



Gujarat govt to survey flora, fauna of 7 forest ranges in Surat to declare area as sanctuary

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The Gujarat Forest department will initiate a preliminary survey of the flora and fauna in seven ranges of the Tapi-Vyara region of Surat, covering the “intact forests”, spread across 69,668.51 hectare to declare the area as a sanctuary.

A decision to the tune was taken at the 23rd meeting of the State Board for Wildlife held in [Gandhinagar](#) under the leadership of Chief Minister [Bhupendra Patel](#).

The surveys will cover the forest areas of Umarpada, Vadpada, Mandvi North and South, Kherwada, Tapti, and Vajpur.

The government in a statement said, “Senior Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) Nityanand Srivastava, in a presentation highlighting the efforts to contain human-animal conflict on account of the increasing number of leopard attacks in South Gujarat, said five of the big cats had been radio-collared and the department is procuring trap cameras to study the animal’s behaviour and tranquiliser guns to handle aggressive leopards.”

Gujarat currently has nearly 20 wildlife sanctuaries.

The statement added, “Given the high density of human population in the South Gujarat area, there are plans to acquire 10 cages per taluka to trap leopards when they come in proximity to human settlements.”

The forest officer also informed the board about two new rescue centres being built in [Surat](#) and Valsad, in addition to the ones already inaugurated at Pavagadh and Jambughoda.

Meanwhile, Chief Secretary Raj Kumar suggested the “strategic planning of a Rehabilitation Center by the Forest Department as a long-term solution to relocate leopards to protected forest areas, away from human populations”.

During the meeting, 15 proposals were presented for the installation of underground optical fibre cables, mobile towers and roads in seven sanctuaries across the state, which includes the Wild Ass sanctuary in the Little Rann of Kutch, Balaram-Ambaji, Narayan Sarovar, Gir, Jambughoda, and Shoolpaneshwar.

The meeting was attended by Forest Minister Mulubhai Bera, Minister of State Mukesh Patel, Pankaj Joshi, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister, U D Singh, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Head of the Forest Force, Principal Secretary Sanjiv Kumar, along with Chief Principal Conservators of Forests and members of the Board, MLAs Mahesh Kaswala, Maltiben Maheshwari and senior members from associated wildlife organisations.

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