

Wildlife without borders

Dr. Vidya Athreya

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Having seen wildlife documentaries and read about wildlife, if we think about it, these are usually situated in wild spaces. That is where people go to see and film wildlife. However, none of the wild species understand our borders of forested areas and move between the boundaries making their management not so easy especially when they cause damage to property and life, like the leopards of Mumbai. With around 30 attacks on humans each year in the early 2000's now we have less than an attack a year despite the highest density of leopards so close to a metropolis. This talk will take you through the work in Maharashtra on leopards that have learned to live in human-use landscapes such as croplands, at the edge of high-density urban space in Mumbai, and changed the notion of where the wild should be. It also will touch upon the role of humans in mitigating human-wildlife conflict.



Dr. Vidya Athreya is the Director and Head - Science and Conservation at WCS-India. She initially joined WCS-India in 2013. She obtained her MS in Ecology from Pondicherry in 1993 and a MSc in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from the University of Iowa, USA in 2000. Dr. Athreya obtained her doctorate from Manipal University in 2012 for her thesis, 'Conflict resolution and leopard conservation in a human-dominated landscape'. Based in Pune, Vidya has been studying the human-leopard conflict in Maharashtra for the past decade. She also works closely with Protected Area managers and the public to mitigate conflicts involving big cats.

Vidya has been working in landscapes of Western Maharashtra where leopards share spaces with humans. A member of the IUCN Cat Specialist Group, she has assisted in formulating state and national-level policy guidelines on managing human-leopard conflict. Vidya's research work has led to an increased awareness of large carnivores outside Protected Areas in India. Vidya was awarded the Carl Zeiss Wildlife Conservation Award in 2011, TN Koshoo Memorial Award in 2012, and the Maharana Udai Singh Award in 2013. To know more about her work, please visit: www.projectwaghoba.com

Friday, 16 June 2023 at 4 p.m. (AGG-66, TIFR Mumbai)

YouTube Live Link: <https://youtube.com/live/QqBtzMPYqQs?feature=share>