



Press Brief

**INDIA TAKES MAJOR NEXT STEP IN TIGER CONSERVATION:
ANNOUNCES ‘PHASE IV’ ANNUAL TIGER MONITORING**

New Delhi, May 12th 2011

India has announced a major expansion of its tiger monitoring programme, through ‘Phase IV’ of the national tiger estimation programme. This will initiate **intensive, annual monitoring of tigers at the tiger reserve level**, across 41 protected areas in the country, commencing from November 2011.

Welcoming the decision, Minister of State (I/C), Environment and Forests, Shri Jairam Ramesh said: *“This marks an important milestone in our comprehensive tiger conservation strategy. Annual monitoring, (instead of only a four-year cycle) at the tiger reserve level will allow us to get regular updates on the number and health of tiger populations across the country, and will strengthen our tiger conservation efforts”.*

What is “Phase IV”?

Phase IV of the All India Tiger Estimation exercise will begin the process of intensive, annual monitoring of important ‘source’ populations of tigers. The methodology will be developed by the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), in consultation with experts, and will use statistically sound procedures to estimate numbers of both tigers and their prey.

The tiger monitoring protocol will use camera traps, at a density of 25 double-sided cameras per 100 square kilometres, and a minimum trapping effort of 1000 trap nights per 100 square kilometres. This will provide a yearly indication of the status of critical tiger populations around the country, and will be critical to long-term management and conservation of tiger populations.

Prey population monitoring will be conducted simultaneously, using Distance sampling protocols. Distance sampling will be conducted along line transects already established in phase I, and will use a minimum of 30 spatial replicates for 2 km each, and a total effort of 300 km.

The decision to begin Phase IV monitoring was made at a workshop on ‘Best Management Practices in Tiger Conservation’, held from May 9th to 11th.



Framework of All India Tiger Estimation

The All India Tiger Estimation exercise is one of the most crucial components of our national tiger conservation efforts. Monitoring efforts began in 2006, and are undertaken every four years, through a three-phase approach.

Phase I: Field data collection at the beat-level, by trained personnel and using a standardised protocol.

Phase II: Analysis of habitat status of tiger forests using satellite data

Phase III: Camera trapping to identify individual tigers from their unique stripe patterns. This information was used to estimate tiger numbers in sampled sites.

The 2010 National Tiger Assessment involved three phases, and was carried out between December 2009 and December 2010. The previous assessment was done in 2006.

India's Tigers

60 percent of the world's wild tiger population is found in India.

Across a system of **41 tiger reserves**, the 2010 National Tiger Assessment estimates that there are **1706 tigers** (range between 1571 and 1875). This is an improvement from the 2006 estimates of **1411 tigers** (range between 1165 and 1657). However, the increase is largely because the survey was expanded to the entire country in 2010.

Other key outcomes of the workshop

The NTCA and the WII will decide a uniform protocol for Phase IV monitoring, and will facilitate, train and provide a panel of outside experts to be involved in the same. The annual monitoring will be carried out by the respective Chief Wildlife Wardens in tiger States.

In addition to Phase IV monitoring, the 'snapshot' country-level estimation will continue, and will be carried out every 4 years, covering all tiger areas. This will be implemented by the NTCA and WII.

All technical publications and data relating to tiger estimation and conservation will be placed in the public domain by the end of June, 2011.

Special initiatives will be taken to strengthen the management in problematic reserves like Indravati, Similipal, Palamau and Nagarjunasagar-Srisailem Tiger Reserves.

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