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# Forest department, NGO begin covering open wells in Junnar

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Pune: The Junnar forest division and Wildlife SOS, a non-governmental organization (NGO), have started to cover open wells in the region for the safety of wild animals.

Under the project, which started a few weeks ago, four wells have already been covered in Junnar tehsil. The forest department has rescued nearly 100 wild animals, including leopards, from such wells over the last 10 years.

The Junnar forest division is spread across Junnar, Ambegaon, Shirur and Khed tehsils. It is home to various wild animals, such as leopards, hyenas, Indian jackals, foxes etc. Each village in these tehsils has about 30 to 50 wells, with some as deep as 80 to 100ft. The authorities aim to cover all of

these wells under the project.

Amol Satpute, the deputy conservator of forest, Junnar division, said, "It is a pilot project. We need at least Rs1 lakh to cover each well. Currently, we are covering the wells with a history of animals falling into them. We are planning to get financial assistance under CSR activities of private firms in the district."

The wells are being covered by installing an iron fabrication net on top of them. Forest officials said a small portion was kept open to allow entry of pump pipe for irrigation purpose.