

GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

Souvenir

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Islands around Gulf of Mannar

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Island is a body of land smaller than a continent and surrounded by water. There are about 21 islands in Gulf of Mannar on the South eastern coast of India extending from Rameswaram island on the north and Tuticorin on the south between latitude 8° 50' - 9° 15' N and longitude 78° 13' - 79° 14' E. These islands and the sea around them upto 3.5 - 5 fathom depth, has been notified as a National Park under the provisions of the Wild Life Protection Act 1972. Gulf of Mannar alongwith islands was declared as the first Marine Biosphere Reserve (GOMMBRE) in South east Asia. GOMMBRE was set up on 18-02-1989 jointly by Government of India and State of Tamil Nadu. Islands around Gulf of Mannar houses a rich variety of fauna and flora that derives her the term "Biologists Paradise". All 21 islands are coral islands of fringing and patch types covering an area of 623.12 hectares.

Shingle Island

Shingle island has an area of 12.69 ha. Earlier Singalese fishermen used to land and stay here during their fishing operation. Hence it was called Singala thivu, later termed as Shingle Island. Its northwest and northeastern shores are sandy, the southwestern shore is found full of dead corals. This island is 4 kms away from Pamban. This area is good for snorkelling.

Krusadai Island

Krusadai island has an area of 65.80 ha. This island is 3 km away from Pamban. The nearest land is Kundugal point 500 mt away. The southeast part of the island is sandy, while the northern part is muddy with marshy vegetation. Western part of the island is covered

with mangroves and the southeastern part of the island is with live coral reefs. Main inhabitants of the island are Field rats, Birds, Moths, Beetles, Garden lizards and the rare Hemichordate representative *Balanoglossus*. Since the island having many marine species of animal life, it is called as "Marine Biologists Paradise". Fishermen camp here for few days for fishing activities.

Pullivasal Island

Pullivasal island has an area of 29.95 ha. The island is about 5 kms from Mandapam. This island has to be approached from Poomarichan island by crossing the channel separating the two islands. Eastern and southern shores are sandy while the northern part is muddy and marshy.

Poomarichan Island

Poomarichan island covers an area of 16.58 ha. It is situated 5 kms away from Mandapam. It is almost like a horse-shoe shaped island. It is a marshy island, wooded jungle with the water area enclosing a continuous reef. Fishermen from Mandapam and Pamban collect shells from this island.

Manoli Island

Manoli island covers an area of 25.90 ha. It is situated at a distance of 6 kms from the Mandapam camp mainland. Extensive reefs with live and dead corals are present on the southern and northern sides. The island has lagoonal pools and open mud flats. The lagoonal area is margined shorewardly by mangroves and seawardly by live corals.

The northern and southern beach ridges are separated by an area of *Thespesia* wood land. Large number of birds visit this island during March to September. Fishermen and seaweed collectors are staying for a stretch of six or seven days with their families.

Manoliputty Island

This island covers an area of 2.34 ha., and is situated 6 kms away from Mandapam camp. Bushes are abundant and patch corals are found around this island. It is a very small island separated from the nearby Manoli island by an extensive sand flat. Fishermen are staying here for collecting seaweed and live shells.

Hare Island

This island is largest of all 21 islands covering an area of 129.04 ha. It is 7 kms away from Mandapam camp. Shore is sandy. Dense coconut gardens are found in this island. Human interference has brought some cattle, goats and monkeys to the island. Very good assemblage of coral reefs are found around the island. Tolerably good drinking water is present.

Van Island

Van island covers an area of 16 ha. and is situated 6 km away from Tuticorin new harbour mainland. Construction of break waters in Tuticorin harbour in early 70's caused the depletion of sediment from the upstream side in the northwest direction to 1.62 km towards the mainland. Reef of Van island is non-elongated with sharp corners and their developments are extensive on the south, southeast and northeast of the island. Fishermen from Taruvaikulam and Tuticorin visit the island for collection of coral rubbles from the shallow water zone around the island.

Koswari Island

This island covers an area of 19.50 ha. and is situated 7 km away from Tuticorin mainland. The whole island is covered with

xerophytic vegetation. The reef area is small. The average depth of lagoon is about 2.5 m. Branching corals are seen at a distance of 200 meters from the shoreline, then massive type of the corals heads and dominate with increase in the depth.

Vilangushuli Island

This island covers an area of 0.95 ha. and situated about 15 km from Tuticorin mainland. This island reef is narrow and elongated. It is a very small island, completely strewn with coral rubbles, some bushes and grasses that are seen towards the middle of the island.

Kariyashuli Island

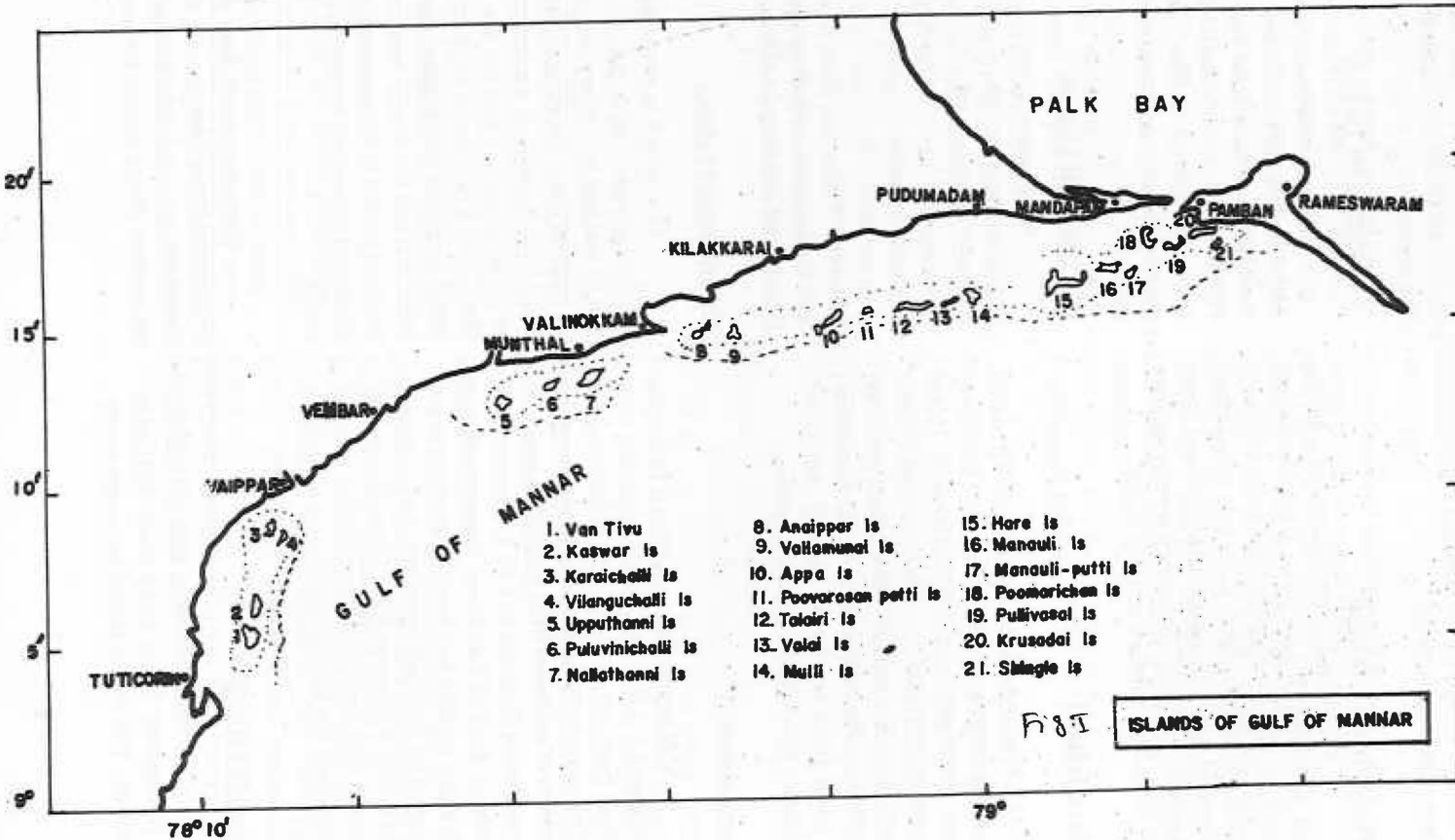
This island covers an area of 16.46 ha. and is situated about 15 km away from the Tuticorin mainland. The reef area is small and depth exceeds 3 m in certain places. This island had best formed reef among all islands and now it is no more best due to exploitation for limestone. Fishermen from nearby villages are here for operation of bottom-set gill nets. Men from Ervadi collect seaweeds around this island.

Upputhanni Island

This island is about 29.94 ha. and is situated opposite to Mukayur village. This island can be reached by vallam (motorised canoe) in 25 minutes from this village. The island is 8 km away from Vembar. It is a fairly big with plenty of coral rubbles. There are few trees here and there, with a number of tall bushes. The entire island is covered with grasses. Several fishermen from Naripaiyur camp here to quarry coral boulders buried in the centre of the island, thus disturbing the natural formation of corals in the island.

They also camp here frequently for commercial exploitation of the seaweed *Gelidium* sp. and *Gracilaria* sp. growing in the shallow waters around the island.

ISLANDS OF GULF OF MANNAR



Nallathanni Island

This island has an area of 110.00 ha. and is situated in 2 km from Mundel, a placenear Valinokkam. Potable water is available. This is one of the biggest island having about 4000 coconut trees, palmyrah and other woody trees. A temple of Muniswaran god is present. People from mainland used to visit the temple on every Tuesday and Friday of the week. A good number of fishermen frequently visit this island for fishing operations. They are also engaged in algae and live shell collection. Coral reefs and coral boulders are available all around the island at a distance of 0.5 km on the southern side and very near on the northern side.

Puluvinchalli Island

This island has an area of 6.12 ha. and it is 18 km away from Vembar. It has a good sandy beach. A fairly good portion of the island has thick vegetation. Few *Thespesia* trees are available on the eastern side. Fishermen from Kilakarai frequently visit this island, staying for a week for lobster fishing. Some people are engaged in algae and live shell collection. This island is surrounded by live coral all around except for a small stretch on the eastern side.

Vallimuni Island

This island has an area of 6.72 ha., It

is 9 km away from Kilakarai. It is a sandy island with shore strewn with coral rubbles. This island is completely covered with *Acacia* trees and tall bushes of *Zizyphus jujuba*. The southern corner of the island has been affected due to wave action. Fishermen visit this island for lobster fishing. Women and boys are engaged in algae and live shell collection. Live coral reefs are available in southwestern corner at a distance of 200 m from the shore. Dead coral reefs are available all around the island.

Poovarasanpatti Island ('Kilangan Paar')

This island is 0.25 ha. in area and is visible only during low tide and fully submerged during high tide. Live corals are available in this area upto a distance of 100 m except on the northern side. Collection of seaweed is the only activity of the fishermen here.

Other islands

Appa island has an area of 28.63 ha. and is situated 8 km away from Kilakarai. Talairi island covers an area of 75.15 ha. and is 15 km away from Kilakarai. Valai island has an area of 10.15 ha. and is 15 km away from Kilakarai. Trap-net fishing is intensive in and around this island. Mulli island covers an area of 10.12 ha. and is situated about 15 km from Kilakarai. Bushes are found throughout this island.