



Issue 39/Feb.2025

Tadoba

DIARIES

The Official Newsletter of Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve



Chandrasekhar Dolapichha

Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve Conservation Foundation, Chandrapur

₹ 30/-



PROMOTING COEXISTENCE THROUGH BETTER POPULATION MANAGEMENT

Dear Reader

India's rich biodiversity and thriving wildlife are a source of national pride. With an extensive network of national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, and tiger reserves, we have successfully provided a haven for many endangered species. Places like Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, a major attraction for wildlife enthusiasts and tourists, highlight the success of our conservation efforts.

However, a significant yet often overlooked aspect of wildlife conservation is the growing presence of wild animals outside protected areas. As habitats shrink and wildlife populations increase, animals such as tigers, leopards, monkeys, and wild boars are frequently found in human-dominated landscapes. This growing interaction has led to rising human-wildlife conflicts—farmers' crops are damaged, livestock is killed by large predators, and, in some unfortunate cases, human lives are also lost.

While the Forest Department has been actively mitigating such conflicts, there is an urgent need to explore innovative and humane solutions to manage wildlife populations outside protected zones. Finding the right balance is critical—not just to prevent economic losses for farmers and local communities but also to ensure that wildlife retains its conservation value and goodwill of the communities who share the space with wildlife.

Key discussions included the impact of wildlife outside protected areas, strengthening legal and policy frameworks, enhancing veterinary infrastructure, exploring scientific and technological solutions for population management including the best global practices, and leveraging AI and modern tools for conservation.

Experts also emphasized the importance of advanced wildlife population monitoring, early intervention, and innovative methods for controlling the population of animals that are threatening rural and urban landscapes by their

presence, damaging life and property, such as the abundant monkey population.

Legal and administrative challenges in wildlife management were discussed, along with the need for better emergency veterinary facilities and rapid emergency response systems. The conference also highlighted the use of AI for wildlife monitoring, safe wildlife corridors, chemical reversible contraceptives for population control of certain species of wildlife and the establishment of a centre of excellence for human-wildlife conflict and related issues.

The deliberations are going to lead in forming the policy guidelines for dealing with the larger issue of balancing conservation and coexistence in areas that are abundant in wildlife.

The government is committed to resolving human-wildlife conflicts, and a collective effort involving local communities, scientists, policymakers, and conservationists is essential for achieving a harmonious balance between wildlife conservation and human well-being.

For tourists visiting Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve and other wildlife destinations, it is important to recognize that conservation extends beyond the boundaries of national parks. Supporting ethical tourism, respecting wildlife corridors, and spreading awareness about the challenges of human-wildlife coexistence can contribute to sustainable conservation efforts.

As India continues its journey of conservation, WildCon 2025 has laid the foundation for a future where both humans and wildlife can thrive together. With scientific innovation, policy support, and community participation, we can ensure that our wildlife remains an asset, not a challenge—preserving its value for future generations.

Dr. Jitendra Ramgaokar

Field Director, TATR
and Executive Director, TATR Conservation Foundation



"Tadoba Diaries" is published by the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve Conservation Foundation, Chandrapur and printed at Renuka Publications, Chandrapur. The views and opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the publisher. Reproduction of any content is not allowed without a written permission of the publisher.

Please share your feedback on tadobadiaries2021@gmail.com or call us on 07172-277116, 9579160778 / 8010539472 | For advertising call : 8169730713

Editor: Dr. Jitendra Ramgaokar, CCF & Field Director, TATR | **Executive Editor: Anant Sonawane**, Communications Officer, TATR.



THE VITAL GRASSLANDS OF TADOBA: A CONSERVATION TRIUMPH

Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, renowned for its thriving tiger population, stands as a model of successful wildlife conservation. A key factor in this success is the meticulous management of its vast grasslands, which play a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance.

Spanning thousands of hectares, the grasslands of Tadoba are vital in sustaining herbivore populations. These herbivores, in turn, support the reserve's apex predators, including tigers, making the grasslands an indispensable part of the ecosystem. Their management is a year-round effort, with one of the primary tasks being the removal of non-palatable species and invasive weeds. This ensures that the grasslands remain lush and capable of sustaining diverse wildlife.

Maintaining these grasslands is both physically demanding and logistically complex. Workers must navigate tall, dense vegetation, which is exhausting and requires constant vigilance due to the risk of wildlife encounters. For safety, forest guards accompany workers during operations.

Exposure to various plants and insects often leads to allergies and skin rashes. Additionally, grass seed collection is challenging, as the seeds are light and difficult to gather. Close monitoring is required during the flowering season to ensure effective seed harvesting and storage. Proper transportation and preservation of these seeds are crucial in maintaining the health of Tadoba's grasslands.



Managing over 8,000 hectares of grassland annually is an enormous task. Range Forest Officers, Round Officers, and Forest Guards play pivotal roles in ensuring the health and sustainability of these habitats. The rehabilitation of Navegaon, Jamni, Palasgaon, and Kolsa into thriving grasslands is a testament to effective conservation efforts. These restored areas now support abundant herbivore populations and increased tiger activity, proving the success of systematic habitat management.

Grass expert Dr. Gajanan Muratkar plays a key role in training Tadoba's staff, equipping them with essential knowledge and skills for habitat management. Additionally, Tadoba's officers and staff regularly educate visitors, particularly forest officer trainees, about the importance of grassland conservation. Maintaining a herbarium and seed bank further enhances the park's conservation efforts.

Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve's dedication to grassland conservation highlights the intricate relationship between habitat management and wildlife preservation. The tireless efforts of forest staff ensure that these vital ecosystems continue to support a rich diversity of life, solidifying Tadoba's status as a conservation success story.

- Sachin Shinde
DFO, TATR

A LOVE REKINDLED WITH INDIAN WILDLIFE

We come from the small island nation of Sri Lanka, a close neighbour of India. While one of us has previously explored some of India's wildlife, for the other, this was the first venture into the country's wilderness. As passionate wildlife photographers, the decision to visit Tadoba—after marvelling at its magnificent wildlife through social media and other sources—was an instinctive yes. By the end of this incredible journey, the experience proved to be nothing short of magical.

Over the course of four days, we embarked on seven exhilarating safaris. As tropical souls, the early January chilly mornings had us bundled up in layers, shivering with anticipation. Yet, as the sun rose, the warmth brought us back to the familiar climate we're accustomed to. The evenings, with their crisp chill, were perfectly suited for unwinding and reflecting on the day's adventures.

The wildlife we encountered was as diverse as it was awe-inspiring. From majestic tigers and sturdy gaurs to elegant blue bulls and playful sloth bears, every sighting felt like a privilege. The myriad of birdlife was equally enchanting, with a special mention to a mottled wood owl that treated us to a spectacular show. And then, there was the elusive leopard—a sighting that held a special place in our hearts. In Sri Lanka, the leopard is the apex predator, the undisputed boss of the wild. But here, in the Indian wilderness, it exists in the shadow of the tiger, a fascinating contrast to witness.

Throughout our safaris, we were fortunate to cross paths with some of the reserve's most famous residents. T126, popularly known as Chota Makta, believed to be the largest male tiger in Tadoba, graced us with his majestic presence. Then there was T127, lovingly called Choti Madhu, who, along with her playful cubs, put on an unforgettable display of affection and agility. Nayanathara and Veer also made their appearances. We were fortunate to explore both the core and

buffer zones, each offering unique terrains and landscapes that provided a diverse array of backdrops for photography enthusiasts.

I was also struck by the commendable discipline and respect displayed by the safari drivers and guides. The gypsy safaris were a novel experience, and the way the team treated the wildlife with such reverence was truly inspiring. We didn't face any communication challenges, as most of the guides and drivers speak English. Plus, with one of us being a big Bollywood fan and competent enough in Hindi, we were able to navigate conversations with ease. For first-timers to TATR, it's essential to pack light and pack responsibly. Avoid plastics and unnecessary waste to help preserve the environment.

The buffer zones of TATR offered a remarkable glimpse into the harmonious coexistence of humans and wildlife. A standout moment was our sighting of Veer, a magnificent tiger, near a cotton field on the reserve's edge. It was the villagers living alongside the reserve who first spotted him and informed the guides, leading us to witness this majestic predator walking confidently through their shared landscape before resting near the roadside. This experience highlighted the unique balance in TATR's buffer zones, where plantations and villages blend seamlessly with roaming wildlife. Seeing humans and animals share this space, respecting each other's presence, was both humbling and enlightening. It underscored the potential for coexistence, with communities acting as protectors rather than adversaries of nature. This symbiosis reflects how sustainable practices and awareness can foster harmony between people and the wilderness they inhabit.

- Dhanushka Dolapihilla

Principal Software Engineer, Colombo, Sri Lanka

- Gayan Ranga Kumara

Superintendent of Customs, Colombo, Sri Lanka



AN EXTRAORDINARY ENCOUNTER

We are frequent visitors to Tadoba, and our latest trip on March 12, 2024, took us to the Junona Buffer Forest in the Moharli Range during the afternoon safari. Our adventure began with spotting a male tiger lounging on the opposite side of a nullah. Unfazed by the sounds of tourists and vehicles, he remained undisturbed, allowing us to observe him for approximately 15 minutes. Eventually, we chose to leave, mindful not to disturb His Majesty further.

Following our guide's suggestion, we continued down the road alongside the nullah. This proved to be a wise decision, as we soon encountered a tigress with her three cubs, all around 3-4 months old. Excited tourists eagerly awaited the tigress's emergence from the dense foliage. As she navigated a steep slope and made her way to the nullah bed, the anticipation was palpable. Cameras clicked furiously as the tigress gracefully entered the water, pausing occasionally to regard the onlookers. She quenched her thirst while exuding confidence in the presence of her human observers. After a while, reassured that her cubs wouldn't be in danger, she climbed back up the slope to retrieve them.

Following our guide's instructions to remain patient, we were rewarded when the tigress returned, accompanied by her three cubs in succession. It was a breath-taking experience to see each cub navigate the steep terrain. Two of the cubs tackled the descent with ease, while the third hesitated, struggling to find the right path. After a few attempts, he finally succeeded in joining his family on the nullah bed.



We were delighted watching the tigress and her playful cubs for nearly an hour, splashing in the water and enjoying their time together. Suddenly, the tigress leapt out of the nullah bed and went up the hillside. Moments later, she reappeared, this time with a langur kill. She shared the kill with her cubs, who engaged in a playful tug-of-war. Noticing their difficulty in tearing apart the prey, the tigress tore off a piece for them. However, instead of devouring the meat, the cubs continued to play with the langur's paw. Realizing their disinterest in eating, the tigress eventually took the remains back into the jungle, followed closely by her playful cubs.

This extraordinary encounter during our safari left a lasting impression on us- a truly unforgettable experience that we will cherish for a lifetime.

- Anant Pandurang Dorlikar

Principal Private Secretary,
CSIR-Central Institute of Mining and Fuel Research

ILLUSIVE AND BOLD

As a safari guide at the Kolara Buffer Safari gate since its opening on November 18, 2014, I have had the privilege of witnessing incredible wildlife moments. Each safari holds its own thrill, but one experience stands out to me vividly- December 31, 2020. That chilly morning, I ventured into the buffer forest with my guests, bundled in warm clothes, eagerly scanning the landscape for wildlife. Despite our hopes, the first couple of hours yielded no noteworthy sightings.

After a hearty breakfast around 8 am, we set off again at 8:30, and within 15 minutes, as we entered compartment no. 102, my heart raced at the sight of a magnificent male leopard sauntering along the dusty road. I quickly signaled my guests to remain quiet, and cautiously began to trail the stunning creature while maintaining a safe distance.

This leopard was different- bold and unbothered by our presence. Even another vehicle, coming from the Madnapur gate, followed closely, yet he paid us no attention. Generally, leopards are elusive and their sightings brief, but this



majestic cat confidently walked ahead of us.

To our astonishment, the leopard paused near a tree and began marking his territory! He sprayed his scent on the bark, a rare behaviour to witness. He continued this act multiple times, strolling nearly 500 meters before vanishing into the forest. In all my years of guiding, I had only seen a leopard marking territory once before. This moment was a highlight of my career, the best example of the wonders of nature that we are privileged to witness in the wild.

- Ganesh Yerme

Guide, Kolara Buffer Gate, TATR



Kiran Ghadge

HOW DOES A TIGER MOVE ACROSS SPACE AND TIME?

In the last segment, we talked about the social behaviour of tigers and how they interact with other tigers, other species, and also humans. This offers us a great segue into the topic of discussion for this article, where we will be talking about how tigers interact with time and space. When you plan a safari to spot the striped big cat in the wild, what time do you choose? You mostly expect a tiger sighting when the sun is rising or setting because this is when tigers can be found moving around. Why do you think that is?

Contrary to popular belief, tigers are not primarily nocturnal (active only during the night). Tigers are crepuscular, which means that they are most active at dawn and dusk, during the twilight phase. From the time the sun sets in the evening to the time the sun rises again, tigers cover long distances in search of prey. During the day, however, tigers spend their time getting some much-needed rest. If you've visited Tadoba and seen a tiger on an afternoon safari, it's quite likely that you saw the tiger taking a nap in the shade, often next to a waterhole, especially on hot summer days. But why are tigers more active when it's dark? Tigers have evolved this behaviour for various reasons – First and foremost, their hunting strategy. Tigers are adept at hunting in low-light conditions, where they can easily blend into their surroundings. This gives them an advantage over their prey. Interestingly, tigers match the activity cycle of their prey, i.e. since prey species like chital or sambar are more active at night, tigers are also more active during these times. Secondly, centuries of hunting by humans have also altered tiger behaviour. Tigers know that humans are more active during the day, so to avoid humans, tigers are more active when the sun goes down, and humans have returned to their homes to sleep.

What about space? We know that tigers are highly territorial. You may also have heard another term called – “home range”. What is that? A home range is basically a large area that an individual moves across, and within an individual's home range is their territory, a fragment of the home range that the individual defends fiercely. Multiple individuals may have overlapping home ranges but rarely have overlapping territories. Every night, individuals walk upwards of 15-20 km patrolling their territories, marking boundaries with chemical cues like spray marks and scrape marks to warn competitors not to venture into their space.

Females occupy small, mutually exclusive territories. Similarly, males occupy larger, mutually exclusive territories. Females and Males, however, have overlapping territories, where there are multiple females within the territory of a single male. But how big is a tiger's territory? Territory size may vary based on many factors like prey density, habitat quality, and the individual's age and sex. As a general rule of thumb, males have larger territories ranging between 60 to 100 km², while females have smaller territories in the range of 15 to 20 km². What do you think is the territory size of tigers in a reserve like TATR, which hosts more than 100 tigers? It is important to note that individual territories are always dynamic and change with many factors, including time. Today, a sub-adult male may have a very small territory after being ousted by larger males. Still, in the future, when this male reaches his prime, he can potentially push out older males and take up a much larger territory. There's a popular saying in India that “every dog has its day”. Well, maybe we can broaden the saying to apply to tigers as well since every tiger also has its day.

- Yashaswi Rao
Wildlife Biologist, TATR

CONSERVATION WITH COMMUNITIES

In January, conservation practitioners, policymakers, experts, and local representatives gathered to address a pressing concern: the increasing negative interactions between humans and abundant local wildlife. While conservation efforts have led to notable successes, the realities faced by local communities remain challenging and complex.

At the conference, public representatives shared that financial compensation for human and livestock losses, though comprehensive, does little to mend the emotional and social void left behind by these incidents. The grief of losing a family member or a critical asset is deeply personal and cannot be measured solely in monetary terms. On top of these factors, the communities face crop damage and economic losses particularly from wild boars and other herbivores that stray into farmlands.

Urban tourists spend considerable time and money hoping to catch a glimpse of a tiger—an experience that often depends on luck. In contrast, unpredictability is a daily reality for locals. Wildlife viewing can be both an inspirational experience and a cause for anxiety when unexpected tiger sightings occur close to agricultural land, revealing the thin boundary between thriving ecosystems and community wellbeing.

One resident recalled an experience from her school days that vividly illustrates the everyday reality of living on nature's edge. One afternoon, as she was cycling home from school—since her village only had a primary school—she noticed a dark shape beneath a tree in the distance. In the countryside, such a sight might easily be mistaken for a grazing buffalo, and initially, she assumed it was just that. However, as she got closer, the dark figure revealed itself to be a sloth bear, busy feasting on termites near a mound. Startled and overcome with fear, she left her bicycle behind and ran back to school. Although nothing harmful happened, the rush of adrenaline from that moment has stayed with her over the years—a clear reminder that for many locals, such encounters are not rare adventures but a part of daily life.

Chandrapur District, renowned for its robust tiger population, serves as a prime example of the intricate balance between conservation and community safety. Here, the reality of protecting livelihoods and ensuring family safety contrasts sharply with the distant thrill experienced by visitors. With such rooted challenges, pioneering solutions for human-wildlife conflict are likely to emerge from this very place, setting a benchmark for the rest of the country.

Reflecting on the discussions at the conference, it's clear that the future of wildlife conservation in India hinges on



© Sachin Bagmare

bridging the gap between scientific policy and everyday community experiences. Moving forward, it is essential that local voices are not only heard but actively involved in shaping policies that address the unique challenges they face. Aligning community voices with conservation programs will help create a future where the benefits of healthy, abundant wildlife are more equitably distributed.

Ultimately, nurturing the beauty and biodiversity of regions like Tadoba requires more than just technical or administrative solutions. It demands a commitment to understanding and embracing the everyday reality of those living at nature's doorstep. By doing so, we honour our shared natural heritage, working toward a harmonious coexistence that respects both the marvels of the wild and the needs of our communities.

- Saket Agasti
Social Scientist, TATR



Banda Arvind

SAFETY FIRST! A mother's protective instinct at its best. A wild dog mother carrying her little puppy to safety in the Kolsa range of TATR core.



[[Rahul Mangam

ALL IN ONE FRAME! Tourists watch in awe as T-178, popularly known as Xylo, locks eyes on his prey—an Indian gaur. Meanwhile, an egret, unfazed by the tension, enjoys its free ride.



[[Sumit Puramshettywar, RFO

ACUTE GIANT!
The Indian giant squirrel, the state animal of Maharashtra, spotted in the Nagulwahi beat of Chaprala Wildlife Sanctuary, under the administration of TATR.



[[Anup Deodhar

FOOD FOR FURBALLS!
Tigress T163, popularly known as Collarwali, the current ruler of the Telia Lake area carrying a fresh kill to feed her cubs.



INDIAN ROCK PYTHON

The Indian rock python (*Python molurus molurus*) is the largest non-venomous snake found in Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve. These heavy-bodied snakes have smooth scales, a broad triangular head, and round pupils. Their upper body features dark brown or black patterns resembling rocky textures, while the head has a pinkish hue. They can grow up to 14 feet in length.

Pythons are nocturnal and inhabit scrub jungles, forests, grasslands, agricultural fields, and even areas near human settlements. They prey on small mammals and birds, but adults are known to hunt fawns of spotted deer and jackal pups. These snakes are excellent climbers, using their strong muscles to scale trees.

The lower jaw of a python can open in four parts, allowing it to swallow large mammals whole. However, after consuming large prey, they become vulnerable to attacks from jackals, leopards, and tigers. When threatened, they emit a hissing sound similar to a cobra and may strike in self-defence.

Being non-venomous, pythons kill their prey by coiling around it and using immense muscle strength to cause suffocation. Females lay up to 100 eggs between March and June. Juvenile pythons are often mistaken for Russell's vipers, leading to accidental bites when improperly handled. Though non-venomous, a python bite can cause bacterial infections.

These magnificent reptiles play a vital role in the ecosystem and should be protected.

- Chinmay Deshpande
Naturalist



LENDIYA

One of the common yet often overlooked trees in Tadoba is the Lendiya tree (*Lagerstroemia parviflora*). If you visit Tadoba between April and May, ask your guide to show you a Lendiya in bloom. As its botanical name 'parviflora' suggests, it bears tiny white flowers, making the tree truly mesmerising.

Take a closer look, and you'll fall in love with these delicate five mm-sized blossoms. Each flower has six pure white crinkled petals, with long, thin claws and numerous stamens—six of them distinctly longer than the rest. Notice the darker anther in the centre, adding to its charm. The flowering period lasts about a month, making the tree a stunning sight.

Even in the non-flowering season, identifying Lendiya isn't tricky. Its bark closely resembles Teak, both in colour and texture. Small capsule-like green fruits with a prominent woody calyx are often visible. The sweet, edible gum exuded from bark injuries is another unique feature.

The wood of Lendiya is tough, flexible, and durable, making it ideal for agricultural implements. More importantly, it plays a crucial role in reforesting degraded areas. While most herbivores avoid its leaves, the *Antheraea paphia* moth feeds on them to produce tassar silk, a commercially valuable wild silk.

Beyond Tadoba, Lendiya is valued in urban landscaping and traditional medicine across India and Southeast Asia.

- Anirudh Chaoji
Senior Naturalist



BANDED PEACOCK

Encountering the Banded Peacock Butterfly (*Papilio crino*) for the first time is truly mesmerising. This butterfly's iridescent colours make it appear as if nature has crafted a jewel. When Johan Christian Fabricius described this species in 1793, he must have felt he had discovered one of nature's finest creations. Its vibrant presence enhances the beauty of dry deciduous forests as it flutters gracefully.

The Banded Peacock has a noticeable wingspan of 10–11 cm. Its abdomen is black, although poisonous species in this group have red abdomens. The butterfly's forewings display sparkling black with shiny green patches that curve downward toward the hindwings. Its hindwings have tails and are marked with eye-like patterns to deter predators by mimicking a staring gaze.

The butterfly lays its eggs on plants of the Rutaceae family, especially on *Chloroxylon swietenia*, a common tree in the Tadoba Forest. Females deposit pale yellow, rounded eggs on tender leaves. After the maturation period, a tiny caterpillar emerges and begins feeding on the leaves. Like other Swallowtail caterpillars, it has an osmeterium, a defence organ that deters predators. The caterpillar eventually forms a chrysalis, where the transformation begins. Days later, a beautiful butterfly emerges, completing its life cycle.

Unlike most butterflies, the green colour on the Banded Peacock's wings results not from pigments but from structural colouration, a phenomenon caused by microscopic wing structures interacting with light.

- Yogita N. D. Chhapekar
Biologist



SAVANNA NIGHTJAR

The Savanna Nightjar (*Caprimulgus affinis*) is a common nocturnal bird found in TATR. Measuring around 23 cm, this well-camouflaged nightbird is often seen roosting on gravel riverbeds, open grasslands, rooftops, and even roadsides. Occasionally, small loose flocks can be found resting together. Unlike other nightjars, it has less white in its plumage, with only males sporting a small white wing patch near the tip.

This species is well-adapted to urban environments and is frequently seen on city edges and town outskirts. Its intricate grey-brown plumage blends perfectly into its surroundings, making it difficult to spot. The crown and mantle are finely vermiculated without bold streaking. The scapular feathers are edged with rufous buff, and males have white outer tail feathers. It is most commonly detected by its distinctive high-pitched, burry "chree-ik" call, which it repeats frequently at night.

A resident bird, the Savanna Nightjar is a nocturnal insectivore, feeding actively from dusk to dawn. Its large eyes and massive gape allow it to hunt flying insects in near-darkness. The bill is surrounded by rictal bristles, aiding in prey capture.

Breeding occurs from March to August, varying among subspecies. Like most nightjars, it does not build a nest; instead, 1–3 pale pink blotched eggs are laid directly on the rocky ground or open spaces, camouflaging with the surroundings. The female incubates the eggs for 20–25 days while the male guards the nest.

This remarkable nightjar remains one of nature's best-hidden avian wonders.

- Rundan Katkar
Range Forest Officer, Kolsa, TATR



Ankit Bansod

Tiger, oh tiger

Tiger, oh tiger,
You are mightier,
When you are in the jungle,
You are the greatest fighter.

Tiger, oh tiger,
I am your admirer,
When I see you in the jungle,
My day feels much better.

Tiger, oh tiger,
You are a good hunter,
Your stripes and colours,
Make you bold and brighter

- Sai Vaibhav Shinde

Age- 10 years

Std- 4, Podar International School, Sangli

SPECIAL GUEST FOR R-DAY

Dr. Ravikant Khobragade, a wildlife veterinarian and the Head of the Rapid Rescue Team at the TATR, won another feather in his cap. He was the only wildlife veterinarian invited as a special guest for last month's Republic Day parade in New Delhi. It was an honour for his decade-long exemplary work in mitigating man-animal conflict. Dr. Khobragade is credited with rescuing 81 tigers, 48 leopards, 15 elephants, and 36 sloth bears involved in the conflict. With a B.V.Sc. and M.V.Sc. from Maharashtra Animal & Fishery Sciences University, Dr. Khobragade has extensive experience in the rescue, treatment, and management of wildlife, both in the wild and captivity. He is known for leadership in wildlife rescue operations, including handling human-wildlife conflicts and translocation projects. Notably, he was the first to detect Elephant Endotheliotropic Herpesvirus (EEHV) in the Asian elephants. Dr. Khobragade's expertise extends to chemical immobilisation, radio-collaring, and translocation of endangered species like tigers and leopards. He was



awarded the prestigious 'Sanctuary Joint Wildlife Service Award' in 2021 and has been recognised by the Government of India for his significant contributions to wildlife conservation and health management.

A Startling Call



A lucky few will get to experience the peculiar sight and call of the muntjac or barking deer. Though not entirely rare, they are elusive and not easily spotted. Smaller than chital and mousy brown in colour, male muntjacs are especially striking with their V-shaped antlers - almost the length of their face and partially embedded in thick skin. A black streak of fur runs down this embedded section, enhancing their unique appearance. The exposed antler tips curve inward like the hook of a wizard's staff, giving them an almost mythical look, as if an elf had taken the form of a deer in the central Indian jungle. For such a small creature, their alarm call - a deep, barking sound - is surprisingly loud and startling!

- Shreya Khadilkar

Visual Designer

LEADER OF THE CAMP

If you visit the forest campsite near the Madnapur safari gate in the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve's buffer zone, a friendly young man will greet you with a smile. His name is Rupesh Uike, and he's the manager at the campsite. Born and raised in the nearby Madnapur village, Rupesh is a familiar face to everyone who visits this scenic spot. He takes great pride in sharing information about the campsite and its surroundings, welcoming every guest with warmth and hospitality.

Rupesh's journey from a farm labourer's son to the manager of a forest campsite is a story of hard work and dedication. Growing up on the edge of the forest, he developed a deep admiration for wildlife from a young age. As a child, he would often gaze at the animals and birds of the forest, fascinated by their beauty. This love for nature only grew stronger as he matured.

The youngest of three brothers, Rupesh comes from a humble background. His parents worked hard as farm labourers, and life was simple yet fulfilling. After graduating in Arts, Rupesh started seeking job opportunities to support his family. His first break came when he was hired as a daily wage labourer at a protection hut in Tadoba. He worked there for a couple of months, gaining first-hand experience of the forest and the conservation efforts of the Forest Department.

During this time, Rupesh's educational qualification caught the attention of the then Forest Guard Mr. Vayad. Recognising Rupesh's potential, he recommended him for a position as the gate manager at the Madnapur safari gate. In October 2019, Rupesh took over the responsibility of managing the gate. The process of bookings had shifted online, and although it was a new system for him, Rupesh adapted quickly. His dedication to the job and eagerness to learn impressed his seniors, and he quickly became a trusted team member.

By November 2020, the TATR administration had set up a campsite at Madnapur and needed someone to manage bookings and hospitality. By this time, Rupesh had already mastered the necessary skills, making him the perfect candidate for the job. He embraced the challenge and took on the responsibility of managing the campsite.

Since then, Rupesh has been the heart and soul of the Madnapur campsite. He does everything from handling



online bookings to ensuring that guests have a memorable experience. Over the years, he has managed numerous camps for school and college students and has hosted many VIP guests. Each day at the campsite is a new learning experience for Rupesh. He enjoys conversing with visitors from across India and even abroad, which has given him a broader perspective on the world.

Rupesh credits his job for improving his family's financial condition. With his earnings, he and his wife have been able to take better care of his parents. He feels grateful that this job has not only provided him with financial stability but has also deepened his connection with nature. While he always admired tigers, he now understands their crucial role in maintaining ecological balance. Rupesh is proud to be part of the conservation efforts and is happy to contribute to the protection of the forest and its inhabitants.

- Anant Sonwane
Communications Officer, TATR

Contribute to 'Tadoba Diaries'

Are you a forest department staff, tourist, guide, driver, working with a resort, managing a home stay or a community member from TATR vicinity? Do you want to join our effort to spread awareness on forest and wildlife conservation through 'Tadoba Diaries'? Please share your interesting photographs (not less than 4 MB) and experiences (not more than 250 words) on tadobadiaries2021@gmail.com. Your photograph/experience must be related to TATR only. The best content will be published with due credit.





Midnight Express! A mother sloth bear carries her little hitchhikers through the jungle, showcasing the wild's most endearing travel style. Captured on the camera trap, this moment in the quiet of the night is a reminder of nature's untamed beauty and tender love!

THE ACHIEVERS (December-2024)

Join us in celebrating the outstanding dedication of TATR's top-performing forest guards! These frontline warriors of the Forest Department have led the way in foot patrols, ensuring the safety of their respective divisions.

We are delighted to announce the top two achievers for December 2024, recognising their remarkable commitment and service to forest protection.



Forest Guard - P. H. Borkar
Beat - Chipalghat
Round - Karwa
Range - Karwa
Division - Core TATR
Duration - 27 Days
Target - 125 Km/Month
Actual Patrolling - 333.22 Km.



Forest Guard - S. D. Patil
Beat - Mamla-II
Round - Mamla
Range - Chandrapur Buffer
Division - Buffer TATR
Duration - 18 Days
Target - 125Km/Month
Actual Patrolling - 325.23 Km

Explore
Tadoba
Like
Never
Before !



Scan for



Tadoba Movie



Scan for



www.mytadoba.mahaforest.gov.in



**Boating
Site**
Sitarampeth

For Booking
Surendra Mangam
M. 8657935941



Kayaking
Moharti

For Booking
Sanjay Jumde
M. 9834689541
Avinash Rathod
M. 9158928393



**Adventure
Site**
Agarzari

For Booking
Ajay Kodape
M. 9730853324



**Camping
Site**
Agarzari & Madnapur

For Booking
Ajay Kodape
M. 9730853324
Rupesh
M. 7083669491



Cycling
Moharti

For Booking
Sanjay
M. 9834689541
Avinash
M. 9158928393

SUPER MOMS OF TADoba

The forests of Tadoba are home to many fierce and nurturing mothers, each carving out a unique existence for their cubs. Tigress T20, popularly known as Zarni, the mysteriously shy Super Mom of Alizanza, stands apart among them. She resides in the farthest reaches of the Alizanza buffer, beyond which human settlements begin. Her cautious nature makes her an elusive figure, rarely offering sightings to visitors. But her instincts as a mother are razor-sharp, ensuring the safety of her cubs in a constantly changing landscape.

A buffer forest has two distinct zones: one bordering the core area and another merging into human habitation. While we define these spaces with boundaries, a tigress like Zarni perceives them differently. For her, what matters is a secure shelter for her cubs and an ample food supply. She doesn't understand the differentiation of zones or human territories—her focus remains on survival.

Contrary to popular belief, tigers are deeply afraid of humans. Most attacks occur out of fear or accident, a fact noted by the legendary Jim Corbett nearly a century ago. This holds true even today. Zarni, facing the realities of human encroachment, has adapted to be more secretive. Her cubs, too, inherit this cautious behaviour, staying hidden and wary of human presence.

In contrast, tigresses who enjoy the solitude of the forest raise cubs that are bolder. Take Nayantara, daughter of T16—the famous tigress Bhanuskhindi—she strides fearlessly along the roads even with a fleet of gypsies trailing behind. But Chandani, Zarni's female cub, mirrors her mother's elusive nature, avoiding attention and keeping to the shadows.

Each tigress in Tadoba shapes her cubs in her own way. Some grow into bold queens of the jungle, while others, like Zarni's lineage, become the silent, watchful rulers of the wild. In the ever-changing world of Tadoba, every mother carves a destiny for her young, teaching them the ancient ways of survival, secrecy, and strength.

- Sanjay Deshpande
Wildlife Enthusiast,
Sanjeevani Developers, Pune

MY BROTHER MY FOREST MY HOME



When We Build Your Home in Pune,
We Also Care for Their Home in Tadoba!

© Sanjay Deshpande, TATR, February 2025



Instagram: jungle_belles
Facebook: jungle_belles
Website: www.junglebelles.in
Phone: +91 7756081922



sanjeevanidevelopers
Sanjeevani Deve
www.sanjeevanideve.com
020-79649951 | +91 98509 63387



वाचा कधीही न ऐकलेल्या थरारक कथा पहा कधीही न पाहिलेली छायाचित्रे



ताडोबाच्या राणीची नाट्यमय जीवनकथा
प्रथमच पुस्तक रूपात

एक होती माया

GET
NOW

किंमत
₹ 450/-



English Version

COMING
SOON

इंट्री गेट आणि वेबसाईट वर उपलब्ध : www.tadobastore.com/collections/special-issue

Also
Available
on

amazon

HARD COPY

Annual Subscription

Rs. 300/-

Tadoba

DIARIES

Please follow these simple steps to subscribe :

- 1 ▶ Transfer Rs. 300/- to following account.
Executive Director, Tadoba-Andhari Tiger
Reserve Conservation Foundation, Chandrapur
SBI A/c No: 42331115800
Branch Code: 1941 | IFSC: SBIN0001941
Branch: Shastrinagar, Chandrapur
 - 2 ▶ E-mail us the screen shot of the payment confirmation or UTR/Ref. No. on
subscriptiontd@gmail.com or What's App us on 8010464632 along with the
following information.
Name | Mobile No. | What's App No. | e-mail ID
Address - House No./Name, Building No. Name, Street , Area,
Village/City, Tehsil, District, State, Pin Code.
- ▶ You can also pay the subscription fees at any of the safari gates at TATR.
▶ Your Tadoba Diaries copy will be delivered to you by post every month.

Scan QR for UPI Payment



UPI ID : tatmew5800@sb

DIGITAL COPY
Subscription



Tadoba

DIARIES

Scan



OR

Visit the website

<https://www.tadobastore.com/collections/tadoba-newsletter>

● Buy a single issue OR become an annual subscriber. ● Buy old issues also

Book-Post

From,

Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve Conservation Foundation

Mul Road, Chandrapur, Maharashtra. 442401

Ph. 07172 - 251414

To, _____