

Wildfires in the Mukurthi National Park

Why in News

Ahead of summer and peak fire season, 'fire lines' or 'fire breaks', in the Mukurthi National Park (MNP) are being constructed by the Tamil Nadu government.

Key Points

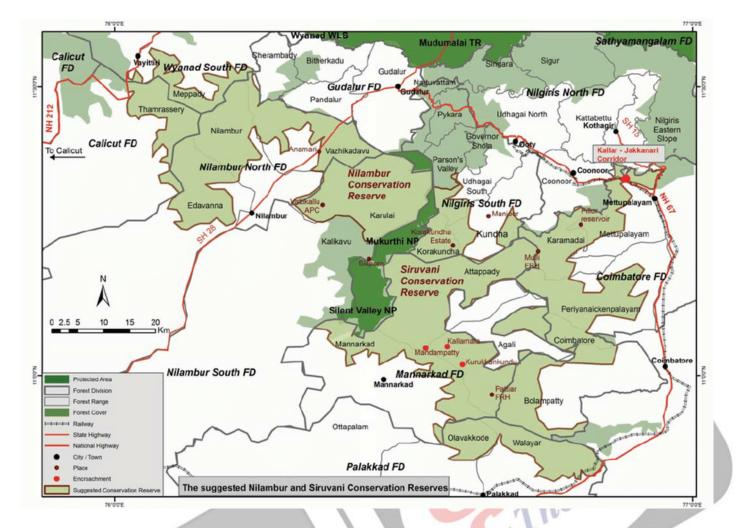
- **Fire line** is an artificially formed **break in foliage or forest cover** to control the spread of wildfires by limiting the amount of combustible vegetation available.
- Other Measures Being Taken to Control Wildfires in the Park :
 - Cool Burning: Cool burning is done in a controlled manner by artificially creating small, localised fires to limit the amount of vegetation available in any given area. It means that any fires will not have any build-up of "vegetative fuel" to use to become a large, uncontrollable fire.
 - **Removal of invasive trees** such as **wattle** is also being done in the Park in order to reduce the fuel for wildfires.

Wildfires

- Wildfire is a general term which includes any uncontrolled, unplanned forest fires, grassland fires, bushfires, brush fires and any other vegetation fire in countryside areas.
- Wildfires occur in every continent except Antarctica.

Mukurthi National Park

- Extent: Mukurthi National Park (MNP) is located in the northwest corner of Tamil Nadu in the Western Ghats.
- It is a part of <u>Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve</u> (UNESCO World Heritage Site) along with <u>Mudumalai</u> <u>Wildlife Sanctuary</u>, Bandipur National Park, Nagarhole National Park, Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary and <u>Silent Valley</u>.
- Keystone Species: The park was created to protect its <u>keystone species</u>, the <u>Nilgiri Tahr</u>.
 - There has been almost a 27% increase in the population of the Tahr in the Nilgiris over the last few years.
- Forest Type: The park is characterised by montane grasslands and shrublands interspersed with sholas in a high altitude area of high rainfall, near-freezing temperatures and high winds.
- Peaks: The Park is also home to Mukurthi Peak, one of the highest peaks in the Nilgiri Hills.
- Tribes Living Inside: Todas
 - Todas are a pastoral tribe of the Nīlgiri Hills.



Source: TH

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