



## India's First Urban Wildlife Corridor Being Planned In Delhi-NCR

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Forest departments of Delhi and Haryana are working on an interstate plan to build a wildlife corridor on a busy road stretch near the Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary to provide safe passage to leopards and other animals, officials said on Tuesday.

This will be the first such corridor for wildlife management in an urban setting in the country, an official said.

The wildlife sanctuary covering 32.71 sqkm area on the Southern Delhi Ridge of Aravalli hill range lies in southern Delhi and northern parts of Faridabad and Gurugram districts of Haryana.

It is part of the Northern Aravalli leopard wildlife corridor, which extends from the Sariska National Park in Rajasthan to Delhi Ridge.

The Delhi forest department, which has been trying to provide an enriched habitat to leopards in Asola Bhatti, is seeking to utilise the expertise of the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) in building underpasses on busy roads around the wildlife sanctuary, according to Delhi Deputy Conservator of Forests (South Division) Amit Anand.

On Monday, a two-year-old female leopard was killed after being hit by a vehicle on Pali road in Faridabad. This is the second such incident within a year.

In October last year, a leopard was killed in a road accident near Mangar village on Gurugram-Faridabad road, according to Divisional Forest Officer, Faridabad, Rajkumar Yadav.

Bombay Natural History Society's Delhi head Sohail Madan said around five leopards have died in the last five years on the roads passing through or abutting the wildlife sanctuary.

There are three major roads with heavy traffic flow around the wildlife sanctuary -- Surajkund-Faridabad road, Gurgaon-Faridabad road and Mehrauli-Badarpur road -- according to officials.

Another road connecting Chhatarpur in south Delhi to Mangar village in Faridabad cuts through the sanctuary.

"We have had talks with officials in Haryana. We will be chalking out a proper plan for the wildlife corridor," DCF (South) Anand said.

Whenever any leopard goes towards Faridabad, it uses the same corridor -- a stretch of Gurgaon-Faridabad road and Pali road south of the wildlife sanctuary -- he said.

"The road cuts through the leopard corridor.... We have to find a solution. We will utilize the expertise of DMRC which will advise us on the matter of building an underpass on the Pali-Surajkund road," he added.

The two forest departments are looking to build several wildlife corridors in that region. It is an interstate matter, so a plan will be made and the agencies concerned will be approached, an official said.

Mr Yadav said the idea is at a nascent stage, but "we will try to build three underpasses because several such incidents have taken place in the recent past".

"The idea was mooted earlier too, but could not be implemented. This time, there is a strong recommendation and we have taken it up with senior officials," he said.

The BHNS has identified three spots on Gurgaon-Faridabad road and Pali road where animals were killed while crossing the road.

Source: <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/forest-departments-working-to-create-countrys-first-urban-wildlife-corridor-in-delhi-ncr-2475404>