

New Delhi

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Face-to-face with tiger

Madhur Tankha



Special series to be aired by Animal Planet from October 1



All in the family: The majestic tiger with its cubs

NEW DELHI: To commemorate World Animal Day, Animal Planet will air a special five-day series beginning October 1 on the most majestic animal on earth -- the tiger.

Threatened by many factors, including growing human populations, loss of habitat and illegal hunting, tigers these days are caught in an ongoing battle for survival.

However, they continue to amaze researchers, wildlife filmmakers and viewers around the world.

Showcasing the tigers' magnificence as they hunt prey, battle threats and develop new relationships in some of the most dangerous communities in the world, the upcoming Animal Planet series will highlight the precarious position of tigers in India. Highly prized for their skin, bones and teeth, the tigers are targeted by everyone from small-time poachers who trap them in primitive snares to organised criminals.

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Poaching, illegal trade of their body parts and destruction of their habitat have greatly reduced the wild tiger populations.

"In Search Of Maneaters", which goes on the air this coming Monday, shows Tess McGregor trying to complete one of the most dangerous tasks a naturalist can embark on -- taking a head count of the elusive man-eating Bengal tiger in the Sundarbans.

The Indian subcontinent is home to a dazzling array of plants and animals. And wildlife expert Valmik Thapar will share his love and experiences of this rich and varied landscape in "Land of the Tiger: Tiger's Domain" on Tuesday. He will be shown travelling from the deserts of Rajasthan to the snowy peaks of the Himalayas, through lush mangrove forests to the sparkling coral reef waters of India's west coast.

"Land of the Tiger: Sacred Waters" on Wednesday will travel from Ranthambhor National Park in Rajasthan to Gujarat to showcase India's rarest animal species including the fabled Bengal tiger and the rare Asiatic lion. This episode has also been filmed in the great northern plains, watered by the Ganga, the Indus and the Brahmaputra, to witness wild buffalo, elephants and one-horned rhinos as they share the rivers' bounty with gharials and freshwater dolphins.

The hour-long episode "Tiger Zero" to be aired on Thursday will reveal India's tiger crisis. It will highlight the grim fact that across the subcontinent, tigers are being poached in snares, shot or electrocuted.

There will be a discovery of a huge stock of wildlife remains at a warehouse basement in Delhi. And Valmik Thapar will be shown confronting leading politicians.

"Tigers of The Sunderbans" on Friday will explore the Sundarbans that are popularly referred to as the last refuge of the tiger. Wildlife expert Tess is not sure about the tiger population though many believe it to be the only one in the world large enough to sustain itself into the next century.

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