

tiger relocation

Sariska gets T-12 of Ranthambore

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NEW DELHI

July 20: One male tiger was relocated from the Ranthambore National Park in Sawai Madhopur to the Sariska Tiger Reserve in Alwar on Tuesday. The tiger T-12 was tranquilised on Tuesday in Kundla area in Ranthambore, put in a special cage and taken to Sariska amid tight security. A female tigress, also from Ranthambore National Park, is expected to join the tiger in the reserve in the next few weeks.

The sedated tiger was driven by truck from the reserve which is located 110 km from the Ranthambore Park. Although the Sariska Tiger Reserve is at the centre of Project Tiger conservation programme, the government was forced in 2005 to confirm that there were no tigers left in Sariska.

In a bid to repopulate the reserve, one male tiger was airlifted here in 2008 followed by two female tigers in 2009.

But genetic similarity between the three animals created a situation where despite mating, the females failed to breed.

This time round the National Tiger Conservation Authority decided to

adopt a more cautious approach and asked the Bangalore-based National Centre for Biological Sciences to conduct the DNA tests of male and female tigers before relocating them. DNA tests of eight tigers from Ranthambore tiger reserve were conducted and the NTCA zeroed in only on two tigers because they had the least degree of relatedness. The other six tigers had a high degree of relatedness with the big cats in Sariska.

Once the environment ministry gave the approval to the NTCA, "Operation Tiger Relocation" was formally launched.

"To avoid controversy, this is for the first time that, minister for environment and forests Jairam Ramesh, who personally oversaw the shifting of the tiger admitted, "We decided to go in for the genetic analysis of the tigers and hope it (the translocation) will give the desired result."

One tiger expert pointed out that it would have been better for the NTCA to first relocate the already present male in the Sariska tiger reserve. Conservationist Belinda Wright did not agree with this surmise. "Most tiger reserves have more than one tiger."