

Similipal Tiger Reserve Core Area Gets Bigger.

While Union Cabinet has ratified Satkosia as the Second tiger reserve in the State, Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) 's core area has just got bigger.

Under the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), Orissa's first tiger reserve has been notified as a critical tiger habitat and the big cats will enjoy a bigger protected area now. The National authority has increased the core area from 845 sq km to 1194 sq. km with immediate effect.

Details :

It was in 1973 Similipal was designated as a tiger reserve under the Project Tiger, Six years later, the Orissa Government declared it is a sanctuary with an area of 2,200 sq km and proposed a 303 sq km as national park, which was later increased to 845 sq km.

Why was the enhanced core area necessitated? “ There were enough tiger signs in new area calling for increased protection to the big cats. Given STR's unique terrain and conservation needs, we felt that NTCA should be suggested for enhancing the core area”, a senior official of the Forest Department said.

There are four villages in the core area of the tiger reserve which would be there as usual. Meanwhile, the Department is bracing up for relocation of the 200 families that are in Satkosia's core area. These families inhabit five hamlets.

With rehabilitation remaining a sensitive issue in the State, the Department hopes to sail through smoothly with huge incentives offered under the 11th Finance Commission.

As per the EFC plans, each relocated family would get adequate compensation which could be reach up to Rs.10 lakh whereas earlier it was barely Rs.1 lakh. The Department has to go in for landscaping, irrigation, housing plans besides providing source of sustenance for the families. Plans are being put in place to chalk out the relocation of the families.

Source : Wildlife Watch Desk, dt. February 12, 2008