

# Vembanad Lake

August 16, 2020

## Why in news?

- Researchers have warned that the shrinking Vembanad Lake would soon turn into a marshy land.

## More information:

- According to a study conducted by the **International Research and Training Centre for Below Sea-level Farming**, plants have started to grow in areas where the lake's depth has decreased due to accumulation of silt.
- As these plants start to grow taller, the lake would become a swamp.
- Increase in encroachments and lack of conservation have added to the problem.
- Earlier, the **Kuttanad farmers** used to dig out the silt and sediments accumulated in the lake bed to fill the fields and for other farming purposes, but now that is rarely practised, resulting in a marked dip in the lake's depth.
- Many studies had found that accumulation of silt and presence of water weeds had blocked the outflow of water, resulting in water logging in Kuttanad.
- It is reported that **Piranhas (red belly fish) are found in the Vembanad Lake**. (Piranha, a predatory species that feeds on other fish and animals, is a **freshwater fish native to South America** and its rearing has been banned by the Kerala Fisheries Department).
- The floods of 2019 have enabled piranhas to find their way to the Vembanad Lake.

## About the lake

- Vembanad Lake is **also known as Vembanad Kayal, Vembanad Kol, Punnamada Lake (in Kuttanad) and Kochi Lake (in**

**Kochi).**

- It is the longest lake in India and the largest in Kerala.
- It is a popular backwater stretch in Kerala.
- **Vallam Kali** also known as **Nehru Trophy Boat Race** is a **Snake Boat Race** held every year in the month of August in **Vembanad Lake**.
- It was included in the list of **wetlands of international importance** under the Ramsar Convention in 2002.
- The **Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary** is located on the east coast of the lake.