

7.34 LAKSHADWEEP

7.34.1 Introduction

The Union Territory of Lakshadweep is located in the Arabian sea and has a geographical area of 32 km². It consists of a group of 36 coral islands covering 12 atolls, 3 reefs and submerged sand banks. Only 22 islands are inhabited. These islands lie scattered about 280 km to 480 km west of Kochi on Kerala coast between latitude 8° 15' & 11°45' N and longitude 72° & 74°E . Average rainfall ranges between 1,000 mm and 2,000 mm. Mean temperature varies from 23°C to 35°C.

As per Census 2001, the total population of the UT is 60,650 of which the rural population is 55.54%. The population density is 1,895 persons per km². The Scheduled Tribes constitute 94.5% of the population. The projected population of the UT is 75,000 (as projected by the Office of RGI for 2009). The livestock population as per Livestock Census 2003 is 52,000, which has nearly tripled since the census of 1992.

Land use pattern of the Union Territory is given in Table 7.34.1.

7.34.2 Recorded Forest Area

The Union Territory is devoid of any natural forest. The islands are covered with coconut trees. There is no recorded forest area.

7.34.3 Protected Areas

There is only one Wildlife Sanctuary (Pitti), covering an area of 1 ha.

7.34.4 Forest Cover

The forest cover in the UT, based on interpretation of satellite data of Dec 2006 - Mar 2007, is 26.48 km², which is 82.75% of the UT's geographical area. In terms of forest canopy density classes, the UT

Table 7.34.1: Land use pattern

Land Use	Area in '000 ha	Percentage
Total geographical area	3.20	
Reporting area for land utilization	3.00	100.00
Forests	0	0.00
Not available for cultivation	0	0.00
Net area sown	3.00	100.00

Source: Land Use Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture, GOI, 2006.

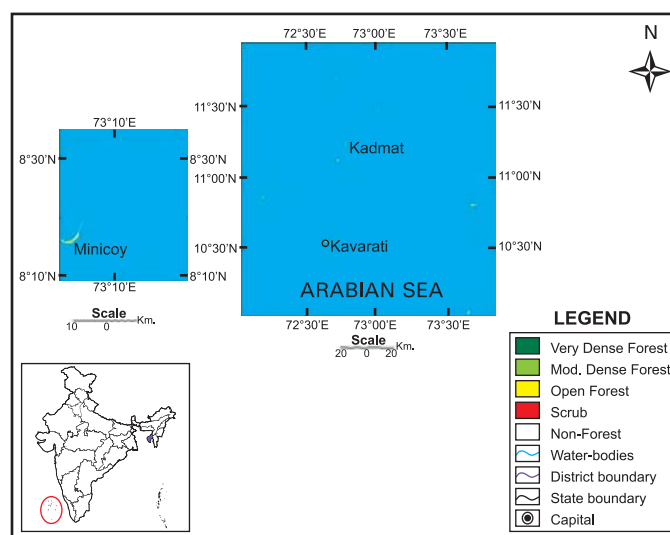


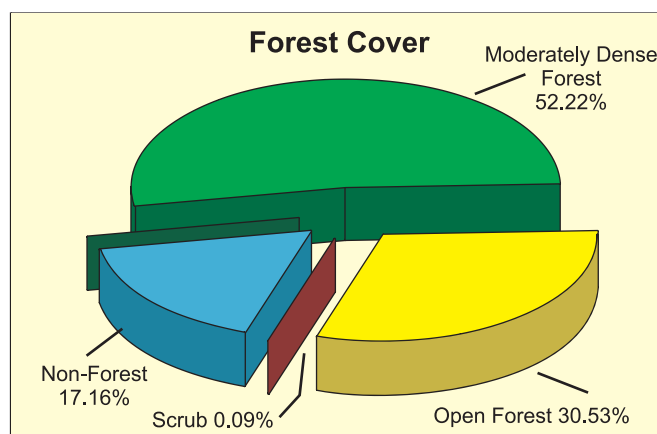
Fig. 7.34 : Forest cover map of Lakshadweep

has 16.71 km² moderately dense forest and 9.77 km² open forest. The distribution of forest cover of the State is shown in Fig. 7.34.

Comparison of the current forest cover (satellite data of Dec 2006 - Mar 2007) with the previous assessment (satellite data of Dec 2004) shows a gain of 0.86 km² of forest cover.

The change matrix, given in Table 7.34.2, reveals that there has been an increase of 0.76 km² in the moderately dense forest and 0.10 km² in open forest.

Since there is only one district in the UT the details of forest cover provided for the UT is also valid for Lakshadweep district.



District wise forest cover in different canopy density classes and scrub along with the changes compared to 2005 assessment is given in the Table 7.34.3.

Table 7.34.2: Forest cover change matrix

(area in km²)

2005 Assessment (Data of Dec 2004)	2007 (Dec 2006 - Mar 2007)					Total of 2005
	VDF	MDF	OF	Scrub	NF	
Very Dense Forest	0	0	0	0	0	0
Moderately Dense Forest	0	15.32	0.06	0	0.57	15.95
Open Forest	0	1.05	8.62	0	0	9.67
Scrub	0	0	0	0	0	0
Non-Forest	0	.34	1.09	0.03	4.92	6.38
Total of 2007	0	16.71	9.77	0.03	5.49	32.00
Net Change	0	0.76	0.10	0.03	-0.89	

Table 7.34.3: District-wise forest cover in 2007

Number of districts: 1

(area in km²)

District	Geographical area	Very dense forest	Mod. dense forest	Open forest	Total	% of G.A.	Change*	Scrub
Lakshadweep ^T	32	0	16.71	9.77	26.48	82.75	0.86	0.03

* Change compared to 2005 assessment (revised).

7.34.5 Altitude Zone wise Forest Cover

All the forest cover of the UT lies in one altitude zone as given in Table 7.34.4.

Table 7.34.4: Altitude zone wise forest cover

(area in km²)

Altitude Zone	VDF	MDF	OF	Total
0-500m	0	16.71	9.77	26.48
Total	0	16.71	9.77	26.48

(based on SRTM Digital Elevation Model)

7.34.6 Tree Cover

Tree cover of the Union Territory has been estimated using sample data of TOF inventory collected

over a period of 6 years i.e. 2002-08. The estimated tree cover in the UT is 4 km² which is 12.50% of the geographical area. The forest and tree cover of the UT is presented in the Table 7.34.5.

Table 7.34 .5: Forest & tree cover

(area in km²)

Category	Area	% of Geographical area
Tree Cover	4	12.50
Forest Cover	26.48	82.75
Forest & Tree Cover	30.48	95.25