

Source : The Hindu Date : 21.06.2009

Waste dumping a threat to migrant birds of Kadalundi

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MALAPPURAM: Indiscriminate waste dumping in and around Kadalundi estuary is posing a threat to migrant birds of Kadalundi. Scavengers like crows and kites attracted by the waste dumped in the mangroves as well as in the river are driving away the migrant birds that visit Kadalundi in flocks.

Although Kadalundi was declared a community reserve some months ago, no effort has been made to stop the routine dumping of house waste and animal waste in the river and canals.

The aerial roots of the mangroves in Kadalundi are the second most important feeding ground for migratory shore birds. When the mudflats, the primary feeding ground of Kadalundi estuary, are covered during high tides and in the monsoon, migrant birds depend heavily on the mangrove roots.

Waste and garbage thrown carelessly into the river are often trapped in the mangrove roots, attracting scavengers. Omnivorous scavengers like house crows, jungle crows, brahminy kites and black kites are attracted to the waste, particularly animal waste, trapped in mangrove roots.

“Many a time have I seen the crows attacking migrants in Kadalundi,” said K.M. Arif, a young ornithologist who has been studying the birds of Kadalundi for several years.

Mr. Arif, who identified 110 species of birds in Kadalundi during his study, said that the presence of brahminy kites in Kadalundi would shoo away migrants. According to Mr. Arif, if the

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Written by Administrator

Sunday, 21 June 2009 14:31 - Last Updated Sunday, 21 June 2009 14:43

civic authorities fail to prevent the dumping of waste the in the river, the number of winged visitors to Kadalundi will drastically fall.