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Data collection begins at Anamalai tiger reserve

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Chennai: An eight-day pre-monsoon drive to collect data on carnivores and their prey in the Anamalai tiger reserve in Pollachi has begun.

A senior wildlife official said the exercise, which is part of the annual tiger census and is to be done twice a year, will give an indication about the prey base in wooded areas, anthropogenic pressure on the habitat, degradation of forests, the predator base and its density. Forest soldiers - rangers, foresters, guards, watchers and anti-poaching watchers - will trek through designated transect lines and record sightings of wildlife in a data sheet, he said.

Beat-wise monitoring of signs and encounters of animals, vegetation, habitat disturbances are part of the Phase-I protocols and will cover the entire tiger reserve. Data on tiger/carnivore signs, ungulate encounter rates, habitat status, human presence and pellet/dung counts will help prepare beat level maps indicating the spatial presence/relative abundance of prey/predator species.

The Anamalai Tiger Reserve is spread over 968.6 sq km plus a buffer area of 150.5 sq km.