

BI MONTHLY JOURNAL

# s t r i p e s

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## SPECIAL DRIVE TO FINALIZE TIGER MORTALITY CASES



## TIGER DAY CELEBRATIONS

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## SECURITY AUDIT OF TIGER RESERVES



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NATIONAL TIGER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

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## NOTE FROM THE EDITOR



*The National Tiger Conservation Authority has a rigorous process for ascribing reason to tiger death cases. Owing to the rigour involved, the process sometimes takes time because of which tiger mortality cases are not finalised. This however, portrays a negative image of authorities to the general public, media and law makers alike. In order to reduce the pendency in closure of tiger mortality cases, a special drive was conducted by the NTCA keeping in view the transparency, the organization has been maintaining in tiger death incidences which are put up in public domain on [www.tigernet.nic.in](http://www.tigernet.nic.in).*

*July 29, being Global Tiger Day, was celebrated with the Hon'ble Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change flagging off a Tiger Walk comprising enthused school children on Rajpath. He also administered a pledge on tiger conservation to them.*

*With the aim of gearing up protection mechanisms in tiger reserves, the Technical Committee of the NTCA approved a draft framework for implementing Security Audit in all tiger reserves after validation. Keeping abreast with technology, the NTCA has upgraded it's M-STrIPES protocol on an Android based platform, in collaboration with the WII, for use of which a training workshop was held at the Bandipur Tiger Reserve in Karnataka.*



Photo Credit: Dr Vaibhav Mathur

## SPECIAL DRIVE TO FINALIZE TIGER MORTALITY CASES

No tiger death is entered into the official database, unless an authentic source from the State Government reports the mortality. Even if a tiger death is reported from third party sources to the NTCA, a confirmation is obtained from the State before recording it. It is subsequently made available in public domain at [www.tigernet.nic.in](http://www.tigernet.nic.in), at the earliest. Field officers are expected to report events of tiger mortality, immediately on detection via any of the innumerable communication means available nowadays.

All tiger deaths are dealt as per SOP

issued by the NTCA in this regard (available at [www.projecttiger.nic.in](http://www.projecttiger.nic.in)) under suitable provisions of India's Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Non compliance is viewed seriously and in certain cases, if the situation so warrants, an inquiry is instituted by the Regional Office of the NTCA.

The onus of proving a case as natural or poaching, (with adequate evidences like Necropsy report, Pathology report, Coloured photographs, Forensic reports and other report as per the SOP format) rests with the State. There may be instances, wherein, the necropsy report

provides clinching evidence to ascertain cause of death. However, in absence of such lesions, supporting reports as listed above are used to come to a conclusion. This analysis is done at the NTCA Headquarters at Delhi. Once ascertained, a cause is finally ascribed to a tiger's death. In the event of any doubt, in spite of the evidences, the case is closed as poaching.

However, non-ascribing of a cause is generally viewed as if the Government is keeping information from the public. It is common logic to fathom that furnishing laboratory and

forensic reports from agencies concerned is a lengthy process, hence, there may be an apparent delay in sending details of tiger mortality events to the NTCA by the states.

In order to close down pending tiger mortality cases across the country, the National Tiger Conservation Authority conducted a special drive to finalize tiger mortality cases in Central and South India which were respectively held at Nagpur in Maharashtra and at the Biligiri Ranganathaswamy Temple Tiger Reserve in Karnataka.

**SPECIAL DRIVE IN THE SOUTH**

The meeting at Biligiri Ranganathaswamy Temple Tiger Reserve in Karnataka was held on July 19 and 20 which was presided over by the Chief Wildlife Warden, Karnataka, Shri. B.J. Hosmath



Photo Credit: NTCA

IG NTCA, RO, Bengaluru speaking at the meeting

and Chaired by the IG (NTCA), Regional Office, Bengaluru, Shri. P.S. Somashekar. The meeting commenced with the Chair presenting the outline and laying

down agenda items. He stressed the need to finalize mortality cases as the same have been kept open for want of various reasons. Shri. B.J. Hosmath, in his welcome

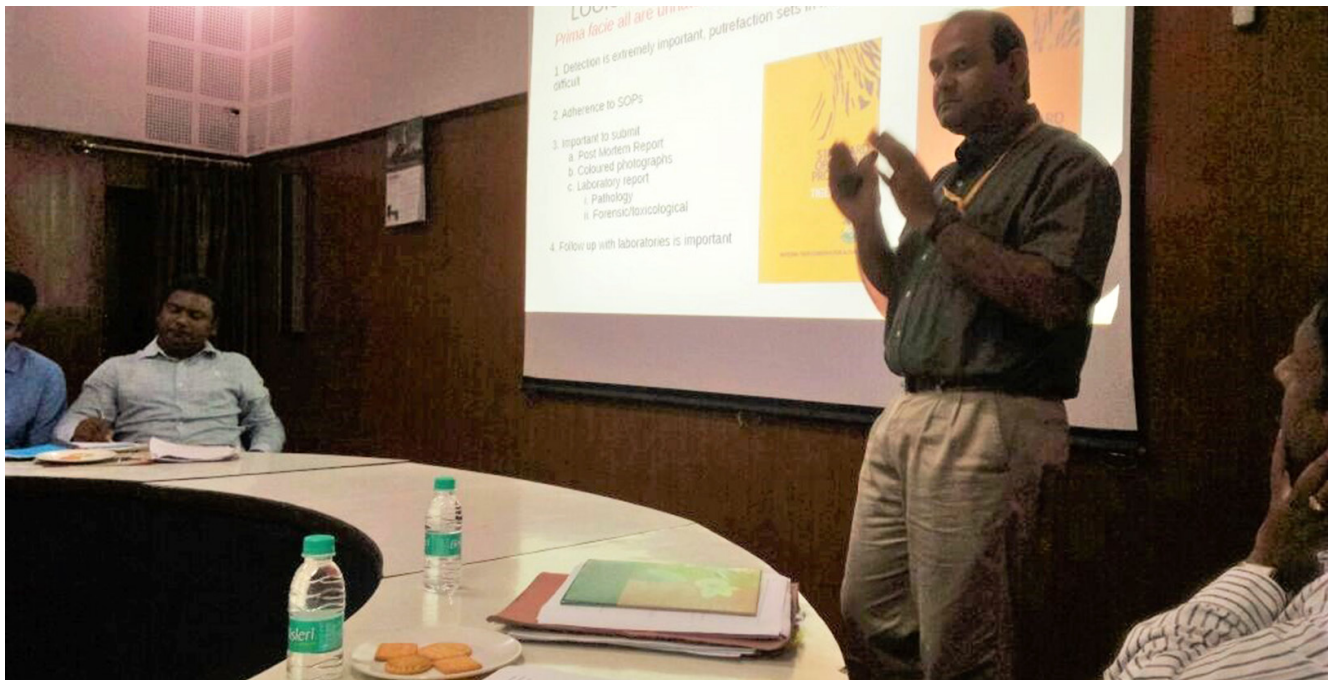


Photo Credit: NTCA

Dr. Vaibhav Mathur giving a presentation



Photo Credit: NTCA

IG NTCA, RO, Nagpur chairing the meeting

address stated that, it is imperative to close down tiger death cases as the same are solicited in public domain through RTIs as well the State Assembly and Parliament of India. Being a serious matter, reasons for tiger death cannot be kept in ambiguity and there is an urgent need to assess cause of tiger death and close down cases.

This was followed by a presentation by the AIG (NTCA), New Delhi on trends of tiger mortality cases over the last five years. He reiterated the need to finalize mortality cases as the same were creating misperception in minds of the general public as well as NGOs and public representatives alike. Hence, assigning reasons to cause of tiger death needs to be underscored

and finalized, as several cases are pending since 2012. Case by case details were discussed with Field officials present and at the end of the meeting 52 percent of the cases were in a position to be finalized and closed.

### **SPECIAL DRIVE IN CENTRAL INDIA**

The special drive to finalize tiger mortality cases of the Central Indian landscape was held on 5th August, under Chairmanship of IG (NTCA), Dr Debabrata Swain, Regional Office, Nagpur. The meeting was also graced by the Chief Wildlife Warden, Maharashtra, Shri. Shree Bhagwan. The AIG (NTCA), New Delhi, gave a short presentation on tiger mortality trends since, 2012

in the country and emphasised the need to close down pending tiger mortality cases quickly. The meeting saw active participation from field officials including those from territorial areas, who provided inputs on various factors causing tiger deaths in their respective areas. Case by case details were discussed with Field officials present and at the end of the meeting 65 percent of the cases were in a position to be finalized and closed.



## INTERNATIONAL TIGER DAY CELEBRATIONS

The National Tiger Conservation Authority, along with conservation partners organized a “Walk for the Tiger” on occasion of International Tiger Day on 29.7.16, which was flagged off by Shri. Anil Madhav Dave, Minister of State (Independent Charge), Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India.

The heads of Governments of Tiger Range countries which *inter alia* includes India, resolved to strive to double the number of wild tigers (T X 2) across their

range by 2022 and adopted the St. Petersburg Resolution on Tiger Conservation, at St Petersburg, Russia, wherein July 29 was endorsed as Global Tiger Day.

Shri. Anil Madhav Dave, while exhorting students to conserve tigers on the occasion, stated that India is a world leader in tiger conservation and has 70% of the global tiger population, which stands at 2226. He mentioned that India is contributing significantly towards achieving

the St. Petersburg target, commonly referred to as T X 2. He administered a pledge for tiger conservation, which received an enthusiastic response from the school children.

The event was organized in collaboration with the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB), Global Tiger Forum, WWF-India, Wildlife Trust of India, TRAFFIC, Kids for Tigers and Aircel.

Due to ongoing conservation efforts under the Project Tiger and



Photo Credit: NTCA

Shri Anil Madhav Dave, Minister, MEF&CC flagging off Tiger walk

the National Tiger Conservation Authority, India has the maximum number of tigers along with its source areas amongst the 13 tiger range countries in the world. Needless to say, that India is well on path to contributing to the tiger range by the year 2022 in tune with the St. Petersburg Declaration.

The status of wild tiger across Tiger Range Countries (TRCs) continues to remain endangered. Though there have been some gains on this front during the last few years as seen in the population build up in some TRCs like India, Nepal, Bhutan and Russia, the global scenario is a cause for major concern. Tigers have become locally extinct in some TRCs and the status of prey as well as the habitat has declined



Photo Credit: NTCA

in many. This is a serious limiting factor for achieving the Tx2 goal within the timeline as envisaged in the St. Petersburg Declaration (2010) on tiger conservation.



Photo Credit: NTCA

L to R: S.P.Yadav, ASG, GTF, H.S.Negi, IG (NTCA), A.M.Dave, Minister, MEF&CC, A.N.Jha, Secretary, MEF&CC, B.S.Bonal, MS (NTCA), PS to MEF&CC

## M-STrIPES PHASE II

The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Zoological Survey of London (ZSL) and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) took an initiative for establishing a decision support system for adaptive management of protected areas. Monitoring System for Tigers Intensive Protection and Ecological Status (M-STrIPES) was a result of these joint efforts. The system consists of two components;

- a) field based protocol for patrolling, law enforcement, recording wildlife crimes and ecological monitoring, and
- b) a customized software for storage, retrieval, analysis and reporting.

Currently law enforcement and ecological monitoring are being done, but the information generated is ad hoc and rarely available in a format for informed decision making. The “M-STrIPES” addresses this void and is a tool for adaptive management. The system uses a holistic approach by integrating

ecological insights obtained through standardized tiger, prey, and habitat assessment protocols (Phase I) to guide protection and management. It enables managers to assess intensity and spatial coverage of patrols in a GIS based tool. The system performs statistical computations of occupancy, precision, sample size, and assesses trends over desired time and spatial scales for tigers, other carnivores, prey populations, human impacts, illegal activities, and law enforcement investments. M-STrIPES produces easily interpretable reports and maps that are useful for management and policy decisions. If

implemented as designed, the system reduces the response time to detrimental events like poaching or habitat degradation and becomes a comprehensive tool to keep the pulse of a tiger reserve.

The M-STrIPES SMART patrolling protocol was launched initially in six tiger reserves at Bhadra, Corbett, Kanha, Nagarjunasagar-Srisailem, Sariska and Anamalai in Karnataka, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu respectively. Based on inputs received from the field, it was decided to upgrade the system and make it more user friendly for frontline staff. Following features



Photo Credit: NTCA



had been suggested;

1. The program needs to have a hierarchical integration of data, analysis and report generation capacity from range, protected area/ Division, State, and Country.
2. The program needs to be web enabled for transfer and integration of data, sectoral analysis, and report generation.
3. Data collection and download should be possible from any platform i.e. manual entry, android or windows phone platform, or GPS track log.
4. Besides Patrol module and ecological monitoring module (currently available in the program) the program should have a module for wildlife conflict (livestock kills and crop depredation).
5. The ecological module needs to have a camera trap photo archiving and output module for Phase IV data analysis on abundance analysis of tigers and leopards
6. The ecological module needs to output ungulate encounter data in DISTANCE format for abundance analysis of prey base as per the Phase IV requirement.



Photo Credit: NTCA

Development on the above lines was carried out at the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun and an Android based M-STRIPES protocol was developed. In order to gear up staff for using the new framework, a training workshop was organized for all tiger reserves of South India at the Bandipur Tiger Reserve in end August, with representations from all the States. The workshop

was also attended by officials from the NTCA headquarters, Global Tiger Forum, besides non governmental organizations.



Photo Credit: NTCA

29/08/2016



Photo Credit: Dr. Vaibhav Mathur

## SECURITY AUDIT OF TIGER RESERVES

The tiger is a conservation and management dependent species being faced with major threats like poaching driven by an illegal international market for tiger parts and products; depleting prey base as a result of wild meat consumption and habitat loss. Tiger Reserves are the cornerstone of tiger conservation in India. Tiger Reserves act as key sites for “source population” of tigers. As per the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (amended 2006), each Tiger Reserve in India is required to prepare a Tiger Conservation Plan of which “Protection” is a key component.

The NTCA has also issued generic guidelines for reserve specific Security Plans (SPs), which forms part of the TCP. The level of security enjoyed by the tiger and all other species that inhabit the area, is key to conservation success even if every other factor remains very favorable, lack of security can lead to irrevocable and sudden losses of the biodiversity wealth of the area. There is a need to evaluate the security status of the Tiger Reserve from time to time to be able to assess current status, understand gaps in security and take necessary steps to fill those gaps in view of ever increasing poaching pressures

also involving newer techniques and technologies.

Law Enforcement Monitoring (LEM) is a site-specific way of keeping track of our Law Enforcement (LE) efforts. ‘Site specific’ because every protected area (PA) is different and its LE needs vary. While results can be compared between different years in the same PA, they cannot be compared between sites. Keeping in mind the above points, Security Audit (SA) protocols are developed to help Tiger Reserve (TR) managers in regularly tracking the progress of their enforcement efforts



Photo Credit: Dr Vaibhav Mathur

to tackle poaching at their sites, while assessing status by an independent team constituted by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) at a regular interval. Keeping this in view, the Technical Committee of the NTCA in its meeting held on August

16, approved a framework for Security Audit of tiger reserves in collaboration with the Global Tiger Forum for testing at the Kanha and Satkosia Tiger Reserves in Madhya Pradesh and Odisha respectively. Based on results of validation of the framework, the

same shall be implemented across all tiger reserves of the country.



Photo Credit: Anupam Sahay

**STRIPES**  
**BI-MONTHLY OUTREACH JOURNAL OF**  
**NATIONAL TIGER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**  
**(A STATUTORY BODY UNDER MINISTRY ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE**  
**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA)**

**PLEDGE FOR TIGER CONSERVATION**

I recognize and value, that tiger is an umbrella species with charisma, and is the flagship indicator of a balanced ecosystem; that a balanced ecosystem is crucial for life support, while providing numerous ecological services to the society; being aware that the status of wild tiger is highly endangered in its natural habitat across Tiger Range Countries with a declining global population;

I hereby solemnly pledge: to protect the tiger and its wild habitat to ensure crucial ecological services for posterity; to contribute for fostering awareness for tiger conservation by factoring in its concern in areas where tiger is not the goal; to work for a balance between tiger conservation and ecologically sustainable development towards harmonious co-occurrence of human beings and the tiger; commit to conserve our natural heritage while making all efforts for the future sustenance of wild tiger.

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