

Similipal Tiger Reserve faces poaching threat

March 18, 2010, Kolkata.

The threat of poaching has increased in the Similipal Tiger Reserve in Orissa which houses 25 tigers as per the last census.

In March last year, Maoists damaged three forest range offices, beat up tourists and burnt down forest departments, which boost of considerable animal presence.

The Similipal Tiger Reserve in Orissa faces increased danger of poaching after it closed last year following Maoist violence and assault on forest guards.

“After the Maoist attack in Similipal in march last year, the National Park and Tiger Reserve is yet to reopen due to lack of adequate security forces. Central forces promised are yet to arrive,” field director of STR Harishankar Upadhyay said.

The threat of poaching has increased in the reserve which houses 25 tigers as per the last census, Mr. Upadhyay said, adding that of the 65 anti-poaching camps only 40 are now functioning.

Forest guards, who fled after the Maoists violence are gradually returning and confidence building measuring have been taken up as they are still scared , he said. “But, if Maoist violence continues in Similipal no forest staff will remain there.

“There have been instances of poaching of deer, but not of tigers.”

In march last year, Maoists damaged three forest range offices, beat up tourists and forest staff and burnt down forest department establishments at Chahala, Dhudruchampa and Upper Barahkamuda, which boast of considerable animal presence and are located in the core area.

The STR field director said at present two police camps are located in the Upper Barakumda range and Gudgudia range, but deployment of adequate forces and extensive combing operation are required.

Asked whether Maoists posed a threat to tigers and other animals, he said, “Since the forest personnel are scared, the protection of animals is affected.”

Asked whether he has taken up the matter with the Orissa government, he said it is aware of it.

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On the re-opening of the tiger reserve for tourists, he said the decision would be taken after deployment of central forces.

Mr. Upadhyay said a positive development was that one of the four villages inside the core area of the reserve has been shifted last week from Jenabil to Amdiah near Udla in Mayurbhanj district.

Altogether 61 families have been relocated from Jenabil. Each family has been given a Rs 10 lakh package as per the rules of National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).

Mr. Upadhyay said three villages – Kabatghai, Jamunagarh and Bakua – are still located inside the core area and steps are being taken to locate them also.

Altogether 35 families are living in Kabatghai, 26 in Jamunagarh and 61 in Bakua, he said.

Asked whether any time frame has been fixed for their relocation, he said it took 20 years to shift the Jenabil village.

“ Now our first priority is to settle the villages from Jenabil properly. Once they are settled properly, others from the remaining villages inside the core area will be encouraged to shift out of the park,” he said.

Source : The Hindu.



Similipal : Boost to anti-poaching drive

Date : 17 Mar, 2010.

In a major boost to anti –poaching surveillance in Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR), World wide Fund for Nature – India (WWF-India) has extended its assistance to the reserve by providing some essential equipment and gears.

Diwakar Sharma, associate director, Species Conservation Programme, WWF India, handed over the essential equipment and gears to STR authorities on Saturday.

H.S. Upadhyay, Field Director of STR-cum- Conservator of Forests, Baripada , said the equipment would help the field staff set up anti-poaching activities.

The equipment and gears included two Bolero Camper vehicles that can plough through difficult terrain of Similipal, 250 sleeping bags, 100 water filters for camps , 250 LED torches and 250pairs of hunter shoes.

At a function held in this connection at the central nursery at Salabani, Upadhyay said Similipal is home to 55 species of mammals, 304 species of avi-fauna, 64 species of reptiles, 20 species of amphibians, 62 species of reptiles, 37 species of fishes, including rare 'Mahseer', and 1076 species of flowering plants.

Referring to invertebrates, he said the Zoological Survey of India has recorded 217 species in the STR, including 50 species of butterflies.

Upadhyay underlined the tremendous bio-geographical importance of the SBR (Similipal Biosphere Reserve) by saying it is home to flora and fauna found in Western Chats and north-east India.

CULTURAL FEST : A five –day cultural extravaganza will be held here from April 14 on the occasion of the eighth annual 'Balangi Mohatsava'. The cultural festival will showcase the rich cultural heritage of Mayurbhanj. Cultural troupes from other districts are also likely to take part in the Mohatsava, preparatory committee sources said.

Source : Express News Service.