

WWF pitches in to save Gir lions

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Rajkot: World Wildlife Fund (WWF) is planning to bring about awareness about the importance of the lion in the lives of those living on the fringes of the Gir forest. WWF will appoint a person to reach out to the villagers.

Speaking to TOI Dr Diwakar Sharma, associate director of WWF said conservation of Asiatic lions would be difficult without participation of people living nearby. Issues like barricading wells, which cause accidental deaths of lions, poaching of lions and also conservation of flora and fauna will be dis-

cussed with locals. Efforts will be made to persuade them on how it could change their lives.

Adds Sharma, Gir forest is known across the globe because of the lions found here. This brings thousands of foreign tourists, this translates into employment gener-

ation in Sasan and nearby villages. Secondly rivers originating from the forest flow southward making areas in their path prosperous.

It is worth mentioning that

WWF has adopted 400 wells for barricading and spent around Rs 25 lakh. Barricades have already been construct-

ed in 110 wells in association with Rajkot based NGO Wildlife Conservation Trust (WCT), which has barricaded around 1,100 wells in the Gir area. Around 9,000 open wells in

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Gir have been declared dangerous for Asiatic Lions. "For this purpose corporates like Reliance, Tata and Ambuja have come forward and adopted around 3,000 wells," said Kishor Kotecha of WCT.



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