

# 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**

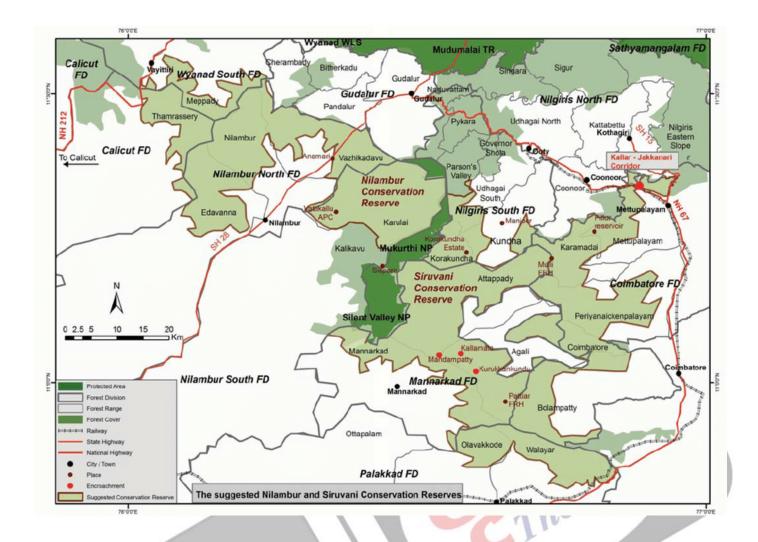
- **Fire line** is an artificially formed **break in foliage or forest cover** to control the spread of wildfires by limiting the amount of combustible vegetation available.
- Other Measures Being Taken to Control Wildfires in the Park:
  - Cool Burning: Cool burning is done in a controlled manner by 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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