

While tiger count goes up 20% in TN, it dwindles in north

R Vasundara | TNN

SO/WG am-19
Chennai: Environmentalists in the southern states may well be doing a jig in the woods this year as the tiger population has reached healthy levels. In contrast, the tiger count in the northern states has seen a decline, say experts.

According to the state chief conservator of forests, Dr V N Singh, Tamil Nadu is expected to show a 20% increase in tiger population. "The last census, which was taken in 2005, showed the presence of 77 tigers in Tamil Nadu, an increase of 25%



SOUTHERN HOPE

over the earlier numbers," he said. "The results of this year's census are yet to be released. But we believe the results are good and we are expecting at least a 20% increase."

However, while in terms

of absolute numbers, northern states still ranked higher, there has been a decline in the number of tigers over the years, while the southern states have shown an increase, said Singh.

Corroborating this, Praveen Bhargav, trustee of Wildlife First, a nodal agency that coordinated the Karnataka Tiger Conservation Project cited the cases of Panna Tiger Reserve in MP and Sariska in Rajasthan. "The numbers here had dwindled so much that the government decided to re-populate the area with tigers taken from other areas," he said.