

## **APPEAL OF THE DIRECTOR FROM DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT FOR WORLD ELEPHANT DAY ON 12<sup>TH</sup>, AUGUST, 2018.**

**The World Elephant Day** is celebrated on 12<sup>th</sup> of August every year. World Elephant Day was launched to bring attention to the conservation and protection of the elephants worldwide. World Elephant Day was formulated in 2011 by two Canadian filmmakers and Thailand's Elephant Reintroduction Foundation. The day was first celebrated on August 12, 2012.

World Elephant Day is celebrated to raise awareness of the devastating threats of the iconic species. The threats are forest fragmentation, loss of corridors, isolation of population etc., The escalation of poaching, habitat loss, human-elephant conflict and mistreatment in captivity are just some of the threats to both African and Asian elephants. Working towards better protection for wild elephants, improving enforcement policies to prevent the illegal poaching and trade of ivory, conserving elephant habitats, better treatment for captive elephants and when appropriate, reintroducing captive elephants into natural, protected sanctuaries are the goals that numerous elephant conservation organizations are focusing on around the world.

Elephant is a terrestrial animal which is included in Schedule-I animal list of the wildlife (Protection) Act 1972. Project Elephant was launched in February 1992 by Govt. of India for conservation of elephant and its habitat. The Indian elephant *Elephas maximus* occurs in the central and southern Western Ghats, North-east India, eastern India and northern India and in some parts of southern peninsular India. It is included in Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES). In 2012 the population was estimated to be between 27,785 and 31,368 and in Tamil Nadu elephant it was estimated as 3726.

The Government of Tamil Nadu is a pioneer in taking effective initiatives to protect this magnificent animal. The Project Elephant scheme is implemented by the Government of Tamil Nadu in four elephant reserves viz. Nilgiris Eastern Ghats Elephant Reserve, Coimbatore Elephant Reserve, Anamalai Elephant Reserve and Periyar Elephant Reserve. Tamil Nadu is one of the leading States in elephant population and their habitat management. The Forest Department, Government of Tamil Nadu has elephant camps at Kozhikamudhi near Top Slip in Anamalai Tiger Reserve (ATR) at Theppakadu in Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR) in the Nilgiris, and at Chadivayal in Pooluvampatti Range of the Coimbatore Forest Division. The camps have a sizeable number of elephants that were either rescued when in distress or those orphaned calves. The camp elephants are being used for various connection purposes. The management initiatives in the wild include digging elephant proof trenches, construction of percolation ponds, check dams and water troughs, maintenance of elephant proof trenches, early warning system, trip wire alarm system, tranquilizing and translocation of problematic elephants etc.,

The best way to celebrate this day is to take the opportunity to raise awareness on the issues of elephant conservation and the steps that need to be taken.

**The steps that could be taken are:**

- To conserve and protect elephant populations and to ensure healthy population and viable within its ecosystem.
- To conserve and protect the habitat and to reverse its deterioration.
- To conserve, protect and open up traditional migration corridor linking the different habitats.
- To continue eco-development activities, welfare measures and mitigation of elephant depredation.
- To take measures to check poaching and other threats.
- To create facilities for research and veterinary care.
- To educate people about the ecological significance

Elephants are important to us and to the environment. They maintain ecological harmony by transporting seeds to miles away and excrete them in fertile dung piles. 90% of plants and tree species rely on elephant for spread. On this World elephant Day, I urge all to take responsibility for joining hands with common people, Government agencies, NGOs, and people of all the community to enhance public awareness towards the significance of conservation and protection of the elephants.

Director of Environment