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Experts to discuss recent bird deaths

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MYSURU: With THE recent deaths of spot-billed pelicans and other birds overshadowing the migratory season in the region, a committee of experts from across the country under the aegis of the Forest Department will visit Kokkare Bellur Bird Sanctuary in Mandya district on Tuesday to study the issue and prevent further deaths.

This comes in the wake of the recent bird deaths in Rajasthan in which over 17,000 migratory birds died owing to botulism caused by a bacteria named *Clostridium botulinum*. According to Dr K C Prashanth Kumar, Mysuru division, Deputy Conservator of Forests, the tests on dead pelicans in the region confirmed that the deaths were also caused due to botulism.

Apart from pelicans, over 10 northern shoveler birds also perished in Mysuru region recently. Now, the Forest Department here has decided to host the committee to prevent more deaths. “If it was an issue with one lake or a location we could have had a targeted action, but now we need a much more effective solution,” said Alexander M G, Deputy Conservator of Forests & Member Secretary, Wildlife Division, Mysuru.

He said the experts will try to find out whether the deaths were caused owing to pollution — a local phenomenon — or whether the bacteria was carried to the region from another location or is it due to climate change, he said. He said the meeting will also discuss measures to contain the issue and prevent future deaths.

The meeting will see senior scientists, ornithologists, forest officials, including ornithologist Asad Rahmani, Dr T V Ramachandra, scientist S Muralidharan of Salim Ali Centre of Ornithologist and Natural History and scientists from Indian Veterinary Research Institute as well as Suresh Babu, Director of Rivers, Wetlands and Water Policy, WWF India, and many others converging.

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