

Wildlife monitoring exercise resumes at STR

STAFF REPORTER
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The six-day wildlife monitoring exercise that was halted in December last year due to the killing of a forest watcher and a volunteer by a wild elephant at Vilamundi forest range resumed at Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve.

STR comprises two forest divisions, Sathyamangalam and Hasanur, with 10 ranges, Sathyamangalam, Bhavani Sagar, T.N. Palayam, Vilamundi, Kadambur, Talamalai, Hasanur, Germalam, Talavadi and Jerahalli. Bi-annual six-day wildlife monitoring exercise is carried out to estimate carnivores and herbivores at STR. While the pre-monsoon survey is done between June and July, post-monsoon survey is done in December - January every year.

During the survey on December 17, 2020, an elephant attacked forest watcher K. Satheesh Kumar and volunteer P. Muthu Prabhakar Sera Pandian of Thooth-



Forest personnel involved in wildlife monitoring exercise at T.N. Palayam Forest Range i on Saturday.

ukudi in which both died. Hence, the survey was temporarily cancelled. Nihar Ranjan, Chief Conservator of Forests and Field Director, STR, issued orders for carrying out the remaining five-day exercise that began on Friday. Only forest personnel were involved in the survey and the services of vo-

lunteers were not used.

Officials said the critical tiger habitat of STR was 739.49 sq.km. while the buffer area was 614.91 sq.km. STR had a significant population of tiger, elephants, leopards, black bucks, gaur, four horned antelope, striped hyena and other creatures.