

Lonely horses on Delft Island

Delft is a small Island where there are about 4,000 to 5,000 people live. It is also Divisional Secretariat area called Delft itself.

There are horses on Delft Island which were brought in to haul goods during Dutch era. Now they have adapted to native conditions in the Delft. It is estimated that there are about 400 to 500 medium sized horses live here.

This horse population is controlled naturally. The Delft region experiences a drought from June to September. With this drought, old animals and their young are died whilst the strong animals are survived. The Department of Wildlife bowzers supply water to tanks built in the park. However, during this period animals are died.

From Kalpitiya to Jaffna the sea is shallow. There are dugong mammals in this sea. They feed on sea grasses. The sea grasses grow from Jaffna to there in the bottom of the shallow sea. One dugong species is endemic to the area. Dugong is an endangered species as well.

There is a special tree called 'Baobab' on this Delft Island. This is a tree introduced from South Africa. There is a similar tree in Thalai Mannar as well. Sri Lanka has only these two trees.

Tourists are also visit to the island. They have private boats to travel. The Wildlife staff report to work in a boat belonging to the Wildlife Department. In addition, a boat which can carry about 100 people belongs to the Road Development Authority arrives on the island at about 8.00 am. You can travel on that boat for free of charge. The boat is operated by the Navy.

Migratory birds also visit Delft Island. It is not a special case for the Delft Island, but it may have been a pleasure for the birds to be a part of it after the war, when the environment returned to normal.

Mr. G. U. Saranga



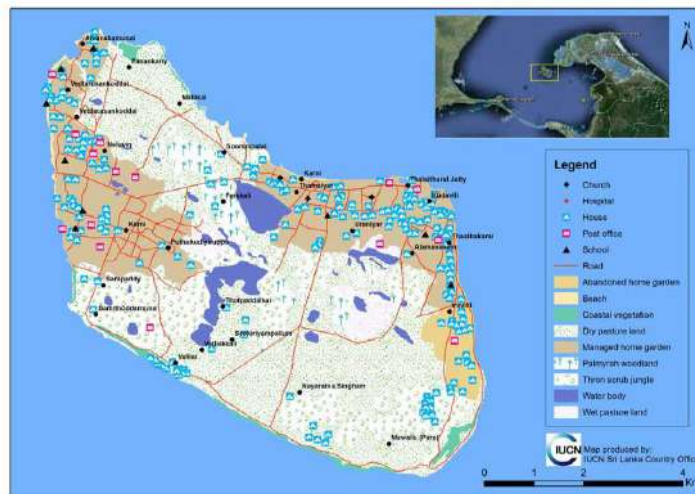
Mr. G. U. Saranga joined the Wildlife Department in 1983 as a Ranger and he was fortunate to work in various National Parks and Sanctuaries. He received his basic training at the Yala and Wilpattu Sanctuaries. He was in charge of the Sigiriya Sanctuary and later worked at the Minneriya National Park and then at the Wasgamuwa National Park for seven years. He also served as Park Warden at Horton Plains National Park from 2004-2005 and 2009-2002. Mr. Saranga was later promoted to Assistant Director and was in charge of the Kilinochchi area and later the Ampara area. He is currently in charge of the Vavuniya region.

Mr. Saranga completed a 9-month Diploma course awarded by the Department of Wildlife in 1995 and trained for three months at the Wildlife Institute in Dehradun, India. He has also completed short training courses in countries such as Korea, the Philippines and Thailand.

Mr. Saranga's house is located in Katugastota, Kandy.

Delft National Park

Delft Island is located in the northwestern part of the country and south of the Indian Ocean, far away from the inhabited islands of Sri Lanka. Delft Island is an island with a long history which is fascinated by the natural beauty of the Jaffna Peninsula and shaped by the ruins of historic buildings.



Map of the Delft National Park

This island belongs to the Jaffna Administrative District of the Northern Province of Sri Lanka. An area of 1846.2 hectares on Neduntiv (Delft) Island has been declared as a National Park, in accordance with the provisions of the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance, by a special gazette notification dated 22nd June 2015.

Located 35 km southwest of Jaffna, the oval-shaped island covers an area of 50 square kilometers while the maximum length is 8 km and the width is 6 km. Delft Island, located at the western tip of the Jaffna Peninsula, 80 km off the Indian mainland, 42 km from Talaimannar and Rameshwaram, situated in the middle of the Palk Strait, is the second largest island in Sri Lanka.

All over Delft Island there are the ruins of the Portuguese and Dutch colonial era and the Buddhist ruins dating back to earlier times. The history of the island dates back to the Chola dynasty, about 1000 years ago, and ancient stupas can also be seen on the west coast of the island. The island became more famous during the Dutch era and is home to the only colonial fortress, the Mekhanam, which was used by the Portuguese and later by the Dutch. The Queen's Tower, a simple lighthouse built by the Dutch on the south coast of Delft Island.



Mekhanam fortress



Ruins Buddhist stupas



Ruins Buddhist stupas



Queen's Tower

The specialty of this park is that you can see wild horse type endemic to Delphi which are not found in other parks in Sri Lanka. The wild horses found in the park were brought from Arabia by the Portuguese in the 16th century and later bred by the Dutch and sold to ships passing through the seafront across Delft. After the Dutch left the country, these horses gradually became wild horses. These horses in Delft are often referred to as "ponies".

A shallow coastal region, the rainy season lasts from October to February, but there are also days when the sky is blue throughout the rainy season. Annual rainfall is about 750 mm, and generally during the dry summer months of the northern hemisphere, this area receives a total lack of rainfall. Annual rainfall is very low and shows semi-arid zone characteristics. In the center of the island are two lakes, Vedduk Kulam and Periya Kulam.

Plants adapted to dry climates and Porous coralline soils set up in the area can be found in the garden. Early settlers seem to have fully exposed it, and local weather conditions seem to be at a standstill due to the harsh weather and grazing of herbivores. Among the identified species are 209 species of flowering plants, 29 species of shrubs, 67 species of non-flowering plants and about 70 species of herbs. The palmyra palm (*Borassus flabellifer*) is abundant throughout the island. The garden plant Baobab (*Adansonia digitata*) is a species native to Ethiopia in tropical Africa. This plant is believed to have been planted here by Arab traders.

The trunk of this plant has a large hole in it that is large enough for several people to easily stand on. The trunk is about 12 m high and 15 m in circumference.



Baobab Tree



Palmyra Palm

Among the reported flowering species are the endangered *Fimbristylis dipsacea*, five endangered species of *Ipomoea coptica*, *Cocculus hirsutus* and *Peplidium maritimum*, as well as 11 endangered species. Among the marine plants, *Sargassum* and *Caulerpa* algae species are abundant. Among the animal species found in the park, there are 11 species of mammals, one species of amphibian, 08 species of reptiles, 101 species of birds, 15 species of butterflies and 10 species of dragonflies.

The Delph Pony (wild horse) or *Equus caballus* is the predominant mammal in Delft National Park. About 1000 of them live in the park. Also, small mammals include the Brown Mongoose (*Herpestes brachyurus*), Gray mongoose (*Herpestes edwardsii*), Black naped hare (*Lepus nigricollis*), and Flying fox (*Pteropus giganteus*).



Wild horse



Black naped hare



Flying fox

Reptile species include the saw-scaled viper (*Echis carinatus*), the common garden lizard (*Calotes versicolor*).



Saw-scaled viper



Common garden lizard

The park shows more bird diversity and is also a great resting place for many migratory birds. Common kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*), Little ringed plover (*Charadrius dubius*), Kentish plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*), Silver bill (*Lonchura malabarica*), Gray francolin (*Francolinus pondicerianus*), Eurasian collared dove (*Decoptera*) , Black-crowned night-heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) are some of the bird species found here.



Common kestrel



Little ringed plover



Eurasian collared dove

Butterfly species include Crimoson rose (*Pachliopta hector*), Striped pierrot (*Tarucus nara*), Small samon arab while (*Colotis amata*) and Pruinosed bloodtail (*Lathrecista asiatica*) are the common dragonflies in here.

Visitors from Colombo can reach Jaffna via the Kurunegala-Dambulla-Medawachchiya-Vavuniya-Kilinochchi-Elephant Pass-Kayts Road and the total distance from Colombo is 389 km. From there you can reach reach the Kurikattuwan Naval Jetty of the Kayts Road for by travelling 31 km. More than a hundred people are transported to the island at one time by two large Navy-controlled boats, the Vadataraki and the Kumudini, used by the Road Development Authority to reach Delft National Park from the jetty. Starting at around 8.30 am, there will be about five boat trips, including these two boats. Delft Island can be reached after a 14-kilometer voyage of about an hour by sea. A bus service is in operation on the island. Accommodation and tourist centers run by the Northern Provincial Council are also in operation for tourists visiting the island.

The developed area of the island, which suitable for the plant growth and not subject to flooding is about 1/4 of the total land area whilst the remaining is reserved for wildlife. The total population is approximately 5,000 persons.



Navy controlling boats

ඩෙල්ෆ් ජාතික උද්‍යානය පිළිබඳව විස්තරයේ ඇති වෘක්ෂයන්ගේ නම් ලැයිස්තුව

ඩෙල්ෆ් தேசிய பூங்கா தொடர்பான விளக்கத்தில் காணப்படும் மரங்களின் பெயர்ப் பட்டியல்

List of trees in the Delft National Park

Sinhala Names	Tamil Names	English Names	Botanical Name
තල් ශාකය	ஆசியப்பனை	Palmyra Palm	<i>Borassus flabellifer</i>
බයෝබැබ්	பெருக்க மரம்	Baobab / Aliyagaha	<i>Adonosonia digitata</i>
මල් විශේෂයන්	பூ வகைகள்	Flower Sps	
මල් විශේෂයන්	பூ வகைகள்	Flower Sps	
වැල් විශේෂයන්	கொடி வகைகள்	Creeper Sps	
මල් විශේෂයන්	பூ வகைகள்	Flower Sps	
මුහුදු ශාක විශේෂ	கடற் தாவர வகைகள்	Ocean plant Sps	

டெல்ப் தேசிய பூங்காதொடர்பான விளக்கத்தில் காணப்படும் விலங்குகளின் பெயர்ப் பட்டியல்

Sinhala Name	Tamil Name	English Name	Scientific name
කැලෑ අශ්වයා	காட்டுக் குதிரை	Wild horse	<i>Equus caballus</i>
වල් හාවා	காட்டு குழி முயல்	Black naped hare	<i>Lepus nigricollis</i>
බොර මුවෙයා	குட்டைவால் இந்திய சாம்பல் கீரிப்பிள்ளை	Brown mongoose	<i>Herpestes brachyurus</i>
අළු මුවෙයා	சாம்பல் கீரிப்பிள்ளை	Grey mongoose	<i>Herpestes edwardsii</i>
මා වවුලා	பெரிய வெளவால்	Flying fox	<i>Pteropus giganteus</i>
ගරා කටුස්සා	பொதுவான தோட்டப்பல்லி	Common garden lizard	<i>Calotes versicolor</i>
වැලි පොළහා	சுருட்டை விரியன்	Saw- scaled viper	<i>Echis carinatus</i>
පොදු උකුසු ගොයා	சாதாரண சிற்றெழால்	Common kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
පුංචි මාල ඔලෙවියා	சிறிய வளையம் கொண்ட பிளவர்	Little ringed plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>
කෙන්ට් ඔලෙවියා	கென்டிஷ் ப்ளோவர்	Kentish plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>
වී කුරුල්ලා	நெற்குருவி	Silver bill	<i>Lonchura malabarica</i>
අළු උස්සවටුවා	கௌதாரி	Grey francolin	<i>Francolinus pondicerianus</i>
මාල කොබෙයියා	யுரேஷியா காலர் புறா	Eurasian collared dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
මහා කොණ්ඩ මුහුදු ලිහිණියා	பெரிய முகடு டெர்டன்	Great crested tern	<i>Sterna bergii</i>
රූ කණ කොකා	கறுப்பு கிரீடம் அணிந்த நைட் ஹெரான்	Black-crowned night - heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
අරුණු සෙවිවන්දියා	சிவப்புடல் அழகி	Crimoson rose butterfly	<i>Pachliopta hector</i>
ඉරිකි ගෝමර නිලයා	தருகஸ் நாரா	Striped pierrot butterfly	<i>Tarucus nara</i>
මලිතෙයිියා	சிறிய சால்மன் அரபு	Small salmon arab butterfly	<i>Colotis amata</i>
දුරුලභ බන්කුරන් විශේෂයන්	தும்பி இனங்கள்	Pruinosed bloodtail	<i>Lathrecista asiatica</i>

Editor - Dammika Malsinghe, Additional Secretary, Wildlife and Forest Resources Conservation, Section, Ministry of Agriculture and Wildlife and Forest Resources Conservation (MAWFRC)

Article on park written by - Hasini Sarathchandra, Chief Media Officer, Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWLC)

- Mahesha Chathurani Perera (Graduate Trainee), (DWLC)

Tamil Translations - A.R.F. Rifna, Development Officer, MAWFRC

English Translations - Asoka Palihawadana, Translator, MAWFRC

Web Designing - N.I.Gayathri, Development Officer, MAWFRC - C.A.D.D.A. Kollure, Management Service Officer, MAWFRC

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Other pictures are from internet.