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Plea to protect Kerala's natural coastline

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THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The Thiruvananthapuram-based research forum Friends of Marine Life (FML) has urged the government and the scientific community to adopt urgent measures to protect the natural coastline of the state.



Recent news reports on rough seas and frantic evacuation of families on the Thiruvananthapuram coast are more a story of unscientific human activity destroying natural shorelines, said FML. The forum displays two photographs to prove how the district's shoreline has changed for the worse in the last 10 years. Place the two photographs side by side and you have the story of how beaches die. In the first, taken on February 18, 2007, the beach next to the Valiyathura pier is more expansive. A second photograph of the same location taken by FML this month shows a much shrunken strip of sand.

"In all instances of coastal erosion, the sea is shown as the villain.

Until recent times, we had strong sand beds along our coasts to resist marauding waves. But flawed human interventions have destroyed them," said FML convener and marine researcher Robert Panipilla.

Roughly 20 breakwaters/groynes have been constructed along the Kerala shoreline in the past few decades. Except a handful, majority are useless and prevent the natural sand flow in the sea, said Panipilla. "Studies show each breakwater has destroyed up to 10 kilometres of natural shore," he said. The government and scientists should urgently adopt measures to prevent further coastal degradation.

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