Kerala launches India's first Red List of Ecosystems assessment

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News

The Kerala State Biodiversity Board (KSBB) launched India's first sub-national ecosystem risk assessment under the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems (RLE) framework at Kollam on 14 Oct 2026. Implemented by the Kerala Forest Research Institute (KFRI, Peechi) and others, it will assess shola-grasslands, riparian evergreen forests, Myristica swamps, coastal mangroves and river systems. Riparian evergreen forests of the southern Western Ghats are noted to have lost 83% of their area in about 100 years.

Key facts

Launch	14 Oct 2026, Kollam – Kerala State Biodiversity Board (KSBB)
Implementing	Kerala Forest Research Institute (KFRI), Peechi; MES Asmabi College research centre
Ecosystems	Shola–grassland, riparian evergreen forest, Myristica swamp, mangroves, estuaries, rivers
Outputs	Risk register, ecosystem typology atlas, restoration-priority maps
RLE categories (8)	Collapsed (CO), Critically Endangered (CR), Endangered (EN), Vulnerable (VU), Near Threatened (NT), Least Concern (LC), Data Deficient (DD), Not Evaluated (NE)

Background

- IUCN – International Union for Conservation of Nature: founded 5 Oct 1948 at Fontainebleau (France); HQ Gland (Switzerland). The Red List of Threatened Species dates from 1964; the Red List of Ecosystems was adopted by IUCN in 2014.
- RLE criteria A–E: A – decline in area; B – restricted distribution; C – degradation of the abiotic environment; D – disruption of biotic processes; E – quantitative risk analysis. The 'Collapsed' category is specific to the RLE.
- Myristica swamps – rare, ancient freshwater swamp forests of the Western Ghats, often called 'living fossils'.

Tamil Nadu link: Tamil Nadu has the same ecosystem types – shola-grasslands of the Nilgiris, Anamalai and Palani hills, and mangroves at Pichavaram (Cuddalore district) and Muthupet (Tiruvarur district). The Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve (1986, India's first) spans Tamil Nadu, Keralam and Karnataka.

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