

Black Royal Bengal Tiger spotted in Simlipal

Wednesday, Jan 14 2009.

An adult black Royal Bengal Tiger (RBT) was sighted in the Patbil forest compartment of the Simlipal Tiger Reserve (STR).

The Tiger was watching at its kill an adult hefty Sambar, from a distance of nearly fifty metres when two census officials – Harish Barik and Mantribar Mohanta –were approaching the site to collect the pugmarks last Sunday.

The duo were specially commissioned by STR Field Director R Nagaraja Reddy after he had received a report from Michael Peter, a representative of the WWF-India as its state Director. Mr Peter said the six-day long pugmark-based census exercise was a thrilling experience for him.

Both Harish and Mantribar were surprised to see the animal looking exactly like an RBT but with a deep black coat and no strips. As the duo approached the site, the tiger growled and disappeared into denser cover.

The new variety sighted in Simlipal has a deep black coat with a white abdomen but no strips, the duo reported to the field Director. According to Mr. Reddy the normal RBT has a yellowish brown coat with black stripes, while the Melanistic tiger has a black coat with yellowish brown stripes.

Simlipal Tiger Reserve is perhaps the first among the 28 reserves in the country to be inhabited by three varieties of RBT, sources said.

This was the second sighting of a black RBT in Patbil under Upper-barha-Kamuda(UBK) range of the STR about 115 kms from here.

This unique black Royal Bengal Tiger in Simlipal was first sighted by Debendra Nayak, a jeep driver and Solem Deogam a Sabuja Vahini volunteer in Sanjo compartment No 7 of the Jodapal beat in 2007.

The black RBT has a distinct advantage of remaining in a camouflaged condition in the dense woodland of Simlipal while preying on prey animals, experts said.

Source : UNI – 14CA11.xml.