

Project Update: December 2008

The focus of this project is creating awareness among the public about the complexities of the human – large cat conflict in India; that the current belief that wildlife is restricted only to forests is a misconception and that animals like the leopards can live even in human dominated landscapes **without serious conflict** if we understand more about them.

The two main components of this project are the making of a movie on the issue of human carnivore conflict, focused on the leopard and a state level education programme targeting village administrative bodies in two human dominated landscapes (Ahmednagar and Nashik Forest Divisions) in Maharashtra. The focus of my work is the state of Maharashtra where I am also carrying out research, the results of which have been used in the movie and will be used in the education programmes.

As part of the Rufford Booster grant, “Pushed to Kill” a movie that deals with my work and highlights the complexities of the human wildlife conflict in India has been produced (a clip of it is available on the web page <http://mazoomdaar.blogspot.com/>) by Jay Mazoomdaar. The aim is to provide this movie to as large an audience as possible so that people are educated about the complexities involved with the human leopard conflict issue.



The shooting for the movie was carried out in Nashik, Ahmednagar and Jalgaon (bordering the state of Madhya Pradesh) districts of Maharashtra, as well as in the Dang forests of Gujarat (bordering Maharashtra) (*Image inset below*). The production of the movie has been completed, and the final version will be ready soon.

The awareness programmes will be carried out from February 2009 as I was waiting for my research to be completed so that we have more information on hand to share with the farmers. Also, I plan on using a combination of both, talks at the village administrative bodies as well as to have street plays during market days. I am coordinating with a local theatre group for the latter.