

Tiger dies at Bihar reserve

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At a time when the dwindling tiger population in the country has become of matter of grave national concern and debates, a tiger was found dead in Bihar's only tiger reserve in West Champaran on Thursday.

According to the census in 2006, there are only 13 tigers left in Valmiki Tiger Reserve. The carcass was found in a ditch in Madanpur range of the forest. Officials suspect that the tiger was killed by poachers. "Though nothing is clear yet until we get the post-mortem report, it appears that the tiger could have been poisoned," said Junail Ali, an official of the Madanpur Forest range.

However, chief wildlife



warden of Bihar BA Khan said the reserve's field director has already been asked to reach the spot and review the situation. "Nothing is clear now. Only a post-mortem report will reveal the truth," he said. Besides, officials said a team of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) too has been sent to the spot.

In August 2008, a tiger had been killed after he was

trapped in a foot claw laid out by poachers in Valmiki Tiger Reserve. In December last year, three leopard skins were seized from traders at Lakhimpur village, 6 km from the reserve.

The incident came to light when women, who had gone into the forest to collect firewood, saw some people trying to dispose of a tiger's body. They informed the locals, who, in turn, contacted forest officials. However, by the time officials reached the spot, the killers had disappeared.

It is said the tiger might have died a week earlier. The villagers alleged that the tiger was killed by poachers, who sneak in through Nepal. Forest officials at Valmiki are reportedly ill-equipped to deal with such a situation.