

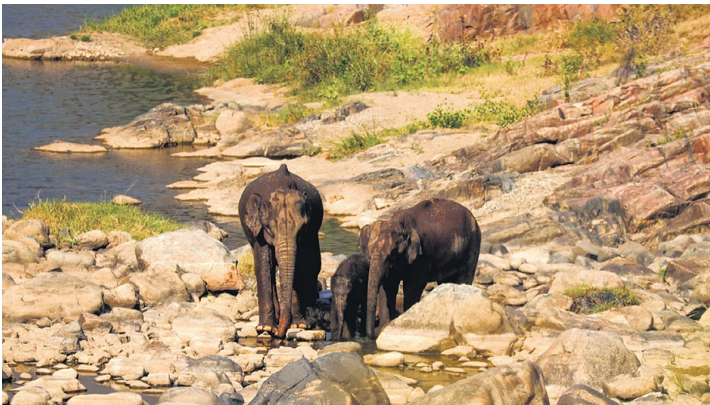
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Tamil Nadu

Bargur Hills in Erode is now Thanthai Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary

This landscape is also one of the tiger corridors identified by the National Tiger Conservation Authority as it holds a number of tigers.

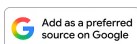


Bargur hills are interconnected with Kollegal forests in Karnataka and the Nilgiris in Tamil Nadu. [Express](#)

SV Krishna Chaitanya 

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Thursday issued a gazette notifying Bargur Hills - 80,567 hectares (801 sq.km) of reserve forest area in Erode district - as Thanthai Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary. With this, Tamil Nadu will have 18 wildlife sanctuaries.

The new sanctuary will boost tiger conservation in the state, which is already home to a healthy population of 306 tigers as per the latest census. Bargur hills is interconnected with Kollegal forests in Karnataka and the Nilgiris in Tamil Nadu, creating one of the most diverse habitats in the region.

“It is a critical area that needs to be conserved. This region is part of the corridor that connects Sathyamangalam tiger reserve to MM Hills tiger reserve and Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary, playing a crucial role in maintaining a viable tiger population,” said Supriya Sahu, additional chief secretary, environment, forests and climate change, in the G.O. issued on Thursday.

This landscape is also one of the tiger corridors identified by the National Tiger Conservation Authority as it holds a number of tigers. “It facilitates unhindered genetic exchange between geographically isolated populations of tigers, thereby maintaining a healthy population and genetic diversity,” the G.O states.

Besides, this region is part of Nilgiris Elephant Reserve, catchment of the Palar river that drains into the Cauvery river



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river that drains into the Cauvery river and is a crucial source of water for agricultural activities. It is also a natural sandal bearing belt and an active sandal regenerating area, forest officials said.

The proposal to declare the reserve forests as wildlife sanctuary would create a contiguous network of protected areas, thereby providing uniform legal status and protection to the landscape, the G.O. reads.

As per the gazette notification, the reserve forest areas that form the new sanctuary include North Bargur reserved forest, South Bargur reserved forest, Thamarai karai reserved forest, Ennamangalam reserved forest and Nagalur reserved forest.

There are six tribal habitations falling within the sanctuary area and their rights conferred under Scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 shall remain, the authorities said.

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