

Female leopard trapped in Aarey

Linah Baliga | TNN

Mumbai: Apart from locals squatting in the open and dumping garbage around the fringes of the national park, the other big problem is that the national park boundary is patchy and not continuous, making people living in Aarey vulnerable to leopard attacks.

Jalpesh Mehta, founder, Empower Foundation, who has been working on SGNP's man-animal conflict, said that early Saturday morning they got a call from tribals informing



One of the reasons that lead to leopard attacks, is that the national park's boundary is patchy, making people vulnerable

them that a female leopard was trapped inside Aarey National Park's Mataipada.

"It was a female leopard. We were told there was a male leopard roaring in the periphery of the area. We transported the female leopard to SGNP. Our team had been tracking it through its droppings, pug marks and getting regular information from locals. Even as we surmised that the leopards were in search for food, we received a call that a boy was attacked," said Mehta.

Mehta said the only solution is co-existence wherein people will have to change their lifestyles by not venturing out in the forest at night for nature's call and not dump garbage on which dogs and pigs feed, thereby attracting leopards.

THE CALL OF THE WILD

Sunday's leopard attack is not a solitary incident. They restarted from July 2012, after six years. The first official incident was reported in 2006, when a six-year-old girl was mauled. From July 2012-January 2013, six people have been killed. All incidents have been reported from Bhandup and Aarey Milk Colony. **Some incidents:**

Sandeep Takke



LATEST VICTIM: Saurabh Yadav (10), inset, was attacked at this spot in Aarey Milk Colony on Sunday



NOVEMBER 3, 2012

Sita Paage (52) was killed at her residence in Aarey Colony, Goregaon. The victim had gone to relieve herself

NOVEMBER 20, 2012

Usha Yadav (2) was killed near Sanjay Gandhi national park when she stepped out to relieve herself

DECEMBER 7, 2012

Anthony Fernandes (55), a watchman at the civic water treatment plant in Bhandup, was attacked when he stepped out of the plant to relieve himself

JANUARY 7, 2013

Savita Varte (25) was mauled by a leopard in Aarey colony in Goregaon when she stepped out to fill water around 8pm

HOW DOES A LEOPARD TURN MAN-EATER?

- If the cat is injured, it is likely to attack humans
- When it is confronted or attacked by humans
- When it is accompanied by cubs and goes on the offensive to safeguard them
- It usually attacks children in the dark, mistaking them to be small animals

THINGS TO DO, AVOID WHEN CONFRONTED

Do's | Stay calm, slowly move away | Alert forest officials | Keep children away from forest | Clear vegetation around houses | Ensure area is well-lit

Don'ts | Don't allow garbage build-up near houses. It attracts dogs and rodents