



## Feeding Ecology and Habitat Use of Sloth Bear (*Melursus ursinus*) in Jassore Wildlife Sanctuary, Gujarat, India

Darshan Sukhadiya, J.U. Joshi<sup>1</sup> and Nishith Dharaiya

Department of Life Science, Hemchandracharya North Gujarat University, Palan-384265, Gujarat, India

<sup>1</sup>Deputy Conservator of Forest, Kheda, Gujarat, India

E-mail: nadharaiya@gmail.com

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**Abstract:** North-Eastern Gujarat is known for its high density population in India. Local community around the forests is mainly depending upon the local forest produces and sharing many resources with the wildlife lives therein, which seldom results in the human-wildlife confrontation and conflicts. The present study has been carried out to know the food composition of Sloth bear in the area and the seasonal variation in their diet composition. Scat analysis technique was employed to know the food of Sloth bear in different season along with the sign survey to know the habitat use. The scat study revealed that a sloth bear in the area chiefly consumes fruits of five plant species, followed by termites, ants and bees. No any significant seasonal variations in food composition of Sloth bear were found; however high consumption of termites and ants (79.3%) recorded during monsoon and winter, while in summer the bear mainly depends on the fruits. Among the fruits, *Zizipus* species appear to be important food resource (62.67%) for bear in the study area, especially in dry season when fields lack crops and other fruiting plants. Moreover ground configuration is hard, making it difficult for bear to dig for ants and termites.

**Key Words:** Sloth bear, feeding ecology; seasonal variation; scat analysis; Jassore Wildlife Sanctuary

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