



Pneumonia kills Uttarakhand leopards

Arpita Chakrabarty | TNN | Jan 19, 2016, 07.11 AM IST



ALMORA: Forest conservator of north Kumaon Prem Kumar told TOI that in the year 2014-15, 13 of 24 leopard deaths in the four hill districts of the region — Almora, Bageshwar, Champawat and Pithoragarh — occurred because of pneumonia.

In the first nine months of this financial year, until December 31, 2015, 25 leopards have died. Of these, 14 succumbed to pneumonia.

"Most leopard deaths occur in the months of December and January and are caused primarily by pneumonia. These months, which are extremely cold, are crucial for leopards," Prem Kumar said.

With the rampant deforestation, the forests are home to fewer animals that the leopards can prey on. The leopards wait long near water bodies in search of prey, leaving themselves vulnerable.

Dr BS Janpangi, chief veterinary officer of Almora district, said, "The habitat has changed. There's massive deforestation everywhere. Leopards are unable to find food in the forests. They stay hungry most of the time and their resistance to illnesses is lowered. That is why they suffer from lung infections and catch pneumonia easily."

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