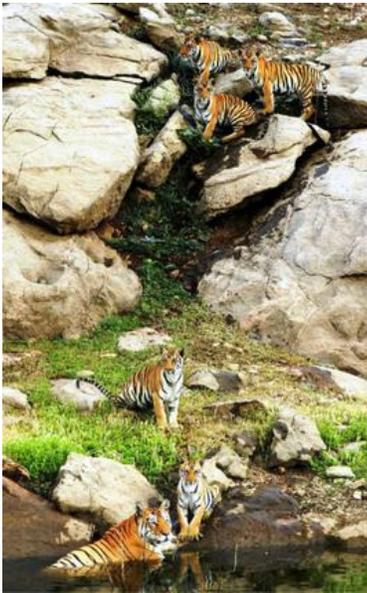


» TODAY'S PAPER » YOUNG WORLD

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Jungle Book and TIGERS

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AT PENCH: The largest number of tigers. Photo: Special Arrangement



According to recent statistics, the percentage of tigers has gone up. But, at the Pench Tiger Reserve things are still bleak. Solution on page 16

Many of you might have seen the new animated version of *The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling. In the book, it is mentioned that the scars on the face of Shere Khan reminds him of man's cruel nature. And this is the reason that he wants to kill Mowgli.

Talking of Shere Khan, in real life, the tiger has been in the news recently for both good and sad reasons. The best news is that the number of tigers in the world has risen from 3,200 in 2010 to 3,890 in 2015. That is an increase of 690 tigers in the world. This is great news since it is after many decades that this has happened. Out of this 690 tigers, India accounts for 520 tigers. The rest 190 tigers are from countries like Russia, Nepal, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China and others. It is clear that India holds a dominant place in the tiger conservation.

In India, the tiger numbers have risen from 1,706 in 2010 to 2,226 in 2014. It gives us hope that an endangered species can be saved.

The Jungle Book is set in a forest near Seoni in Madhya Pradesh which is known as the Pench Tiger Reserve. In fact, the name Seonee Wolf Packs is taken from the Seoni forest. It is sad to know that one tiger has been dying every 10 days this year at the Pench Tiger Reserve. This Reserve spans areas in both Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

In reality

Recently, a tigress named Bhaginnala was found dead and the reason was poisoning. Bhaginnala was a tourist attraction and her photograph was hung on the main gate of the Reserve. The reason for tiger deaths in Pench is poaching and excessive construction going on in the vicinity.

Tiger population in the Reserve had risen by almost 40 per cent in recent years. And tigers faced a severe space crunch. This is because each male tiger carves an area in the forest for himself. He fiercely defends this against other males. He marks this area by scent marks of his body and urine. As and when new cubs are born and grow up, the male cubs are forced to leave and chart out their own territory.

This is a harrowing time for young male tigers, as finding exclusive spots are difficult when forest area is limited. They try to move to adjoining forest areas. Unfortunately, Pench Tiger Reserve is not properly connected to other Reserves especially the Kanha Tiger Reserve.

Pench tigers come into contact with villagers when they try to move within fragmented corridors that connect forests. They become easy targets for poachers. Some villagers poison the water source to help the poachers. There is a large international market for various tiger parts.

The need of the hour is good corridors connecting forests, making it safe for tigers to venture out.

Tigers can be saved only when forest staff work hand in hand with the local people for forest and wildlife conservation.

This series on Conservation and Nature is brought to you by Kalpavriksh Environmental Action Group

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What you can do

Find out...

What is the area of the Pench Tiger Reserve?

How many tigers do they have?

Approximately how much space does each tiger require?

Is that space enough for the tigers of Pench?
