

Tiger Research and Conservation Trust



CONSERVATION WITH COMMUNITIES

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Supported By

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION TRUST

TIGER RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION TRUST

Tigers beyond Boundaries

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PROJECT SUMMARY:

Tiger Research and Conservation Trust has worked in the buffer of Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR) through the reporting period with the local communities addressing their issues and sensitizing them towards conservation of wildlife.

Our ground presence with a team of four working around the year, addressing to issues pertaining to threats to wildlife and the habitat, crop raids, compensation for livestock losses, cattle kills, trespassers and more has facilitated the protection to the area. We have monitored the state government schemes bringing benefits to the local communities to address human – large carnivore conflict, conducting surveys to monitor the change.

The team has assisted the field personnel of the State Forest Department in addressing conflict cases and in creating awareness to reduce attacks.

PATROLS:

The TRACT team has worked in the western buffer of Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve in the areas around ten villages, namely Ghosri, Mudholi, Wadala, Ashta, Kondegaon, Sitarampeth 1 & 2, Bhamdeli, Villoda, Katwal and Khutwanda.

Foot patrols were done to deter the locals from illegal activities, timber extraction, lopping of trees for fodder. Water sources checked for any threats and natural perineal sources cleared plastic and other debris.

12 routes, covering animal trails, streams, field boundaries, water bodies and dirt roads each of 8-12 kms were walked to monitor the presence of wildlife through indirect signs. Data of these signs has been collected indicating presence of tiger, leopard, sloth bear, spotted deer, barking deer, sambar, nilgai, wild dogs, wild boars, jungle cat, civet cat and hare.



Pic 01: Illegal Extraction by locals being questioned by TRACT

While patrolling, the TRACT team has been networking with the forest guards and assisting them with their protection activities.

The team checked for snares, traps, and suspicious activity around the area. The team also informed the forest department of trespassers and intruders, kathiawads and other outsiders seen near the buffer area assisting the field personnel to remove them.

The TRACT team put in extra efforts in their monitoring during the Holi festival, when the locals are known to snare wild herbivores for meat consumption. The teams patrolled the villages nearby in groups and joint patrols with Forest guards, forest labors and locals for a week, covering forest trails, fields and water sources.

Every year in summers, TRACT appoint 6 additional village youth as firewatchers to keep an eye out on the nearby hills and forest patches for forest fires, which when detected is doused with the help of TRACT staff, local men and forest guards. The team also worked with the local guard to make fire lines in sensitive areas as a pre-emptive measure.

CONFLICT CASES:

The TRACT team has been actively participating in mitigating human – large carnivore conflict across the buffer area. We have been working towards creating local leadership and building capacity in a group of youth in each village of the buffer, called the Primary Response teams (PRT). Our team networked through the reporting period with these PRT's, getting information about large carnivore presence near human dwellings and the threat of any conflict.

24.07.2016 - Manik Ramaji Jumnake, from Khutwanda, Round Khatoda, Range Tadoba was fatally injured by a tiger near the TATR boundary of the village, as he went in search of his livestock into the dense forest. TRACT team was present at the time of panchnama, assisted to monitor the forest area to check for the carnivore presence near the village periphery for further threat. The team helped the victim's family to claim compensation. The team created awareness in the villagers in the following weeks, ensuring no further attacks took place in the area

Tadoba was injured by tiger when he was grazing cattle in the forest, he was a grazer. The TRACT team assisted in the reaching the victim to medical aid.

03.08.2016 - Manik Kumbhre, a cattle herder from village Kokewada Tukum, Beat Arjuni, Range was injured by tiger when he went in the forest with his livestock. The TRACT team monited the area for the week following this attack and cautioned the locals about the threat.

30.11.2016 - Rambhau Maniram Bawne from village Tekadi, beat Mudholi, Round/Range – Moharli was attacked and injured by a sloth bear in the backyard of his own house. The TRACT team assisted in getting help to the victim and patrolled the area to ensure no further attacks took place. They spoke to the community, holding meetings to create awareness about such threats.

25.02.2017 - Gujabrao Dhande from village Sitarampeth, Round/Range – Moharli was killed by tiger when he went to attend nature's call near the bushes, adjoining his village.



Pic 02: Awareness meetings by TRACT team and volunteers in buffer villages

TRACT team patrolled the village corridor in the following fortnight, checking for presence of the tiger 24x7. They spent the night with the villagers, ensuring that they were under no further threat. Fires were lit in the village center, street lights were fixed, crackers were used to create disturbance to ensure that the tiger did not stray into the village area again.

For more than 10 days, the tiger was seen close to the village periphery. The team with the patrolling team of the forest department made sure the villagers were secure indoors. The tiger attacked and killed 5 heads of livestock in this period. On more than one occasion, the mob of village Sitarampeth was angry and inconsolable, and they didn't allow the forest department to enter the village. The TRACT team, with members from the local community itself helped pacify the local community.



Pic 03: Villagers at the attack site at Sitarampeth



Pic 04: TRACT team informing village women folk about the conflict and threats



Pic 05: TRACT team tracking the tiger at the Attack site near Sitarampeth

CAMERA TRAPPING:

The TRACT monitored the cattle kills and with the permission of the forest staff, deployed camera traps at the kill sites.

MONITORING GOVERNMENT SCHEMES FOR ADDRESSING CONFLICT:

The TRACT team has worked in the buffer villages, surveying the families who have benefitted from the Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Jan Van Vikas Yojana, that has brought in benefit to more than 50 villages in the TATR buffer. The families have been given LPG, toilets have been made in each household, solar fencing done around their fields.



Pic 06: TRACT team creating awareness among children about conflict mitigation

TRACT has been monitoring these benefits and the use of them by the locals. We have conducted surveys to understand the use of LPG and the decrease in the firewood collection, the continued firewood extraction for heating water and some locals who are still indulging in illegal sale of firewood.



Pic 07: TRACT team with experts addressing the potable water in well in buffer



Pic 08: TRACT staff monitoring the works under the Government scheme

CONSERVATION OUTCOMES:

1. The extraction of firewood due to the LPG benefits in the villages has reduced by more than half. But the locals continue to gather some firewood for heating water.
2. Almost all locals are using the toilets as TRACT teams continue to create awareness about the ill effects to health due to open defecation
3. Rotary club of Canada has funded 1008 water filters of Eureka Forbes to 1008 families of 8 villages in this buffer.
4. Reduction of water borne diseases due to the use of these filters
5. No retaliation in the conflict episode at Sitarampeth
6. Reduction in snares found during patrols
7. Reduction in forest fires cases this summer
8. Primary Response Teams created 3-4 years ago continue to work for conflict mitigation
9. Employment to more than 8 local youth under this project