

Animals strayed many times recently across Telangana, Andhra Pradesh

Leopards breed in sugarcane fields

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Has the leopard-human conflict in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana State taken a new dimension? Is Maharashtra's Akole valley phenomenon of carnivorous cats adapting to human habitation being replicated in Andhra and Telangana?

Wildlife experts say that the recent series of incidents wherein leopards have been spotted in five districts in AP and three in TS, close to towns and rural areas, are indications that the big cats are adapting to human habitations.

On Thursday as well there were two instances of leopards being spotted, in Anantapur and Kadapa.

Imran Siddiqui of Hyderabad Tiger Conservation Society said, "There is no spurt in leopards straying out; in fact they are now adapting to stay close to human habitations. Leopards have started breeding in high crop areas like sugarcane fields. In Tirupati, Visakhapatnam and Hyderabad there have been instances of leopards feeding near garbage dumps. More instances are being reported as people are now more aware of their presence. Goat lifting, cattle kills are taking place."

Leopards live in high densities in rural areas due to easy availability

KILLING FIELDS

LEOPARDS HAVE BEGUN TO ADAPT TO THE HUMAN HABITATIONS AND HAVE STARTED TO BREED IN CROP FIELDS LIKE REVEALED WILD LIFE EXPERTS.

- Wild life rescue vans provided for each circle in AP and TS
- No of tranquilising experts available
- No vets in Guntur, Prakasham and Kurnool

POACHING IN INDIA

1,278 leopards killed in 2000

200 leopards killed in 2005

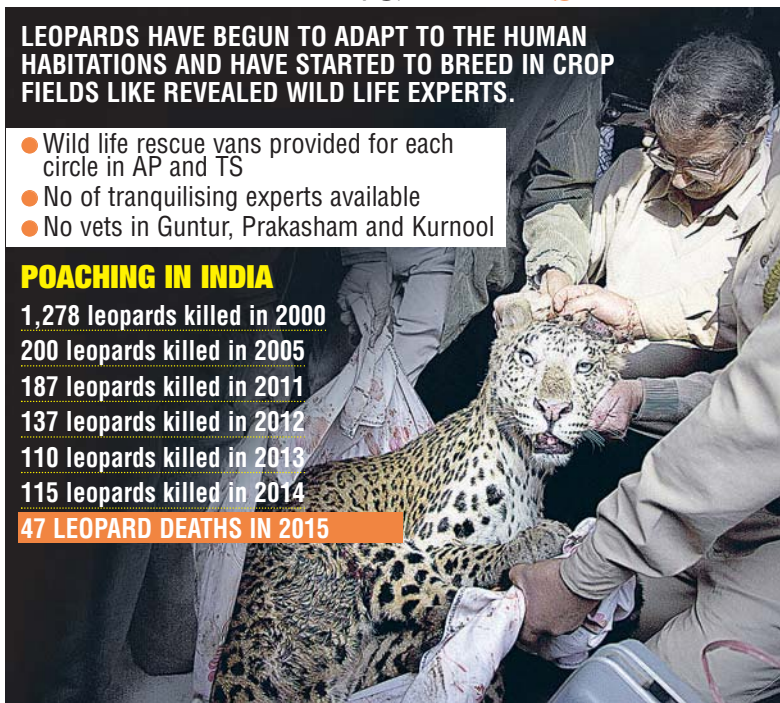
187 leopards killed in 2011

137 leopards killed in 2012

110 leopards killed in 2013

115 leopards killed in 2014

47 LEOPARD DEATHS IN 2015



of stray dogs, pigs and calves.

A senior wildlife official of the Telangana forest department said, "They might have come out in search of food like they stray during summer for water. Leopards can't feed on adult wild boar as they are strong and difficult to attack."

Andhra Pradesh principal chief conservator of forests, A.V. Joseph said, "They are harmless and are of no danger to humans. In Maharashtra there was a phenomenon of leopards breeding in sugarcane fields. But this phenomenon is unlikely in Andhra Pradesh."

POPULATION STABILISES AS POACHING REDUCED

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 28

The demand for leopards in international wild life trafficking has decreased according to Wildlife Protection Society of India, while the number of poaching incidents have come down according to the forest department.

Tiger killings, however, have increased, but the leopard population is stabilising

as they are not targeted by poachers.

Wild life expert Imran Siddiqui said, "We can't say leopard population is blooming but they have stabilised. Poaching has come down as there are no takers for leopard skin and bones."

According to WPSI, the illicit international demand for big cat skins continues, there is virtually no market for leopard skins in India.

LEOPARDS HAVE FREE RUN IN SEEMA REGION

DC CORRESPONDENT
ANANTAPUR, JAN. 29

Leopards seem to be having a field day in many areas of Rayalaseema region. They are found lurking behind bushes in farms and have triggered a wave of panic.

On Thursday, two leopards attacked a herd of sheep and killed at least 90 of them at R. Locharla village in Anantapur district.

In another incident, the people of Sanipaya village in Veeraballi mandal of Kadapa district had a hair-raising experience since the wee hours after a leopard entered the village and climbed up a tree. It stayed there for seven hours till it was caged. Fear-stricken, the villagers of Sanipaya ran helter-skelter.

The villagers informed the forest officials, who rushed to the spot and took at least seven hours to cage the leopard. It was tranquilized and put in a cage.

Forest officials said the leopard had not harmed either animals or humans. The Sanipaya village is close to the reserved forest of Seshachalam and is home to many wild animals, Kadapa divisional forest official said and added that the leopard would be shifted to Tirupati zoo.

However, in Anantapur district, a couple of leopards created tension for villagers of R. Locharla.

A four-member group of sheep rearers in Penukonda mandal set up a Roppam (shelter for sheep) near Kumarappa Kunta of R. Locharla hamlet. There were about 180 small sheep kept in the Roppam with one person to watch over them while the trio took away the older sheep into nearby hilly areas. The lone guard was sleeping, when a couple of leopards attacked the herd and killed at least 90 of them.

Thirty more were injured and when the man shouted, the leopards disappeared into the forest.