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Innovative way to handle wildlife rescue which aims for zero casualties during rescue operations: Wildlife Rescue Bike

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Conflict between wildlife and humans are increasing globally with the habitat destruction and the increase in the population of tigers, elephants and leopards in India. With the aim to develop a technology for safe handling of wildlife – human conflicts and safe patrolling in the wilderness, Myvets Charitable Trust & Research Centre developed "Wildlife Rescue Bike". In most of the reported cases of leopard rescue during conflicts, majority of forest officials gets injured and there are incidences wherein villagers also got injuried during the rescue operation while going near the leopards; as conflict creates fear in the mind of people and they counter-react by beating the wildlife to death or by killing them directly. New technologies will revolutionize the way we handle the wildlife–human conflicts and wildlife conservation, it can be used as a effective and powerful tool for wildlife conflicts mitigation worldwide. The device has been used in India in wildlife terrain and is very effective to provide safety to the forest officials & wildlife veterinarians during the leopard – human conflicts, night patrolling and during tranquilization of wild leopards & tigers for rescue. Key Features of this Wildlife Rescue Bike are: 1. Close monitoring, patrolling & surveillance of wildlife in protected areas; 2. Provides complete cover during wildlife rescue operations; 3. The Wildlife Rescue Bike will give 360 degree panoramic view for darting; 4. It comes with blow gun, tranquilization equipments, dart guns, ropes, stick, binoculars, anti-venom & first aid kits; 5. Contemporary & dynamic design; 6. The bike is covered from all the sides with iron-net to ensure the protection of forest guard from the attack of wild animal; 7. The front-handle wheel gap is further protected from inside with additional iron-net and horizontal rods, so that the wild animal cannot enter from front wheel gap; 8. The main frame is attached to bike guard and supported with additional vertical-adjustable stands, which can neutralize the force of wild animal attack, and the bike will not topple down; 9. The wildlife veterinarian can dart the animal from all sides, with minimum adjustment; 10. The ground clearance is 200 mm; 11. The Wildlife Rescue Bike is also provided with the LED lights at four sides, so that during patrolling in night they can keep watch from all angles; 12. The frame has a provision for keeping the rescue operation equipments' viz. water bottles, dart gun, blow pipe, ropes, medicine bag, sticks, etc.; 13. The Wildlife Rescue Bike has a provision to cover with the forest landscape print, which will camouflage with the surrounding. These will reduce the stress on the animal during rescue operation as well as it will reduce the chance of counter attack of leopard on bike during the operation.

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Effects of dispersal and density of leopard (*Panthera pardus fusca*) on severity of conflict around Gir PA, Gujarat, western India

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Common leopard (*Panthera pardus fusca*, Mayer) is at global dislike, principally due to conflict with humans at the boundary of the most of the parks. Opportunistically, high density and long dispersals of leopards may contribute significantly to draw them towards periphery specifically where they co-exist with other sympatric competitor. A long term history of leopard human conflict cases was obtained from the forest department (WDS, Gir), and was maintained on complaints of villagers regarding leopard problems at the boundary of the Gir PA. The conflict status was analyzed and resulted with consistent increase in numbers ranged from 4 during 2000 to 200 during 2012. Leopard density was estimated as an avg. 3.47±0.28 individuals/100 km2 along with high occupancy rate 0.915±0.024 respectively using mark-recapture matrix. The movement and ranging pattern of radio-collared leopardess was recorded ca.11 kms in each dispersal effort during 2002 to 2005 towards human vicinity and finally established home range of ca. 70 km2 in agro-farm at the coastal site. As the leopard is a least studied and most problematic large carnivore out-side protected areas, its conflict resolution strategy would be more successful with the information on the abundance, preferable home range size & movement pattern respectively.

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