



GUIDELINES TO ESTABLISH
TIGER SAFARI
IN
BUFFER AND FRINGE AREAS OF TIGER RESERVES



NATIONAL TIGER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST & CLIMATE CHANGE
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

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1. **Title:** Guidelines to establish Tiger Safari in buffer and fringe areas of Tiger Reserves.
2. **Subject:** Dealing with establishment, management and administration of Tiger Safari in the buffer (not falling in notified National Parks and/or Wildlife Sanctuary) and fringe areas of Tiger Reserves.
3. **Reference:** Revised Guidelines for the ongoing Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Project Tiger notified by the gazette notification No. 15-31/2012-NTCA dated 15th December 2012.
4. **Purpose:** Tiger Safari may be considered for establishment in the buffer and fringe areas of tiger reserves to reduce pressure of tourism from core/critical tiger habitats and to foster awareness for eliciting public support.
5. **Short Summary:** These guidelines provide the basic criteria, and procedure required in the buffer and fringe areas of tiger reserve for dealing with establishment, management and administration of Tiger Safaris' following due procedure prescribed under the law and guidelines issued by the NTCA vide gazette notification no. 15-31/2012-NTCA dated 15.10.12 and the CZA guidelines for establishment of new zoos under section 38 H (1A) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, in this context.
6. **Scope:** These guidelines apply to those tiger reserves which experience 100% utilization of their carrying capacity in the core / critical habitat.
7. **Responsibilities:** The Field Director shall be overall responsible for establishment, management and administration of the tiger safari with inputs from the Local Advisory Committee (LAC). The overall responsibility of the Tiger Safari at the State level would rest with the Chief Wildlife Warden of the concerned State along with oversight of the National Tiger Conservation Authority and the Central Zoo Authority, New Delhi.
8. **Assessment of tourism pressure:** The tourism activities in the tiger reserves are regulated by the normative guidelines on tourism issued by the National Tiger Conservation Authority as well as by the prescriptions on eco-tourism as contained in the tiger conservation plans of the tiger reserves. The last three years average visitation shall be taken into consideration while determining the need for a tiger safari. If the carrying capacity is 100% utilized, then proposal for establishing a tiger safari can be placed to the NTCA
9. **Selection of animal:** No tiger shall be obtained from a zoo exhibit. Wild tigers which are from the same landscape as that of the area where the tiger safari is established, falling under the following categories shall be selected;
 - a. Injured tigers (after suitable treatment).
 - b. Conflict tigers
 - c. Orphaned tiger cubs which are unfit for re-wilding and release into the wildHowever, no visibly injured or incapacitated tiger shall be put in the safari. Recovered/treated animals shall be put on display only after assessment by the NTCA. Further, no healthy wild tiger or any other animal shall be sourced from the wild as per provisions of the National Zoo Policy.
10. **Criteria and procedure for establishment of a Tiger Safari:** The location of tiger safari shall be identified preferably in the buffer (not falling in notified National Parks and/or



Wildlife Sanctuary) /peripheral area of the tiger reserve on the basis of recommendations of a committee comprising members from the NTCA, CZA, Forest Department of State concerned, an experienced tiger biologist/scientist/conservationist and a representative, nominated by the Chief wildlife Warden of the concerned State. The following points shall be kept in mind:

- a. **Tiger dispersal** routes shall be avoided in all circumstances
- b. **Area:** The area of a Safari Park may be as large as possible, however, minimum area of a safari for tigers should be 40 hectares, extendable as per requirements. It must be ensured that the biological requirements of the animals kept therein are fully met. Clearances under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, shall be taken wherever applicable.
- c. **Topography:** The topography for the safari should be undulating and well drained, without steep slopes
- d. **Flora:** The vegetation maintained in the Safari Park should be of an indigenous nature. The density should be regulated according to needs, and to provide naturalistic effect. It should provide shelters and withdrawal areas to animals. It must be ensured that adequate tree cover is always maintained in the safari.
- e. **Fence/Moat:** The entire safari area should be surrounded by a suitable peripheral chain link fence. The chain link fence should be of a minimum height of 5 meter in case of large carnivores like tigers with a suitable both way -overhang at the top or as prescribed by the CZA from time to time. A buffer zone (strip) of about 5 meter width be provided around the fenced area. Double gates of suitable dimensions be provided at the point of entry. Safety gates may also be provided at a point nearby for service and emergency exists. Gates should be easily operable by one person at a time. Ticket booths and rest facilities for tourists may be provided at a short distance from the entrance in the buffer zone. A store room near the entrance, be provided for storage of equipment etc. required for management of the park as well as to meet emergencies, shall be appropriately camouflaged.
- f. **Watch and Ward:** For keeping an effective watch on the animals, visitors, as well as intruders, at least one watch tower of about 5 meter height be provided preferably near the entrance which should be manned as long as there are animals inside the Safari Park. Near the entrance a kiosk for the gate operator may be provided. At least one manned watch tower of 5 meter height be set up at the remotest corner of the safari on the outside. A control room with CCTV/e-surveillance and wireless monitoring paraphernalia shall be established at the entrance gate.
- g. **Visitors:** Sensitization of visitors shall be carried out at "Visitor Centres" which have been appropriately designed through suitable media, prior to entry into the safari. Entry fee shall be recycled through the Tiger Conservation Foundation of the concerned Tiger Reserve. Visitors shall enter into the park in eco friendly vehicles which run on solar and /or battery power only, and operationalized through a specially promoted EDC. No visitor should be allowed inside Safari Park on foot under any circumstance. Visitors should not be allowed to get out of the vehicle even in case of failure of the vehicle, till they are asked to do so by authorized staff.



Visitors should be informed of safety measures to be adopted in case of any emergency. Visitors should be prohibited from extending any part of their body outside the windows. They should also be asked to maintain silence so as not to provoke animals when they are in vicinity of the vehicle. The door of the vehicle should not be opened by visitors. A kiosk /app based visitor feedback mechanism, with few but pertinent questions, at completion of the safari shall be made mandatory. A record of all visitors especially in context from where they are coming, age group, urban/rural background etc. shall be maintained, for periodic evaluation.

- h. **Gate Receipts:** Earnings of the tiger safari shall be re-ploughed through the concerned tiger conservation foundation. It is suggested that 70% of these earnings are re-ploughed to the tiger reserve concerned and 30% is utilized for the tiger safari.
- i. **Layout of roads:** A main road be laid out to cover most of the highlights of the park, but leaving out certain withdrawal areas for animals. It should be wide enough to allow two vehicles to cross each other at certain places. The road should not have steep gradients or sharp curves. Bituminous tar roads shall not be permitted. It should be kept in good conditions at all times. While crossings and bay areas shall be appropriately designed, vehicles shall however, be allowed in a one way direction only to avoid traffic snarls.
- j. **Vehicles:** All tourist vehicles should be mechanized ones, which run on solar and/or battery power only. They should be maintained in good condition at all times, and vehicles older than ten years should not be permitted to run. The windows and doors of the vehicle should be suitably barred to provide security to visitors. The operator shall ensure that the door of the vehicle carrying the visitors is always kept securely locked so that no visitors can manipulate the locking system. The vehicle should have provision for attachment to another vehicle for pulling it out in case of failure without anybody getting out of the vehicle. It should have auxiliary gears for being used in unmade terrain, if required. The vehicle must also have first aid equipment in it along with a fixed radio set. Each vehicle shall be fitted with a public address system for informing visitors. A trained staff/guide must accompany each vehicle while entering the safari. A four wheel drive vehicle of tiger reserve management shall be on standby in event of any emergency.
- k. **Equipment:** The Safari Park should have appropriate and adequate equipment for restraint of animals including capture guns along with accessories, drugs etc. for use in emergencies and routine operations. It should have the usual equipment for feed of animals etc. It should also have firearms with ammunition to meet rare emergent and inevitable situations. However, these should not be used except as a last resort in emergencies. Safari Park should also have routine equipment like spades, axes, saws, ropes and hooks etc. for maintenance as well as use in emergencies. Wireless equipment should be provided to all watchmen and vehicles. Equipment do deal with any emergency/disasters prevalent in the area should be kept in readiness.
- l. **Veterinary Care:** The animals should be subject to routine veterinary care on a day to day basis and in accordance with the 'Recognition of Zoo Rules' of the CZA. For this purpose the Safari Park should have a treatment room and cages on or near the premises. Prophylactic and sanitary measures should be carried out on a periodic



basis as per a written schedule. A treatment/holding cage/facility, squeeze cage and basic veterinary facility should be available.

- m. **Education:** Appropriate signboards should be setup near the entrance and other vantage points. These should give information regarding the biological as well as ecological facts about the tiger. Besides this it would be useful if such information is presented in an appropriate manner during the drive inside the Safari Park to the visitors. Small pamphlets or handouts can be given to the visitors, highlighting Safari Park, tigers and their status and ecology in the wild including conservation issues.
- n. **Operation:** The frequency of vehicle entering into the Safari Park be regulated so that the animals are not unduly stressed. The vehicles should not be taken near the animals and a distance of 10 meters should always be maintained from the animal. Vehicle should move in a one way direction in a preset programme. The double gates may be operated by one person, so that there is no misunderstanding or mistake. The vehicle driver, watchmen and gate keepers should have wireless connection with the Safari Park control room at all times.
- o. **Waste disposal:** The solid waste material generated in the tiger safari should be scientifically collected and treated/recycled/disposed in an environment friendly manner
- p. **Monitoring and supervision:** Periodic monitoring shall be done by the Field Director, Chief Wildlife Warden, CZA and the NTCA, or persons authorized by them. The safari shall be evaluated as per the CZAs Recognition of Zoo Rules to get Recognition

11. Other enabling requirements

- a. Tiger Safari should endeavour to maintain the basic naturalistic features of the Tiger Safari site such as water bodies, natural ridges and vegetation, merging with habitat of the tiger reserve. Habitat management shall be done wherever required as per the Tiger Conservation Plan.
- b. Tiger Safari should not permit in its premises activities like, conferences, exhibitions, and social functions which are inconsistent with its objectives.
- c. The perimeter barrier and the entry gate of each Tiger Safari should be so designed, constructed and maintained in a way that stray dogs, domestic livestock and feral animals cannot get access into the Tiger Safari.
- d. Provision for posting adequate number of security guards on a 24 X 7 basis should also be made. All breaches in the perimeter barrier, whether accidental or man made should be repaired promptly. Further monitoring is advised by e surveillance/CCTVs
- e. Every Tiger Safari should have a detailed chart indicating duties and responsibilities of all levels of staff also indicating the chain of command for reporting and promptly dealing with the matters pertaining to maintenance and operation of the Tiger Safari and the emergencies that may arise during such operations.



f. The tiger safari management shall strive to employ people from the buffer/fringe areas of the tiger reserve for activities envisaged, wherever possible through an EDC created for the purpose, so as to provide gainful livelihood options, as well as alleviate the need to use regular forest personnel for the purpose. A specially earmarked unit headed by an officer, not less in rank than a Range Forest Officer, should be made in charge of the tiger safari and coordinate all activities.

g. Capacity building of officers/staff engaged in tiger safari, should be organized in all aspects of safari management on a regular basis. Emphasis shall be laid upon exposure to best practices in other safaris.

12. Supporting Services

The following two supporting posts as mandated by the CZA for facilitating effective and scientific management of zoos in India shall be strictly adhered to. These include:

(I) Curator/ Officer in charge: He/She shall be responsible for services, upkeep and maintenance of animal collection and animal housing, including timely cleaning and disinfection of animals' enclosure, timely feeding of animals in the prescribed manner, keeping a close watch on the general health conditions of the animals and taking steps for getting sick animals treated on priority basis including crating, shifting and transportation of animals within the Tiger Safaris. He/She shall have two keepers, two assistant keepers and one supervisor for day to day maintenance of the tiger safari as support.

(ii) Veterinarian: Frequent visits to tiger safari areas and assessing general health condition of animals, assessment of the adequacy of the feed being supplied to the animals, having a regular check on the quality of feed and water being supplied to the animals and timely screening of animals for parasitic loads. Preparation of disinfection schedules, prophylactic treatment schedules and ensuring the implementation of the same. Taking steps for timely restraining and treatment of sick animals, maintenance of record of the treatment provided to animals in prescribed formats, conducting post-mortem of animals that die in the Tiger Safari for arriving at logical conclusions regarding the reasons of death and devise strategies for keeping the mortality of Tiger Safari animals at minimum level. He should also be responsible for supervising the crating, shifting and transportation of Tiger Safari animals.

13. Visitor circulation plan

It is desirable that the Tiger Safari should have only one main approach road to take the visitors to the Tiger Safari animal display areas. The main road should be connected to all animal exhibits with loop roads and sub loop roads of lesser width and specifications on the basis of hierarchy (importance) assigned to each road. The loop roads and sub loop roads should intersect the main road at prominent junction points, where appropriate signage indicating the directions of prominent animal exhibits and visitor facilities should be available. Due safeguards should be taken so that visitor road does not pass through the area adjoining the animal feeding cells, feeding kraals, animal service areas, service road and off the exhibit areas.

14. Master Plan for Tiger Safari

Over the long term, the tiger safari shall be managed based on prescriptions of a Master Plan which shall be formulated as per guidelines of the CZA and duly approved by the said Authority. However, care should be taken to harmonize the Master Plan with prescriptions of the Tiger Conservation Plan of the area concerned.



15. Do's and Dont's: Due precaution shall be taken to ensure distribution of animals across the safari area by providing habitat and drinking water sources in a most naturalistic manner, however, care shall be taken that such water sources be away from visitation routes. The visitors under no circumstance be allowed to carry any undesirable items inside the safari, for which they shall be frisked before entering;

- i. Plastic ware/glassware bottles/wrappers of consumables
- ii. Eatables/drinkables except water
- iii. Inflammable material like matchsticks, crackers, lighters etc.
- iv. Firearms/arms of any kind including replicas
- v. Knives/Scissors
- vi. Electronic equipment to play music including public address systems, whistle etc
- vii. Any item which can be potentially fed to safari animals
- viii. Cigarettes and Alcohol

Any violation in respect of the law shall be dealt as per provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.



ANNEXURE

The Central Government has the following guidelines for grant of approval by the Central Zoo Authority for establishment of new zoos:-

1. Central Zoo Authority shall not entertain any proposal for establishment of a new zoo unless it is accompanied by a "Detailed Project Report" giving detailed appraisal of the proposed zoo site , 'mission-vision-theme' of the zoo and detailed strategy for housing, upkeep and healthcare of the animals and their display for developing amongst visitors an empathy for wild animals and motivation for supporting the national conservation efforts.
2. Central Zoo Authority shall not grant approval for a new zoo unless it is satisfied that the establishment of the zoo shall be instrumental in:-
 - (i) Providing highest standards of housing, upkeep and healthcare to significant number of animals, presently housed in sub-standard and inappropriately managed zoos.
 - (ii) Carrying out of path breaking research for developing innovative strategy for enhancing the reproductive potential, neonatal care and genetic and behavioural management of endangered species of wildlife.
 - (iii) Setting up of state of art facility on use of innovative methods of display of zoo animals that is congenial to the welfare of the animals and motivates the visitors for conservation.
3. Central Zoo Authority before granting approval for establishment of a new zoo shall satisfy itself:-
 - (i) that zoo site has adequate land of appropriate quality (free of all encumbrances, water logging, sewage and storm water drains) is available for construction of the zoo and for raising tree belts of adequate width to act as buffer against noise pollution and air pollution.
 - (ii) project proponents have requisite availability of water, energy and finances on-sustained basis for construction and operation of the zoo, including payment of salary / emoluments of technical personnel, to be required as per the provision of Recognition of Zoo Rules.
 - (iii) There is likelihood of part of operation cost of the zoo being met through revenue earned by the zoo.
 - (iv) Requisite numbers of qualified and experienced persons are available for preparing the detailed plan of the zoo and its effective execution.
 - (v) No animals from wild are proposed to be acquired for display purposes.
4. Central Zoo Authority while examining any proposal of the State Government/ Union territories for establishment of a new zoo and recommending such cases to the Hon'ble Supreme Court shall satisfy itself on following additional points:-
 - (i) State Government / Union Territory has made adequate provisions in its budget to meet the operational costs of all the existing zoos being operated by it, including the salary of zoo personnel as per standards and norms prescribed under "Recognition of Zoo Rules" and all the posts sanctioned in the budget have been duly filled.
 - (ii) All the conditions stipulated by the Central Zoo Authority at the time of grant of recognition to the zoos being operated by the State Government/ Union Territories have been fully complied with.
 - (iii) All the zoos operated by the State Government / Union Territories, that have been refused recognition have stopped their operations and the animals housed therein have been rehabilitated appropriately.
 - (iv) No resources and professional experts from existing zoos are being re-appropriated for establishment of the new zoo.