

Urgent Appeal to Stop the Destruction of Sonnapura Wetlands for Biodiversity & Chikkaballapur's Water Security!



To

The Chief Minister

Govt. of Karnataka
Vidhana Soudha, Bangalore – 560001

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HOFF)

Aranya Bhavan, Bangalore – 560003

The Deputy Commissioner & District Magistrate

DC Office District Offices Complex,
Sidlaghatta Road
Chikkaballapur – 562101

**Ref.: Urgent request to halt destruction of Sonnapura Wetland
for Biodiversity & Chikkaballapur's Water Security**

Respected Sir / Madam,

There is heavy digging and destruction of the ecologically-important wetland habitat birdlife in Sonnapura, near Bannikuppe, just east of Chikkaballapur town in Karnataka. Two JCBs (diggers) are working in the area. The exact location can be access here: <https://goo.gl/maps/rWDmxqZJBmtu2nyu9>.

It seems the work is for a park with walking/jogging track, boating, and a garden. This is a highly inappropriate tourism plan for this location, when the wetland could be preserved and made into a bird sanctuary instead. The wetlands are an important water sink for the well-being of the region's ground water.

The area is easily visible from NH44 as one drives past. This activity was noticed and documented by birdwatchers who have been visiting the area for watching birds.

The entire site is shown in the map below. Water is currently more extensive than shown (to the E and S, with the marshy area with the digger in the photo below being to the N). We believe there is a broader plan for the location, the details of which must be with your office. The area encircled in red has been almost completely cleared of vegetation.



Figure 1: Thousands of migrating barn swallows in Sonnapura wetlands



Figure 2 Diggers clearing earth and vegetation from the wetland



Figure 3: The extensive wetlands at Sonnapura



Figure 4: The grasslands are an integral part of Sonnapura wetlands



Figure 5: The wetlands also have significant vegetation that provides good diversity



Figure 6: The topography of the wetlands here are ideal for a large number of species



Figure 7: Wetlands are critical for the well-being of the ground water in the entire area