

Recent Developments in Nagarhole Reserve

July 8, 2020

A black panther was spotted in Karnataka's Nagarhole National Park and Tiger Reserve. The panther, which seemed to be 4-5 years old was spotted on a large moss-laden tree branch in an attentive posture and looking backwards.

Black Panther

A **melanistic leopard** is often called black panther or jaguar, and mistakenly thought to be a different species. Nine subspecies of the leopard have been recognized, and they are distributed across Africa and Asia. Each of them vary to some degree in appearance and biology as one moves across this wide geographical range. The leopard is the **smallest of the big cats**, and known for its ability to adapt in a variety of habitats. Melanism is a common occurrence in leopards, wherein the entire skin of the animal is black in colour, including its spots. It is listed in **Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and included in Appendix I of CITES and listed as Near Threatened on the IUCN Red List.**

Nagarhole National Park

NTR stretches between Kodagu and Mysore districts and was a protected reserve from the time of the Wodeyar dynasty, rulers of the erstwhile kingdom of Mysore. Nagarhole, which served as an exclusive hunting reserve of the Wodeyars, was made a wildlife sanctuary in 1955, covering an area of 284 square km – later stretched up to 643 square km. It was **upgraded to a national park in 1988 and was brought into the fold of Project Tiger after being declared a tiger reserve in 1999.**

Some of the animals which thrive in the reserve include tigers, panthers, wild dogs, elephants, bisons, sambar,

spotted deer, barking deer, sloth bears, wild boars, common langur, bonnet macaque and a variety of reptiles and birds.

Time Stamped Card System

The Forest Department will soon put in place a **traffic monitoring mechanism** along the roads adjacent to Nagarahole National Park and criss-crossing Mysuru and Kodagu districts to ensure better compliance of forest laws by motorists and minimise road kills. This entails introduction of a time-stamped card system.

The mechanism will help ensure that motorists don't stop midway and litter the area or cause disturbance to wildlife. In the absence of any monitoring mechanism, **littering along the 11-km stretch of road is high** as many motorists stop midway on the road adjacent to the forests for lunch break and leave behind plastic water bottles and liquor bottles. The vehicles on approaching the forest check posts will be provided with the time stamped card complete with **details on the speed limit to be maintained and the exit time at the next check post.**