

Maharashtra's Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve: New thermal drones to help detect forest fires, intensify surveillance

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Drones provided by DP World Forest will help in protecting wildlife; forest field staff to receive on-site training for operating the drones for a year

Global end-to-end supply chain solution provider DP World has provided thermal drones for the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra.

In addition, forest field staff will receive on-site training and support for operating the drones for a year. This will better equip the rescue and rapid response teams and field staff to protect the endangered species.

The Tadoba National Park is the oldest and largest national park in Maharashtra. The Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve harbours at least 80 tigers, and there are over 200 tigers in the larger landscape. The reserve is a dry deciduous tropical forest ecosystem, which makes it prone to forest fires and therefore necessitates timely detection of fire hazards.

Drone's features

The drones funded by DP World are Mavic 3 Enterprise Series drones by DJI, which are equipped with a thermal imaging camera, a mechanical shutter, a 56x zoom camera, and RTK (Real-Time Kinematic) module for centimeter-level precision, enhancing the mapping and mission efficiency during surveillance.

The drones will support the collection of data from inaccessible landscapes, measure water body levels, and help in the creation of maps which will enhance biodiversity documentation.

Furthermore, the thermal imaging capabilities of the drones will enable the forest field staff to detect signs of ground fires early on, enhance rescue and wildlife tracking capability, reduce forest offences, and ensure the safety of forest field staff and the local community, said a press release.

'Well-planned precautionary steps'

Kevin D'Souza, Vice President, Commercial & Business Development, DP World Subcontinent said the data collected by drones can be used to take well-planned precautionary steps directly protecting forests and wildlife. "Drones can help in safeguarding the lives of forest field staff and the local community," he said.

Jitendra Ramgaokar, IFS Field Director, TATR and Executive Director TATR Conservation Foundation, said monitoring the reserve, particularly the fringe sections with human habitations, becomes difficult at night. This further creates problems in managing man-animal conflict situations and tracking animals.

The advanced technology of drones will better equip the rescue and rapid response teams and our field staff in general, to help us protect the endangered species in the forest and help us prevent illicit acts in and around the forest area, Ram.

DP World is part of an industry task force led by 'United for Wildlife', which partners with key stakeholders to tackle unlawful wildlife trade. DP World has also signed 11 commitments, including stopping the transportation and trade of illegal wildlife products, the release said.

Source: <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/national/maharashtras-tadoba-andhari-tiger-reserve-new-thermal-drones-to-help-detect-forest-fires-intensify-surveillance/article67011214.ece>

