

Off limits: Watch tigers from a distance

perspective

Animals are not used to our wild ways



In a wildlife reserve, there are two zones — buffer and core. People are allowed to visit only the buffer zone. But if we see from an animal's point of view, the zones don't limit their movement, as it is meant for them. And if the government is worried about animals then may be they should stop tourists from entering the reserves altogether. Also, around 80% of the tourists don't know how to behave themselves. They treat reserves as parks and don't follow any rules. One should never forget that wild animals are shy by nature. They aren't accustomed to the behaviour of humans. As for poaching, it is still prevalent. And if travel operators think that influx of tourists curbs poaching then they are wrong. People are allowed to visit the reserve for certain timings only and poachers are well aware of it.

—Prakash Pawar,
wildlife enthusiast and tour operator

The government has proposed a ban on entry of tourists into core areas of tiger reserves. Tour operators feel visitors are a deterrent to poaching. **Speak Up** examines pros and cons



expertview

Some confuse wildlife with entertainment



Environment ministry has warned that tourism would be regulated in tiger reserves. It's vital for tourists to be compassionate travellers. There are numerous examples of tourists harming wildlife, by throwing trash that animals eat and choke on later. Many animals are harmed by sanctuary and park officials for tourism. Elephants are 'broken' through beatings and forced to give rides to tourists, other animals are jailed in enclosed spaces so tourists are guaranteed to 'spot' them. There are cases where animals, like deer, are released in an enclosure where they have no chance of survival so that tourists can watch big cats rip them to shreds. Money channelled into keeping few tigers in cages would be better spent on helping protect animals in the wild, including on awareness programmes.

—Poorva Joshipura,
chief functionary, PETA India

Contact with fauna motivates people



It is not justified to ban tourism for two reasons. Firstly, tourists ensure safety of tigers

over the years. In the sense that poachers find it difficult to operate when a park has tourists coming in. Secondly today, the need of the hour is to gather support from the masses to save the tiger. A person who goes to a forest and sees a tiger gets motivated to do something to save it. I was motivated to help save animals after seeing a tigress with cubs for the first time in the Ranthambhore tiger reserve.

—Mridula Vijairaghavan,
student

Highlight bane of hunting animals



Ideally the authorities should ideally support the 'save the tigers' programme

from revenues generated via tourism. Also I think that tourism is an established revenue model in developed countries and definitely does not hamper wildlife in any way. Influx of tourists with proper etiquette shouldn't be an issue. So the tour operators' association is justified in their stand. When the livelihood of an entire group of people depends on tourism, poaching will take a backseat.

—Reeta Gupta,
proprietor

Save the wildlife before it's too late



I don't think that the government should make any zone off limits to human beings

in tiger reserves. The 'Save the Tiger' campaign has received a good response and there has been no study till date that suggests that human interference can deplete tiger population. The government needs to make sure that poachers don't get to the animals easily. The ministry needs to save wildlife before it becomes extinct. I believe that tourists make it difficult for poachers to have a field day.

—Philips Mathew,
content editor

Operators have fiscal gain at heart



Tigers are important for the preservation of the ecosystem, than a few dollars

obtained through tourism. When a tourist enters into tiger reserves, it disturbs their natural environment. Moreover, they pollute the ambience too. Travel operators' association may reason that banning people will increase poaching, but it is only a smokescreen. They are actually taking this stand to ensure that they don't lose revenue. Influx of tourists can fetch money but cannot secure wildlife.

—Saurabh Kapoor,
supply chain planner

Control access into forest areas



The move is not justified. If controlled access is provided to tourists, the people in those

areas will get a good source of income. They will be encouraged to protect the environment since it is a major cause of their livelihood. So in turn, this will act as a natural deterrent against poaching. The tour operators' association's stand is true to an extent. This is because tourism increases opportunities for local employment which wane away the population from helping the poachers.

—Kruti Bakshi,
software engineer

Intrusion hurts natural ecosystem



Development is shrinking tiger's habitat and prey slowly. The government must take some

strong measures for saving rare species of animals. Although we are getting revenue from tourists, we must examine the animals that get poisoned due to tourists. Influx of tourists means lot of revenue to the government, but their intrusion hurts forest life and animals. If forest officers take some preventive measure and shore up security measures for animals, then it's possible to allow tourists.

—Mayur Sonukale,
sr quality engineer