

KERALA

# With onset of summer, wildlife migration to Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary begins

STAFF REPORTER

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**However, the inflow of wildlife is comparatively low this time owing to better rain in the sanctuary as well as adjacent tiger reserves till December 15**



With the onset of summer, the seasonal migration of wild animals has begun from the adjacent wildlife sanctuaries in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu to the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary (WWS).

The inflow of wildlife is comparatively low this time owing to better rain in the sanctuary as well as adjacent tiger reserves till December 15, Jose Mathew, Assistant Conservator of Forest, WWS told *The Hindu*. However, this would be increase considerably by the end of February, he said.

The sanctuary is a haven for wild animals during summer owing to the easy availability of fodder and water throughout the year. Nevertheless, officials have made highly structured measures to ensure the availability of fodder and water, apart from other protection measures.

As many as 26 new brushwood check dams have been constructed, and 34 check dams of 168 dams have been de-silted so far to ensure drinking water to the animals, said Mr. Mathew.

As part of fodder management, around 289 hectares of coarse grasslands have been trimmed to grow soft grass, and weeds were removed on 83 hectares of forest land, he said. Sanctuary authorities are also planning to map fields and waterbodies to ensure fodder supply during the dry season.

Fire breakers have also been erected along 195 km, including a 27-km stretch on the State borders, at a width of 10 metres.

“We have conducted four awareness sessions on forest fire to sensitise those residing on the fringes of the forests. We are planning to organise 20 more similar sessions in the coming days,” said Mr. Mathew.

As many as 160 front-line forest staff, including 130 temporary forest watchers, are deployed for protection with essential equipment and wireless sets.

Apart from 24 permanent anti-poaching camps and five watchtowers at strategic points, 15 new treetop machans (temporary watchtowers) have started functioning on the four forest ranges of the sanctuary.

This year, the sanctuary authorities have registered as many as 186 phone numbers of forest staff with the Forest Survey of India. The latter would issue alerts on incidences of forest fire to the registered phone numbers so that officials can respond quickly.

A round-the-clock control room is also set up to issue alerts in case of forest fires. This can be reached at 0493-6223500 and 8547603486.

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