

## **Project Update: November 2014**

### **September 2013- January 2013**

We applied for the research permission from Gujarat forest Department in September 2013. The permission was supposed to come by the end of November 2013; however they lost my application file, due to which I had to applied again. This took another two months. And finally the research permission from Chief Wildlife Warden (Gujarat) was received in the mid January 2014. During this period we made some preliminary surveys to look for setting up base camp at various places.

### **February 2014 – March 2014**

Field work was initiated with the start of February 2014 in Khadir region of Bhachau taluka of Kutch district, followed by northern parts of Rapar taluka. I was assisted by one volunteer and a field assistant in conducting the field work. The team surveyed the villages and mostly target herders or grazers for the interview so that team can get a quality data on the conflicts and presence of the wolves as they have the more reliable data for the cause they remain in area which can be the possible habitat of Indian wolf. Before I could complete field work in this region, I started suffering from chronic back pain. And so I was advised to rest and avoid physical strain. Because of this I had to hire a researcher to work on behalf of me till I get better. A total of 450 km of vehicle transects were covered for estimating herbivore density and nearly 49 villages were visited to conduct interview surveys. A total of 31 interviews were conducted in the Khadir part of the Bhachau and a total of 118 interviews were conducted in northern part of Rapar.

### **April 2014- July 2014**

We shifted our base to Tera village to survey parts of Abdasa and Nakhtrana taluka. We performed the work with the collaboration of The Kutch Ecological Research Centre (A Division of The Corbett Foundation) in the villages of Abdasa Taluka, and collected various information about the presence of Indian wolf presence in the area through socio-economic surveys in the villages and by recording indirect/ direct animal sings. Team also studied the broad vegetation type of the Indian wolf habitat. Team conducted transect and thus identified some active area of the animal. A total of 447.12 kms of vehicle transect were carried out to estimate herbivore density in Abdasa Taluka. Team carried out 3-6 interviews per village, totalling to at least 15-20 interviews per grid. The presence of the Indian wolf will be based on these interviews. A total of 169 villages were surveyed during these three months, of which 126 were of Abdasa and 43 of Nakhtrana taluka. 222 interviews were conducted in Abdasa Taluka whereas 150 Interviews were conducted in Nakhtrana Taluka. A total of 4582 kms were covered to conduct these surveys.

### **October 2014- Till now**

Field surveys have been started in remaining part of Rapar and Bhachau taluka. By the end of this month we will finish this two Talukas and we will move to Bhuj and Narayan Sarovar talukas for further surveys.

## **IMPORTANT FINDINGS**

Although the data collection is going and the data is still to be analysed, certain important findings have emerged as a result of our observations.

- 1) A large possible wolf habitat area is under great anthropogenic pressure
- 2) Encroachment for agriculture is main cause of shrinking natural habitat
- 3) Coal mining are other significant threats to wolf habitat
- 4) Increase in the population of free ranging domestic dogs
- 5) Poisoning, den destruction and den smoking were reported in human wildlife conflict surveys conducted among the pastoralists in Abdasa.
- 6) Wild boar and Nilgai population is in abundance everywhere and as a result crop raiding has increased in most of the areas surveyed.
- 7) No significant human-carnivore conflict issues were recorded in Nakhtrana taluka. Few incidents of rabid wolf attacking people were recorded.
- 8) Older age peoples are more positive towards conservation in comparison to young generation

## **DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTER**

We faced a major problem for the project, due to which we could not continue the work as estimated. We received the permission letter from Chief Wildlife of warden of Gujarat in January 2014 with a condition that I shall also secure permission from concerned authorities, especially National biodiversity Authority (NBA). We tried to convince the authorities that we do not require any permission from NBA. However, in vain, we were asked again and again to secure permission from NBA. We applied to NBA, and we received a letter from the Technical officer (NBA), after seven months of application, mentioning that we do not require any permission from NBA, since neither of our team members were foreigners. While we were pursuing this race of securing permission we were not allowed to work or did not receive any help from the forest department for almost six months in the absence of any permission letter from NBA. Finally we again applied for a new permission letter from the authorities, which is still pending. However we were able to do a lot of significant field work. I have already applied for extending the research permission to the Chief Wildlife Warden.

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Pic 1. Team conducting interviews



Pic 2. A herder giving his views on conflict with Indian wolf



Pic 3. Group discussion with the villagers



Pic 4. Team conducting interviews



Pic 5. Pug marks of Indian wolf in Nangiya & Ukir region, Abdasa



Pic 6. Feral dogs are the biggest competitors for food



Pic 7. Villagers use spiked collar to protect dogs from Wolves and Hyena attacks.



Pic 8. Dens are either blocked or destroyed by the herders and other villagers

**Table 1. Villages visited in northern region of Rapar taluka for interview surveys.**

Villages	Interviews conducted	Villages	Interviews conducted
Anandpar	3	Khandek	6
Balasar	4	Lodrani (Parkara Vandh)	4
Bela	4	Mauvana (Shivagadh)	3
Bharidia (Bhutakia)	4	Moda	4
Bhimasar	5	Nandasar	4
Davri	4	Pragpar	4
Deshalpar	4	Sangadh	2
Dhabda	5	Selari	5
Gedi	4	Sonalva	6
Hamirpar Moti	4	Thanpar	4
Hamirpar Nani	5	Umaiya	4
Jatavada (Jilar Vandh)	6	Versara	5
Kalyanpar	5	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>118</b>
Kanpar	5		
Karuda	5		

**Table 2. Villages visited in Khadir part of Bhachau taluka for interview surveys.**

Villages	Interviews conducted	Villages	Interviews conducted
Dholavira	4	Kalyanpar	5
Gadhada	4	Kharoda	5
Ganeshpar	5	Ratanpar	4
Janan	4	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31</b>

**Table 3. Villages visited in Abdasa taluka for interview surveys.**

<b>Villages</b>	<b>Interviews conducted</b>	<b>Villages</b>	<b>Interviews conducted</b>
Bara	4	Moti Ber	4
Aarikhana	5	Moti Sindhodi	4
Aashapar	3	Nagor	3
Aasiravandh	4	Nandra	4
Anarvandh	4	Nangiya	2
Baravandh	4	Nani Ber	4
Bhanada	4	Narayannagar	4
Bhoa	4	Parjau	4
Charra	4	Pat	4
Dadamapar	4	Rajanpar	1
Dumra	4	Rampar	4
Gadhvada	3	Rapargarh	4
Goyla	4	Sanosara	4
Jaitvandh	4	Sayara	4
Jakho	4	Snadhand	4
Jashapar	4	Sudodro	4
Kadoli	1	Sukhpar	4
Kadoli	5	Suthri	4
Kalatalab	3	Tera	4
Karamta	4	Ukir	4
Kerwandh	4	Ustiya	4
Khamand	3	Vadsar	4
Khanay	4	Vaghpadhar	4
Khirasara	4	Vakhu	4
Khuda	4	Valsara	4
Kora	4	Varapadhar	4
Kothara	4	Vingaber	4
Lala	4	Yeda	5
Lathedi	4	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>222</b>
Liyari	4		

**Table 4. Villages visited in Nakhtrana taluka for interview surveys.**

<b>Villages</b>	<b>Interviews conducted</b>	<b>Villages</b>	<b>Interviews conducted</b>
Aamara	4	Khamodi	4
Aiyar	4	Khirasara	3
Aral	4	Kothda	2
Baadiyara	3	Lakshmipar	3
Bandiya	4	Ludhway	4
Bhimsar	3	Mathal	4
Chara Khadu	4	Muru	4
Deshalapar	4	Naagviri	2
Devapar	2	Netra	4
Devisar	3	Paneli	4
Dhadani	3	Piya	3
Dhananha	3	Rampar	3
Dhanaya	4	Rasaliya	4
Dhora	4	Ravapar	3
Dodiya	4	Resalpar	1
Fulay	4	Roha	5
Ganganh	4	Sayara	2
Haripar	4	Sukhsanha	4
Jadhodhar	4	Ukheda	7
Jesarvandh	1	Valwa	4
Jetavira	3	Vidhapar	4
Jinjaya	3	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>126</b>