

Tiger Ambassadors

Satpuda Landscape Tiger Partnership

ANNUAL REPORT

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Tigers beyond Boundaries



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Executive Summary:

A program conceptualized with an objective to create local leadership within communities situated in fringes of Nawegaon Nagzhira Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra, to achieve the goal of minimizing attacks by sloth bears, tigers and leopards on people. This program commenced in 2014-15 with 15 villages. Since then the program has been expanded thrice to include a total of 45 villages. 315 locals have been trained in handling conflict cases and spreading awareness within their local communities to ensure reduction in their vulnerability to conflict.

Nawegaon Nagzira Tiger Reserve (NNTR) is situated in the Central Indian landscape and supports rich mammal diversity. It spreads across an area of 653.66 sq. km. and has a notified buffer of 1241 sq. km. that falls under two territorial divisions of Bhandara and Gondia. A crucial corridor with connectivity to the northern Kanha and Pench Tiger reserves of Madhya Pradesh to the southern Pench, Tadoba Andhari Tiger reserves and Umred Karhandla sanctuary of Maharashtra, NNTR is known for frequent animal migration and wildlife presence in the human dominated landscape. Hence it is highly imperative to train locals in the nuances of conflict management.

10 villages were added to the 35 villages under this program in 2018-19. A total of 315 locals who have been trained conduct regular formal and informal meetings within their communities. Their dialogue with forest guards has increased over the study period. Their training in early detection of animal presence, regular patrols and information sharing with the department and locals has led to a decrease in human – wildlife conflict cases over the study period of 5 years. This report also includes some success stories, some challenges and impacts that have been observed in this reporting period.

Through the reporting period, TRACT has also patrolled the area under the program with the local forest staff and the tiger ambassadors. Cattle kills have been monitored, injured animals rescued, snakes relocated from human dwellings safely back into the bush, birds rehabilitated. The team has worked extensively with the forest managers, camera trapping cattle carcass and animal trails, and addressing threats like forest fire and poaching.

The last few years have seen an increase in the wolf presence near the fringe villages. The TRACT team have worked with the Wolf Ambassadors in 10 villages, monitoring their presence and their conflict with livestock

Conservation is a long drawn process and especially when dealing with local communities and bringing about a change in their mindsets towards peaceful cohabitation with wildlife. With increased awareness, timely intervention and capacity building, Tiger Ambassadors should achieve the vision of peaceful co-existence between humans and large carnivores.

Introduction

This report covers the work done under the Tiger Ambassadors program through the period April 2018-March 2019 in 45 villages in Nawegaon Nagzhira Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra, India.

Nawegaon Nagzira Tiger Reserve (NNTR) with a 653.66 sq km and a notified buffer of 1241 sq km is situated in the Gondia and Bhandara Districts of Maharashtra State. It is comprised of Nawegaon National Park, Nawegaon Wildlife Sanctuary, Nagzira Wildlife Sanctuary, New Nagzira Wildlife Sanctuary and Koka Wildlife Sanctuary. The Nawegaon national park and Nawegaon wildlife sanctuary are adjoining to each other and both come under the Gondia district of Maharashtra. Nagzira, New Nagzira and Koka wildlife sanctuaries are adjoining to each other and are partly located in Gondia and partly in Bhandara district. The two blocks of the tiger reserve are separated by forest and non-forest areas supporting many villages, farmlands, highways and rail lines. This area is surrounded on three sides by good patches of forests under the control of the Forest Development Corporation of Maharashtra (FDCM) and territorial forest divisions.

Name of protected area	Critical Tiger Habitat Area (Sq. Km.)
Nawegaon National Park	129.55
Nagzira wildlife sanctuary	152.40
Nawegaon wildlife sanctuary	122.76
New Nagzira wildlife sanctuary	151.33
Koka wildlife sanctuary	97.62
TOTAL	653.66
Buffer	1241.24
TOTAL Tiger Reserve area	1894.90

Table 1: Table showing total Tiger reserve area (sq.km.) of NNTR

NNTR supports rich large mammal diversity, including Tiger and Leopard, Wild dog, Wolf jackal, Jungle cat, Cheetal, Sambar, Nilgai, Chousingha, Barking deer, Wild pig and Indian gaur. Other species include common langur, Rhesus macaque, Pangolin and Honey badger. More than 300 species of birds have also been documented. NNTR is significant as it is a mix of the Central Indian tropical moist and dry deciduous forest to the southern tropical dry deciduous forest. Besides its floral and faunal values, the Nawegaon area acts as catchment of several rivers and streams.

NNTR is strategically located in the heart of central Indian Tiger landscape which is home to around a sixth of total Tiger population of India. NNTR is home to tigers and breeding tigrsses, leopards, dhles and a large number of prey species. It also serves as a crucial corridor between a number of Tiger reserves of central India. It has connectivity with Kanha and Pench Tiger

reserves of Madhya Pradesh, Indravati Tiger reserve in Chhattisgarh and Pench, Tadoba Andhari Tiger reserves and Umred Karhandla sanctuary of Maharashtra.

NNTR has been well known for its dispersal of tigers to other satellite protected areas and the corridor. The buffer area supports 185 villages and the dispersal of wild animals occurs here, forcing people and large carnivores to co-exist.

With an increase in the protection in the park, there is an increased wild animal presence in the buffer. Being a multiple use area, the buffer zone with the 185 villages is very prone to becoming a landscape where interface between people and wild animals is high, often resulting in stress, panic and conflict.

The natural resources in this buffer zone are shared by people, livestock and wild animals. Hence it is imperative that the local communities be aware of movement of large carnivores near their dwellings, their required conduct to avoid threats of attack and a system to enable early warning within the community to share information of threat.

Under this program, this information has been dissipated by TRACT through awareness programs, meetings, school programs, building of selected individuals (Tiger Ambassadors) in 45 villages and ensuring a dialogue between the forest managers and the local communities.

Maps of Project area:

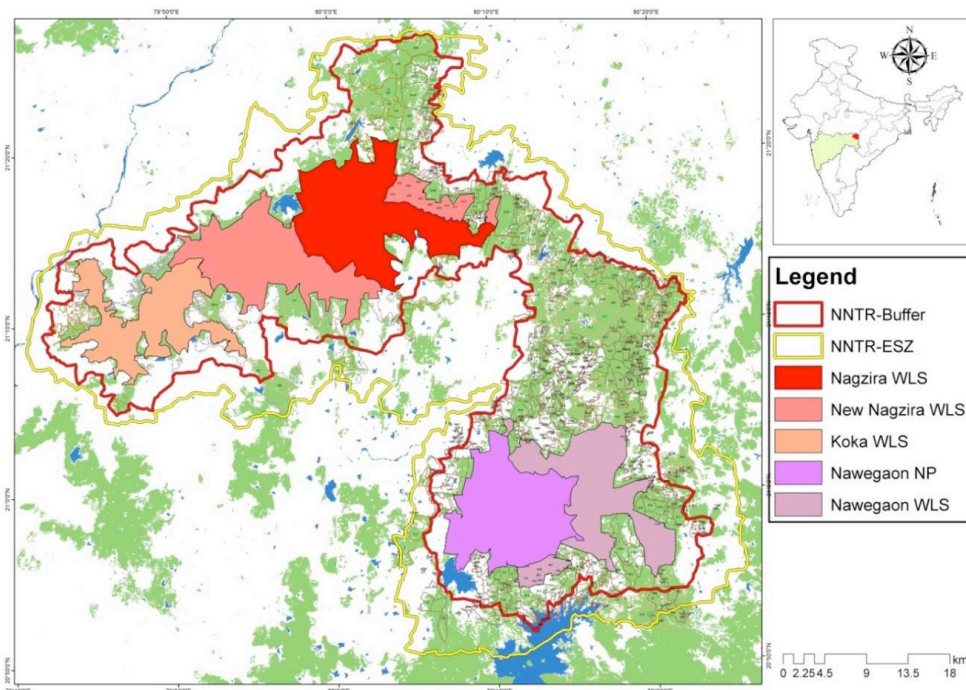


Figure 1: Map showing NNTR boundary

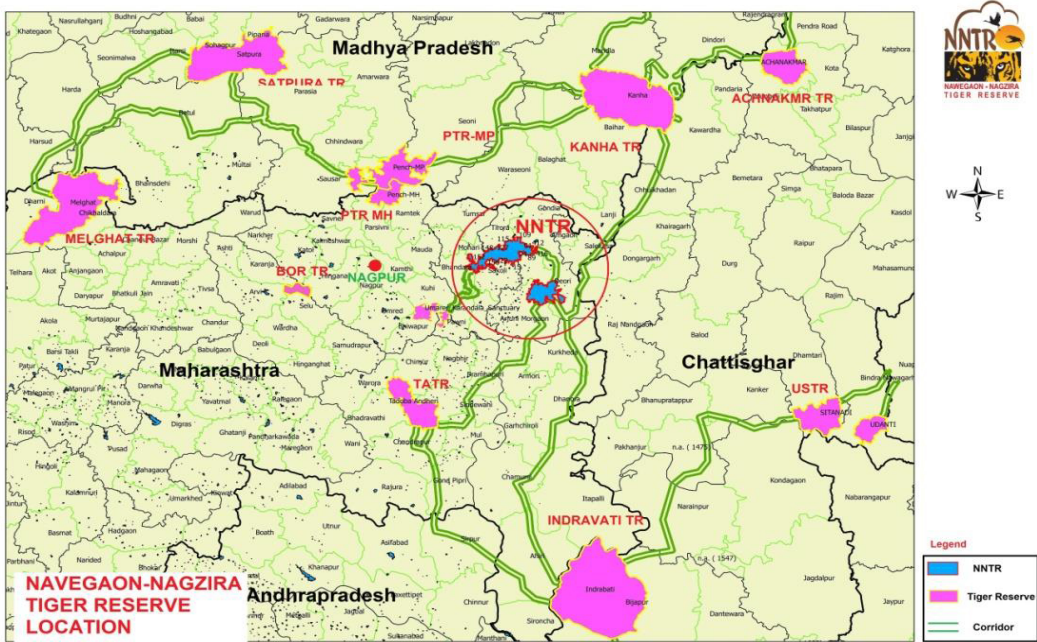


Figure 2: Map showing NNTR in the Central Indian Landscape

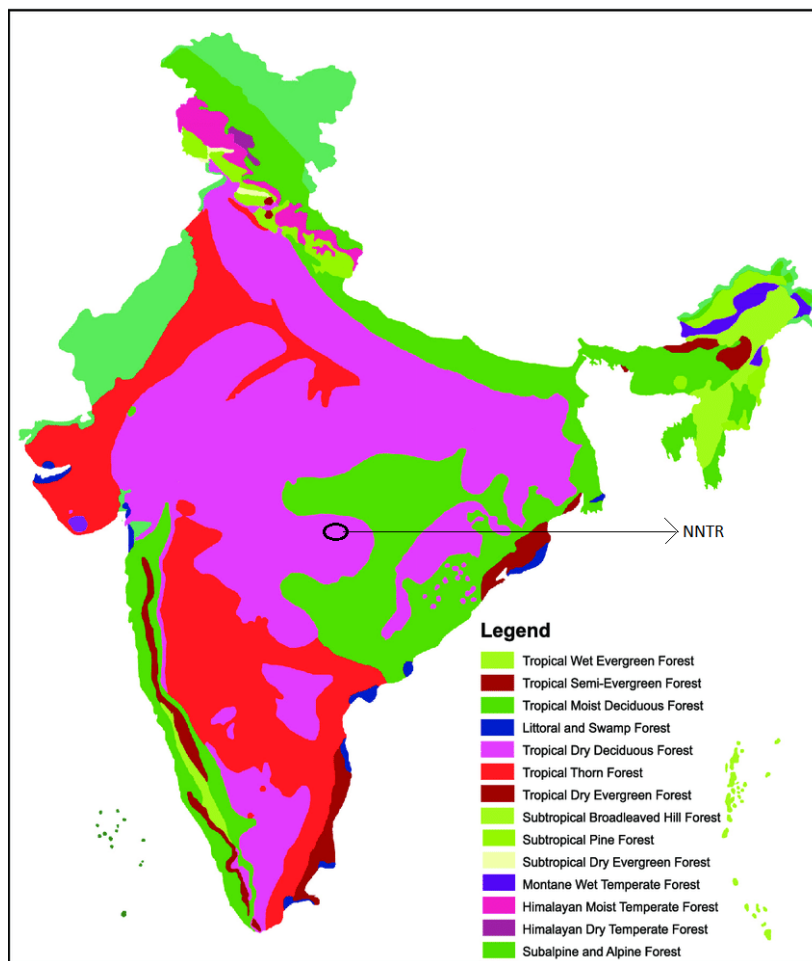


Figure 3: Map showing classification of Indian forests as per Champion and Seth

About TRACT and our work in the landscape:

Tiger Research and Conservation Trust (TRACT) was founded in 2001 and is registered under the Charity Commissioner Nagpur.

TRACT has been working in forest landscapes of central India since 2001. Projects undertaken by the trust are with the goal of conservation of Tiger, other wildlife species and the forest habitat. TRACT believes in integrating local stakeholders in the process of conservation.

TRACT is also partnering with Government of Maharashtra to bring about a social transformation in 43 villages of Nagpur district, 60 villages for human – large carnivore conflict in Brahmapuri Division and 93 villages in the Buffer of Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve. Our projects focus on empowering local youth and creating leadership within them and their community for participation in conservation and transformation. We realize the roles of all stakeholders and believe in active intervention by the way of capacity building in local communities. At TRACT we work in support and in conjunction with government schemes for the improvement in village livelihoods occurring in Tiger habitat.

TRACT has been working in the NNTR landscape since 2014-15. 35 villages that are prone to conflict and have had a history of human large carnivore conflict and crop depredation from wild herbivores were identified and chosen to be a part of the Tiger Ambassadors project. These 35 villages come under 7 different ranges namely Tiroda, Goregaon, Sadak Arjuni, Devri, Sarpewada, Sakoli and Tumsar. Over the past 5 years, 245 locals have been trained in facilitating mitigation and in early detection of wildlife presence. Village awareness workshops, training workshops in identifying indirect signs of carnivore presence and conducting patrols and mock drills are some of the aspects of capacity building in local communities.

With the sustained efforts for over 5 years towards mitigating conflict, the aim of this project for 2018-19 was to expand the program to 10 more villages that are vulnerable to human wildlife conflict and thus work towards the goal of peaceful coexistence. The 10 villages that were identified for inclusion in Tiger Ambassadors program come under the Gondia and Tiroda Range.

GOAL: Peaceful co-existence between humans and large carnivores in the buffer zone and forested corridors of NNTR.

AIMS:

To expand the program by which local communities manage and reduce human wildlife conflict, to include a total of 45 buffer villages.

OBJECTIVES:

- To establish the Tiger Ambassador programme in 10 new villages in the corridor/buffer.
- To train 10 new Tiger Ambassador teams in managing conflict and building awareness within their communities.
- To provide higher level of training to ten of the best performing Tiger Ambassador teams.
- To continue regular follow ups of all Tiger Ambassador teams to ensure effective operations
- To monitor the severity of wolf conflict in these peripheral forests in this landscape along with conflict with leopards and tigers. To monitor the severity of wolf conflict in these peripheral forests in this landscape along with conflict with leopards and tigers

Threats to target species (Tiger) and the landscape:

Over 5 years of work in the landscape and with a team of two locals deployed in the project area, monitoring is a regular activity. TRACT team has actively participated in rescuing injured wild animals and facilitating intelligence gathering to address threats of poaching of wild animals. Alert monitoring and foot patrolling have helped in dousing forest fires too. However, given the vast expanse of the landscape and over 180 villages in the buffer, threats to the landscape are multipronged and spread out.

1. Electrocutation to prevent crop damage:

Crop depredation from wild herbivores has been a persistent problem of local farmers in Nawegaon Nagzira Tiger Reserve landscape. This loss of crop affects their economic cycle and also their sustenance. In order to avoid this menace, some farmers adopt a highly harmful practice of deploying live electric wires along the periphery of their fields. This practice not only affects herbivores that unintentionally enter the fields, but is also a serious threat to large carnivores that come in contact with such live wire.

2. Lack of water conservation initiatives:

Summers in this landscape can see temperatures soaring up to 48 degree Celsius. A number of water sources dry up in this pinch period with only a handful of streams and Umarzari dam situated in the corridor section that hold water throughout summer. Water management in NNTR needs to be worked upon as this often leads to sharing of water sources by people and wild animals leading to and interface or conflict.

3. Grazing:

Cattle grazing in the buffer forest is rampant and unregulated often leading to livestock losses by large carnivores and may be a threat to the shepherds as well.

4. Need for protection in Nagzira – Nawegaon corridor:

8000 hectares of land, which is an active corridor used by large carnivores, between Nagzira wildlife sanctuary and Nawegaon National Park falls under the Forest Development Corporation of Maharashtra (FDCM) and protection in this area of forest is low. This area is notorious for poaching and other illegal activities like tree felling, Bamboo felling, setting forest fires and using snares.

Buffer of Nawegaon Nagzira Tiger Reserve has been delineated in the year 2016, however, it has not yet been notified and hence the transfer of land from FDCM and territorial departments to the Wildlife department has not happened. Another challenge that springs from multiple departments being involved is that there is no centralized repository of data related to conflict or compensation.

Methodology

Activities:

- Selection of 10 additional villages
- House hold survey
- Tiger Ambassador team selection
- Training workshops for 10 new Tiger Ambassador Teams – Preliminary and intensive
- Intensive training of the 35 existing tiger Ambassador teams
- Meetings with forest staff
- Patrols in the forest – village fringes
- Animal rescue
- Wolf Ambassador village visits
- School programs

Selection of 10 additional villages:

Tiger Ambassadors program was to be expanded to 10 more villages in the buffer of Nawegaon Nagzira Tiger Reserve with a goal of establishing peaceful co-existence between humans and large carnivores. These additional 10 villages were to be selected on the basis of presence of wildlife and their vulnerability to conflict with large carnivores like tigers and leopards. Identification and eventual selection was done on the basis of field visits and village meetings with village headmen and concerned forest officials.

Two visits per village were done before the final inclusion of these villages under the Tiger Ambassador program. First field visit pertained to meeting with village headmen and the forest

guards to gauge the level of wildlife presence in and around the villages and also to brief them about the program and its objectives. Second field visit included a meeting with the locals and apprising them of the program and understanding their willingness to be a part of this project. TRACT staff then selected those villages where there was a convergence of need and willingness of people.

Villages shortlisted for inclusion in TA for 2018-19	14
Number of Field Visits done	28
Number of Meetings held	28
Number of villages included in TA	10

Table 1: Table showing efforts in identifying 10 new villages

Initially a total of 14 villages were shortlisted, based on wildlife presence. 2 visits and 2 meetings per village were also done before final inclusion of 10 villages. The other 4 villages did not agree to be a part of this program as they failed to understand the importance of owing up to the efforts towards their own safety. They lacked motivation to voluntarily work towards conflict mitigation even though they believed in a peaceful co-existence.

On finalizing additional 10 villages and their inclusion in the Tiger Ambassador program, a conflict survey was carried out in each of these 10 villages. This survey is done to get the benchmark on the level of conflict, the locals understanding of conflict and their tolerance towards wildlife.

Details of additional 10 villages:

Sr. No.	Villages	Range	No. of Households
1	Lohara	Gondia	70
2	Raipur		60
3	Sonpuri		41
4	Ozitola		40
5	Kehutola		40
6	Bairagitola		40
7	Panchitola		55
8	Hanumantola		42
9	Indora	Tiroda	81
10	Rustampur		55

Table 2: Table showing details of 10 new villages

Tiger Ambassador team selection:

Once the villages were identified, TRACT team conducted village awareness camps in them which saw participation from the locals and some departmental staff. The TRACT team addressed locals and sensitized them about conflict and its various types. These awareness camps are a way of showcasing how participatory efforts help in mitigating conflict. This camp also focuses on explaining the Tiger Ambassadors program and its motive to the local communities. Awareness is done through dialogues and screening wildlife documentaries in the local language. This was then followed by team selection, where not only some motivated people came forward and expressed their opinion to be a part of the tiger ambassador team, but also, some were even nominated by the village headmen. That is how a group of 7 locals, motivated and interested in conflict management, ultimately became our Tiger Ambassadors.

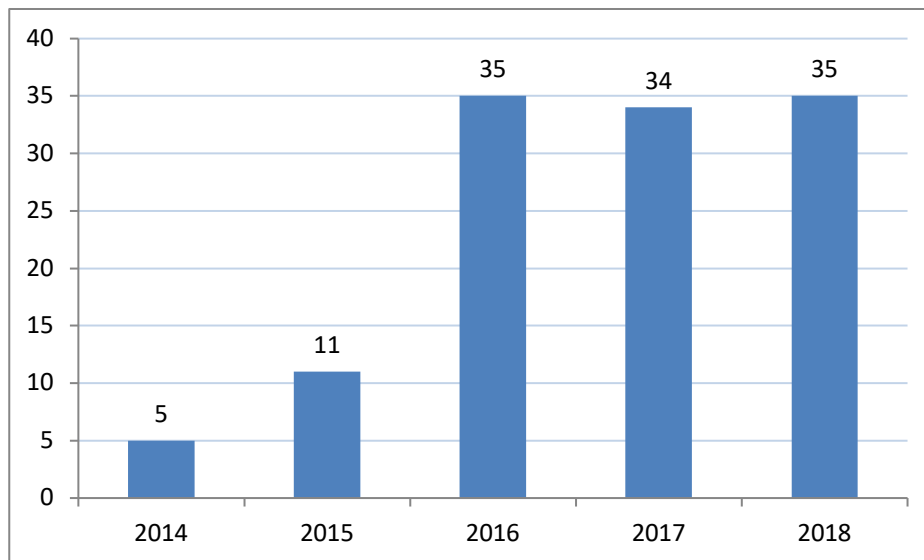


Chart 1: Chart showing number of conflict cases in the new 10 villages over the last 5 years

The 10 additional villages that were selected for the Tiger Ambassador program saw an increase in the number of conflict cases over the last 5 years. Year 2016 and 2018 saw the maximum number of cases although none of them were related to human-animal conflict. The above chart shows conflict cases related to livestock. Our benchmark conflict survey also includes questions to gauge their understanding of conflict mitigation.

Villages surveyed: 10; Households surveyed: 341

62 percent of the total responses were in the favor of efforts that are a part of the Tiger Ambassadors program viz. Awareness to local communities about conflict and efforts towards

mitigation, better and more learned code of conduct and training in early detection of wildlife presence.

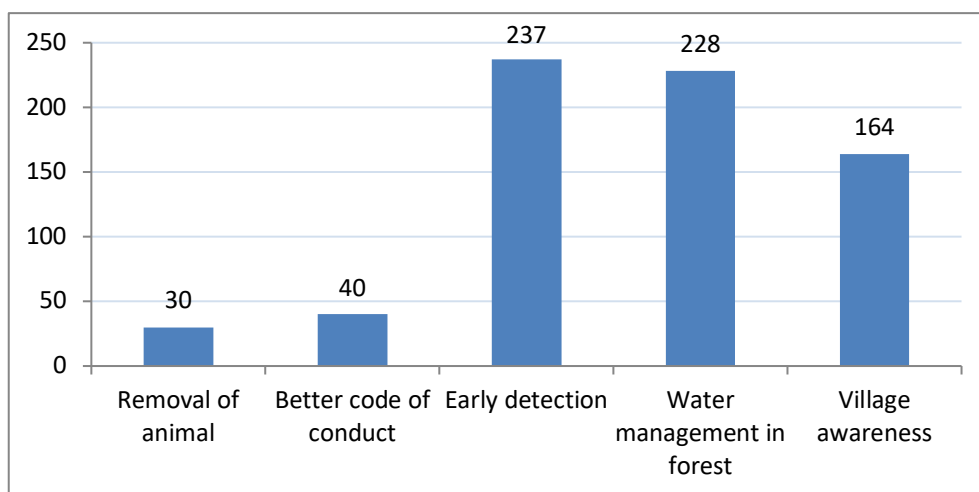


Chart 2: Chart showing responses of locals related to conflict mitigation

Training workshops for 10 new Tiger Ambassador Teams – Preliminary and intensive:

New Tiger Ambassadors trained in additional 10 villages	70
Day long training workshops	10 (1 with each team)
Half day refresher training	10 (1 with each team)

TRACT team conducted day long workshops with the new Tiger Ambassador teams, sharing information regarding conditions that threaten co-existence, about interface that is not conflict and regarding serious conflict situations that cause injury or loss of life to people of animal.

The community’s participation in reducing conflict and mitigation is explained, along with the input form the code of conduct of the locals as individuals and a community that facilitates mitigation and long term management of co-existence.

Capacity building of the team in patrols, identification of large carnivore signs, rescue protocols and addressing mob situation in conflict was also addressed. Conditions that lure large carnivores closer to human dwellings was also explained.

While target for 2018-19 was inclusion of 10 additional villages and training 70 locals, it was imperative to take regular follow ups with the existing 35 teams. Yearly efforts put in by the

TRACT team range from conducting training camps to taking fortnightly surveys of TA teams over the phone.

Conflict surveys	10
Repeat of conflict surveys	35
TA members selected and trained	70
Post intervention survey of TA members	239
Fortnightly surveys	840
School awareness	5
Village awareness	12
Formal meetings	123
Informal meetings	165

Table 3: Table showing yearly efforts of TRACT Team

Results:

With a goal of establishing peaceful coexistence between humans and large carnivores, TRACT set out in 2018-19 with the following objectives

- To establish Tiger Ambassador program in 10 new villages in the corridor/buffer of NNTR
- To train 10 new Tiger Ambassador teams in managing conflict and building awareness in their communities
- To provide higher level of training to ten of the best performing Tiger Ambassador teams
- To continue regular follow ups of all Tiger Ambassador teams to ensure effective operations
- To monitor the severity of wolf conflict in these peripheral forests in this landscape along with conflict with leopards and tigers

Proposed Outputs	Actual Outputs
Leadership in 45 villages for conflict mitigation	TA teams formed and trained in all 45 villages. They act as local leaders in creating awareness in their communities

Awareness about conflict mitigation in 45 villages	Village awareness workshops were done in all 45 villages. Tiger Ambassadors take timely informal meetings with the locals to apprise and sensitize them about wildlife presence and conflict
315 trained Tiger Ambassadors	315 locals trained in total. Currently there are 7 individuals per team in 43 villages, one team has 6 while another has 2 TA members; a total of 309 locals are active Tiger Ambassadors
Data on conflict collected in 45 villages	Repeat of conflict surveys and fortnightly surveys done in old 35 villages; conflict surveys done in new 10 villages. Data collection on conflict done in all 45 villages
Tiger Ambassadors employed by forest department on casual basis	Improved levels of communication and collaboration of Tiger Ambassadors with forest department personnel like beat guards and round officers

Table 4: Table showing Proposed Outputs V/S Actual Outputs

The main outcome of this project is a reduction in conflict cases in the study villages (45). There has just been 1 case of human animal conflict in the study villages in the 5 years of this program, however, quite a few cases of livestock loss have been reported. In the reporting period of 2018-19, two cases of conflict were reported. One was of a leopard killing a goat in Walmazari village on 26th December 2018. The alert Tiger Ambassadors team of that village instantly informed TRACT staff and the forest department, which led to timely receipt of compensation. Another case of conflict occurred at Jambdhi village on 15th March 2019, where a leopard killed a cow calf. Tiger Ambassador team alerted the beat guard and also TRACT team who rushed to the spot. TA team along with TRACT field coordinator and department personnel patrolled the area and found the carcass of the calf about 500 meters from the village. The owner of the cattle was informed about the process of filing an application for compensation and the TA team assured of extending any assistance required.

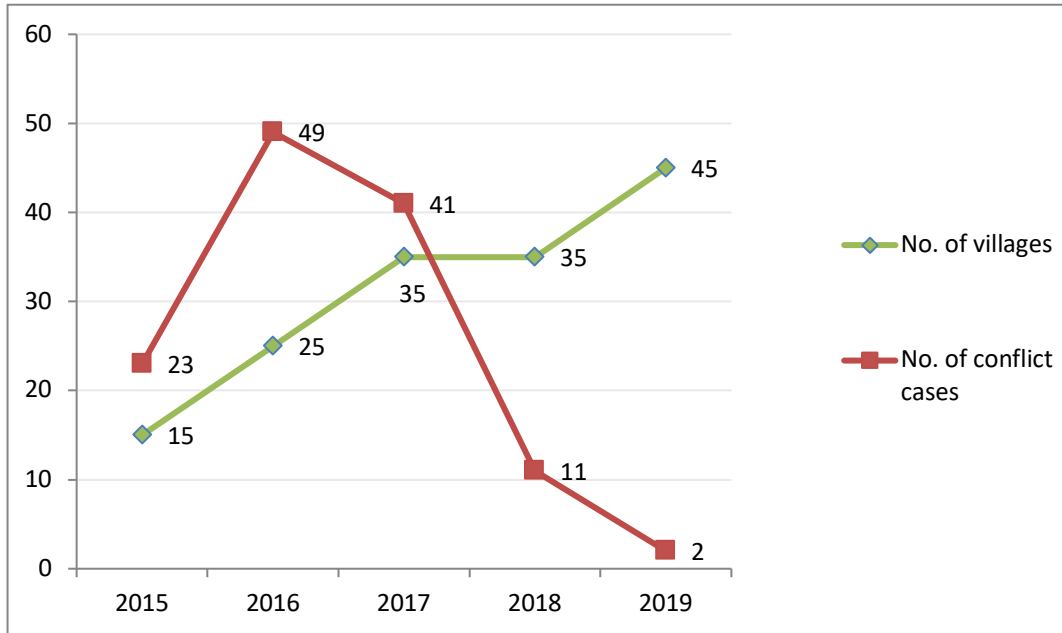


Chart 3: Line chart showing number of conflict cases in 5 study years and a 2 point moving average

As can be observed, the number of conflict cases has gone down consistently except for one year in 2015-16 when the first batch of additional 10 villages was added to the program. Even though the decline in the absolute number of conflict cases from 2015-16 to 2016-17 does not seem much, the decline in relative terms (conflict cases per village) is 60 percent which is quite significant (as shown in the graph below).

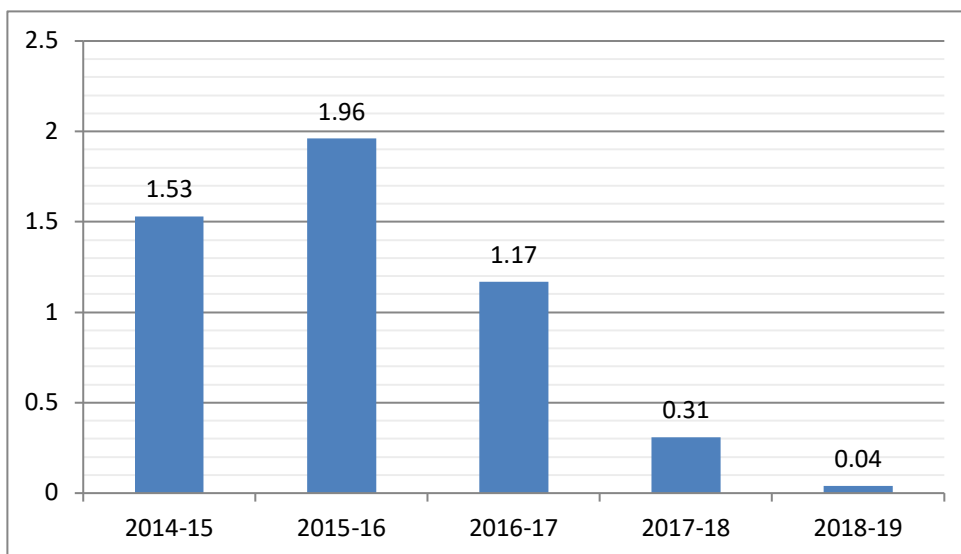


Chart 3 : Showing average number of conflict cases per village over 5 years

All 239 TA team members expressed satisfaction in working as Tiger Ambassadors and would like to continue being part of this project. Tiger Ambassadors feel that conflict mitigation training is not only beneficial for individuals but also for the community. They attribute the decline in number of conflict cases to sensitization, training in conflict management techniques and also to better and improved communication with the forest department. Training in various conflict mitigation efforts has formalized the dialogue between forest department personnel and the Tiger Ambassadors. Notwithstanding the lack of payment for the efforts towards peaceful co-existence, these Tiger Ambassadors understand the onus of personal safety. Through the post intervention survey of TA members it was also observed that all of them believed in the possibility of peaceful co-existence and felt that tolerance of local communities towards wildlife had increased.

Repeat surveys were also done in 35 villages to gauge the change in attitude of locals towards wildlife and to understand if there has been any increase in their tolerance levels. Same set of questions were asked to know the exact change in their attitudes. The villages are small and have less number of households, so generally, finding the same people who were surveyed 3 years back (in 2016) was not a difficulty ask.

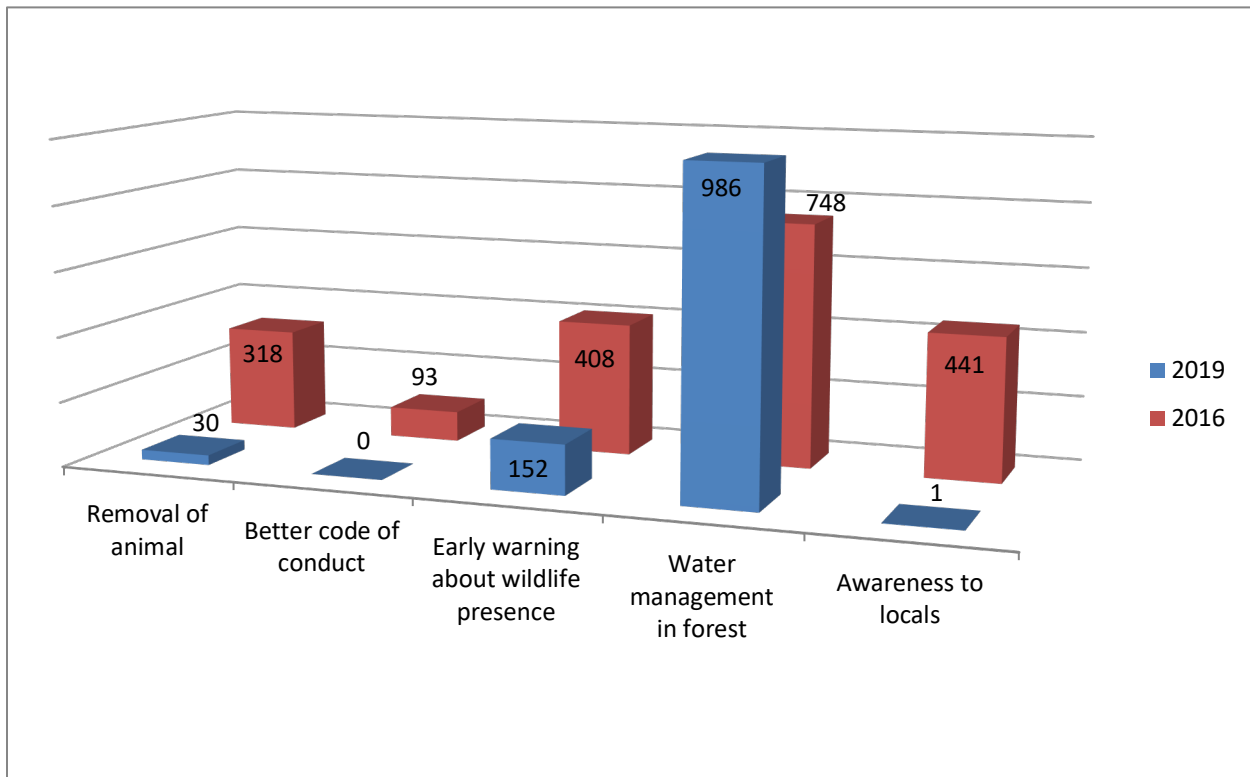


Chart 4: Chart showing change in responses to the question ‘what helps in mitigating conflict’

In 2016, 32 percent of respondents (318 out of 994) were of the opinion that removal of problem animals (large carnivores) was the best way of mitigating conflict while 44 percent of them felt the need for awareness about conflict, its types and ways of handling the same. **However, when asked the same question again in 2019 TOTAL 1048 SAMPLED, only 3 percent respondents now felt that removal of animal will lead to lower conflict.** This clearly shows that tolerance of local communities towards wildlife has increased. They have started believing in peaceful co-existence with wild animals as they no longer wish to remove them out of their own habitat.

Similarly, back in 2016, when asked about whether they were aware of what needs to be done in a conflict situation, only 9 percent of the respondents replied positively. This has changed to 77 percent. The fact that more than two thirds of the sample population is now aware of what needs to be done in a conflict situation is a testimony of efforts of not only TRACT, but also of Tiger Ambassadors, the 315 local leaders, and their incessant outreach within their own communities.

Objectives	Achievements
Establish TA program in 10 new villages	10 villages of 2 ranges were included in the Tiger Ambassadors program. These were selected on the basis of wildlife presence and willingness of local communities.
Train 10 new TA teams and build awareness within their communities	Post inclusion in the program, Village Awareness camps were organized in all 10 villages which sensitized locals about conflict and its mitigation. TA teams, comprising 7 motivated locals, were formed in all 10 villages. These 70 individuals were trained in training camps conducted by TRACT team which focused on teaching them about reasons of conflict, importance and ways of monitoring carnivore presence and the model code of conduct while venturing in the forest.
Higher level of training to 10 best performing TA teams	Selection of 10 best performing teams has been done based on their annual work, their efforts towards creating awareness and their feedback to TRACT. Preparation of coursework for more intensive training is underway.

<p>Regular follow ups of all TA teams</p>	<p>840 surveys over the phone with 35 TA teams (fortnightly feedback surveys)</p> <p>239 post intervention surveys of TA team members</p> <p>175 meetings with old TA teams</p>
<p>Monitor wolf conflict in the landscape along with conflict with leopards and tigers</p>	<p>Identification of wolf affected areas/villages was done. 80 visits were undertaken to the villages that are affected by wolf presence. Formal and informal meetings with the locals were held.</p> <p>315 village visits were done to old and new TA villages for the purpose of awareness camps, formal and informal meetings, training workshops, surveys, etc.</p>

Table 6: Table showing proposed objectives V/S achievement in 2018-19

Discussion

Impacts, Challenges and observations

Impacts:



Picture 1: Picture showing injured Blue bull with Tiger Ambassadors and few locals

4th February 2019, a nilgai (Blue bull) injured its hind leg while escaping a pack of wild dogs and entered a village called Govindtola. a small hamlet of 40 households, has been a part of Tiger Ambassadors program since 2014-15 and is one of the better performing villages. Tiger Ambassadors of this village were prompt in their action and immediately informed the local beat guard and TRACT field coordinators. Till the time help arrived, a mob had gathered which threatened the safety of the animal. However, these 7 Tiger Ambassadors bravely controlled the situation and led the animal to a safe place. Rapid Response Team (RRT) of Nawegaon Nagzira Tiger Reserve soon reached the spot and shifted the animal to Tiroda Range office.

The above incident is a clear example of how increased awareness of wildlife protection and increased capacity in managing conflict situation leads to an increase in tolerance towards wildlife. The biggest impact of Tiger Ambassadors program is the change in the mindset of local communities towards peaceful co-existence which directly increases their tolerance towards wildlife in general, and large carnivores in particular. Timely intervention with right training ultimately enhances the survival of such species, their prey and the overall habitat.

Five years of working in this landscape has helped build a strong network of communication with these 45 villages. Local communities have opened up to the presence of NGOs and have shown increased levels of interaction with the forest department. Understanding the importance of wildlife protection and peaceful cohabitation, Tiger Ambassadors are prompt in reporting incidents in nearby villages too irrespective of the fact that those villages are not a part of this program. On 30th June 2018, a sloth bear attacked a man in Bodunda village. Tiger Ambassador team of Asalpani village, 15 Km away from Bodunda, were quick in informing the incident to Beat Guard and TRACT field coordinator who rushed to the spot and helped in the reporting procedure and bringing the situation under control.

Such instances not only motivate us, but also local communities in working together towards establishing peaceful co-existence. These examples underpin the continuation of conservation efforts and the belief that it is possible to achieve increased tolerance through intervention.

Challenges:

Conservation and working with local communities is full of challenges which are multipronged and are faced at different stages of the project. Following are some of the challenges that we have faced in this landscape over the years

1. Lack of ownership of local communities towards their own safety.
4 villages declined to be a part of this program even though they had wildlife presence in the periphery of their villages. Their main opposition to be a part of this program was

that they viewed wildlife protection and conflict mitigation as a duty only of the forest department. They failed to value the participation of local community in conservation efforts. Ultimately, after scouting 14 villages, 10 villages that were willing were added to the Tiger Ambassadors program.

2. Lack of incentives deters motivation

65 percent Tiger Ambassadors expressed their desire for wages for the efforts put in towards conflict mitigation. As most of these tiger ambassadors are small and marginal farmers, they expect to earn something extra whenever they contribute towards mitigation activities. A few members also demand equipment for their work. Anything material acts as a big incentive for continuation of work. Number of TA team members of Salaitola village has come down to just 2 from 7. The 5 members who left the team demanded daily wages and equipment for the work. They felt that each day of work towards conflict mitigation takes their earning from daily agriculture labor away. It is crucial to maintain a dialogue with these teams to keep them motivated and make them understand the importance of local participation.

3. Saturation of efforts

As seen earlier, the level of conflict has gone down substantially in 5 years. However, locals fail to realize that this is a result of their efforts over a period of 5 years. They think that only when there is conflict do they have to work towards mitigation. It is this attitude that has made it imperative to conduct refresher workshops and meetings with the teams.

Conclusion:

Conservation is about compassion and participation of all stakeholders. Inclusionary approach is bound to make any such effort sustainable. As Jane Goodall, the British Primatologist had put it, 'Only if we understand, will we care. Only if we care, will we help. Only if we help shall all be saved.' The aim of this project was to help locals understand the reasons and types of conflict with large carnivores, their role in mitigation and code of conduct within their community to ensure that there are no attacks on humans. An increased awareness and capacity of the locals towards wildlife protection increases their tolerance towards large carnivores and thus enhances the chances of species and habitat conservation.

Tiger Ambassadors program has helped spread awareness and train locals in conflict management activities. It has created leadership in this landscape and instilled a sense of ownership in local communities towards their safety and safety of the habitat which they share with some of the majestic wild species. It has also helped in forging a new relationship with

forest managers and together they strive to maintain a peaceful co-existence. Challenges are aplenty and as unique as each village in this landscape, however, sustained efforts over half a decade has borne good results. With inclusion of additional 10 villages, the vision of humans living peacefully alongside wildlife has received a shot in the arm. It is believed that past levels of conflict in these 10 additional villages will come down eventually with the right type of intervention, as observed in the rest of 35 villages.