

Project Update: March 2011

The forests in Sabarkantha and Mehsana districts are unprotected reserved forest with some very good patches of dense forest, ravine forests and hilly tracks with sizeable population of sloth bear, leopard, hyaena and other wildlife. Due to unprotected category of forest, it suffers from variety of human activities such as mining, transport, encroachment, grazing, collection of firewood and other forest products, etc. Water is the everlasting problem in the area for both human and wildlife and sharing of these two resources results in human-bear conflict, especially when a bear mother is found with cubs.

Our findings revealed that the awareness about bears in the local tribes can be one of the ultimate options towards human-bear coexistence in the region. We organised sign surveys to study the bear occupancy in the region and conducted awareness campaigns in the area highly occupied by sloth bear. We also educated the local tribes about how to claim the compensation after injury by bears and other wildlife. Our focal topics of discussion during the awareness campaign were also posted as hoardings and sign boards at different places in the region. These hoardings include:

1. What should be done to avoid bear attack;
2. Know about bear behaviour and food in your region;
3. Emergency and first aid to bear attack victim.

We also conducted the workshop and meetings with local forest field staff for training on bear sign survey and first aid and emergency treatment to injured person through wildlife attacks. We prepared the simpler compensation form which includes all the details required by the government for paying compensation to villagers. We distributed these compensation forms in all the villages in vicinity to the forests as well as in the forest range offices.

