Training workshop for updating the Rusty-spotted Cat captive breeding facility at Sanjay Gandhi National Park, Mumbai.

Shomita Mukherjee, Neville Buck, Nayan Khanolkar, M.K. Rao, Anwar Ahmed, Shailesh Pethe, Devendra Bawdane

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Correspondence: Dr. Shomita Mukherjee, shomitam@gmail.com

Front cover image: Mr. Nayan Khanolkar
Organisers:
Mr. M. K. Rao, APCCF
Mr. Anwar Ahmed, CCF and FD
Dr. Shailesh Pethe, Veterinary Officer, Sanjay Gandhi National Park
Dr. Shomita Mukherjee, Principal Scientist, SACON
Mr. Nayan Khanolkar, Freelance wildlife photographer and lecturer

Chief Expert and Resource Person:
Mr. Neville Buck, Section Manager, small carnivores, The Aspinall Foundation

Architect:
Mr. Devendra Bawdane

Volunteers:
Mr. Deval Kadam
Mr. Kunal Chaudhary
Mr. Parag Raorane
Mr. Nikit Surve

Participants (Staff of Sanjay Gandhi National Park):
Mr. Sachin Repal DFO
Mr. Dinesh J. Singh ACF
Mr. Kiran M. Dabholkar ACF
Mr. Sanjay Kamble ACF
Mr. Muthe RFO
Ms. Priyanka Barge RFO
Mr. Rajendra Pawar RFO
Mr. Sanjay Waghmode RFO
Mr. Shailesh Deore RFO
Mr. E. D. Mahadik Forest
Mr. Manoj Patil Forest
Mr. A. R. Jadhav Forest Guard
Mr. A. S. Bhosale Forest Guard
Mr. B. N. Khutale Forest Guard
Mr. B. R. Dhambre Forest Guard
Mr. Bhagwan S. Bhagat Forest Guard
Mr. D. S. Patil Forest Guard
Mr. Deepak P. Tokare Forest Guard
Mr. Jitendras S. Deshmukh Forest Guard
Mr. M. F. Pawara Forest Guard
Mr. M.B. Patil Forest Guard
Mr. Namdeo V. Jhirve Forest Guard
Mr. P. M. Wadajkar Forest Guard
Mr. Paresh J. Ramdharne Forest Guard
Mr. Rajan B. Kharat Forest Guard
Ms. Rina B. Kumbhar Forest Guard
Mr. Roshan S. Shinde Forest Guard
Mr. S. H. Munde Forest Guard
Mr. S. M. Singh Forest Guard
Mr. Sandip Shankar Gaikwad Forest Guard
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SUMMARY

The Rusty-spotted Cat is the smallest cat in the world and endemic to India, Sri Lanka and the region of Nepal bordering India. The species is placed under Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972 and is listed as Vulnerable in the IUCN Red List. Little is known of the ecology of the cat but its populations throughout India are under severe threat of fragmentation and degradation. The species also exists outside Protected Areas in the country, and several kittens are found during the crop harvesting season. Its ability to persist in such extreme disturbance to its habitat is not known and it is feared that the species may lose substantial parts of its habitat and population in the future. Since India perhaps holds the largest population of this species, it is necessary to safeguard the future of the species here. There are no formal captive breeding programs aimed at small cats in India. Sanjay Gandhi National Park, Mumbai has a captive breeding facility for Rusty-spotted Cat which needs to be updated following International standards and Central Zoo Authority of India guidelines. This would pave the way for updating small cat captive conditions and captive breeding facilities in the country.

The aim of the training workshop was to update the captive breeding facility of this species at Sanjay Gandhi National Park, Mumbai. Over the five-day training workshop, participants from the Forest Department were taught skills in handling and caring for the cats, a diet and health plan was outlined, a new site was selected to relocate the breeding program, new enclosures were designed and a future plan for the breeding program was charted. The report provides details of the training and discussions that were held during the workshop.