

'Tiger population of 1,411 is exaggerated'

UNDER THREAT Environment minister says the number could be much lower

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NEW DELHI: India's wild tiger population is much less than the often claimed figure of 1,411 tigers.

"It (the figure) is an exaggeration," Environment and Forest minister Jairam Ramesh said, while launching a handbook on wildlife law enforcement in India by Samir Sinha of NGO WWF. "I don't know from where the figure (1,411) came. Probably, the number of tigers in the wild are much lower and are diminishing day by day".

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THE TIGER CENSUS



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- Many tiger experts have raised question over the National Tiger Conservation Authority figure of 1,411.
- In 2007, the Tiger Census report had estimated maximum of 1,650 and minimum of 1,150 tigers.
- It meant an average of 1,411 tigers in the wild, however since then, over 100 tiger deaths have been reported.

(NCTA) figure of 1,411.

"To me, there are not more than 1,000 to 1,100 tigers in the wild," said P K Sen, former director of Project Tiger.

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tigers. It meant an average of 1,411 tigers in the wild. Since then, over 100 tiger deaths have been reported.

The new tiger census using better methodology will be completed by October and by December 2010, the number of

big cat, categorized as most endangered species in the world, would be out.

Belinda Wright, Executive Director of NGO Wildlife Protection Society of India, said: "The tiger estimate in new census would be less" than in 2008

but added that it would be difficult to give a guess estimate as of now.

"Except, Corbett Tiger Reserve in Uttarakhand, the tiger population in most other reserves has diminished," Sen said.

For Ramesh, tigers even in Corbett are under attack and there is a "concerted effort" to kill them. "It is because of high density of tigers there."

Four tigers have died in Corbett in last one month, which Anil Baluni, deputy chairman of state environment and forest advisory committee, said were because of natural reasons. "There was not even a single case of poaching as all body parts were intact," he said.

Apart from poachers, Ramesh said, the growing real estate close to tiger habitat is also an issue of concern.