World Wetlands Day. Tamil Nadu has the most Ramsar sites of any Indian State.
- Pallikaranai is one of south Chennai's last natural wetlands; declared a reserve forest in 2007; 337 species recorded, including 115 bird species. It has shrunk greatly from about 15,000 acres.

**Tamil Nadu link:** Pallikaranai is closely tied to the IT corridor (OMR), Metro Phase II works and flood drainage. The NGT Southern Zone bench sits in Chennai.


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