

Project Update: June 2010

Up to January 2010, three rusty-spotted cats had been identified. By the end of May 2010 two more cats had been seen. But if I compared this result with my previous work with the state forest department for the same period of time, I have learnt that my sightings are far less than before.

Our study area is surrounded by many villages and between March and June 2010 I found the most disturbance of wildlife due to the intensive collection of flowers and seeds of *Madhuca indica* by locals, even at night. Wildlife, including rusty-spotted cat, avoided *Madhuca indica* dominant areas. Due to mentioned practice of the locals we had also faced difficulties in installing the camera traps in the intensive study area of Kevadi forest. To overcome this problem I have hired three more locals, Paniyo, Manek and Parvat, to guard our installed camera traps as well as to make local people aware of our work.

Of the five individual rusty-spotted cats identified, four were with the aid of handheld camera and one from a camera trap. I have also learnt that through camera trapping, rusty-spotted cats are very hard to see.

Orientations on importance of forest, rusty-spotted cat and other important wildlife, and their dependence on forest cover were exercised in various villages with men, women and children. The same exercise with schoolchildren has been scheduled in first week of July 2010.