

Project Update: January 2018

Our study area is a model for an arid agro-pastoral landscape devoid of any protected areas or abundant large wild prey, but yet hosting a high diversity of large carnivores sharing space with humans because of its unique geological features, i.e. the rocky outcrops.

Our survey kick-started in July 2017 with our collaboration with Deccan Conservation Foundation, Bangalore where we together placed camera traps at a total of three fragmented rocky outcrop sites, out of a total of five, which we aim to monitor till the project ends. These rocky outcrops are surrounded by agricultural landscapes, domestic animals and people and yet, we have been able to document the presence of Indian grey wolves, leopards, sloth bears and striped hyenas at these sites (first three being Schedule I species under Indian law), along with an even higher diversity of small carnivores. These surveys have been clubbed together with interviews of local shepherds, in order to obtain distribution maps of large carnivores from a 3500 km² landscape.



A Striped Hyena captured in our camera trap in one of our large carnivore surveys.

We have been able to employ five local people as informants, each in charge of five villages in a 1000 km² landscape, where they provide us real-time livestock loss instances from carnivores which are faced by shepherds. We have been able to reach out to at least 138 shepherds till now and we have been able to record at least 10 cases of livestock losses in detail.

We hope to finish the survey till April 2018 and be able to understand the significance of such unique landscapes in India, which are otherwise wrongly thought to be degraded.



Volunteers conducting interviews with shepherds in Koppal.