

NGO begins planting 1,500 saplings in Sigur plateau

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Forest staff and a volunteer of NGO Arulagam planting saplings near Thengumarahada. Special Arrangement

With forest fires in Mudumalai and Bandipur tiger reserves destroying many trees located near vulture nesting sites, vulture conservation NGO Arulagam has begun planting native saplings to provide more nesting grounds for vultures.

S. Bharathidasan, secretary of Arulagam, told *The Hindu* that they have planned to plant over 1,500 trees in the coming days, with planting already started in Thengumarahada in the buffer zone of the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR). Over the coming weeks, more saplings would be planted in Siriyur, Kallampalayam, Alli Moyar and seven other places in both MTR and Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve, he said.

The saplings to be planted along the Moyar River are “vulture-friendly” species, such as the *Terminalia arjuna* and *Terminalia bellerica*, in

which at least three of the four vulture species seen in the Nilgiris are known to nest.

“There is a need to plant these saplings as hundreds of trees located near vulture nesting sites were destroyed in the forest fires that erupted in parts of MTR. So this afforestation drive could help safeguard these sites for the future,” said Mr. Bharathidasan.

Moreover, a recent survey of the forests of Mudumalai and Bandipur tiger reserves by wildlife enthusiasts also revealed that there was death of some species of trees that the vultures depend upon, he said.

The planting of saplings began on October 2 in Thengumarahada.

Each of the 10 sites earmarked for afforestation will be planted with 150 saplings, to mark the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

“Mahatma Gandhi is the torch bearer of Clean India campaign. Enormous amount of labour is being spent for this campaign by our Government. But at the same time, this cleanliness drive is done very very effectively in our forests, without spending any money by nature’s sanitary crew – vultures,” said Mr. Bharathidasan.

Source:<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Coimbatore/ngo-begins-planting-1500-saplings-in-sigur-plateau/article29674955.ece>