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Pampadum Shola National Park

Published On: 04-11-2025

In News:

The Pampadum Shola National Park in Kerala, once dominated by invasive Australian wattles (*Acacia* species), is witnessing a remarkable ecological transformation. Native shola–grassland ecosystems, streams, and indigenous flora and fauna are being restored through active ecological management and invasive species removal.

Feature	Details
Location	Eastern part of the Southern Western Ghats , Kerala
Status	Declared National Park in 2004
Size	Smallest National Park in Kerala
Ecosystem Type	Shola–grassland mosaic — the southernmost such ecosystem in the Western Ghats
Part of	Palani Hills range, extending up to Vandaravu Peak
Connectivity	Links Eravikulam National Park and Palani Hills , enabling free movement of wildlife
Altitude	1,600–2,400 metres above sea level
Rainfall	Receives heavy Northeast Monsoon rainfall
Topography	Undulating terrain with hillocks of varying heights

Ecological Significance

Represents the southernmost shola–grassland mosaic in the Western Ghats — one of the oldest mountain systems, predating the Himalayas.

Acts as a vital wildlife corridor connecting Western Ghats ecosystems.

Supports high endemism, particularly among flora, avifauna, and small mammals.

Source region for numerous perennial streams feeding local river systems.

Flora

Shola forests interspersed with montane grasslands.

Rich in medicinal plants, orchids, ferns, and native herbs.

Current restoration efforts aim to eradicate invasive *Acacia* (Australian wattle) to revive native vegetation.

Fauna

Endemic and threatened species include:

Nilgiri Marten (Endangered)

Kerala Laughing Thrush (Endemic)

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Black-and-Orange Flycatcher

Nilgiri Langur, Indian Giant Squirrel, and several amphibians and reptiles adapted to high-altitude shola habitats.

Conservation Focus

Removal of invasive wattles that degraded native grasslands and water sources.

Grassland restoration improving soil moisture and stream regeneration.

Community involvement in conservation and eco-restoration.

Monitoring biodiversity recovery post-restoration.

Ecological Revival Impact

Revival of stream flow and soil moisture balance.

Regeneration of native grasses and shrubs.

Return of insect, amphibian, and bird species once displaced by wattles.

Enhanced carbon sequestration and local climate regulation.