

Project Update: December 2009

This study on Asian elephants in southern Eastern Ghats, within Vellore and Tiruvannamalai districts in Tamil Nadu, India is ongoing.

Over a period of three months (September – November 2009), eight of the 11 forest ranges within the three divisions of Vellore Forest Circle have been surveyed for movement patterns of Asian elephants.

So far, one herd of Asian elephants comprising of nine individuals led by a matriarch and one solitary male tusker (moving independent of the herd) has been identified as the cause of human-elephant conflicts in majority of these forest ranges, while the presence and movement of one more herd comprising of 13 individuals (three of which are male tuskers) has been confirmed.

Structured interviews have been conducted in these forest ranges, and identification of potential conflict areas and locations, based on the Tamil Nadu Forest Department records going back several years, have been ascertained along with field visits to these forest ranges. These data, along with information on habitat quality, will probably determine the seasonal movement pattern and habitat use of the Asian elephants in this region.