

Identifying key issues for the conservation of Sloth bear (*Melursus ursinus*) in Rajnilgiri, Odisha, Eastern India.

-Prakash Mardaraj

August to November 2014 update:

The project work started during the 1st week of August 2014. In Nilgiri wildlife range we collected information from the Forest department, hospitals and contacted the local village head for any information on Human Sloth bear. We gather information on village demography cattle population from the administrated offices. A total of 169 human attacks (resulting in 3 deaths) already occurred between June 2002 to November 2014. Three sloth bears were also killed in retaliation by the villagers during this period. The highest number of human casualty (66%, n=111) were during the year 2005 to 2009 whereas during that period more than 100 quarries were running in the Range. At present there are legally 40 stone quarries running.

Towards the awareness campaign we had organised a painting fest among the school students around Swarnachuda Reserve Forest in Nilgiri Wildlife Range special focusing on Saving Sloth Bear, 12 schools participated in the competition. With announced prizes 8 participant in Senior



and 8 in Junior groups were awarded, apart from winners all the contestant were gifted drawing books and pencils.

The field survey in and around the project area has been initiated to know the circumstance of conflict situation. Among the existing reserve forests in the Nilgiri wildlife Range the maximum Sloth bear population exist in the Swarnachuda Reserve forest, so mostly the people living around the Swarnachuda Reserve forest faces serious problems in the form of human injuries and kitchen garden raid.



November is the harvesting season and the prime occupation of the villagers residing around the

Swarnachuda reserve forest is farming. Paddy (Rice) is the stable crop of this area. The village head of the villages around the Swarnachuda reserve forest were been informed regarding meeting and discussion on human sloth bear conflict issues. Future objective is to understand the core problem and to developed the awareness and education programmes accordingly.

Table: List of conflict villages mostly affected by Sloth bear

Sl.No	Name of Villages	Sl.No	Name of Villages
1	Dhobosila	11	Patna
2	Kantabania	12	Balbolia
3	Kendukhunta	13	Kuanali
4	Chanapal	14	Malyani
5	Katokochi	15	Salabani
6	Chaturikanta	16	Ringpur
7	Gujadhia	17	Bagmora
8	Mahisapata	18	Pudasol
9	Jamboboni	19	Nizgadh
10	Hatiasia		