

## **FINAL REPORT**

**BY – TIGER RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION TRUST**

### **COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP FOR TIGER CONSERVATION (CLTC) – TADOBA ANDHARI TIGER RESERVE – 2004-2005.**

#### **PROJECT TITLE:**

**Community Leadership for Tiger Conservation – Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve**

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR) is one of the prime tiger reserves in central India, which falls under the level – III of the Tiger Conservation Unit (TCU) – 44. Community Leadership for Tiger Conservation – Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve is a one-year pilot project to build a long-term intensive field conservation program to conserve tigers and their prey base.

This project was carried out to build a long-term intensive field conservation program. Its main aim was to conserve tigers and their prey base through the following activities

- Long-term consolidation of the park through facilitating resettlement of villages lying within the tiger reserve.
- Improve protection system through motivation and training of the field staff of the state forest department.
- Monitoring and ‘Watch Dog’ activities and
- Community awareness programs to reduce human pressures like NTFP collection, poaching, fire and cattle grazing.

During the reporting period the project leaders worked on mobilizing community support and improving of protecting system activities.

A total of 48 meetings were held with villagers from the 3 villages due for rehabilitation. These meetings were held to assist the villagers in understanding the resettlement package and the new Rehabilitation Act. As a member of the Relocation Monitoring Committee, formal and informal meetings were held with officials from government agencies, elected representatives and community leaders to co-ordinate the implementation of the rehabilitation project and also to build community support for the project. A Relocation seminar was organised for facilitating the work.

The Relocation project has finally gathered momentum and the first village will be resettled by March 2006.

The project leaders carried out meetings with forest department staff to discuss various problems related to the reserve.

Insurance against death and disablement has been provided for the third year to 28 frontline field staffs that are not covered under government insurance schemes.

Motivational rewards have been given to 9 field staff and 1 other individual for exemplary protection work. Community awareness programs were also carried out under the project to educate general public and students about the conservation of the reserve.

The project leaders participated in two State level Wildlife research seminars to decide about the statewide research to be carried out to facilitate conservation and protection of the wild species.

The project leaders also carried out extensive field surveys to map the reserve and to map the Survey analysis for dependency of the peripheral villages was done in 6 villages.

Field training camps were held in Tadoba Andhari to train the field staff in wildlife field management. The project leaders held a GIS / GPS mapping training camp in the adjoining Melghat Tiger Reserve to train the Range officers in the use of the GPS.

### **PROJECT PERSONNEL:**

**Overall project guidance:** Dr. K. Ullas Karanth, Wildlife Conservation Society.

**Project co-ordination:** Poonam Dhanwatey

**Project leaders:** Harshawardhan and Poonam Dhanwatey

**Project staff:** Five temporary field staff :-

Vinod Jambhule

Mukesh Bhandakkar

Dr. A.D Kholkute (veterinary doctor)

Manoj Bhandakkar

Adik (camp cook)

### **COLLABORATORS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATIONS:**

- I. Wildlife Conservation Society, India Program, Bangalore: Scientific guidance
- II. Centre for Wildlife Studies, Bangalore: Scientific guidance
- III. Maharashtra Forest Department: Deputy Conservator of Forests, Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve
- IV. Wildlife First, Bangalore: Conservation partner
- V. Feral, Bangalore, GIS mapping guidance.

**PROJECT DURATION:** July 01 2004 - June 30 2005.

**APPROVED BUDGET :** GBP 13540 -00

## **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES :**

### **Long-term consolidation of the reserve through resettlement of the villages from within the Tiger reserve.**

In pursuance of the proposed voluntary rehabilitation project, the project leaders and the staff held 48 formal and informal meetings with the villagers of the two villages, Kolsa and Botezari (in the field and in the office of TRACT) to address their apprehensions about rehabilitation. The villagers were also informed about the benefits and compensation packages of this project. The villagers of two villages were taken to the Relocation site 5 times and explained the planning of their agricultural and residential area.

Several formal meetings with forest and other government agencies were held in connection with the rehabilitation project. A relocation seminar was held in July where in the Project authorities of the Forest and the Revenue department were invited along with the villagers from the 3 villages due for relocation. All apprehensions of the villagers were sorted out and the authorities committed to a time frame to the project. This one day seminar has helped in giving momentum to the project and was held to plan and co-ordinate the implementation of the proposed project and to assist with any shortcomings in the project.

A group of villagers due to be relocated were taken to Melghat Tiger Reserve, from where 3 villages have been relocated successfully in the recent past. They were shown the relocation site and had a meeting with the relocated villagers from Melghat.

The project leaders have held 26 meetings with the Principle Secretary, Revenue & Forest, and the staff of the Secretary, Rehabilitation, in Mumbai and locally to decide on the quantum of land to be allotted to the landless and the landlords. It was only due to these consistent meetings of the project leaders with the officials, that this Government Resolution was announced.

This particular Relocation is the first to be carried out after the government has made a Rehabilitation Act in 2001. So, all Government resolutions pertaining to this Relocation will be valid for all such project, which will be done in the State in future. This relocation will be a model for all these projects.

Field visits to the Relocation site have resulted in an increase in the capacity of the lake, which is being made to fulfil the needs of the villagers.

The Relocation of the first village will be completed by March 2006, as promised by the authorities.

### **Improving protection system**

The project leaders carried out 29 field visits to Tadoba Andhari during the reporting period. Meetings with field staff and meetings with senior forest department officials were held to discuss various conservation and protection problems of the area.

The field staffs of TRACT are in the field 6 days a week. Their work involves monitoring the entire Tiger reserve, visiting the villagers to be relocated and visiting the Relocation site to check the progress of the work.

The 'TRACT Wildlife Conservation Award 2005' award function was held in the presence of the senior state level forest officials, and the Honourable Forest Minister of Maharashtra State was the chief guest for this function.

To motivate the field staff awards (Binoculars and wrist watches) have also been given to 9 frontline staff for carrying out meritorious protection duties. 1 Range officer of Tadoba was felicitated with field equipment for the water management and protection work he did in Tadoba during his tenure here.

To support the field protection staff insurance against life and disability insurance has been provided for the third time to 28 staff under the project. This staffs have not been covered under any government insurance schemes. This insurance cover will act as moral support for the frontline field staff during carrying out their protection duties. The project leaders also carried out extensive field surveys to map the reserve using Geographical Positioning System (GPS). The features included areas of impact by extraction.

Impact maps have been made by the project leaders with three years of data collected during daily monitoring by the field staff using a GPS. 500 waypoints were taken to access Extraction of bamboo and timber, illegal fishing, Snares found, trespassers and domestic dogs seen, fires, grazing, encroachments, cattle kills, human kills, cattle kill poisoning for retaliation by villagers, human population etc.

This data was then categorised in 6 broad categories and impact assessment maps were prepared. These maps give a very clear picture of the areas, which are being hammered and also state the relation between the human population and the anthropogenic pressures exerted on the Tiger reserve.

TRACT has temporarily employed a retired Veterinary doctor, who had been working with the wildlife department. The project leaders held 3 field-training camps for the entire staff of Tadoba Andhari. The training included tranquillisation methods, caring for the wildlife during summer months, checking water bodies for urea poisoning, identifying scat, pellets, dung and tracks, foot patrolling methods, caring for wireless and the battery sets, identifying ill animals in different seasons etc. Printed matter was also given to each field staff. These camps have been appreciated by the authorities and wish to be repeated on a regular basis. The other two State Tiger Reserve officials have also requested the project leaders to hold such training camps in their areas.

To further boost protection, local intelligence network in the villages within and on the periphery of the park is being developed through motivational rewards.

### **Monitoring and ‘watch dog’ activities -**

The field staff of TRACT are in the field on a daily basis, and their tracking skills have been put to use by the authorities as well to patrol problem areas.

Number of incidences of illegal activities has been brought to the notice of the concerned authorities due to the field monitoring activities of the TRACT field staff and the project leaders. A number of cases have been registered against offenders by the authorities as per information given by TRACT.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:**

The project team thank the donors, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Tiger.

The project team also thanks the Chief Wildlife Warden of Maharashtra, Reserve Warden and all the staff of the Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve.

The project team wishes to thank Centre for Wildlife Studies for their guidance throughout the project and to Feral for their guidance and assistance in the GIS mapping done.

### **PROBLEMS :-**

The accommodation used by the project leaders and field staff, since the last two years had been allotted by the authorities for the entire year and at the official rate. But the authorities have asked the staff of TRACT to vacate the premises and book the guest rooms as and when needed. This will hamper the daily work of the field staff, as guest rooms at times are unavailable due to tourist pressures.

### **GOALS / ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT YEAR -**

1. Continue conservation monitoring on the periphery of the Tiger Reserve.
2. Pursue the voluntary rehabilitation project, do a relocation workshop and help maintain the decide time frame for the project.
3. Organize another four-day survey for the data collection of the dependency survey of 4 more peripheral villages.
4. Continue the GPS mapping for impact maps on the periphery of the Reserve.
4. Conduct survey to ascertain density indices.
5. Motivating the field staff by organizing the TRACT Awards ceremony, and by giving them incentives.
6. Conduct wildlife educational activities in the peripheral villages and those inside the reserves.
6. Conduct field training camps for the staff of TATR.
7. Organise intelligence network in more peripheral areas of TATR.
8. Work towards getting peripheral areas under the Tiger reserve.