



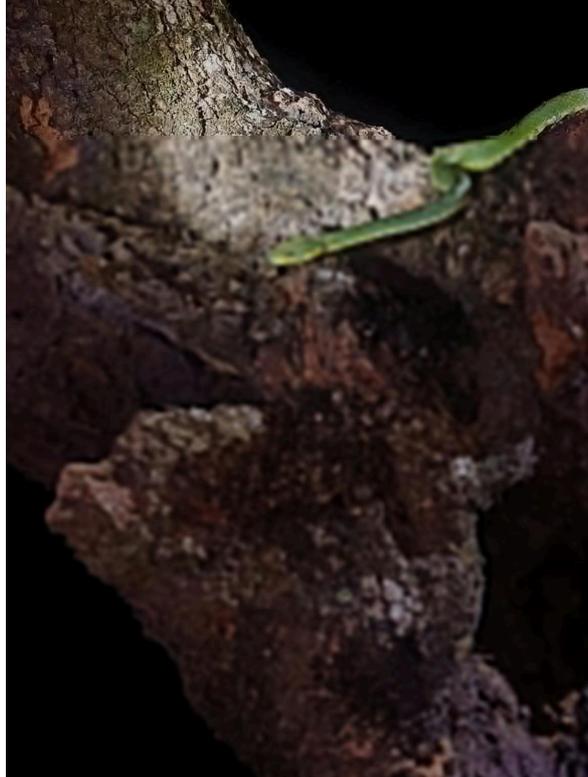
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82 species of amphibians and reptiles recorded during herpetofaunal survey in Mudumalai Tiger Reserve

C. Vidhya, Deputy Director of MTR (Core Area), said that the survey succeeded in ascertaining a rough estimate of the amphibian and reptile diversity in Mudumalai.

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ROHAN PREMKUMAR



A Western Bamboo Pit Viper at the herpetofauna survey in the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve. | Photo Credit: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The first-ever herpetofaunal survey conducted in the Core Area of the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR) led to the sighting of 82 species of reptiles and amphibians.

The survey was conducted from February 23 to 25 in Theppakadu, Kargudi and Nilakottai forest ranges of the tiger reserve. According to officials, the first-ever dedicated survey of the diversity of the region's amphibians and reptiles led to the recording of 82 different species, which includes 51 species of reptiles and 31 species of amphibians.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, C. Vidhya, Deputy Director of MTR (Core Area), said that the survey succeeded in ascertaining a rough estimate of the amphibian and reptile diversity in Mudumalai. She said she hoped the survey could help the forest department in implementing species-specific conservation plans for animals inhabiting the area, such as the 'near threatened' Indian rock python, 'vulnerable' mugger crocodile and other species of amphibians and reptiles.

Ms. Vidhya said that the survey also led to the records of multiple species that had previously not been recorded by researchers from the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve. "Another herpetofaunal survey has been planned for June as the number of amphibians recorded during the summer is usually lower than just after the monsoon," added Ms. Vidhya.

The first-ever herpetofaunal survey, much like other first-time surveys of butterflies, wetland birds and odonates, will help the forest department in better understanding and protecting the smaller, lesser known species that inhabit MTR, officials added. The second herpetofaunal survey has also been planned to be undertaken in the same area and will help provide even more of an accurate picture of the species diversity in the region, they added.

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