

Karnataka government sets annual target to reclaim 10k acres of forest land

Jul 20, 2025, 04:22 AM IST

Forest circle	Divisions	Encroachment area (in acres)	Target for eviction in 2025-26 (in acres)
Shivamogga	Sagar, Shivamogga Wildlife, Bhadravathi, Shivamogga	79,560.7	3,650
Canara	Sirsi, Honnavara, Haliyal	28,033.3	1,450
Chikkamagaluru	Chikkamagaluru, Koppa, Bhadra Tiger Reserve	27,184	1,250
Bengaluru	Bengaluru Urban, Rural, Ramanagar, Chikkaballapur, Bannerughatta National Park, Kolar	15,070.7	750
Hassan	Hassan, Tumakuru	13,710.8	700

*Figures rounded off/ Source: KFD, GovK



In most cases, our officials do not take up further steps after clearing encroachment. They will have to notify the reclaimed land as reserve forest under section 4 of Karnataka Forest Act. If they do, we will get back about one lakh hectares of forest land. We will soon decide on fixing accountability on officers for failing to achieve the target — **Eshwar Khandre** | FOREST MINISTER

Bengaluru: Firm on evicting encroachment of forest land across Karnataka, the govt has devised a novel method to put an end to the activities of land sharks.

The forest department has now fixed the responsibility of clearing encroachments on deputy conservators of forests (DCFs) at the district level and chief conservators of forests (CCFs) at the circle level. Annual targets have been set for the IFS officers, which will be reviewed on a monthly basis by the chief secretary.

With the Karnataka state action plan on climate change approved in Feb 2024 considering the reclamation of encroached forest land as one of the key performance indicators, the principal chief

conservator of forests (head of the forest force), Meenakshi Negi, has directed all DCFs and CCFs to crack down on encroachers. The PCCF has also set a modest target of clearing encroachment on at least 10,000 acres of forest land every year.

As per the data, out of the 2.15 lakh acres, the majority of the encroachment cases fall under five districts: Shivamogga, Uttara Kannada, Chikkamagaluru, Hassan, and Bengaluru. The highest targets have also been fixed for these districts.

"The state govt has set a target of clearing a minimum of 10,000 acres of forest land from encroachment for the year 2025-26. This target will be reviewed on a monthly basis by the chief secretary. Hence, all CCFs, CFs, and DCFs

must take up encroachment eviction drives on priority and comply with the targets fixed by the govt," the PCCF said in her order.

While the latest order is hailed by conservationists, they have criticised the department for not fixing responsibility on any officials who fail to complete the task or achieve the target.

Hanamanth, a resident of Dharwad, said, "I complained to the forest minister in 2024 seeking suspension of Belagavi circle CCF for failing to prevent fresh encroachments and recommend disciplinary action against lower rank officials. However, no action has been initiated to date against any of the forest officials at the district and circle levels. Clearing forest encroachment will be a futile exercise from the govt until it fixes accountability on officials. Mere setting of target would lead us nowhere," he pointed out.

Another complainant from Belagavi, Adavayya Hiremath, said, "Seven new encroachment cases were flagged in the Kakati range of Belagavi division between Nov 2023 and Jan 2024. Yet, the RFO, ACF did not issue any notice to the encroachers. But notices were issued one and a half years later after the transfer of incumbent officials. But no action was initiated against the officers, and the state govt even promoted them."

Forest minister Eshwar Khandre clarified that he has been personally monitoring encroachment eviction cases periodically. "I agree that in most of the cases, our officials do not even take up further steps after clearing the encroachment. They will have to notify the land under section 4 of the Karnataka Forest Act, notifying the reclaimed land as reserve forest. If they complete these section 4 formalities, we will get back about one lakh hectares of forest land. We will soon discuss and decide on fixing accountability on officers for failing to achieve the target," the minister explained.