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The Official Newsletter of Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve

Tadoba

DIARIES



Harshat Motwankar

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**Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve
Conservation Foundation, Chandrapur**

TRANSLOCATION: A TIGER CONSERVATION STRATEGY

Dear Reader

The tiger population in the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR) has increased from less than 40 to around 100 in the last decade, contributing to the dispersal of several tigers to adjoining landscapes and protected areas in Maharashtra, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh. The reserve is today fulfilling its role as an important source population for the larger Central Indian landscape. Additionally, it also supports the translocation as an essential measure of long-term tiger conservation.

Last month, one magnificent tigress completed a historic 900 km journey to the Sahyadri Tiger Reserve (STR) as part of a vital conservation-led translocation initiative. This marks the beginning of the reintroduction of tigers in STR. With the authorisation by the Government of India, a three-year-old tigress, progeny of the famous male tiger T126, was successfully captured in the Khadsangi region of Tadoba on November 12, 2025, and transported to STR following due protocol. This effort builds on earlier milestones: the first inter-state tiger translocation from Maharashtra occurred in 2024, when two young tigresses from TATR were moved to Simlipal Tiger Reserve in Odisha. Earlier, in 2023, two

tigresses had been shifted to the Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra.

Tiger translocation is a crucial conservation strategy aimed at addressing the decline of tiger populations. As apex predators, tigers play a vital role in maintaining the ecological balance within their habitats. Another benefit of translocation is the enhancement of genetic diversity. In isolated populations, inbreeding can lead to reduced fitness, lower reproductive success, and increased vulnerability to diseases. Translocation of tigers also restores the ecological health of the park.

By relocating tigers from stable populations to areas facing critical shortages, conservationists can introduce new genetic material, revitalising struggling populations. This approach has shown notable success in India, with inspiring examples from Panna and Sariska. The recent translocation from TATR to STR underscores TATR's continued commitment to strengthening tiger populations across various reserves and making meaningful contributions to India's broader conservation landscape.

Dr. Prabhu Nath Shukla (IFS)

Conservator of Forests & Field Director, TATR
Executive Director, TATR Conservation Foundation

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Official website of TATR : www.mytadoba.mahaforest.gov.in



AN INTENSE FIGHT

We entered through the Mamla Gate, and the forest felt unusually silent. No alarm calls, no movement, no hint of big cats. The entire safari was slipping by without a single sign of excitement.

Our driver suggested we wait near a spot where we had seen a faint pugmark of a male tiger earlier. We parked there quietly, the jungle still and heavy around us.

Suddenly, a loud growl tore through the silence. For a moment, we thought it might be a clash between a tiger and a sloth bear. Seconds later, sambar deer and monkeys erupted into alarm calls. We immediately repositioned our vehicle closer to the direction of the sound.



And then, out of nowhere, Gauri, the female tiger, leapt out of the bushes right in front of our gypsy, followed by the massive male Y-Mark. The two tigers engaged in a brief but intense fight before Y-Mark slipped back into the undergrowth. Gauri walked ahead of us for a short distance before disappearing into the forest in the opposite direction.

Gauri currently has two young cubs, fathered by Junior Bajrang. With Junior Bajrang absent for the past few weeks, Y-Mark is attempting to intrude, posing a serious threat to the cubs. Gauri is doing everything she can to protect them.

We can only hope Junior Bajrang returns soon to reclaim his throne before it's too late.

Jeswin Kingsly
Naturalist, Red Earth, TATR

FIRST RECORD OF LEUCISTIC BLACK DRONGO IN TADOBA

Arare Leucistic Black Drongo (*Dicrurus macrocercus*) has been recorded for the first time in the Kolsa Range of the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve and Chandrapur district. This sighting marks the first official record of this unique genetic variant in the reserve.

The bird was observed and documented by Mr Rundan Katkar, Range Forest Officer & Wildlife Researcher and Mr Datta Suryawanshi, Forest Guard, during routine field monitoring on 10th November. Their keen observation helped confirm the identity of this unusual individual.

The Black Drongo is known for its glossy black plumage and bold nature. However, due to a genetic condition called leucism, some birds



© Rundan Katkar

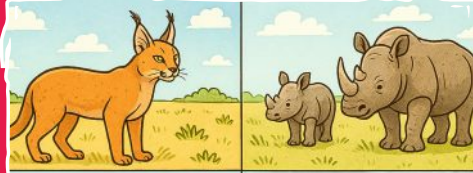
lose pigmentation in their feathers, appearing whitish or pale grey while retaining normal eye colour. Such individuals are called "leucistic."

This rare sighting adds valuable data to ongoing wildlife monitoring and biodiversity research in the region. The same drongo has also been seen around Pangdi Lake.

Team Tadoba Diaries

Rare Caracal Rediscovered in India

A rare Asian caracal, once nearly gone from India, has been rediscovered in Rajasthan's Ramgarh grasslands. Experts from the BNHS estimate around ten breeding pairs, reviving hope for this elusive wild cat's survival and calling for stronger protection of its fragile desert habitat.



Black Rhino Calf Born in the Wild

Conservationists in Kenya's Chyulu Hills have confirmed the birth of a critically endangered eastern black rhino calf, one of fewer than 600 mature individuals globally.

This rare addition strengthens a key subpopulation that supports long-term species recovery.



Interpol's Global Fight Against Illegal Deforestation

Interpol has launched a major international crackdown on illegal logging, timber trafficking, and mining syndicates across tropical forests in Brazil, Indonesia and Peru, aiming to dismantle wildlife crime networks driving global deforestation.

2025 Among the Hottest Years on Record

Scientists report that 2025 is likely to be the second or third warmest year ever recorded, driven by record greenhouse gas emissions and accelerating climate impacts—raising alarms for biodiversity, habitats, and human communities.



Ready for a jungle challenge?

Take this quiz and see how much you know about forests and wildlife!

- Which bird in the forest is often called the 'forest alarm' because of its loud calls when it spots a predator?
 - Indian Roller
 - Myna
 - Crow
 - Drongo
- What is the main food of the Sloth Bear?
 - Honey and termites
 - Small deer
 - Fish
 - Bamboo shoots
- Which water body inside Tadoba is famous for crocodile sightings?
 - Pandharpauni
 - Panchdhara
 - Tadoba Lake
 - Moharli Lake
- What time of day are tigers most active in the forest?
 - Afternoon
 - Night and early morning
 - Anytime
 - Daytime
- Which tree in Tadoba is known as the Flame of the Forest?
 - Teak
 - Palash
 - Bamboo
 - Arjun

THE TURTLE TRIAL

There's something otherworldly about monsoon mornings in the forest. The air is thick with untold stories, and mist drifts like forgotten breath across the jungle floor. Every branch glistens, every leaf hums with life. You don't enter the forest, you surrender to it.

That day, I wasn't just exploring with my friend Vaibhav Shelke and his family, I was journeying into tiger country. We were chasing whispers of Choti Madhu, the tigress ruling the Moharli buffers, and her three cubs sighted the previous evening. Forest tales are always part myth, part memory.

As the sun teased its way through clouds, two cubs appeared first- streaks of orange and black, playful and fleeting. Silence followed, a pause hinting at more. Then came the third cub. She didn't run. She stepped from the grass with quiet confidence, carrying an Indian flapshell turtle in her jaws.



Not typical prey for a cub, yet she handled it with patience and calculation- testing angles, circling, learning. This wasn't play. It was practice. A ritual of becoming.

Then she flung the turtle high. For an instant, time slowed. Her eyes blazed with focus, hunger, and precision. I raised my camera. Clicked!

That frame wasn't just a photo. It was a page from the jungle's diary. The moment a cub stepped toward her destiny, rehearsing the hunt that may one day crown her the forest's next queen.

Makrand Mohan Pardeshi

Deputy Executive Engineer,
Mahagenco, Chandrapur

THE HUNTING DOGS

My recent visit to the magnificent TATR was nothing short of extraordinary, marked by an unforgettable encounter with a pack of wild dogs.

Upon embarking on the safari, excitement and anticipation filled the air. The dense forests, the rustling leaves, and the distant calls of birds created an ambience of mystery and adventure. Our journey took an exhilarating turn when we spotted a pack of 22 wild dogs. It was a sight to behold as they moved gracefully and purposefully, embodying the essence of the wild. Suddenly, our attention was drawn to a sambar fawn, desperately trying to evade the relentless pursuit of the pack. The scene unfolded before us like a dramatic tableau, showcasing the raw and unfiltered realities of the animal kingdom.



The sambar fawn, with its large doe eyes filled with a mix of fear and determination, fought valiantly to escape. Its cries echoed through the forest, creating a poignant symphony of struggle and survival. The wild dogs, displaying remarkable coordination and teamwork, closed in on their prey with unwavering focus. Despite the fawn's brave efforts, it ultimately succumbed to the relentless pursuit, a stark reminder of nature's unforgiving cycle of life and death.

Sayan Saha

Software Engineer, Kolkata

THE LESSER KNOWN KHAKI #09

Planting trees or sowing seeds are not the only means of greening the earth...
We also care for the **NATURAL** regeneration...
Identify it, mark it, tend to its growth & help it grow into a tree...



Do you want to know what work the foresters do?

This series will take you to the world of forest warriors in Khaki.

Piyusha Jagtap (IFS)

Natural regeneration (NR) are the young plants that grow naturally. We just supplement the healthy ones with some soil working, weeding and tending to encourage its growth! Helping nature is helping humans...

SNAKES CAN'T HEAR

Snakes don't actually dance to music! When you see a snake raising its hood and moving while a snake charmer plays the flute, it might look like the snake is swaying to the tune — but that's not true. Snakes can't hear sounds the way we do. Instead, they sense vibrations through the ground. When the charmer moves the flute or his hands, the snake follows the movement, not the music. Its so-called 'dance' is actually a defensive reaction to what it sees as a possible threat. Even though snakes can't hear the flute's melody, they are very sensitive to motion and ground vibrations. That's how they sense danger in their surroundings. So the next time



you see a snake 'dancing', remember- it's not grooving to the music, it's watching carefully!

JAMNI'S WILDEST SURPRISE

I have been working as a safari guide in Tadoba for 13 years, and not a single day in the jungle feels ordinary. Every morning and evening brings a new story, a new surprise, and a new lesson from the wild. But even after all these years, there is one experience that still sends a chill down my spine whenever I think of it.

At that time, Tigress T7, our beloved Choti Tara, ruled the Jamni territory. She was a confident and caring mother, and her two male cubs, Tarachand and Chota Matka, were already famous in the park. They were about 18 months old, playful, naughty, and always up to something.

One evening, I was on safari with just two guests. One guest sat beside me on the last seat, while the other sat behind the driver. Around 4 pm, when we reached Jamni Lake, we saw a line of vehicles. And there she was, Choti Tara, sitting gracefully in the water. Her two cubs were splashing around, jumping, wrestling, and enjoying their playtime. My guests were thrilled, and honestly, I too felt just as excited.

After a while, another vehicle parked behind my Gypsy. Everyone waited silently, hoping the trio would cross the road. Soon enough, Choti Tara rose from the water and started walking out. She moved behind my vehicle and crossed the road with the elegance only a tigress carries. We got an extremely close look, something every tourist dreams of.

Then came the two brothers.

They stepped onto the road but did not follow



their mother. Instead, they began playing right behind my Gypsy. In their playful mood, they didn't realise how close they were coming to us. With other vehicles ahead, I had no room to move forward. I was worried.

Within seconds, the cubs reached the back of my Gypsy. Before I knew it, both of them placed their paws on the spare tyre mounted at the rear. They stretched their necks forward and started peeping inside the vehicle with full curiosity. My heart almost stopped.

I immediately whispered to my guests to bend down and hide. We both slid ourselves under the front seats as quietly as possible. My heartbeat was loud enough for me to hear. The cubs stared for a few seconds- those few seconds felt endless- and then simply dropped their paws, walked across the road, and followed their mother, as if nothing had happened.

Only after they disappeared into the bushes did we get up, breathe deeply, and share a nervous smile. That day taught me something important: a tiger truly is a gentleman. The cubs had no intention to harm us; they were just curious youngsters exploring their world.

It was frightening, unforgettable, and one of the most incredible moments of my life as a guide.

Sandesh Dekate
Guide, Kolara (Core)

HAVE A STORY TO TELL? A SKETCH TO SHARE?

We'd love to hear from you!

Send us your articles, illustrations, or drawings that capture your experience at Tadoba.

The best entries will be published in Tadoba Diaries with due credit.

And that's not all - you'll also receive a special souvenir from us! So don't wait!

📧 Share your work at: tadobadiaries2021@gmail.com



JUNGLE DETECTIVE

Do you want to be a Jungle Detective?
Solve the following puzzles and check your knowledge.

GUESS WHO?

THE HONEY HUNTER

I sniff and dig through logs and ground,
Where honeycombs and insects abound.
My shaggy coat keeps me warm and free,
I roam the forest wild and carefree.

With snout so long and claws so strong,
I hum and grunt my forest song.
Not fierce, but brave, I wander there
The jungle's digger- guess who?

TRACK THE TRAIL

WHISTLING WANDERER'S PATH

Small, oval paw marks lined the sandy path- close together, as if trotting in rhythm. A sweeping tail lightly brushed the soil, and a faint musky scent lingered in the air.

Nearby, the remains of a small prey told their own story- a quick chase, silent teamwork, and success before sunrise.

The trail led toward the tall bamboo groves- home to a clever, social hunter who never hunts alone.

Can you tell whose trail this is?



MATCH-UP

Match each animal with its home in the forest!

Birds

1. Hornbill



2. Kingfisher



3. Weaver Bird



4. Peafowl



5. Owl



Homes

A. Hanging Nest on Tree Branch

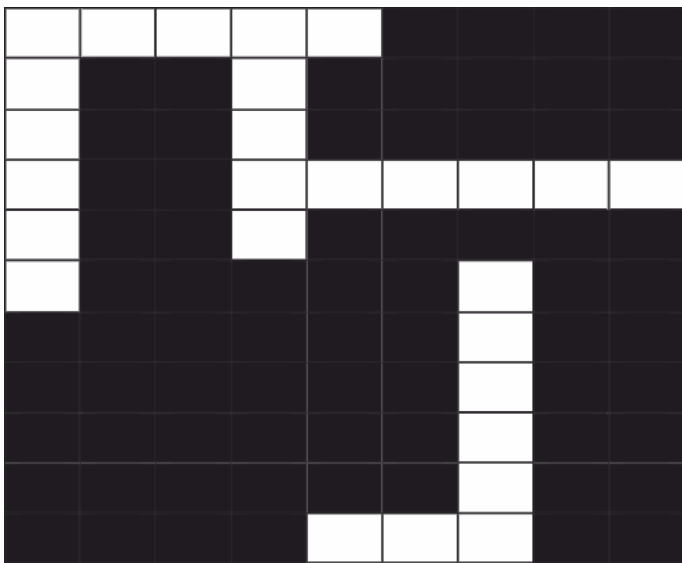
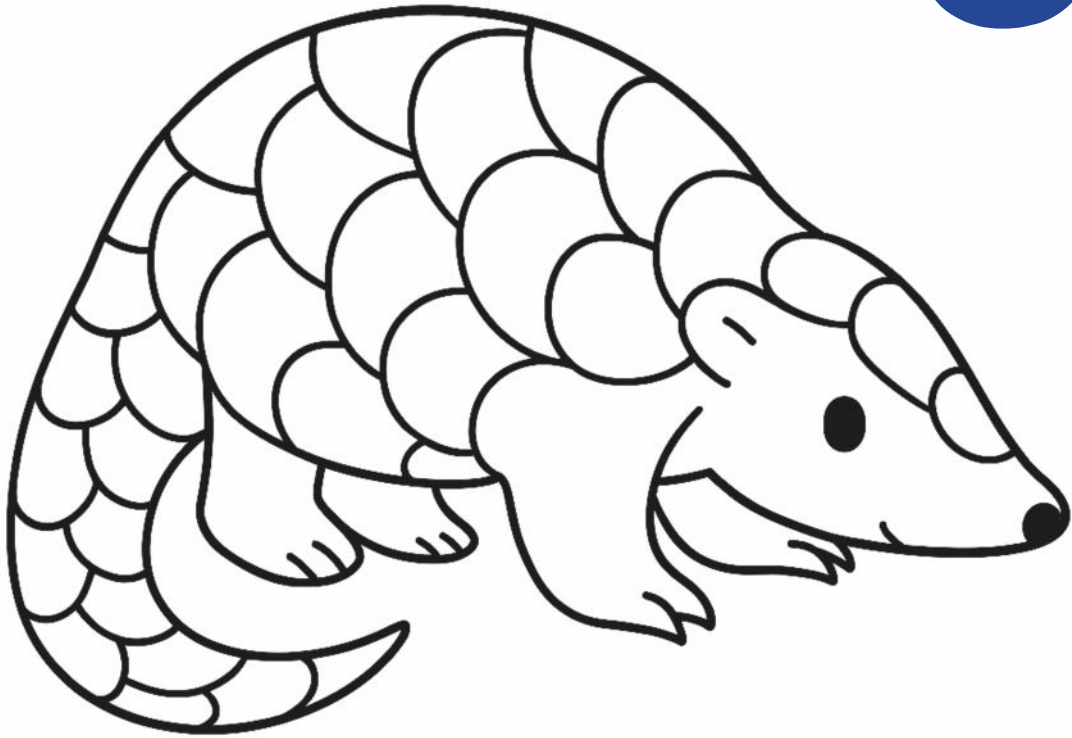
B. Ground Nest under Bushes

C. Hollow Tree or Old Building

D. Tree Cavity

E. Mud Tunnel near Water

Bring this Pangolin to life with colours!
Let your imagination run wild!



ACROSS:

1. This striped animal is the most famous resident of Tadoba.
2. These playful creatures chatter and swing through Tadoba's trees.
3. A nocturnal bird that hunts using silent wings and sharp eyesight.

DOWN:

1. A slow-moving reptile with a hard shell, found near lakes.
2. A large bird of prey often seen soaring high above the forest.
3. This spotted deer gives an alarm call when it sees a tiger.

Check page no. 14 for correct answer.

Historic Tiger Translocation to Sahyadri



A three-year-old tigress from Tadoba was translocated to the Sahyadri Tiger Reserve, 900 km away, as part of a major conservation-led translocation effort. Captured from Khadsangi on 12 November 2025, this progeny of the famous male T126 marks the beginning of tiger reintroduction in STR following the Government of India approval.

Successful Chital Translocation to NNTR



In november, the first phase of the chital translocation from TATR to Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve began with the safe transfer of 73 spotted deer. The animals were captured in newly constructed African-style Boma enclosures at Jamni meadows, Kolara Range. They were then moved in specially designed vehicles equipped with CCTV and safety features to NNTR's soft-release enclosures.

TATR ACF Dhage in KBC



Shri Aniruddha Dhage, ACF, TATR (Core), appeared on the Hot Seat of India's iconic game show Kaun Banega Crorepati, hosted by Shri Amitabh Bachchan. During the episode, Shri Dhage highlighted Chandrapur's remarkable status as the Tiger Capital of the World, home to nearly 5% of the global tiger population. Shri Bachchan also shared his memorable experience of filming alongside a tiger, making the moment even more special.

T-91 SAM-1 Captured in Moharli Buffer



On 7 November 2025, the Forest Department safely captured the sub-adult male tiger T-91 SAM-1 from the Moharli Buffer Range after its repeated movement near human habitation posed a risk to public safety. Earlier, on 24 September 2025, the same tiger was involved in a fatal incident near Bhamdeli. After capture, the tiger was transferred to the Transit Treatment Centre in Chandrapur.

TATR Shines at AIFSM 2025



The TATR team delivered an outstanding performance at the All India Forest Sports Meet (AIFSM) 2025 in Dehradun, winning 4 gold, 4 silver, and 1 bronze medal. Medal winners included Ms Himani Dhanre (2 Gold), Ms Aachal Kadukar (Silver), Shri Akhil Jadhav (4 medals + Best Athlete Award), Shri Anand Reddy & Shri Anuj Sagle (Silver), and Shri Dipak Keram (Kabaddi Quarterfinal). Their achievements brought national pride to TATR.

Bird Week Celebration



Bird Week was celebrated in TATR from November 5 to 12 to honour legendary conservationists Sálim Ali and Maruti Chitampalli. This week, birdwatching was organised across all the TATR ranges. Forest officers, staff, safari guides, and villagers participated in the initiative.

Let's celebrate the dedication and impact of our frontline staff who go above and beyond to protect our forests and wildlife. It is a token of appreciation for their outstanding service, vigilance, and commitment to conservation on the ground.

October 2025



Dhanshree Pradhane

Forest Guard, Range: Tadoba (Core)

- Completed patrolling target in Oct. using M-Stripes
- Completed KRA targets in Oct.
- Completed non-palatable plants eradication target



D.R. Balki

Forest Guard, Range: Khadsangi (Buffer)

- Patrolled 356.64 km using M-Stripes
- Supported subordinates in KRA data entry
- Conducted awareness to prevent human-wildlife conflict

Leopard-Free Village Practices



As part of the Zero-Waste initiative, PRT teams from multiple buffer villages carried out cleanliness drives every Tuesday and Wednesday. With support from Gram Panchayats, roadside vegetation was trimmed, waste heaps were cleared, and awareness was created on "Leopard-Free Village" practices. PRT members from Bamhanagao, Sirkada, Karbada, Madanpur, Gondmohali, Alizanza, Shivni, and Vihargao actively participated.

[[Apjit Jain



DUMERIL'S BLACK-HEADED SNAKE

Dumeril's Black-headed Snake (*Sibynophis subpunctatus*) is a harmless, non-venomous species found in many forest habitats. It is a very small snake, growing only up to about 10 inches. Its body is slender with smooth scales, and its head is slightly broader than the neck. If you look closely, you can spot tiny black dots scattered across its body.

Where It Lives

This shy snake prefers cool, hidden spaces. It is often found under leaf litter, fallen logs, or stones, quietly going about its life on the forest floor.

What It Eats

Dumeril's Black-headed Snake feeds on earthworms, small geckos, and skinks, helping maintain balance in the ecosystem.

Life Cycle and Behaviour

Females lay around 3 to 5 eggs. The snake is active both during the day and at night. Because of its slim body, it can sometimes look like the Slender Coral Snake — but unlike its venomous look-alike, this little reptile is entirely harmless.

Chinmay Deshpande
Naturalist, Nagpur

[[Wikimedia Commons



RITHA

Near the Tadoba Lakeside Camp Office stands a unique tree known as Ritha, also called the soapnut tree. These trees are rarely found deep inside the forest, and whenever you spot one, it hints that a human settlement once existed there. Long ago, people living in those areas planted Ritha saplings that have now grown into tall trees.

A Tree with Bubbly Magic

The medium-sized deciduous Ritha tree (*Sapindus mukorossi*) bears round, yellowish fruits. When locals collect and dry them, the outer shells turn brownish-black and become very special.

Nature's Own Soap

The shells contain saponin, a natural substance that creates foam in water. This gentle foam is used to wash clothes, woollens, and even jewellery. It also works as a chemical-free shampoo!

Good for Hair and Skin

For generations, tribal communities have used Ritha to reduce dandruff, promote hair growth, and soothe skin infections in both people and cattle.

Anirudh Chaoji
Senior Naturalist, Nagpur



TAWNY RAJAH BUTTERFLY

The Tawny Rajah (*Charaxes bernardus*) is a striking forest butterfly known for its bold flight and adventurous habits. A powerful and fast flyer, it explores every level of the forest canopy and rarely visits flowers. Instead, it enjoys the sweetness of rotting fruit and oozing tree sap—an unusual choice that sets it apart from many nectar-loving butterflies.

Life Cycle and Behaviour

Its journey begins as a tiny egg laid on host plants like *Croton tiglium*. The caterpillar feeds on tender leaves, storing energy for its transformation. Inside the chrysalis, the silent magic of metamorphosis unfolds until an elegant adult butterfly emerges to continue the cycle.

Role in the Forest

Though it doesn't aid in pollination, the Tawny Rajah helps recycle nutrients by feeding on decaying fruit. Its presence enriches forest ecosystems and highlights the delicate balance that protected landscapes help maintain.

A quiet symbol of resilience, the Tawny Rajah invites us to look closer at the hidden wonders of the wild.

Yogita N. D. Chhapekar
Biologist, Nagpur



BARN OWL

The Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) is one of the most easily recognised owls, famous for its beautiful heart-shaped face and ghost-like pale feathers. In Tadoba, it is very commonly seen around human habitation rather than deep inside the forest.

Identification and Traits

This medium-sized owl has dark eyes, long legs, and no ear tufts. Its upper body is light brown with speckles, while the underside is white. Barn Owls fly silently due to their special wing feathers.

Behaviour and Hunting

A nocturnal hunter, it uses excellent night vision and superb hearing—helped by its unevenly placed ears—to locate prey even in total darkness. It hunts mice, rats and small mammals, making it very helpful to farmers.

Habitat and Breeding

Found across the world, Barn Owls prefer open fields, farmlands, and village areas. They nest in tree hollows, old buildings, and barns. Females lay 3-11 eggs, and both parents work tirelessly to feed their chicks.

A graceful night-time guardian, the Barn Owl plays an important role in keeping rodent populations under control.

Rundan Katkar
Range Forest Officer, Kolsa, TATR



Moonlit Walk! Under the cover of darkness, a tiger begins its nightly journey across the forest. The camera trap freezes this fleeting moment, showing the grace and power of a true wilderness ruler.

ANSWERS

WILD WISDOM

1-D, 2-A, 3-C, 4-B, 5-B

GUESS WHO?

Sloth Bear



TRACK THE TRAIL



Dhole (Indian Wild Dog) pawprints

MATCH-UP:

- | Birds | Homes |
|----------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Hornbill | A. Hanging Nest on Tree Branch |
| 2. Kingfisher | B. Ground Nest under Bushes |
| 3. Weaver Bird | C. Hollow Tree or Old Building |
| 4. Peafowl | D. Tree Cavity |
| 5. Owl | E. Mud Tunnel near Water |

JUNGLE JUMBLE:

T	I	G	E	R					
U			A						
R			G						
T			L	A	N	G	U	R	
L			E						
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LESSONS FROM A FADING QUEEN

It was a humid late-summer noon—cloudy skies, a silent forest, and the weight of a thought that had been troubling me for days. T7, popularly known as Choti Tara, now nearly fifteen, may never raise another litter. Her two sub-adult daughters will soon claim her territory, slowly pushing her to the forest's edge, where survival becomes harder for an ageing tigress. That single truth made me set aside all my work and return to Tadoba.

And CT didn't disappoint. She walked out of the lush green around Pandharapuni, her daughter trailing behind her, recreating a scene I had witnessed nine years ago with her earlier cub, T126-Chota Matka. It felt like time folding into itself—a perfect déjà vu.

When she looked straight into my camera, her eyes held the same warmth I had seen over a decade: first as a young female, then a confident mother, and now a tired but dignified matriarch. In that gaze, it felt as if she was saying, "I may be ageing, but my legacy will stay. Care for my daughters the way you cared for me."

My eyes blurred- not the camera's fault, but my own tears.

From her, I learnt again how the forest teaches its young: how a tigress marks trees, chooses routes, and shows her cubs how to claim a life of their own, even when she knows she will one day be replaced.

That afternoon, Choti Tara reminded me that the wild is honest, practical, and deeply emotional. And I left hoping for one more déjà vu with her.

Sanjay Deshpande
Wildlife Enthusiast
Sanjeevani Developers, Pune



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Warli art beautifully captures emotions and preserves unforgettable moments- just like those experienced in Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR). Surrounded by rich forests, birdsong, and grazing deer, our excitement grew as we entered the jungle for our safari. Soon, we saw several jeeps waiting ahead. A guide whispered the news—a tiger had just crossed the trail. After a brief wait, a magnificent tiger stepped out, followed by its tiny cub. It was a dreamlike sight. I realised that only Warli art, with its simple yet powerful circles, triangles, and lines, could truly honour and immortalise this magical moment.

Snehalata Avinash Birnale

Artist, Bengaluru



Two Species; One Bond!

A bond without words- the langur's sharp eyes and the chital's keen senses. Side by side, they watch over each other in the timeless harmony of Tadoba.

