

Tiger census to be annual affair

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In a bid to ensure greater accountability, the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has decided to conduct an annual tiger census from 2012 in all 39 tiger reserves of the country.

This will continue in tandem with the ongoing practice of conducting the tiger census every four years.

The objective of holding an annual exercise is to ensure that the field staff remain on alert as far as



their specific tiger population is concerned. While the NTCA will provide all the necessary equipment including sophisticated cameras, experts from the Wildlife Institute of India will provide technical

training to the field staff.

In order to ensure quick implementation, the NTCA plans to transfer ₹35 lakhs to each tiger reserve. The money will be transferred directly to the tiger foundation in these reserves to be used to track down the animals.

The earlier practice of using pug marks to arrive at the number of tigers has been discontinued in favour of camera traps which are placed in salient positions for a period of 35 to 60 days in a single location to trap the images of

tigers. The data is then collected and analysed.

As a start to this census operation, a two-day regional training workshop for 100 forest department officials in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra has been organised at the Panna Tiger Reserve.

The annual census will be conducted in all tiger reserves of the country, including six in Madhya Pradesh, namely Kanha, Pench, Bandhavgarh, Satpura, Panna and Sanjay Dubri tiger reserves.