

Junglescapes News

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How Roads Affect Wildlife

An ideal situation for wildlife is not to have any roads go through their natural habitat. However, in real life it is not possible to completely avoid having roads go through our forests. Studies have shown that the road density (no.of km of roads / no.of sq km of forests) has a direct bearing on the migratory and breeding patterns of wildlife populations. Each species of animals behaves differently to a given road density and therefore it is best to have a road density that is tolerated by the most sensitive of the species.

The tolerable road density for a species of wild animals is known as the 'threshold' density for that species. These -threshold densities have been computed for some of the

western wild animals such as Elk, Wolves, Bears and Lynx. Wolves, for instance, have a threshold of only 0.6km /1 sq km. In the Indian context, the threshold densities should be computed, at least for the endangered species, and the lowest among these densities should be adopted for sustainable and stable wildlife reserves. This is particularly relevant in the context of the several infrastructure projects being planned (Read article on page 2).

Elephants Dwindle in Numbers

In the last two years, the population of elephants seems to have come down in the state of Karnataka from over 4300 in the year '05 to just about 4000 in May of this year. The number was nearly 5800 in the year 2002. These numbers appear in the recent report of ANCF and IISc. The accuracy of these numbers are a little suspect because of constant migration of these elephants between the state borders, but trends are evident.

The ratio between males and females was observed to be approximately 1:2. Bandipur seems to be the preferred location for the pachyderms, as the count was highest in that area.



Junglescapes News welcomes you to this inaugural issue. Our aim is to share with you information on conservation related topics and interesting, off-beat wildlife locations that you might like to visit. We welcome your feedback on this newsletter and suggestions for our future issues.

Unique Slender Loris Habitat



Slender Loris is a very small primate found in the western ghats and Sri Lanka. This little endangered animal has long thin legs and hands - and hence slender. It has large eyes set in a small round face which makes it very endearing. Slender Loris is a solitary nocturnal animal that feeds on small insects, birds etc. It is a shy creature and difficult to spot.

A recent TOI report talks of a village called Nagavalli where these small primates can be found in the school compound and in surrounding villages. The villagers have made friends with Loris and no one harms them. Nagavalli is located on the Bangalore - Tumkur highway, about 80 kms from Bangalore.

Contact Mr.Gundappa, school master (mob. 94486 17529) Nagavalli village for more information.

HIGHWAY PROJECTS THREATEN WIDLIFE

Highway development projects in some of the best protected forests in India are the latest threat to several endangered species, threatening habitat fragmentation, ecological degradation and hampering migration. In Nagarahole, the Mysore-Mananthavadi road is to become NH 10 connecting Mysore and Kerala. The alignment lies in a major migratory path that is crowded with around 2,000 elephants during summer. The Kudremukh sholas are the finest habitat for the lion-tailed macaque but the Karkala to Sringeri road is to become a NH.

There is some hope on the horizon though. The courts recently shot down proposals to upgrade roads in the Corbett Tiger and Sariska Tiger Reserves. The modern highway that will be built through Rajaji National park with public-private partnership will have two 750-metre-long flyovers below which will be elephant corridors plus a number of

culverts for smaller animal movement.

What we urgently need is a total embargo on construction of new highways through sanctuaries and parks and a ban on night traffic on existing highways that pass through protected wildlife areas. Let not GDP growth be at the cost of our wonderful wildlife.

MADHESWARA UPDATE

The Madheswara temple home stay had nine guests in October. Bird viewing is improving with the onset of migration season. The place is lush green and very cool, and November-March would be a great time to visit. A small library of wildlife reference books is being put together, and any used books are welcome. If you are planning a trip, contact Ragini at 9343700345 for details.

Junglescapes

towards sustainable wildlife conservation

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