

High Tech Cameras for Tiger census in Similipal.

Highly sophisticated “Deercam” and “Trainmaster” cameras were used for the first time in Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR), spread over 2750 sq. km. for tiger census.

The high – tech trap of trip – wires and auto - flash cameras were fixed on the poles of trees and other selected points for self – portraiting of the tigers.

This time, the high – tech method was introduced for the stripes and spots to get their more authentic count, STR Director Debabrata Swain said.

The wildlife experts are experimenting with this unique “ camera – trap ‘ method and a range of other simpler ways of tiger head – counting in various reserves of the country. These methods are in their quest for a better alternative to the oft – doubted pugmark technique used by the tiger reserves.

A team of four wildlife scientists from the Dehradun – based Wildlife Institute of India (WII) recently visited the STR and fixed as many as 60 cameras at 30 points in high – density tiger areas of the tiger reserve.

The STR Field Director said since each tiger has its own distinct stripes, the high tech cameras were used by wildlife scientists to arrive at a new and arguably a more reliable methodology of tiger densities in the wild, than the hitherto – used pugmark method.

Source : The Telegraph, dt. June'05, 2007

Rare black tigers sighted at Similipal.

Three rare black tigers have been sighted at Similipal Orissa’s only tiger reserve, by the surveying teams of Wildlife Institute of India (WII).

During the on –going enumeration through the camera - trap methodology as part of nationwide tiger census, the cameras captured images of three different melanistic tigers known as black tigers.

The survey team which are currently carrying out the census, on a sampling basis, captured images of these three black tigers near the Upper Barakamuda and Devasthali regions in the tiger reserve’s core area.

The survey is now being conducted over a 120 sq. km region out of the 850 sq. km core area of the Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR)

In fact, the cameras have so far captured images of six different tigers in the survey area of which three are melanistic suggesting that their strength could be reasonably good in STR

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Since the census work is still on, the matter is still under wraps. In fact, it would be officially released once the survey teams submit their report to the Dehradun – based WII while the Forest Department officials are tight lipped over the entire issue.

In the past, there have been reports of black and melanistic tiger inhabiting in STR but only once was it recorded. On July 21, 1993, a tribal boy killed a melanistic tigress with traditional weapons while defending himself.

The incident occurred at Padagarh village near Bhandan river to the West of Similipal. BC Prusty, the then Field Director of STR had videotaped it.

Elsewhere in India, the skin of the melanistic tiger was recovered from the smuggler at Tis Hazari in October'1992. Measured at eight feet and half, it is currently at National Museum of Natural History at New Delhi.

Source : LATEST INDIAN TIGER NEWS, dt. June 3, 2007

Source : UNI on Monday' June' 04,2007

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The STR Field Director said since each tiger has its own distinct stripes, the high tech cameras were used by wildlife scientists to arrive at a new and arguably a more reliable methodology of counting.

Altogether 30 points of prey areas of Similipal were selected, where the cameras trap were set and the number of tigers inhabiting the areas recorded films.

The points selected for the high – tech camera trap include Upper – Barhakamuda, Bhanjabasa, Tarinivilla, Patbil abd Debasthali, STR sources added.

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Although, the census results would be known only after a details analysis by the Scientists of the WII, the census team had recorded on films six Royal Bengal Tigers (RBT) and eleven leopards in the aforesaid areas.

STR sources said during their 60 days long exercise (March 26 to May 26) at least three of The RBT's were found black.

Of the three black RBTs, all of them were females – two of them were again a mother with her cub, and the third was an adult female.

As per the 2004 Pugmark - based census, Similipal is home of 101 Royal Bengal Tigers and 126 Leopards, STR sources said.