

## MONITORING PREY-PREDATOR ABUNDANCE IN PARAMBIKULAM WILDLIFE SANCTUARY.

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A continuous tiger monitoring programme by a selected and trained team in Parambikulam Wildlife Sanctuary has given for the first time an extremely reliable count of tigers in this sanctuary. The heart warming news is that the sanctuary sustains around 19 adult tigers (7 males and 12 females) in a small area of 285 km<sup>2</sup>. The estimation of tiger population has been done over a period of June 1998 to January 1999 by carefully and methodically collecting plaster casts of these animals and their analysis.

As a sequel to the above, a very focussed census operation was conducted recently, for estimating the populations of major prey species of the tigers in the sanctuary. The species covered were Gaur, Chital, Sambar and Wild Boar. The census was conducted using block count, point count and road count methods in tandem from 12th to 15th March 1999. The neighbouring Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary also conducted wild animals census on these dates and the entire operations, thus became a mega event in the pristine Anamalai portions of the southern Western Ghats. In spite of the examination period, around 200 volunteers from different parts of Kerala and Tamil Nadu participated in the census programme in Parambikulam Wildlife Sanctuary along with the sanctuary staff and the local trekkers.

The number of animals of each group counted were Gaur - 495, Cheetal - 664, Sambar - 253 and Wild Boar - 260. The census results are extremely satisfactory as all the four animal groups' populations show a healthy increase over 1997 census figures. Moreover the prey animals were located from all parts of the sanctuary including the Karimala Gopuram (the highest point in the sanctuary) and the Orukomban kutty (the lowest point in the sanctuary). Still sanctuary authorities feel that some additional populations of these animal groups could not be covered due to the vast terrain and a heavy shower in the evening during census. The count of Sambar deers and Wild Boar should be quite higher than the reported results as they could not be covered fully because of their nocturnal habits.

The major outcome of this exercise is the fact that the monitoring programme and the census techniques for the major predator (Tiger) and major prey species (Gaur and Chital) in Parambikulam Wildlife Sanctuary has been standardized.

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## INTESTINAL AMOEBIASIS IN A LIONNESS

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Intestinal amoebiasis due to *Entamoeba histolytica* is a serious malady in man and in domestic carnivores. Its incidence in wild is rarely recognised. A chronic case of amoebiasis in a lioness (Jyothi) was brought to our notice for treatment by the Director of Bhagwan Birsa Jaivik Udyan, Ranchi. The lioness was off feed, constipated, passing black coloured stools, sometimes with plenty of mucus. The animal was under treatment with Mortin D.S., Vitapepsin, Livogen, Tonomon, Neochlor and Kemicetin since 27.4.94 but showed no signs of improvement. The faecal sample when examined was found positive for cysts of *E. histolytica*. She was then treated with Metron syrup 20 ml (each 5 ml contains Metronidazole 200 mg) thrice daily for five days i.e. up to 10.v.94. The lioness appeared cheerful and showed considerable improvement in appetite. The above symptoms however reappeared on 16.v.94 and the animal was treated again with Metron syrup for two days. However, the treatment was not effective and the faecal sample still showed cysts of the protozoa.

The lioness was then treated with oral administration of Erythromycin esterate syrup 20 ml (each ml = 125 mg) thrice daily, Tiniba 800 mg twice daily (Goodman & Gilman, 1996) and 10 ml Complex B syrup twice daily. The treatment schedule was continued for 12 days i.e. from 18.v.94 to 29.v.94. Chremafyn suspension was also administered 10 ml twice daily orally for 4 days. After treatment constipation disappeared and the animal returned back to normal health.

An important lesson learnt from this case is that during the treatment of intestinal amoebiasis, it is essential to control the secondary bacterial infection also simultaneously (Soulsby, 1982). Oral administration of drugs is very difficult in wild animals. One has to make sure that any loss during administration is duly compensated. Drugs were administered by squeezing the animal and pushing the drug with a syringe with mouth open.

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