

‘Enrol local youth in forest exploration’

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Panaji: There is a need for village youth to act as facilitators in the forest areas to explore responsible tourism activities, said ACF, forest department, Paresh Porob.

He was speaking in an online session with Global Shapers on the occasion of Wildlife Week celebrations.

“Forests gives out vapourised alkalines which can be beneficial to human health – an aspect that people are discovering owing to the pandemic. To help people trek, we require facilitators in each village to assist the visitors as well as ensure the forests are kept plastic-free,” he said, adding that this could help in revenue generation for the youth.

He also said that the forest department usually ropes in youngsters from the tribal communities of Goa for their better understanding of the forests. “Better management of wildlife and protected areas is done by uniformed guards with the help of their knowledge,” he said.

Porob pointed out that bird watching has become an active part of eco-tourism in Goa. However, there is also an increasing interest in photographing butterflies, spiders, bracket fungi and dragonflies. “The tourism department must provide a platform for these interests,” Porob said.

He also stressed on the need for wildlife researchers in Goa, protection of forests and wildlife and the mapping of forests in the state.

“Wildlife is not just tigers, elephants and gaur but a lot more. Even the marine life are a part of wildlife and a lot needs to be done in forest research. Often, the tourists at Dudhsagar take selfies but don’t realise that the rock their standing on is millions of years old. People need to take their eyes away from their mobile phone screens and spare a few minutes for nature; interest will automatically develop,” he said.

Porob also pointed out how technology has changed in the forestry sector, especially in recording tiger census. Earlier, forest officials would follow tigers around for days to get a clear picture. Since 2013, however, the camera trap method is being used to record tiger census. For mapping of forests as well, the department is keeping with the times and has adopted drone photography, he said.