

AI Cameras deployed in 17 locations in Hosur Forest division to track elephant movement

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THE HINDU BUREAU



The cameras are supported by special software with images of domestic and wild elephants captured from the Theppakadu elephant camp. This enables the AI camera to pick up images of an elephant and track its movement as soon as it leaves the forest. The images of the elephant are immediately relayed to the

Command and Control Center that are equipped with large-sized monitors and computers, and the information is passed from there to the field staff..

The cameras are protected by a fence with 24-hour solar-powered batteries. A large tower has been set up at the district forest office from where all the cameras are networked, according to the Forest Department.

In October each year, around 125 to 150 elephants migrate from Bannerghatta National Park and Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary in Karnataka into Tamilnadu. The elephants enter the State through Thally, and Jawalagiri reserve forests, and move through Denkanikottai, Noganur, Udedurgam, Sanamavu, Settippalli, and Maharajakadai reserve forests, and enter Koundinya Wildlife Sanctuary and Sri Venkateswara Wildlife Sanctuary in Andhra Pradesh. They return to Bannerghatta National Park in April and May.

This migratory journey is also fraught with transgressions and negative interactions with humans, resulting in human casualties and crop loss. According to the forest department, various measures including the relay of

information through WhatsApp groups and Telegram channels on elephant movement; and infrastructural measures including solar fences and much-lasting steel wire rope fences are being set up along with creation of water holes inside reserve forests.

To help contain the elephants within the forests of the Cauvery North Wildlife Sanctuary, the Forest Department is in the process of setting up steel wire rope fences along a 150-km distance north of the sanctuary. Of this targeted area, a 35 km distance has already been covered by the fence in specific spots where elephants are seen to breach forest boundaries.

The AI cameras have been deployed in vulnerable locations where steel wire rope fencing is yet to be erected. The AI-Cameras have been deployed under the Tamil Nadu Innovative Initiative that started in 2023-24.

Similarly, the Hosur Forest division has also acquired a thermal drone to monitor elephant movement out of the reserve forests at night.

This would be in addition to the existing system of information channels such as as “Thadam” Whatsapp group and “Kurinji Nilam”

Earlier, the Command and Control Centre was set up inaugurated by the Deputy Superintendents of Police A. Babu Prasanth of Hosur and Shanthi of Denkanikottai in the presence of the Wild Life Warden K. Karthikeyani.