

Video on monitoring tigers on YouTube

Bangalore, March 5, 2009

The Wildlife Conservation Society – India Program (WCS – India) has released a unique training video on YouTube, the popular video-sharing network on the Internet. Titled '**Monitoring tigers and their Prey - The Right Way**', the 5-part instructional video, produced by wildlife filmmaker Shekar Dattatri in collaboration with renowned tiger scientist Dr. K. Ullas Karanth, is the first of its kind in the world, and showcases the latest scientific methods for estimating the numbers of wild tigers and their prey and for measuring habitat occupancy. The video is based on the acclaimed manual 'Monitoring Tigers and their Prey' edited by Karanth and Dr. James D. Nichols, and is aimed at wildlife researchers, park managers, conservation volunteers and students.

According to Karanth, who is a Senior Conservation Scientist with WCS, the main aim of the training video is to demystify the practice of field scientific techniques such as 'line transect sampling' and 'camera trapping', and enable all interested persons to understand the correct field protocols that should be followed for monitoring the numbers of the endangered big cat. "A robust scientific system will allow us to accurately measure population trends of tigers and their prey from year to year. Such a system of monitoring could help us prevent local extinctions, like the one that took place in Sariska Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan a few years ago", he said. Hitherto, the Indian government had relied on a scientifically flawed 'pugmark method', which allowed a lot of scope for inflating tiger numbers. However, the government has now discarded this method in favour of scientific techniques such as those outlined in the video. "WCS believes in developing 'best practices' for big cat conservation and sharing its science widely with the conservation community" Karanth added.

"While many people are now familiar with terms such as 'line transect sampling' and 'camera trapping', they may not be aware of the practice and principles underlying these methods. We hope the video will help fill this gap", says Dr. Ravi Chellam, Country Director (India), Wildlife Conservation Society. "The video will also be useful to people studying other big cats like jaguars, cheetahs, snow leopards and leopards, because the methods of monitoring are essentially the same", he adds.

The video can be accessed at [**www.youtube.com/monitoringtigers**](http://www.youtube.com/monitoringtigers)