

To,

Subject: "India lost 750 tigers in last 8 years, 168 due to poaching"; article published in the Times Of India dated June 5, 2020.

Sir,

Reference is invited to the subject cited above. In this context, I am directed to inform that the said media article, which has also appeared in other national dailies, presents a one sided view of tiger conservation in the country and has apparently attempted to malign efforts of the Government of India in this regard and sensationalize the issue.

2. It is important to mention that due to efforts of the Government of India thorough the National Tiger Conservation Authority, the tiger has been taken from the brink to an assured path of recovery, which is evident in findings of the quadrennial All India Tiger Estimation conducted in 2006, 2010, 2014 and 2018.

3. These results have shown a healthy annual growth rate of tigers at 6%, which offsets natural losses and keeps tigers at the habitats carrying capacity level, in the Indian context. Further, an analysis of mortality data done by the NTCA has revealed that only one third of deaths involves adult females, the latter essential to ensure an ecologically healthy and viable population.

4. The National Tiger Conservation Authority maintains the highest standards of transparency in so far as making tiger death statistics available to the citizen through it's website as well as dedicated portal - www.tigernet.nic.in, so that people can make a logical assessment, if they desire. The presentation of data over a long time frame spread across 8 years indicates an intent to to imprint the gullible reader with large numbers which may cause undue alarm. Also not adequately covered is the fact that 60 percent of tiger deaths in India are not attributable to poaching.

5. It is also pertinent to mention that the NTCA, though a dedicated Standard Operating Procedure, has a stringent protocol to ascribe cause to a tiger death, which is treated as unnatural, unless otherwise proved by the State concerned through submission of necropsy reports, histopathological and forensic assessments besides photographs and circumstantial evidences. It is only after a detailed analysis of these documents that cause is ascribed to a tiger death.

6. While it is appreciated that figures as available on the NTCA's website and as provided in the RTI reply have been used in your article, the manner in which it has been presented causes alarm and does not take into account the gamut of processes that go into dealing with tiger death in the country and the natural gains that have been made in tiger conservation, as a result of sustained technical and financial interventions by the Government of India under its Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Project Tiger being steered by the NTCA.

It is hence, requested that the aforesaid facts be presented to your readers so that there is no sensationalism and citizens are not led to believe that there is cause for alarm.

Yours faithfully,

(Dr. Vaibhav C. Mathur)
Assistant Inspector General of Forests
National Tiger Conservation Authority