

## Forest Dept warns locals to not hunt birds at lakes

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**By Reya Mehrotra**

**On Thursday, two Sarjapura residents**

**Deepanjali Naik**

**and**

**Raicy Mathew**

**heard gunshots and rushed to**

## **Sarjapura Lake**

to find two men on a bike going around shooting birds while a 12-year-old boy was collecting the dead birds in a bag. When Deepanjali and Raicy started chasing them and shouted at them, the men on the bike fled while the young boy was left behind. He refused to open his bag.

Deepanjali said, “We heard more than five gunshots. It seemed like an air gun. The locals usually collect birds for cooking and eating. We started interrogating the young boy, who was very scared. We told him it was wrong and let him go. We contacted the forest department immediately to send their patrolling staff. However, the men were gone by then.”

She further added, “Hearing gunshots from the lake is a common thing but we caught them red-handed for the first time. Since it is monsoon time, there are more birds at the lake and hence the locals get a good catch.”

Range forest officer Rangaswamy quickly sent off his patrolling team on the site. However, they could not get hold of the culprits. He has promised to increase security and patrolling on the lake. Sarjapura Lake has many bird species like Halcyon, Indian Pheasant, Kingfisher, Drongos, Mynah, Bulbul and Sunbirds.

Since the lake has dried up, there are hardly any visitors at the lake which makes it easier for hunters to hunt birds.

Sidramappa Chalkapure, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO),

Bengaluru

Urban Division said, “We do not allow poaching of birds at any lake, especially if it is in the scheduled category, which most of them are. Hunting of birds is an offence. If one comes across such hunters, they must contact the forest department or the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) forest cell immediately.”

## **5 % of Bellandur lake area to become park**

*In a public meeting held on Friday in Varthur along with members of Santosh Hegde committee, on Bellandur and Varthur Lake rejuvenation process, it was said that around 5% of the area of Bellandur Lake land will be used for constructing a park, walking tracks and an island as a part of the beautification process. Dr TV Ramachandra who had compiled a blueprint for rejuvenation of both the lakes in 2017, said, "Between 10-12 feet of silt needs to be removed from the lake bed. Heavy metals were found in the lake water and hopefully after installation of the Sewage Treatment Plant by June 2020 in Bellandur Lake, water will be cleaner. The whole process of cleaning and beautification will take 18-24 months*