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Wildfires in the Mukurthi National Park

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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

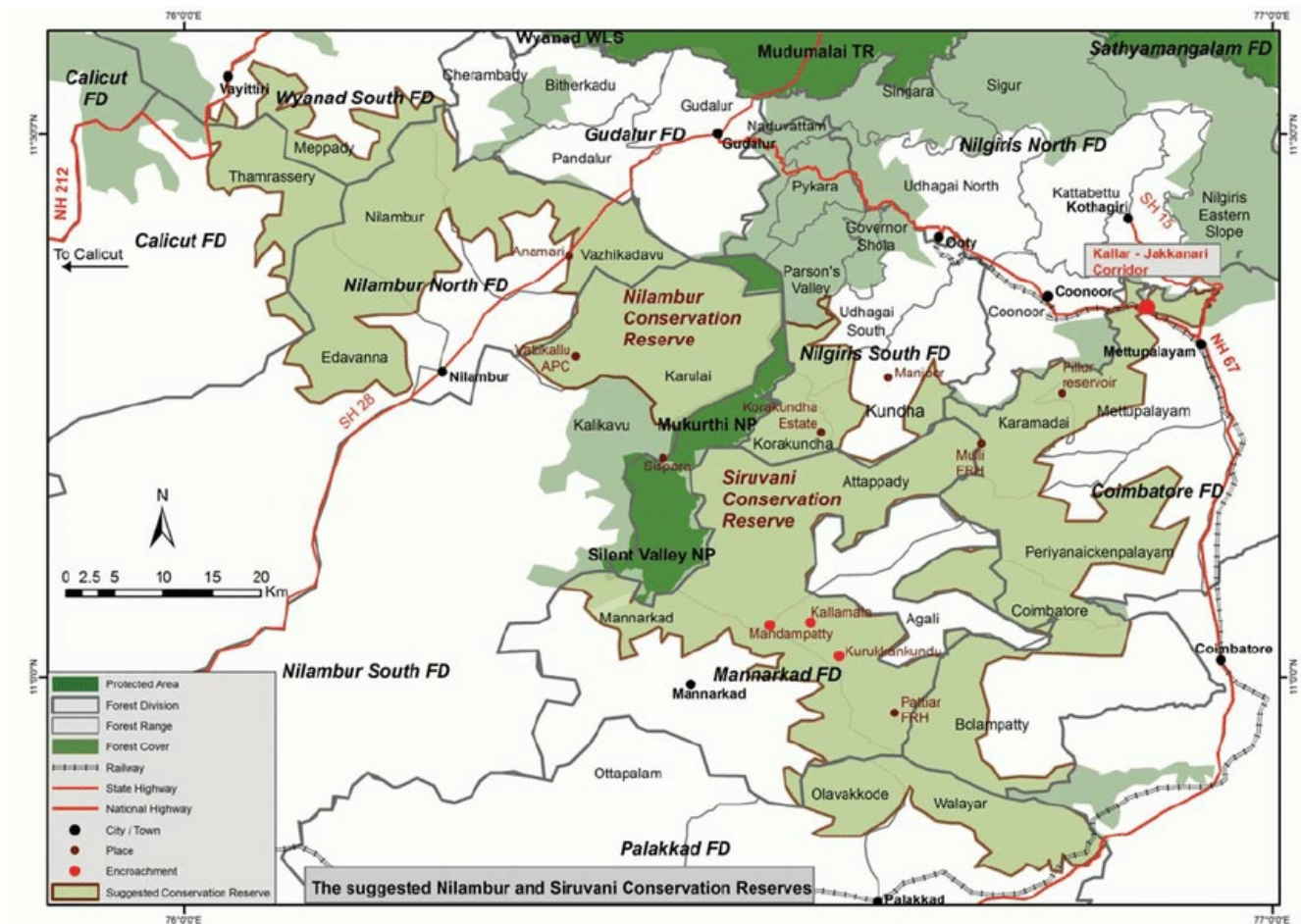
- **Extent:** Mukurthi National Park (MNP) is located in the northwest corner of Tamil Nadu in the **Western Ghats**.
- It is a part of **Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve** (UNESCO World Heritage Site) along with **Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary**, Bandipur National Park, Nagarhole National Park, Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary and Silent Valley.

- **Keystone Species :** The park was created to protect its keystone species, the Nilgiri Tahr.

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 Nilgiri Hills.



Source: TH