

IITian to improve water supply for Gir ecosystem

Study aims to improve animal habitat, reduce man-animal conflict

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Ahmedabad: A student of the Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar has undertaken a study to minimize the human-animal conflict at the Gir National Park in Gujarat. A recent visit to the Gir forest by the students of IITGn compelled final year BTech student Rushabh Desadla to undertake the challenge and work towards a solution.

Desadla intends to create a technological intervention to improve the water supply arrangement at watering holes in forests to benefit maximum number of animals and species of the Gir ecosystem. The study will involve change in both, the design of the water points and the material used. It will also look at the system of water supply to these water points and suggest improvements for more efficient utilisation of water.



6 In Gir and surrounding areas, the forest department has made around 500 artificial water points which must be regularly filled. The efficient design and management of these water points is a key requirement for animals and birds during the dry season.

- Kuldeep Goel, principal chief conservator of Forests (Wildlife), chief wildlife warden, Gujarat

Desadla, currently at Gir, is studying the issue with help from the forest department.

He says, "A major reason of man-animal conflict during the dry season is the source of water.

As water becomes scarce, both men and wild animals start depending on common water sources which have not dried. This places them in mutual conflict."

"Hence, it is important to design water sources in such a way that they are user-friendly for maximum number of species of animals, birds and reptiles. The water supply system should be such that the process doesn't disturb animals and the water is properly utilised as well. The possibility of using solar pumps and wind mills to extract local ground water will be examined."

Kuldeep Goel, principal chief conservator of Forests (Wildlife) and the chief wildlife warden of Gujarat said, "As the habitat of these majestic animals lies in dry and drought prone regions of the state, it is a huge effort for the Forest Department to arrange drinking water for the wild animals."

According to a census carried out in 2015, the population of Asiatic lions in the wild had grown from 177 in 1968 to 523 in 2015. The study by IITGN will help the forest to conserve water for better animal habitat.

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