

# ‘Declare Aghanashini estuary as Ramsar site’

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Boats lined up at a jetty in Tadadi on the Aghanashini river

By [Express News Service](#)

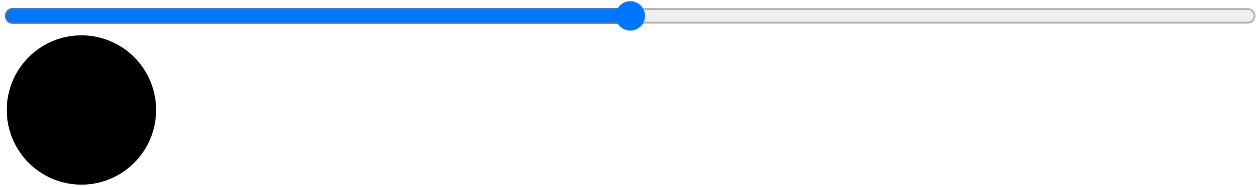
**BENGALURU:** Though Karnataka is rich in biodiversity, it is also one of the few states which does not have a single Ramsar site. Now, to protect the wetlands and mangroves along the Aghanashini river in Uttara Kannada district, IISc researchers, ecologists and marine biologists are demanding the government declare Aghanashini Estuary as a Ramsar Convention site.

The 1975 Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, commonly known as the Ramsar Convention, is a global agreement promoting wetland conservation. Prof T V Ramachandra from Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, reminded the government and Karnataka Biodiversity Board chairman Ananth Hegde Ashisar on Monday about the long-pending proposal to declare Aghanashini as a Ramsar site.

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Speaking at the inauguration of, “Lake 2020: Conference on Ecosystem Structure, Function, Goods and Services”, he said two years ago a proposal was placed before the Ramsar Board, which agreed and asked the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change to send a formal proposal. The ministry in turn asked the state government to send the proposal, but nothing came of it. “So now we are asking the Biodiversity Board to look into the proposal and declare the site,” he said.

A marine expert said, “We had proposed to declare four sites along Aghanashini river and four along Kali river. It would be ideal if the entire backwaters of Aghanashini is declared a Ramsar site. The advantages are that it will draw international funding for protection, the 1,800-acre port land will be protected from commercialisation, the area which is rich in bird population and endemic, and endangered plants will also be protected.” Biodiversity Board chairman Ashisar said: “We will take up the proposal with the government. The forest department already has it. It is the rarest estuary where salt is made with fresh river water.”