

Synchronized elephant census covers 3.5 lakh hectare of forest area

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Udhagamandalam: The three-day synchronized elephant census in the state concluded on Saturday. The census covered around 3,50,000 hectare of forest area spread across 697 blocks in 26 forest divisions in the state.

The elephant census was simultaneously held in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala as well.

Supriya Sahu, additional chief secretary to the government, said it was the second synchronized elephant census to be held in the state.

At least 1,836 forest staff and 342 volunteers were involved in the state-wide exercise. Biologists attached to the Mudumalai, Sathyamangalam, Anaimalai, Srivilliputhur-Meghamalai and Kalakkadu-Mundanthurai tiger reserves had conducted a formal training for the participants across the 26 forest divisions on May 12.

Methods such as block counts, line transects, waterhole count were adopted to assess the elephant population. “The data compiled from each forest division will be sent to the Tiger Monitoring Cell at Theppakadu in Mudumalai Tiger Reserve. The data will be systematically analysed for elephant reserves and tiger reserves,” Sahu said.

For the first time, she said, a synthesis report of southern states would be prepared to get a better insight into the elephant population pattern in the neighbouring states as well.

As per the 2023 synchronized elephant census, Tamil Nadu was home to 2,961 elephants.

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