

Removal Record No. R-26

July 15, 2015

TECHNICAL REPORT ON THE REMOVAL OF A MALE TIGER

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BACKGROUND

Three incidents of cattle killing by a tiger, one on 11-Jul-2015, and two on 12-Jul-2015 were reported from Odappallam, a village on the fringes of the Sulthan Bathery forest range under the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary. The tiger was still found near the location by media personnel during the first incident, who took photos which were used for identification of the tiger.



Photo: 1

BPT-236

Source: Media Reports

The forest department placed a box trap with live bait near the cattle kill location at N11.78165°; E76.27344° and found the tiger trapped on the morning of 14th July, 2015.

We summarize our findings here below:

1. From the images of the captured tiger (Photo: 2) we were able to identify this individual tiger as BPT-236, an adult male tiger whose photos of both flanks (Photo 3 and 4) are available with us from camera trapping.
2. The individual was first photo-captured in Bandipur Tiger Reserve on 12th February 2010. It was subsequently camera-trapped in 2012, 2013, 2014 and February 2015. The photo-capture history of the tiger is provided in Table: 1.
3. Based on its size and physical appearance from our photo-captures of this individual, we estimate this tiger's current age to be about 8-9 years.
4. The sequence of events has been covered by the media (The Hindu, Indian Express, Deccan chronicle and The Times of India).

SUMMARY

From the analysis of the photo-capture data shared by Forest Department, the tiger appeared to be an adult of about 8-9 years. Our research shows that the Nagarahole-Bandipur-Wayanad tiger population is at high densities of 10-15 tigers/100 sq. km. Because of high rates of reproduction, based on an abundant prey base, this population naturally has high mortality and dispersal related losses of nearly 20% per year. This is part of a natural tiger population dynamics. Such mortalities and dispersals are more likely among sub-adults trying to find new territories, and among old, weakened residents who are evicted from their home ranges. BPT-236 appears to belong to the latter case. From the fact that BPT-236 moved away from its recorded home range and became a problem tiger recently, it appears that the animal was evicted from its territory, possibly following a fight or some other injury suffered through natural violence. Such individuals are also likely to come into conflict with cattle and humans.

A decision by the Government of Kerala to capture the tiger before it could inflict more conflict is laudable. The immediate sharing of information by the Forest Department helped establish the identity and tenure of the problem tiger, and, avoid further losses.

Table 1: The photo-capture history of BPT-236

Date	Time	Location Name	Image Source
12-Feb-10	0:29	Tiger road (north)	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
13-Feb-10	18:42	Tiger road (north)	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
13-Feb-12	21:45	Mavina halla road	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
19-Feb-12	23:59	Rampura road	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
22-Feb-12	23:59	Sule katte road	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
28-Feb-12	23:59	Mavina halla road	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
17-Apr-13	19:08	Rampura road	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
20-Apr-13	20:49	Varanchi mavinahalla road	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap

20-Apr-13	21:35	Mavina halla road	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
23-Apr-13	3:29	Ulsoor gadde road	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
29-Apr-13	23:29	Rampura road	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
30-Apr-13	22:46	Ulsoor gadde road	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
30-Apr-13	23:08	Ulsoor gadde road	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
11-May-13	20:04	Tiger road (north)	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
11-May-13	21:39	Tiger road (north)	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
27-Dec-13	21:04	Ulsoor gadde road	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
28-Dec-13	0:52	Tiger road (north)	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
28-Dec-13	1:37	Tiger road (north)	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
28-Dec-13	19:41	Rampura road	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
29-Dec-13	1:50	Rampura road	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
		Mavinahalla eremavu border road	
30-Dec-13	0:47	border road	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
30-Dec-13	4:47	Rampura road	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
31-Dec-13	21:27	Tiger road (north)	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
01-Jan-14	2:55	Tiger road (north)	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
		Mavinahalla eremavu border road	
01-Jan-14	20:07	border road	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
		Mavinahalla eremavu border road	
10-Jan-14	18:47	border road	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
12-Jan-14	19:23	Tiger road (north)	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
13-Jan-14	19:17	Tiger road (north)	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
		Mavinahalla eremavu border road	
25-Jan-14	5:51	border road	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
		Mavinahalla eremavu border road	
26-Jan-15	20:53	border road	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
		Mavinahalla eremavu border road	
27-Jan-15	23:32	border road	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
		Mavinahalla eremavu border road	
30-Jan-15	0:09	border road	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
		Mavinahalla eremavu border road	
03-Feb-15	19:03	border road	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
		Mavinahalla eremavu border road	
11-Feb-15	7:46	border road	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
		Mavinahalla eremavu border road	
18-Feb-15	4:07	border road	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap
		Mavinahalla eremavu border road	
24-Feb-15	6:20	border road	WCS/KUK-Camera Trap



Photo: 2

BPT-236

Source: WCS Field Team

ANALYSIS

We have been conducting photographic capture-recapture studies of the tiger meta-population in Karnataka for over two decades and recently, this study was extended to include adjacent forests of Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary in Kerala. We have prepared this report using data from our long-term research projects in the Malenad Landscape encompassing forests of Karnataka and neighboring states of Kerala and Goa. The camera trap data collected under rigorous scientific protocols are stored in an advanced database coupled to sophisticated pattern matching software that enables rapid identification of individual tigers. We have photographs of over 800 individually identified tigers obtained from this landscape during past two decades. The images obtained from the media personnel (Photo: 1) were used for comparison with the tiger images in our database records. This matched with the individual tiger BPT-236 recorded in WCS photo-database (Photos: 3 and 45).