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Luring leopard with rooster and mobile

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SAMBA (SURAT): Here's something that will surely make cellphone companies sit up and think; after all, they never tire out of announcing new features in their cellphones.

And yet, their imagination is yet to run wild, like it has with forest officials in Surat district. Forest officials in Samba village in Mahuva taluka of Surat district - out to nab a leopard that killed a boy from this village on Friday - are actually using a cellphone with a ring tone that sounds like a rooster to lure the beast into a trap.

Of course, the foresters have also put a live rooster in the trap. And, the ring tone is just in case the chicken decides to clam up.

It's their way of creating an audio-visual effect to trap the beast. If you think it is a hare-brained scheme, then think again, as forest officials were successful in trapping a leopard by this technique three months ago in a nearby village.

The technique is simple. Just when the forest officials are sure that the leopard is somewhere in the vicinity, they make the cellphone ring, hoping that the sound of a rooster will egg the leopard to head towards the cage.

Three months ago, when farmers sighted a leopard in sugarcane fields in Kathaia village, forest officials decided to capture and release the animal somewhere near Ukai.

But it turned out to be a Herculean task for them as the chicken kept in the cage clammed up for hours and the leopard could not be drawn towards the cage.

"It was then that a funny idea struck me. I have a ring tone on my cellphone that sounds like a rooster's cry. I placed it inside the cage along with the live rooster and between midnight and 4 am, when the chances of leopard looking for its prey are high, we started calling on my cellphone from another one to make it ring. To our surprise, the trick worked and the leopard was in the cage,"said range forest officer Satish Purohit.