

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/proposal-to-declare-karnatakas-mm-hills-as-a-tiger-reserve-public-hearing-on-oct-31/article70217130.ece>

Proposal to declare Karnataka's M.M. Hills as a tiger reserve: Public hearing on Oct. 31

Published - October 29, 2025 08:09 pm IST - MYSURU

THE HINDU BUREAU

The Forest Department has convened a public hearing on eliciting opinion from the local community on the proposed move to declare the M.M. Hills Wildlife Sanctuary as a tiger reserve.

The public hearing is scheduled for October 31 and the proposal to upgrade the wildlife sanctuary into a tiger reserve is pending since many years.

Incidentally, both the National Board for Wildlife and State Board for Wildlife had given their approval for the same and a final notification was pending for the same. But in 2022, the then district in charge Minister V. Somanna opposed it on the grounds that the local community will face the brunt of new restrictions that will be in place once the area is declared a tiger reserve.

However, the demand for reviving the proposal to

upgrade the M.M. Hills Wildlife Sanctuary, which is spread over 903 sq. km, to a tiger reserve received fresh traction in July this year following the death of five tigers — a mother and its four cubs — due to poisoning. Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre had directed the officials to hold a public hearing to elicit the views of the villagers and understand their concerns and submit a report at the earliest.

But a section of the conservationists are supportive of the move on the grounds that the protected area will act as a natural sink to absorb the spill over of tiger population from the nearby regions. M.M. Hills is contiguous to the BRT Tiger Reserve, Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary, and the Satyamangalam Tiger Reserve in the neighbouring State of Tamil Nadu.

The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) in its report 'Status of Tiger and Co-predators — 2018' stated that declaring the M.M. Hills as a tiger reserve will assist in prey and tiger recovery, besides adding space for dispersing and colonising tigers in this landscape of global conservation importance. The report highlighted that the sanctuary was strategically located to connect major tiger reserves.

The NTCA, which investigated the death of the five tigers in June this year, also submitted a report that upgrading M.M. Hills' status to a tiger reserve would provide an additional layer of security to the tiger population.

But there is also a strong opposition to this consensus and on Monday, C. Made Gowda of Jilla Budakattu Girijana Abhivridhi Sangha, Chamarajanagar, addressed a public meeting in the town and said that nearly 45,000 tribals, mainly Jenu Kurubas, Betta Kurubas, and Soligas, live in such a district which already has two tiger reserves and two wildlife sanctuaries.

“We don't want a tiger reserve because there are 15,000 tribals living in enclosures within the M.M. Hills. We are dependent on the forest for resources and declaration of a tiger reserve will result in our relocation. This is a conspiracy to evict us from the forests though we have deep and abiding relationship with nature, including forest and tigers,” he said.

Published - October 29, 2025 08:09 pm IST

In Case You Missed It
