

Metro



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BENGALURU: Many dead cat fish were seen floating on the polluted Varthur Lake, in East Bengaluru on Wednesday.

Experts point out that this was an sign that the lake is beyond repair now. But officials said they were unaware of the fish kill.

Jagadish Reddy Nagappa, a resident of Varthur said he found dead catfish floating on the lake during his morning walk on Wednesday. The water level in the lake had dropped and there was an increase in solid waste floating on the lake. A lot of plastic was floating on the lake because ragpickers throw unwanted waste into the lake, he said.

The Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) is the custodian of the 445.8-acre lake. Officer Shivashankar said he was unaware of any fish kill in the lake. "I am not aware of the issue. The government gives funds to develop the lake. Pollution should be managed by the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board. So far, we have not taken up any development work. We have told the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board that unless sewage entry into the lake is

stopped, no restoration can be done. The lake is full of sewage and not even 10% of it is fresh water," he said.

G Vidyasagar, CEO, Karnataka Lake Conservation and Development Authority said he too was unaware of the issue. He also expressed shock over the presence of the banned catfish. He said the matter will be investigated immediately.

Prof TV Ramachandra from the Centre of Ecological Sciences, IISc, who studied the lake, said this was a sign that the lake had crossed its threshold. Catfish can survive even in harsh environment since they come out of the water, breathe in, and go back into the water. "The level of dissolved oxygen in the lake was zero in some places and 2.5 in other places, against the normal value of five. The macrophytes have covered most of the lake leading to fish kill," he said.

KSPCB officials who visited the lake said that there was no oxygen left in the lake. Since it rained two days ago, the dead fish came floating to the surface. A thorough investigation and sample analysis will be undertaken.

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