

# Acclaimed docu maker pitches for saving tigers outside reserves

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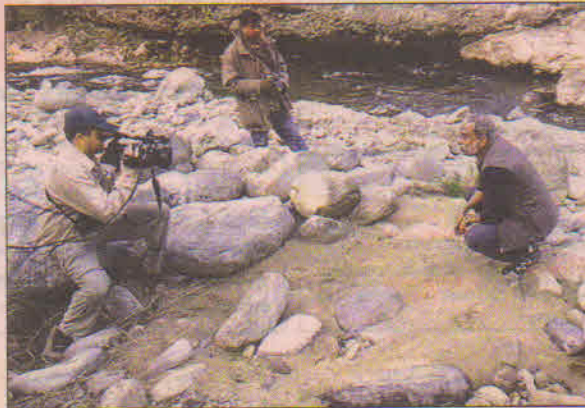
**Pune:** The 30% increase in tiger numbers is encouraging for conservation in India, but this "island-based approach" cannot go far to preserve the country's forests, said documentary filmmaker Krishnendu Bose. He is one of the first to document tigers outside protected areas.

"Most films on tigers look at the animals within the reserves. There is a need for that, but what about the tigers outside the reserves? The conservation policy so far seems to be about saving these pockets of forests, completely ignoring the spaces outside. Instead of conserving the landscape, there is an island-based approach," said Bose.

He said there were 40 tigers living in the fringes of villages like Bramhapuri and Chandrapur, outside the Tadoba tiger reserve.

Bose was the chief guest at the closing ceremony of the Kirloskar Vasundhara International Film Festival (KVIFF) where several people were honoured for their contribution to environmental conservation.

Bose's film, 'The Forgotten Tigers' was the closing film of the festival. Fourteen months in the making, the documentary goes "behind



Krishnendu Bose (right) has been making films on wildlife for over two decades

the headlines" when looking at the issue of conservation. It seeks to look at the issue as more than just man-tiger conflict. "The only time these tigers get any attention is when they kill or are killed, but there is so much more," Bose said.

For instance, in the course of making the film, Bose discovered that among the villagers living on the fringes of the forests, there is still "a tolerant culture" towards conserving wildlife. Citing an example, a sugarcane farmer near Pilibhit told Bose he was happy to be coexisting with the tiger because the big cat protects his fields.

"For a few months when the sugarcane crop is of a

certain height it doesn't need to be tended and tigers are known to move in. There was a case of a female tiger and her cubs that stayed in the fields. The situation is delicate — one killing and the public mood will change," Bose said.

However, he said India's conservation policy has completely failed to capitalize on this. In more than two decades that he has been making films on wildlife, Bose has felt a perceptible shift in the attitude.

"There used to be massive support on the ground for conserving forests. It is still there, but support is withering because people have not benefitted in any way. Had we provided jobs,

“Tigers are what grab headlines and there are many other species that need attention, but don't get it. This is why I have used the tigers to tell a bigger story. The story remains the same whichever animal you choose. Birds, wolves, foxes and a lot of wildlife are known to coexist with humans in a landscape

**Krishnendu Bose** | DIRECTOR,  
THE FORGOTTEN TIGERS

built schools and hospitals, it would have been so different," he said.

A bigger threat to the tiger habitat is the increasing pressure from railway lines, road construction and mining. "Madhya Pradesh was the leading state as far as tiger numbers were concerned. It has now slipped to third position, beaten by Karnataka and Uttarakhand ever since the state opened up to mining interests in the tiger habitat," he said.

On the one hand, tiger numbers are rising and on the other hand their habitat is shrinking. Human-tiger conflict is bound to rise, he said, adding that India's conservation policy is skewed in general towards tigers.