

Now, an app to track Indian gaur in Nilgiris

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A mobile app has been introduced by the Keystone foundation for tracking Indian gaur in Udhagamandalam.. | Photo Credit: [M Sathyamoorthy](#); [M Sathyamoorthy](#) -

Residents encouraged to record key data such as the places the animal visits and its behavioural patterns

In a bid to understand the behaviour and movement patterns of the Indian gaur, a mobile application has been launched for use by Nilgiris residents to locate spots it frequents.

Keystone Foundation unveiled the app, which can be used on Android phones, in the presence of residents and college students during a day-long workshop held here at the HADP Hall on Saturday. Those attending the workshop were taught how to use it and record their findings.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Abhishek K R, additional programme co-ordinator and Malavika Narayan, subject manager at Keystone Foundation, said the app was designed to collect data on the Indian gaur populating urbanised landscapes in the Nilgiris. “The app can also be used to log the number of animals in a herd, its sex and the age group,” said Mr. Abhishek, who along with Ms. Malavika has been studying the Indian gaur, population composition, movement patterns and behaviour in the Nilgiris, especially herds around Kotagiri.

“We are trying to identify the places where conflicts occur and hope that with the help of the data from the application we can work with local communities to find ways to mitigate conflicts,” added Mr. Abhishek. Forest staff from Kotagiri said there were 25 patches of forest in Kotagiri. and conflicts usually occurred when animals crossed patches.

Rising numbers

N. Mohanraj, conservationist and honorary wildlife warden (Mudumalai Tiger Reserve and other eco-sensitive zones), who was at the workshop, said in the past the number of Indian gaurs in the upper Nilgiri plateau was not high, but by the turn of the century, there had been a steady increase in the population for reasons such as closure of tea plantations.

“This is just an hypothesis, that the crash in the tea industry led to the rejuvenation of grass in around 400-500 square metres of the upper Nilgiris, leading to the gaur moving into these habitats,” said Mr. Mohanraj.

The foundation plans to hold workshops in Coonoor, Kotagiri and also Gudalur to share its findings and distribute the application.

Assistant Conservator of Forests, Nilgiris North Division, K Saravanakumar and N Sadiq Ali, honorary wildlife warden (Nilgiris) shared their expertise.