

Living with Leopards

Today, SGNP faces many problems mostly because of the way it is ill-treated. The edges of SGNP are disappearing as forest is cleared and encroached upon for buildings and infrastructural activities. The park is littered with garbage that is tossed carelessly. Shouting and playing loud music shatter the peace. We and other wild animals are very sensitive to noise and we request you to respect our space when you visit us.

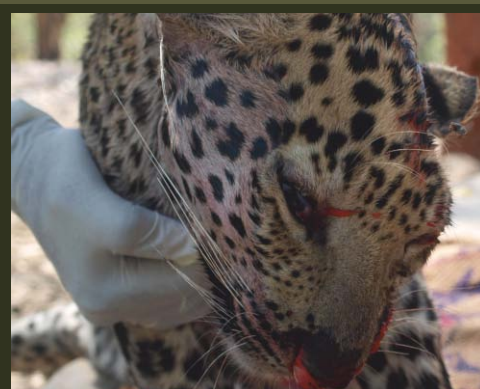
Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP) has been home to us leopards for a long time. We leopards even travel hundreds of kilometers to reach SGNP. We are very adaptable but shy animals, avoiding people as much as possible but dogs are tasty food for us and there are plenty of dogs in settlements around the forest. Sometimes people panic even on simply spotting us. They demand the forest department to trap all of us even if we have not caused any trouble. Such random trappings worsen the problems for us and for you people.

The park does a lot for everyone - it provides clean water, fresh air, open spaces and an opportunity to refresh visitors with a break from the daily grind of life. These benefits are many, crucial for Mumbai but subjective and difficult to put in numbers.

Leopards have always been an integral part of SGNP and we do not follow man-made boundaries/maps and do venture outside the boundary. Sometimes people see merely our presence as dangerous, even if we have been using the area for years without harming anyone. SGNP and the forest department are often blamed for a whole range of problems ranging from leopards to mosquitoes! The park and leopards need your help to resolve these problems.

What worsens the conflict?

- **A mob gathers around a leopard**
If a desperate cat is cornered, it may attack someone in a bid to escape. The Kanjurmarg factory episode
Link: (See 'www.mumbaikarsforsgnp.com/encounters_with_leopards.htm')
illustrates how much these cats want to avoid us. It was trapped inside the factory and when it finally broke the door loose, it did not attack the people who were in its path but skirted around them and ran off.
Leopards typically avoid people but may attack in self defence if it is cornered and surrounded. Thus always give it a way to go off and never surround a leopard.
- **Pressurising the forest department to set up a trap cage**
The intervention was thought of as an answer for so many decades, is actually the worst. Because as you remove leopards from an area, more of them will come in to fill the vacant territories. They may travel hundreds of kilometers effortlessly like 'Ajoba'(the leopard) seems to have done. Link:(www.projectwaghoba.in/docs/ajobas_trek_to_mumbai_toi.pdf)
A pattern has been observed whereby if you remove some individuals leopards others come in and occupy the empty territory. Moreover, sometimes when a mother is removed and her sub adult cub left behind, the cub may create more problems without the guidance of its mother, who would have spent 2 to 3 years teaching it to hunt, to avoid humans and other survival skills. So, if there are leopards living in an area without attacking humans, it is important that the same leopards be allowed to remain in the area, as they will not attack humans unless provoked.
- **Poachers killing leopards**
Like the situation explained above, if an adult leopard is poached or injured, we will have young cubs without a mother and that can have negative consequences for us.



Cub killed by speeding vehicle in Aarey

Please follow speed limit in areas where leopards are present.
Your residential areas/schools can help prevent accidents by erecting reflective boards stating the speed limit of 20 km/hr and by making rumble strips to reduce speed. If vehicles are moving slowly you could even have sightings of the leopards!

A list of practical methods to better live with the leopards so we minimise danger to ourselves

- ☑ Recognise that leopards are resident in the area and mere sightings do not translate into danger.
- ☑ Leopards do not recognise our maps of forest, national park, colony etc. However, they are sensitive enough to avoid contact with people and in fact do their best to avoid us.
- ☑ Be alert after dark (when leopards are active), especially ensuring that children are supervised by an adult if they are outdoor. You could also put on the music on the mobile phone so that it knows that the creature walking along is a human being which it goes out of its way to avoid.
- ☑ Do not move about alone after dark and ensure you have a companion. This will alert any leopard nearby and reduce any chance of you being mistaken for prey animal.
- ☑ If a leopard is sighted, give it right of way and allow it move off peacefully. Any loud actions or aggressive posturing may cause it to react with alarm (and panic), leading to unintended consequences.
- ☑ If a leopard is sighted in the area, do not form a crowd around it. Crowds invariably get excited and the mob behavior will cause the animal to panic and it might harm someone in its bid to escape. The forest department is responsible for managing the interactions between people and leopards but have little control over the movements of individual wild leopards.
- ☑ The only long term solution to avoid leopards within your colony or adjoining it is to ensure that garbage is disposed off well and that no feral dogs are present. If your colony has a dog then ensure its kennel is far away from the building because leopards are attracted to barking dogs from even 400 m away so they will come but once they know that the particular dog is well protected, they will decrease their incursions.
- ☑ Finally leopards do not recognise our man-made park boundaries and they will come outside the park - they always have. It is in our hands to reduce that attraction for them and it is in our hands to put pressure on the civic authorities to ensure better waste collection. The reduction in garbage which attracts dogs and pigs and the proper disposal of organic waste (including waste from butcher shops and *tabelas* in Aarey) can reduce leopard presence around your buildings.

Emergency Numbers

Call the local police station if you anticipate a law and order situation or the police control room at 100 as well as the local fire station or the fire brigade control room at 101. Most often, it is a situation of humans cornering a desperate leopard and the police can help disperse the crowds.

Control Room: 100, 022-22621855, 022-22621983, 022-22625020

Borivali : 022-28906606, 022-28930145

Aarey: 022-29272484, 022-29272494

Dindoshi (Goregaon E): 022-28786300, 022-24691205

In case of a leopard emergency (say a leopard surrounded by mob or a person attacked), call **Sanjay Gandhi National Park control room: 022- 28866449.**
Thane Forest division control room number: 022-25445459.

Incase you're unable to reach any of the Control room numbers, please feel free to speak to our volunteers here:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Numbers</u>
Zeeshan Mirza	Aarey, Goregaon East	96194 93448 / 96649 87540
Rajesh Sanap	Aarey, Goregaon East	96649 87541
Sonu Singh	Mulund Darshan	9833678828
Yogesh Band	Borivali East	8097582519

Have we missed anything? Get in touch and tell us!

Email us at: mumbaikarsforsgnp@gmail.com



www.mumbaikarsforsgnp.com



www.cwsindia.org

Courtesy: Parshuram Shinde, Hari Om Pariwar, Borivali

Tourist Information

Entrance Fees- per day (7.30 am to 6 pm)

Adult (12+) (without vehicle): Rs 30/- Child (3 to 12 yrs): Rs 15/-

Vehicle (additional to each individual person's entrance fee) per day
Two Wheeler: Rs 25/- Car/Jeep: Rs 100/- Bus/Truck: Rs 150/-

Morning Walkers (5 am to 8 am)

Senior Citizens: Rs 12/- per year Others: Rs 25/- per month / Rs 100/- per year

Photography

Still photography (non commercial) : No Fee

Still photography (commercial) : Rs 1000/- per day Video (commercial) : Rs 7500/- per day

Access Restrictions

No entry signs indicate restricted access to tourists around the public recreation zone within the park. Tourists may travel up to Kanheri Caves along the main road only and not either side of the road in the forest. Tourists are requested to leave the park by 6.30 pm

Cycle Hire (Timings available – 7.30 am to 4)

Regular Cycles- Rs 20/- per hour (minimum hire 2 hours) Deposit: Rs 200/- per bicycle
Geared Cycles- Rs 30/- per hour (minimum hire 2 hours) Deposit: Rs 300/- per bicycle

Cloth bags are available at the cycle stands which can be carried to bring back plastic and other thrash found in the Park. For every bag of plastic litter you collect a concession of Rs 5/- will be provided on the rental charge

Accommodation

4 Rest Houses and 2 Camp Sheds are available within the park. Contact the park authorities for further information and booking. Email: sgnpmumbai@gmail.com
New tent houses available for nature lovers.
For further details contact: Range Forest Officer, Krishnagiri Upavan. Tel: 022-28860716

Attractions

Lion and Tiger Safari

Timings : Morning - 9 am to 12.30 pm Afternoon - 2 pm to 5.20 pm
(Open Tuesday to Sunday - MONDAY CLOSED)
Tickets - Adult: Rs 50/- Child: Rs 20/- Video Rs 500/- (per day)

Tickets available at Lion and Tiger Booking Office and Information Centre
Safari Buses leave from outside the booking office. A minimum of 15 adult passengers required for bus departure (maximum 30 seater).

Tourist Information

Nature Information Centre (NIC) and Butterfly Garden

Open daily - Guided Nature Walks and Slide Shows available for booking in advance
Centre contains a walk through interpretation board area with ecological and environmental information on the National Park and the wider world.

Boating Lake

Timings Daily - Morning - 9 am to 12.30 pm
Afternoon - 1.30 pm to 5.30 pm

Tickets - Two Seater Boat - Rs 30/- (over age 3) Duration - 15 minutes
Four Seater Boat - Rs 60/- Duration - 20 minutes

Children's Play Area

One near Boating Lake. Second at Lion and Tiger Safari Booking Office Site

Plant Nursery - Next to NIC (plants available for sale)

Toy Train

Timings - Morning - Every 30 minutes from 9 am to 12 pm
Afternoon - Every 30 minutes from 1.30 pm to 5.30 pm

Tickets - Adult: Rs 25/- Child: Rs 10/-
A minimum of 20 passengers are required for train departure
Trains run Tuesday to Sunday - MONDAY CLOSED
Garden seating area is situated outside train station

Kanheri Caves

Buses run from the Cycle Hire Tent site
Mornings - 9 am to 12.30 pm Afternoons - 2 pm to 5.30 pm
Costs Adult : Rs 30/- Child : Rs 15/-
A minimum of 15 passengers required for bus departure

Tickets for entry to caves (available at cave site)
Timings – Daily 9 am to 5 pm
Indian National : Rs 5/- Foreign Tourist : Rs 100/- Video: Rs 25/-
Snack Shop on site

Deer Enclosure - Small fenced in Deer Park Area near Toy train

Gandhi Memorial - Hilltop views – peaceful garden seating area

Souvenir Shop - Near to Park Entrance Ticket Window

We request you to please think about us when you are inside the Park and

- not play loud music
- collect your trash/plates/cups and take it back to the city - this will prevent the wild animals from choking on the plastic and eating items such as chips
- request your friends also to help us
- give us space when you see us
- enjoy the Park and let us also enjoy your presence.

This forest, of Mumbai, can be saved only with your support.

Please help!

Know your City Forest

