

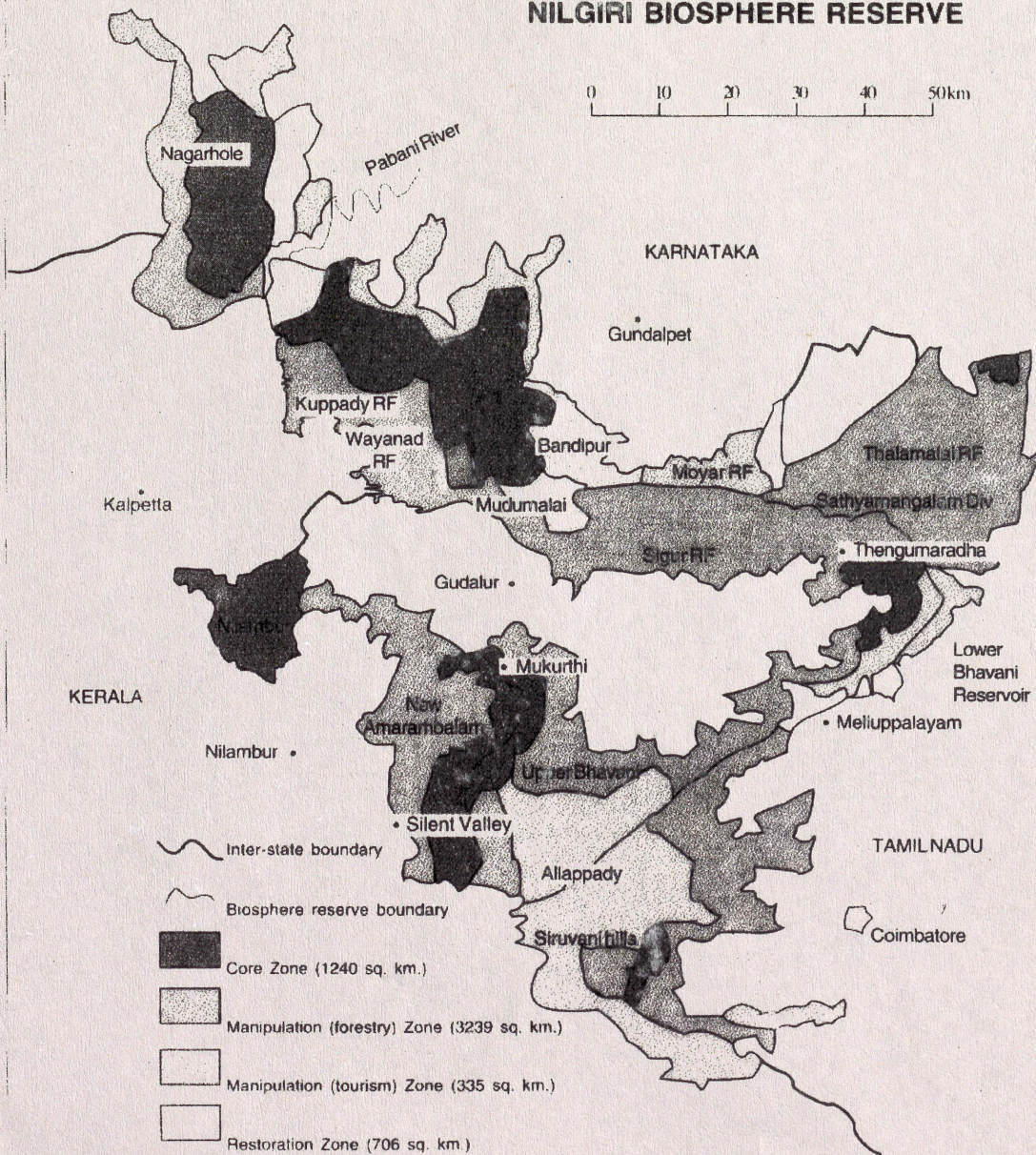
NILGIRI BIOSPHERE RESERVE

KERALA FOREST DEPARTMENT

By

**Conservator of Forests
(Eastern Circle), Palakkad**

NILGIRI BIOSPHERE RESERVE



Estb.	1 st September 1986
Area (sq.km)	Kerala—1455.4 TN----- 237.6 Kar----- 127.4 ----- Total 5520.4
Location	11°15' to 12°15' N Lat 76° to 76°45' E Long
Protected areas	Silent Valley, Wyanad, Bandipur, Nagarhole, Mudumalai, Mukkurthi
Average annual rainfall	500 to 7000 mm
Main tribes inhabiting	Cholanaikas, Todas, Poriyans, Kurinchiyans, Kurumbas, Irulas, Alars, Paniyars, Kotas
Diversity	Mammals, Birds, Reptiles & endemic plant species

Importance of the Reserve

- Rich biodiversity—exceptional species diversity & endemic plants of varied utility—one of the two hotspots of India
- Exceptional community diversity from deciduous, evergreen and **shola** forests to montane grasslands
- Comprises of the last bit of surviving tropical evergreen rainforests of India
- Important watershed for several rivers
- Significant population of highly endangered animal & plant species including medicinal plants & orchids
- Rich in bamboo resource
- Potential area for wildlife research & education,

Issues concerning NBR

- Proximity of fringe area dwellers around NBR, Presence of private settlements along with tribal communities within the reserve with varying degree of dependency
- Pressure from grazing, firewood collection, illicit felling & removal of forest produce
- Forest fires
- Poaching & ganja cultivation
- Illicit distillation
- Mass tourism influx
- Pilgrimage & tribal culture

Activities & Achievements

- **Infrastructure development & Protection**
 - Construction of anti-poaching camps
 - Fire protection
 - Fire line tracing
 - Employing tribal fire gangss
- **Habitat Improvement**
 - Water retention structures—checkdams
 - Soil moisture conservation
 - Vayal mtce.
 - Planting of fodder species, bamboo, canes etc.
- **Eco-development**
 - Providing drinking water facilities
 - Construction of community halls for locals
 - Supply of bio gas units
 - Supply of solar light equipment
 - Supply of smokeless choolas, beehives etc.
 - Distribution of fruit bearing tree seedlings
 - Conducting of medical & vet camps
- **Education, training & awareness**
 - Conducting nature camps
 - Imparting training to staff
- **Mitigating man-animal conflict**
 - Erection of solar power fences
 - Forming Elephant proof trenches
 - Vista clearance
 - Compensation to crop attack by wildlife
 - Conducting vaccination of domestic cattle

RESULTS

- Protection improved
- Habitat of the area improved
- Std of living of locals improved through various eco development activities
- Awareness of public regarding conservation issues improved
- Corridors of long ranging animals protected
- Soil degradation checked
- Forest fires controlled
- Source for alternate livelihood of stakeholders
- Man-animal conflict reduced considerably
- Increased people's + NGO's support towards biodiversity conservation
- Improved eco-tourism activities
- Local people employed for various forestry works & as watchers

Recommendations for future

- Restructuring the assistance programme to give greater emphasis to man-animal conflict
- Innovative programmes to check ganja cultivation in the reserve—anti-ganja camps, aerial detection etc.
- Centralized intelligence gathering mechanism for the whole area to check poaching
- Simultaneous census required periodically
- Areas like Silent Valley NP require a buffer for management
- Innovative, interpretive programmes tailor made for the particular area to be conceived and implemented
- Professionalism to be brought into eco-tourism activity

*conservator of forests,
Eastern circle, Palakkad.*