



ANNUAL REPORT
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TIGER RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION TRUST
Tigers beyond Boundaries



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TRACT HAS RECEIVED SUPPORT FROM:



BORN FREE FOUNDATION
www.bornfree.org.uk



US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICES
www.fws.gov



SAVE WILD TIGERS
www.savewildtigers.org



WILDLIFE CONSERVATION TRUST
www.wildlifeconservationtrust.org



International Union of Conservation of Nature
www.iucn.org



Maharashtra State Forest Department
www.mahaforest.nic.in

SUMMARY:

TRACT has continued working for conservation of tigers, its prey and its habitat in the Tadoba Andhari, Nawegaon - Nagzhira and Pench Landscape through the reporting period.

CONFLICT MITIGATION:

Focussing our work on preserving the co-existence of people with tigers & leopards, we have monitored the peripheral forests in these landscapes for carnivore presence and assisted the forest managers in addressing conflict cases and issues of problem animals. We have worked with the local communities, creating local leadership, ensuring their participation in conflict mitigation.

Our work with the policy makers of the State continued, as we monitored financial support and schemes of the State government for the integrated development of the conflict affected villages. Monitoring of these benefits to the locals from the State schemes in the 50 villages of Tadoba and the 14 villages in the Nagzhira buffer continued. We conducted surveys in these villages to understand the success of the mitigating measures undertaken in this scheme.

We addressed the leopard–human conflict within the vicinity of the Chandrapur thermal Power Station, by monitoring the leopards, identifying the conditions leading to conflict and recommending mitigation.

PROTECTION TO TIGERS, THEIR PREY AND HABITAT:

We continued our work towards protecting the tigers and addressing the threats to the wildlife and the habitat by regular patrolling of all sensitive peripheral areas done by our team of local youth.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

We have been working in more than 120 villages in the peripheral forests of Tadoba-Andhari and Nawegaon-Nagzhira, facilitating security to more than 18000 families and 70000 heads of livestock from carnivore attacks. We have worked towards creating awareness among the local communities about the need to conserve forest, among school children to secure them from attacks, among the women about hygiene and the threats of open defecation. In Partnership with the Rotary Club, Canada, Mumbai and Nagpur, we have facilitated benefit to locals which would secure them from the threats of conflict with wild animals.

CONSOLIDATION OF HABITAT:

We continued our work with the villagers within the Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve to facilitate the voluntary rehabilitation of these families.

Our teams worked towards addressing illegal encroachments in the sensitive peripheral forests of these tiger reserves . We have advocated the need to secure the landscape and the impact of dams and other projects that would damage the habitat.

FARMS TO FOREST:

Addressing the need to implement this initiative, we have given presentations to large corporate groups in India, policy makers and local communities, to sensitise them about the need to sustain this habitat for future generations.

ECO TOURISM COMMITTEE:

Ensuring benefit to local communities from this wildlife tourism, we have held workshops to build capacity of the local youth and women.

CONFLICT MITIGATION:

TIGER AMBASSADORS: Nawegaon Nagzhira Tiger Reserve (NNTR)

Supported by: Save Wild Tigers & Born Free Foundation, under the Satpuda Landscape Tiger Partnership

Local Communities living in the peripheral areas of forest, National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries are forced to accommodate a life of co-habitation with wild animals.

Protection to the core has seen a higher population of large carnivores dispersing into these peripheral areas and sharing natural resources with local communities in the fringes and forested corridors.

This increases the chances of conflict between humans and large carnivores, sloth bears and herbivores, often leading to injuries or human fatalities and a high level of crop damage to the marginal farms. This in turn leads to a lowered tolerance in people towards these wild species.

To address this growing conflict and to secure the locals along with protection to the wild animals from human retaliation, we conceptualised and implemented a management tool in the NNTR landscape 'Participation of Locals in mitigation by building capacity within them as primary response teams; termed as Tiger Ambassadors' in 2014.

This addresses co-habitation between humans and wild animals, specially tigers, leopards and sloth bears, and has built capacity in these local communities to reduce their vulnerability to attacks and take part ownership of this mitigation.

We have continued our work with the Tiger Ambassadors in 25 villages and expanded the program to 10 more conflict affected villages, taking the total villages under the program to 35.

Now, a total of 245 Tiger Ambassadors have been trained and sensitized in identifying presence of wild carnivores, understanding reasons for conflict and ways to mitigate them. They are also sensitized in creating awareness in their own community regarding this.



CONFLICT MITIGATION: Educating Local Communities for Mitigating Human - Large Carnivore Conflict & Conservation of Tigers & Leopards: Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR)

Supported by: US Fish and Wildlife Service

We have continued our work in the Tadoba landscape (2013-2017) to address the high human – large carnivore conflict in the 71 villages in the fringe and the forested corridors of Tadoba and expanded the program to 15 villages in the southern periphery of TATR.

Under this program, we have conducted awareness and capacity building workshops, meetings and drills with these conflict mitigation village teams. The TRACT team has been working closely with the 86 Primary response teams with 600 youth as local leaders for conflict mitigation.

The TRACT team has also conducted awareness programs held in the schools and villages for the children and the populace.



This leadership has resulted in ownership to mitigation of conflict and a reduction of conflict cases, with the village teams taking an initiative to patrol their periphery and inform us about presence of carnivores near human dwellings. They have also addressed issues of garbage near villages and resorts, which has resulted in reduction of conditions that lure wildlife closer to their dwellings.

INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT OF VILLAGES FOR ADDRESSING CONFLICT:

'Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Jan Van Vikas Yojana': Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve & Nawegaon-Nagzhira Tiger Reserve

TRACT has been instrumental in proposing and conceptualizing this scheme to the State government, which has been implemented by the Maharashtra State Government in more



than 166 villages near all the six Tiger Reserves of the State, with the aim of minimizing conflict between people and tigers/leopards and addressing the livelihood alternatives of these local communities.

This State government scheme has been very beneficial for the development of these villages and have greatly improved the lives of these local communities. We have monitored the progress of this scheme in the villages of the Tadoba Andhari buffer and the Nawegaon-Nagzhira landscape.

Under this scheme, the State government has given LPG cooking gas and made toilets in each home, ensured drinking water in the village, solar fencing around some marginal farms, solar lights along village streets, deepening of lakes for a winter crop for local marginal farmers, E-learning in village schools for the children and capacity building workshops for vocational training for women and youth in the villages.



LIQUID PETROLEUM GAS (LPG) SURVEY: To gauge success of this initiative Supported by Serenity Trust

To gauge the success of the distribution of LPG cooking units for the families, and to see its positive impact on the habitat with reduction of the quantum of illegal firewood collected by locals from the adjoining fringe forests, we have conducted a survey in 16 villages, covering 100% families in each village. The survey shows a 50~85% reduction in collection of firewood

LEOPARD – HUMAN CONFLICT: CHANDRAPUR SUPER THERMAL POWER STATION (CSTPS)
Supported by: Maharashtra State Forest Department

The Chandrapur Circle of the Maharashtra State Forest Department approached TRACT to help address the conflict situation between leopards and people in the CSTPS premises that is adjacent to the buffer forest of Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve.

With a population of more than 10000 people, this area is a matrix of office complex's, operations and residential quarters of the staff and their families and overgrown forest cover, streams and open areas.

The area is partially fenced, with an overgrown dense forest habitat, which has lured wild animals, resulting in a regular presence of leopards and sloth bear, feeding on the garbage and the stray animals.

Due to a few conflict cases and constant threats to the people, we studied the reasons for this situation, vulnerable areas, movement patterns of these leopards and sloth bears; and have suggested recommendations to the management of the Power Station.

Recommendations to address this conflict have been shared with the management of CSTPS and soon we will be working towards creating awareness within the communities to ensure a safe environment for the people and a reduction in conflict.

STUDY OF ALL CONFLICT CASES IN CHANDRAPUR/TADOBA LANDSCAPE:
Supported by Born Free Foundation, under the Satpuda Landscape Tiger Partnership

We have observed and monitored all conflict cases in the Tadoba landscape since 2006. A scientific paper published in Oryx was done with the data between 2006-2011. We have continued our field observations and monitoring of all conditions of conflict cases from 2011-till date. This will be analysed to compare with the level of conflict prior to the mitigating measures.

The study is being done to understand the reduction of conflict and methods of management of conflict areas with practices that will benefit the area.

PROTECTION TO TIGERS AND HABITAT:
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MONITORING THREATS TO TIGERS:
Supported by Wildlife Conservation Trust

TRACT teams patrol a large area of the eastern buffer forests of Tadoba and the southern buffer of Nagzhira.

Addressing threats to wildlife and its habitat, the teams patrol on foot, covering more than 10 kms daily, checking the fringes of fields and villages for wire snares, checking illegal extraction of firewood or bamboo by locals living in the buffer forest, damage to forests for other minor forest produce collection and dousing man-made fire to forests.



The team also checks all natural water sources in the forested area, cleaning the sources and ensuring that no such locations are poisoned; monitoring natural dwellings and caves to keep them secure.

The team also monitors data of carnivore presence in these areas. The data on threats and presence is then collated for creating indices annually for conservation benchmarks.

MONITORING TIGER PRESENCE NEAR WATER BODIES:

We have been monitoring presence of large carnivores (tigers, leopard, wild dogs and sloth bears) on a water source throughout the year.

Water sources on private forest conservancies in the buffer of Tadoba are being monitored by us using Camera traps.



FARMS TO FORESTS: SECURING HABITAT:

We have been working on project to study the regeneration of habitat and barren farmland to forest with some basic protection from livestock grazing and lopping of trees. This is being done to compare the regeneration of degraded forests, protected conservancies and barren fields.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

SCHOLARSHIPS TO STUDENTS:

Supported by Serenity Trust:

TRACT has supported 20 students annually from the buffer villages for their 2-year program in the Industrial Training Institutes located in the Chandrapur district. This scholarship supports their accommodation and meals for the year.

We have also assisted these youths to find employment after their education.

INCENTIVES TO VILLAGERS FOR A BETTER LIVING:

Supported by Rotary club, Canada and Nagpur

For improving the lives of the local communities, we have partnered with the Rotary club of Canada and Nagpur and with their support, will distribute 1100 water filter to the families of 8 villages in the buffer of Tadoba.

AWARENESS PROGRAMS IN SCHOOLS:

Supported by US Fish and Wildlife Service

TRACT teams have been working in 71 villages in the Tadoba landscape, to sensitise school children about the ways to minimise the conditions that lure leopards closer to their dwellings, about the threats of open defecation and hygiene.



AWARENESS IN CONFLICT CASES:

Two conflict cases in the recent months saw the TRACT team work 24x7 for a month with the local forest guards. Following attacks by individual tigers on some persons in the buffer area of Tadoba Andhari, the TRACT team assisted the forest personnel in patrolling the area affected by conflict, visiting villages to ensure that villagers are secure in their homes, to create awareness about the conflict situation, to educate them about securing their livestock and barns safe from attacks, checking for presence of the problem tigers, controlling mobs and sensitising the people against retaliation.

The team also checked for indirect signs of the tiger, checking for reasons of attack and the movement pattern of the carnivore. Due to the presence of the local TRACT team, the other local NGO's and the forest personnel, the villagers did not resort to retaliation in any way.

AWARENESS ABOUT THREATS OF OPEN DEFECATION AND THE NEED TO USE TOILETS:

The TRACT team has been working in all the villages which are covered under the State Government supported scheme for Integrated development for conflict mitigation. The team has been holding meetings with the communities, ensuring that they understand the need to stop open defecation and the threats to health and hygiene by the same.

The team has also been training the local women of the communities in the use of cooking gas and burner and ways to optimise this use.

CONSOLIDATION OF HABITAT:

VOLUNTARY REHABILITATION OF VILLAGES FROM WITHIN THE TIGER RESERVE:

The TRACT team has held meetings with the families of village Palasgaon, for the voluntary rehabilitation scheme.

As part of the Meadow development committee, we have also done visits to the vacated agricultural field in the reserve to suggest the ways of developing it as a meadow for the herbivores.

SANCTUARY STATUS TO NEW FOREST AREAS:

We have been working in the forest corridors of Tadoba Andhari since the last 2 decades, working for conflict mitigation, increase in protection, monitoring breeding tigers and presence of large carnivores in these forests and implementation of the Corridor Conservation Program to understand and mitigate conflict between people and large carnivores.

We have closely monitored the presence of large carnivores in the Ghodajhari forest range that lies in the north eastern forested corridor of TATR. We have submitted a proposal to the State government for creating a Wildlife Sanctuary in this region.

Field visits to the area with the State senior officials and the political heads of the area has ensured that this area will soon be declared as a Sanctuary.

COLLABORATION WITH THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT NAGPUR

TRACT continues its collaboration with the Indian Institute of Management, Nagpur, with an immersion program, where students of the Institute visit our field sites for bi-annual internships.

ECO TOURISM COMMITTEE:

As a member of the Eco Tourism Committee relating to tiger reserves across India, we have addressed issues of damage to forest corridors by providing recommendations for best practices including water access, garbage disposal, construction permits and fencing for resorts in buffer forests.

SHOWCASING SOLUTIONS TO CONFLICT:

We have been working on a documentary, to encapsulate the human – tiger / leopard conflict; the reasons and the mitigating measures implemented and the positive results and the failures if these measures.

Managers in other areas with similar conflict conditions, will benefit from this documentation with the recommendations.

GENERATING EMPLOYMENT FOR THE LOCAL YOUTH:



Through the reporting year, 22 local youth have worked on TRACT projects. Each member of TRACT has been given incentives for their exemplary work done for protection of tigers.