

# Forest dept to conduct wildlife census in Gautala

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Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar: The annual wildlife census at Gautala Autramghat Wildlife Sanctuary in the Kannad taluka of Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar district will be conducted by the forest department at 15 different places inside the sanctuary. The census will be carried out from 5pm on Monday until dawn the next day.

Honorary wildlife warden for Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, Dr Kishor Pathak, said 15 machans (platforms erected on trees) have been put in place for observing the animals. "Most of these machans are erected near water holes situated in different parts of the Gautala Autramghat Wildlife Sanctuary. As natural water

resources dry up during summer, wild animals visit water holes to quench their thirst and can be easily spotted for keeping records," he said.

For those taking part in the wildlife census, the forest department has appealed to participants not to wear colourful or bright clothes. "The participants must be fully dressed. They must not bring flashlights or batteries, as the bright moonlight is sufficient to spot the wild creatures. Participants should not carry plastic bottles, food, or alcoholic drinks while observing the animals during the census," Pathak said.

The authorities have also appealed to participants not to play songs or videos on mobiles or any other devices in the forest area.

Spread over Sambhajnagar and the neighbouring Jalgaon district, Gautala Autramghat Wildlife Sanctuary is home to a variety of wild animals, including a lone tiger, leopards, wild boars, deer, Nilgai (blue bull), hares, and Indian porcupine, to name a few, along with several reptiles and birds.