



Issue 38/Jan.2025

Tadoba

DIARIES

The Official Newsletter of Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve



Adeshkumar Shendge

Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve Conservation Foundation, Chandrapur

₹ 30/-

INCREASING FOREST COVER

Dear Reader

Wish you a very happy new year 2025 on behalf of the Tadoba family. Every year brings change, new challenges and opportunities, and this year is no exception. Like everything around us, forests also change in their extent, density, capacity to hold carbon stock and capacity to provide us with several critical ecosystem services. It is critical to monitor this change closely, as it determines the integrity of our ecosystems and our ecological security. And we are fortunate to start this new year with a good news of positive change. The recently released India State of Forest Report 2021-23 has revealed that the total forest and tree cover of the country is 8,27,356.95 sq. km, which is 25.17% of the country's geographical area. The total Forest Cover has an area of 7,15,342.61 sq. km (21.76%), whereas the Tree Cover has an area of 1,12,014.34 sq. km (3.41%). It is amazing how India is able to not only preserve the existing forests but also add to the forest cover in spite of the highest population densities and other biotic pressures on the forests. The current assessment shows an increase of 156.41 sq. km in the Forest Cover at the national level compared to the previous assessment. Also, the total forest and tree cover of the country has increased by 1445.81 sq. km as compared to the last assessment of 2021.

You might wonder about the precision of these figures, but let's be assured that the figures are the result of critical analysis and hard work over two years. In fact, it is a biannual exercise carried out for the entire area of the country by forest survey of India.

India is one of the very few countries that has a dedicated national agency that does this monitoring for all of India's landmass every two years. The Forest Survey of India, headquartered in Dehradun, does this with the help of state-of-the-art technology and very high-resolution satellite imagery. It keeps an eye on the entire geographical area of the country for any change in forest and tree cover. Along

with the increase in forest and tree cover, the report also points out areas where the forest cover has either decreased or the density class of the forest has negatively changed. For example, in the current assessment, there is a decrease in forest cover of 9.45 sq. km in Chandrapur district. This will have to be analysed with the help of a change matrix and see the reasons responsible for this, which can be tree felling, loss due to developmental projects etc. This enables policymakers and forest managers to identify the causes and take remedial measures to reverse the degeneration.

Over the years, since 1987, when the first forest assessment was done, the assessment has become robust and accurate. It acts as an indicator of not only how we are treating our forest resources but also how we are treating nature as a whole, as forests and wildlife and the elements of nature are intricately connected together and cannot thrive without each other. A change in one status is bound to be reflected in the change in the other.

Therefore, every patch of forest, every animal, every river and stream, and every mountain needs to be looked at in its entirety of connections to realise its significance and the repercussions of its loss. For the conservators, every forest patch, however small or big it is, is extremely important because it contributes to connecting other patches of forests. Such connectors are the corridors between the forests that help animals move from one habitat to another, usually searching for their own territory, mate or food and water. This ultimately helps the genetic strengthening of the species. Hence, all of us should strive to save every existing forest patch and create one or contribute to the afforestation initiatives.

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.



RADIO-COLLARING: A CONSERVATION TOOL

In December, four sub-adult tigers were radio-collared in the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve. Radio collaring is a powerful tool for wildlife conservation, enabling tracking of the movements and behaviours of animals in their habitats. For tigers, this technology provides crucial information that aids in their protection and management.

Radio collaring involves fitting a collar with a radio transmitter around the animal, which sends signals to monitoring teams. These signals enable tracking the tiger's movements, territory, and behaviours from a distance. For the tigers in TATR, the collaring will help study their movements as they mature, providing insights into their dispersal patterns—the way young tigers leave their birth territories to establish their own. Understanding dispersal is vital for ensuring the survival of tigers, as it helps identify wildlife corridors that connect different habitats. These corridors are critical for genetic diversity and the long-term health of tiger populations, as they allow tigers to migrate, find mates, and access new territories.

By monitoring the radio-collared tigers, one can also assess the overall health of the population, track the use of prey resources, and identify key areas of habitat that require protection. This data is especially important in a reserve like TATR, where tigers are often in close proximity to human settlements. Radio collaring provides a tool for preventing human-wildlife conflict by enabling timely interventions when tigers venture too close to populated areas. In addition, real-time monitoring of the tigers' movements helps deploy anti-poaching teams to high-risk zones, thus preventing illegal activities that threaten their survival.



While radio-collaring provides essential data, it is not without challenges. There is always a risk that the collars may malfunction or become damaged. Moreover, the cost of the equipment and the logistical challenges involved in tracking animals in remote areas pose additional hurdles. Despite these issues, the benefits far outweigh the drawbacks, as radio collaring has proven to be one of the most effective methods for understanding and protecting endangered species. The use of radio collaring also underscores the importance of integrating technology with conservation efforts to protect the world's endangered species.

- Anand Reddy

Deputy Director (Core), TATR



A VOLUNTEER'S JOURNEY THROUGH TADOBA

In an age where technological advancements and lunar missions often make headlines, it's easy to overlook the harsh realities many rural communities in India face. Even after 78 years of independence, numerous villages still grapple with basic infrastructure issues which impede the provision of quality education in these forgotten corners of our country. Witnessing the disparity between our nation's achievements and the ground realities in rural areas, I embarked on a mission to support less privileged children. After 19 years of fulfilling my corporate career, I resigned and dedicated the rest of my life to community service. In this new journey of self-discovery, I aim to be a catalyst for some positive change, however small, by helping these children with the education they deserve. For the last two years, I have volunteered as a teacher in remote village schools. My journey has led me to places like Turtuk - Ladakh, West Bengal, Arunachal Pradesh, Sharchay (the most secluded village in the Batalic region of Kargil).

For the past three months, I have been closely collaborating with the Zilla Parishad schools in the five villages under the buffer zone of the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra, supporting them as an additional resource for teaching English and Mathematics. A big thanks to the generous support of the Tadoba administration for giving me this opportunity. The TATR has many CSR activities to support the local communities that live in and around the tiger reserve. Education programs are one such initiative through which TATR is committed to enhancing the learning environment and the resources for the holistic development of the tribal community children. Last year, TATR donated e-learning materials to about 65 schools in the fringe areas of the reserve.

My experience as a volunteer teacher has reinforced my belief that education is a powerful instrument for personal development and societal progress. Witnessing the positive

impact on the local community has been incredibly inspiring and has strengthened my belief in the power of education and community support. Having said that, I also would like to bring to the notice of the people residing in many urban centres of the country, so detached from the plights and struggles of these communities that there are numerous challenges associated with remote schools.

1. Teachers are burdened with additional responsibilities like election duties, census duties, etc. This is directly impacting the teaching quality. Most of the time during the day, students are seen playing and roaming around in or outside the campus because teachers are either busy with non-teaching related work or not present in the school to supervise them.
2. Children are not sent to school due to the intentional decision of many parents. They are sent to earn daily wages by working in the paddy and cotton fields. This is structural discrimination against the children and the parents and lack of motivation. And discipline.
3. Lack of basic infrastructure like classrooms with good lighting, blackboards and lack of access to digital resources and the internet.
4. Lack of necessary community involvement.
5. Lack of basic personal hygiene.

These are a few of the common issues that I have observed so far. This is hindering the

quality of education in a big way. In my initial days at Zilla Parishad schools at Madnapur, I was having difficulty bringing the students back to the classroom as they were not used to sitting in the classrooms. Then, I took this as an opportunity to turn their playground into a learning ground and started teaching them through educational games and various activities.

(Continue on page 12..)

MEETING THE PRINCE

The wildlife safari at the Navegaon Core Zone of Tadoba on 19th October 2024 was simply exhilarating. It was my first encounter with the wild, and we were fortunate to spot T-164, popularly known as Yuvraj, a dominant tiger of Tadoba's core zone. Yuvraj is named after the distinct 'Y' mark visible between his left neck and shoulder, as well as another 'Y' mark on his left cheek, as explained by our guide.

While we were driving through the forest, not particularly hopeful of a sighting, he suddenly appeared, marching confidently towards our gypsy during the afternoon safari. For 25 unforgettable minutes, he treated us to a spectacular road show. I was completely captivated by his majestic presence. He was magnificent, commanding, and ferocious, leaving us all in awe and giving me goose bumps.

During my trip to Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR), I learned a great deal about tigers, their habitats, and their way of life. Nestled in the heart of Maharashtra, TATR is renowned for its charismatic tigers that reign over the breath-taking expanses of this popular jungle. The tigers of Tadoba epitomize power and beauty, serving as the true guardians of the forest.



- Monica Chaturvedi
Chartered Accountant, Mumbai

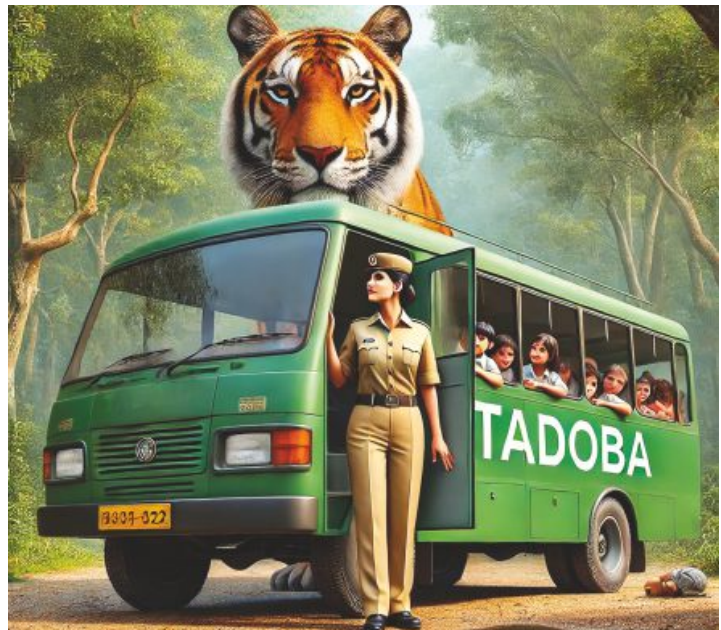
ENCOUNTER WITH A GENTLEMAN

Last month, I had the privilege of guiding a group of enthusiastic school students on a safari under the TATR initiative, 'Chala Majhya Tadobala'. The excitement was palpable as we entered the forest through the Moharli gate, and the children, brimming with curiosity, eagerly absorbed every bit of information I shared about Tadoba's rich flora and fauna. Their ultimate goal, of course, was to spot a tiger.

Our journey brought us to the 97 waterhole. Although there was no immediate sign of a tiger, I decided to wait and instructed the children to maintain silence. As we waited, my eyes caught a small piece of plastic near the bus's front wheel- a rare sight, given TATR's strict 'no plastic' policy. Sensing no immediate danger, I stepped out to pick it up.

As I climbed back onto the bus, I heard the children whispering excitedly, "Tiger! Tiger!" My heart skipped a beat as I turned to see a massive male tiger near the rear wheel, his piercing eyes locked on me. A wave of shock ran through me, but I quickly climbed back into the bus. The tiger, thankfully, retreated into the nearby bushes.

Though I was safe inside, my heart continued to race. Reflecting later, I realized the tiger must have been observing me from a close distance all along. Yet, he exhibited a remarkable calm, never showing aggression. That moment



was a humbling reminder of the wild's unpredictable beauty and the respect it commands. The children were thrilled with their unexpected sighting, and I was grateful for both the tiger's gentleness and the divine protection that day. Truly, Tadoba is a place of awe and wonder!

- Gayatri Wadhai
Guide, Moharli Gate



©Mohan Raj

DO TIGERS HAVE FRIENDS?

There's a popular saying in Hindi that goes "Sher jhund mein nahi, akele ghumte hain (Lions roam alone, not in groups)". This is incredibly wrong in the case of lions since lions live and move in large groups called 'prides'. The line may be better suited to tigers since tigers are solitary living creatures, meaning that they spend a major portion of their life alone in the wild. This is largely because tigers inhabit relatively dense forests where reduced visual contact makes group communication difficult. Also, a bigger group implies the need for more resources. In a forest environment, prey is scattered and insufficient to support large groups. A lone tiger can hunt once and feed on the kill for several days, reducing the need to hunt more often. In a group setting, however, the pack would need to hunt often (even every day, maybe) to keep the group satiated.

There are instances when tigers are more social, such as when two tigers have engaged in courtship or when a tiger is rearing its cubs. During courtship, a male and a female spend a significant amount of time together while also giving each other space intermittently. Social behaviour in tigers is most prominent between mothers and their cubs. Tigresses spend a lot of time with their cubs, teaching them how to hunt and preparing them for solitary life. Cubs remain with their mother for 17 – 24 months and eventually separate. When a tigress is with cubs, the father of the cubs also occasionally spends time with the cubs, protecting them from rival males. Cubs in a litter also have colourful social lives with each other and their parents. Cubs tend to play with each other, engaging in sparring and wrestling. They stalk, ambush, and playfully pounce on each other. With the tigress teaching the cubs how to hunt, the cubs practice these hunting tactics on each other. Once old enough, the cubs separate and go on to capture their own territories, often ousting their own parent as well.

In every other circumstance, though, tigers are highly territorial and use their brawns to keep other tigers out of

their area. These behaviours are more common in male-male and female-female tigers, i.e. males do not allow other males in their territory, and females do not allow other females in their territory. Male and female territories do overlap, though, with one male governing an area that hosts multiple females.

But how do tigers interact with other species? In the case of prey species, it's pretty obvious – they are food. But what about other predators? Like wild dogs or leopards, for instance. Well, territorial behaviour in tigers is driven by the scarcity of resources. Since tigers, leopards, and wild dogs compete for prey like chital or sambar, more for one means less for the other. Unfortunately for all other predators, the tiger is the apex predator in every landscape where it is found, and therefore, it pushes out other predators from its territory. Tigers are known to hunt and kill wild dogs or leopards as well occasionally.

What about interactions with humans? A common misnomer is that tigers are bloodthirsty and actively hunt humans. Ask anyone who has seen tigers all their lives, and they'll tell you that, in most cases, tigers prefer to avoid people. In cases of close encounters, tigers express their discontentment with a growl and allow the people to move away. However, instances of human fatalities caused by tigers are not rare, especially in India. It is important to understand that many of these cases happen when people get too close to a tiger without realising it, and the tiger attacks as it feels threatened.

Food for thought: If you were a leopard in a reserve riddled with tigers, how would you survive? I'll give you a hint. If a bully at school is plaguing you, sometimes you just avoid areas where the bully is or try to move around at times when the bully is not active. In ecology, we call this spatial and temporal segregation!

- Yashaswi Rao
Wildlife Biologist, TATR



COMMUNITY AND WASTE: ADDRESSING TOURISM IMPACT

Tourism serves as a dual-edged sword, bringing economic opportunities to remote corners of the world while introducing significant environmental challenges. From the snowy expanses of the Himalayas to the lush greenery of Tadoba, the beauty of these destinations attracts countless visitors each year, but often at a significant cost. Plastic pollution, a pervasive issue across the globe, has become a critical concern for both the natural environment and the local communities that depend on it.

Here's the stark picture: a free-roaming majestic tiger, a symbol of wild resilience, pride and joy to the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, passes by a glaring anomaly: a bright pink plastic wrapper. It is this kind of image that will shock one's sensibility to realise no place is ever too remote, no area too sacred from the effects of human neglect.

It goes beyond aesthetics alone. The litter of oxygen bottles, food packets, and plastic waste not only spoils the scenery in the Himalayas but also risks killing those precious wild animals, as severe contamination in the Himalayas causes complicated natural processes among such ecosystems. Tadoba also sees the number of people walking through the national park today growing parallel to a collection of discarded plastic waste around that place. This waste not only threatens the biodiversity at the local level by posing a threat to animals that might ingest or get entangled in it but also undermines the health and sustainability of local communities.

For the communities that live around Tadoba, the implications of tourist-induced pollution are immediate and personal. The risk of contamination from plastic leachates for agricultural lands, the pollution of water sources, and a threat to the health of the community thus imperil the quality of life and economic sustainability of local residents. The

plastic waste left behind by tourists indirectly imperils livelihoods that depend on farming and eco-tourism and threatens the very survival basis of these communities.

TATR has thus come up with the initiative of "Zero Waste Tadoba." The idea is to banish waste from the tiger reserve completely by developing powerful collection systems, recycling the material, and composting organic waste. This requires an effective partnership with local government bodies, such as Gram Panchayats, Eco-development Committees, the Zilla Parishad, and the hospitality industry, to create a community-led approach to sustainability.

As we look into the future, the management of TATR is committed to enhancing its sustainability measures, including expanding eco-friendly infrastructure and collaborating with businesses that prioritise environmental responsibility. In this way, Tadoba seeks to transform tourists into conservation advocates so that the allure of this magnificent reserve continues to inspire awe without leaving a trail of destruction.

Tourism need not be a curse to the natural world and its inhabitants. We can keep these wonderful places safe for generations to come by adopting responsible tourism practices so the local communities and wildlife will not continue to pay the price for our adventures. This greater narrative pulls all these different challenges around Mount Everest and Tadoba into an even wider understanding, reinforcing how everybody's action toward protection is vital for destinations such as the former mountain, to help protect precious natural heritage from this very earth.

- Saket Agasti
Social Scientist, TATR



Indrajeet Madavi

EYES OF THE JUNGLE! Piercing eyes that command the jungle's attention, the tiger reigns supreme. Hidden amidst the foliage in Navegaon Ramdegi Buffer forest, its presence is both stealthy and powerful.



FOREST CONSERVATION THROUGH NATURE EDUCATION

Tadoba, a magical forest, is the cradle of pure air, water, and food, and a rightful home to wildlife. Recognizing the importance of this rich forest, the initiative 'Chala Mazya Tadaobala' (Come, Explore My Tadoba) was launched in 2015 to promote forest conservation through nature education. Since then, over 50,000 students and locals have participated in this initiative, gaining a direct experience of Tadoba's vibrant ecosystem and fostering a growing commitment to tiger conservation.

The Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR) is surrounded by 95 villages, home to nearly 100,000 people whose lives are intricately connected to the forest. This initiative aims to deepen their understanding of the forest's significance, emphasizing their role in its preservation. It also seeks to pass down the tradition of conservation to future generations, ensuring sustainable coexistence.

The program includes free nature tours for students from primary and secondary schools in the buffer villages. These tours are conducted using two nature education vehicles, supplemented by tourism canters when necessary. During these excursions, children are introduced to the forest's wonders- its rivers, streams, lakes, plants, insects, birds, and animals- through engaging, interactive activities.

As the children embark on their journey, their excitement grows, filled with curiosity: "Will we see a tiger? What about a deer?" Their joy upon spotting animals like deer and bison is unmatched, and when they catch a glimpse of a tiger, their delight knows no bounds. This connection, spanning generations, reinforces the bond between local communities

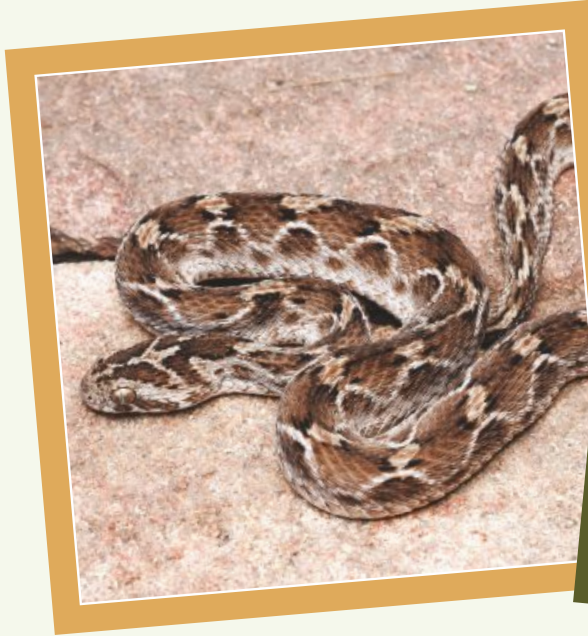


and the forest's majestic inhabitants.

Throughout the experience, children are taught the ecological importance of tigers and their symbiotic relationship with the forest. They pledge to protect wildlife, conserve nature, and respect the environment.

The program concludes with a poignant message: "Forests sustain rivers, streams, and life itself. By protecting the forest, you protect yourself and the planet." The journey leaves the children inspired, ensuring they carry the mission of conservation forward, as guardians of Tadoba's natural treasures.

- Prafulla Savarkar
Environment Education Officer, TATR



SAW-SCALED VIPER

The saw-scaled viper (*Echis carinatus*) is one of India's most venomous snakes, known for its agility and potent venom. Despite its small size, growing up to 60-65 cm, it commands respect in the wild. Its name, *carinatus*, refers to its keeled scales, which are rough and ridge-like. This snake features a reddish-brown body, a triangular head with a distinctive V-shaped design, and large eyes with vertical pupils.

Saw-scaled vipers are nocturnal creatures commonly found in dry areas, rocky terrains, and shrub forests. As cold-blooded reptiles, they can often be spotted basking on roads or rocks during the day. They prefer hiding under rocks and thorny bushes for protection. These vipers are incredibly agile, capable of sidewinding- a unique form of movement that allows them to traverse quickly across loose sand and rocky surfaces.

Their diet consists of scorpions, lizards, frogs, and insects, showcasing their role in maintaining ecological balance. Females give birth to 5-7 young ones between April and August. When threatened, they produce a warning sound by rubbing their scales together, a trait unique to this species. Quick to strike if provoked, their venom is highly toxic and places them among the 'Big Four' venomous snakes in India.

Camouflaging effectively in dry habitats, the saw-scaled viper can be mistaken for non-venomous snakes like sand boas or Russell's kukris. Found in Tadoba and across India, it is essential to seek immediate medical attention and anti-venom treatment in case of a bite. This elusive yet dangerous snake is a reminder of the hidden wonders and perils of the wild.

- Chinmay Deshpande
Naturalist



DEEKEMALI

The Deekemali tree (*Gardenia resinifera*) is often overlooked in Tadoba's lush landscape until it bursts into a spectacular bloom of white and yellow flowers during the hotter months. Found predominantly near nullahs, where its seeds easily disperse, spotting one Deekemali often leads to discovering many more nearby.

The tree's five-petaled flowers are its most striking feature, exuding a strong, sweet fragrance that attracts attention. These blossoms, either solitary or in small terminal clusters, start as bright white and gradually turn yellow after a few hours. Each flower is a hermaphrodite, containing both male and female reproductive organs, ensuring efficient pollination.

Deekemali gets its scientific name, *Gardenia resinifera*, from the resinous amber droplets it produces at the tips of emerging leaves. This resin has a rich history of use in traditional medicine and is prized for its anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties. It has been used to treat skin infections, wounds, and other ailments.

Beyond its medicinal uses, Deekemali's flowers are cherished for their aromatic qualities. The sweet fragrance is utilised in the creation of perfumes, essential oils, and other scented products. Additionally, the flowers play a role in religious and ceremonial practices, often symbolising purity. Their unblemished white petals make them a popular choice for occasions like weddings.

The Deekemali tree is not only a visual and olfactory delight but also a reminder of nature's versatility. From its medicinal resin to its fragrant blooms, it embodies both beauty and utility, making it a valuable yet understated part of Tadoba's ecosystem.

- Anirudh Chaoji
Senior Naturalist

Wikimedia Commons



COMMON JAY BUTTERFLY

The Common Jay butterfly (*Graphium doson*), a member of the swallowtail family (*Papilionidae*), is a striking species found across India. Its wings are adorned with bluish-green spots on the forewings and hindwings, with the undersides displaying distinct red and black spots. The butterfly's wingspan ranges from 50 to 65 mm, making it a vibrant addition to its habitat, which includes semi-deciduous forests, evergreen forests, riparian zones, and urban areas.

The Common Jay lays its eggs on tender leaves of false Ashoka (*Polyalthia longifolia*) and also uses plants like Champa and *Milusa tomentosa* as hosts. For nectar, it favors flowers like *Ixora*, Pagoda flowers, *Tridax procumbens*, *Wedelia*, and Blue Jamaican Spike. Male Common Jays are often seen engaging in mud-puddling, extracting minerals from damp soil, which enhances their reproductive success.

This butterfly undergoes complete metamorphosis, starting as eggs that hatch in 2-4 days. The caterpillar stage lasts 8-10 days, during which they feed on tender and mature leaves. After this, they spin a chrysalis and enter the pupal stage, remaining immobile for 10-15 days before emerging as adults. Once out, the butterfly dries its wings and takes flight.

Caterpillars of the Common Jay possess a specialized defense mechanism called the osmeterium, a fang-like organ that emits a pungent smell to ward off predators. This unique adaptation is a testament to their survival strategy in the wild. The Common Jay butterfly is a fascinating reminder of the intricate balance of nature. Its beauty, behavior, and role in the ecosystem highlight the need to appreciate and protect the biodiversity around us.

- Yogita N. D. Chhapekar
Biologist



INDIAN NIGHTJAR

The Indian Nightjar, or *Caprimulgus asiaticus*, is a fascinating nocturnal bird species, active during the night and resting during the day. In the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR) and surrounding Chandrapur area, it is locally known as "Zapri", a name derived from the word Zopri, meaning sleepy.

Measuring about 28 cm, this bird's plumage is beautifully camouflaged with sandy-grey to brownish-grey tones, making it blend seamlessly with its surroundings. Key features include a boldly streaked crown, rufous buff markings on the nape, prominent buff or rufous buff spots on the wing coverts, and pale, relatively unmarked central tail feathers. It also has broken white patches on the sides of the throat and a more uniform tail.

The Indian Nightjar is a resident breeder and can be found in open woodlands, scrublands, and cultivated areas. During dusk and night, these birds are often seen flying low, feeding on insects attracted to livestock or artificial light sources like street lamps. Their wide-open bills help them scoop up clouds of insects as they glide through the night.

Unlike most birds, the Indian Nightjar does not build a nest. Between February and September, the female lays 2-4 creamy pink eggs directly on the ground, relying on its camouflage to protect them.

Spotting an Indian Nightjar is easier at night, often caught in the beam of vehicle headlights as it rests or takes flight. A master of stealth and adaptation, this nocturnal species is a vital part of the ecosystem, controlling insect populations and enchanting wildlife enthusiasts with its elusive beauty.

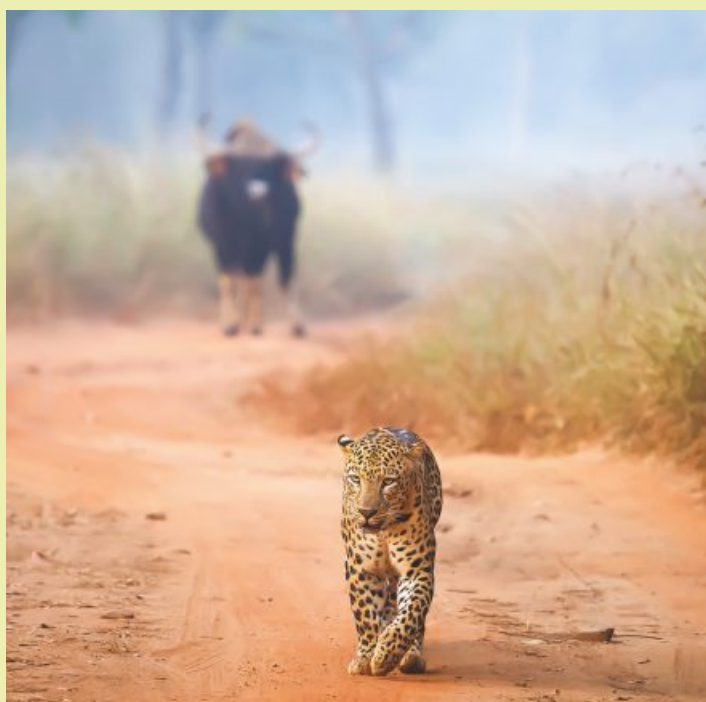
- Rundan Katkar
Range Forest Officer, Kolsa, TATR

A LEOPARD & A GAUR

On my last visit to Tadoba, in November, on a nippy winter morning, we drove around to try and find signs of the tiger. As we entered the park 15 minutes early, due to our full-day permit, ours was the only vehicle in the tourism area of the core zone. We were driving through the Pandharpauli area when something ran across the road. We immediately stopped our gypsy, and a leopard emerged from the grass onto the road. As we were in tiger territory, we were expecting the leopard to run into the bushes quickly, but he had no intention of doing that. It walked with us for ten minutes, and as we rounded a turn, a huge male Indian Gaur was eating grass by the side of the road. The leopard paid no attention and walked past the gaur. The gaur noticed the leopard's presence and stood on the road as it marked its territory. Even after seeing the gaur, the leopard showed no intentions of moving off the road but eventually did to quench its thirst and sit deep inside the bushes.

- Viivaan Srinivasan

Student, Std.7,
Dhirubhai Ambani International School, Mumbai



A VOLUNTEER'S JOURNEY THROUGH TADOBA

(Continued from page 4..)



My experiment worked well to some extent. Students who were once shy and hesitant to speak simple sentences like "Good morning!", "How are you?" Are now confidently saying

prayers and taking pledges in English during the morning assembly. Additionally, they are learning to construct simple sentences, give speeches in English, perform skits, and some of them even aspire to join the Indian Army. The Rangoli Competition using available natural material in the campus and a skit performed by the primary school on the importance of Tigers to farmers and brain-storming followed by essay writing about 'Problems of Our Village and the Solutions' was well appreciated by the audience and judges. Observing this progress fills me with gratitude, and I am

motivated to contribute further to such a meaningful cause.

Deployment of additional resources, creation of community volunteering opportunities by the local Gram Panchayat, and donations of educational resources can help create a conducive learning environment for these less fortunate students. Continued efforts are needed to ensure that students remain in school, which is why local volunteers and their stewardship is crucial.

Hence, I urge people to come forward and support the children in government schools in

whatever capacity you can. It can be spending a few hours with these kids on Saturdays and motivating them to think big and dream by sharing your success stories and experiences, teaching them some skills; playing some games to improve their proficiency in literacy and numeracy, etc. Together, we can bridge the gap and ensure that every child in the villages has access to quality education and a hopeful future. Through my endeavours, I have learned that true fulfillment comes not from material wealth but from making a positive impact on the lives of others.

"Let us sacrifice our today so that our children can have a better tomorrow." - A P J Abdul Kalam

- Sumaiya Nikhath

Volunteer Teacher, Bangalore

THE GATEKEEPER OF WILDERNESS

As you approach the Kolara Safari Gate, one of the prominent entry points into the breathtaking Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR), you'll encounter a young man with an earnest demeanour and a watchful eye. He is Avinash Ganvir, the gate manager of Kolara's core zone. Polite yet firm, Avinash will ensure you follow every rule to the letter. Forget your original ID? No safari for you. He enforces regulations not out of stubbornness but from a deep commitment to preserving the sanctity of Tadoba's wilderness.

At 32, Avinash is not just another gatekeeper. Armed with a Master's degree in Social Work (MSW) and an MPhil, his qualifications might suggest a career in academia or urban development. Yet, he chose a path less travelled—one that keeps him rooted in his village, his family, and his passion for wildlife.

Born and raised in Kolara village, Avinash grew up with modest means. His father, a farmer working on encroached land and skilled in crafting bamboo items, understood the power of education despite his limited formal schooling. He poured his hopes into his only child, ensuring Avinash pursued higher studies. Avinash excelled, earning degrees that opened doors to opportunities far beyond his village.

But fate had other plans. While pursuing his MSW, Avinash encountered a question during an interview with the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) that changed his life forever: "Do you think tigers should be saved?" His answer was an emphatic yes, but when asked why, he faltered. That unanswered question haunted him, sparking a journey to discover its answer.

Determined to understand the importance of tigers, Avinash delved into conversations with experienced gypsy drivers, safari guides, and forest officials. He learned how tigers play a pivotal role in maintaining the ecological balance, and their presence fuels the livelihoods of many in his village through tourism. This realisation ignited a passion for conservation that would shape his future.

In 2014, at just 22, Avinash bought a gypsy and entered the safari business. Driving tourists into the forest brought him closer to the wilderness he had come to love. His dedication caught the attention of Pradeep Chavhan, the Range Forest Officer (RFO) of Kolara at the time, who offered Avinash a temporary job at the Navegaon Gate. Avinash quickly proved



his mettle, demonstrating not just competence but a profound respect for the forest and its rules.

In February 2020, Avinash was appointed Gate Manager at Kolara Gate on a contractual basis. He has since become an important part of Tadoba's tourism management, ensuring a seamless experience for visitors while upholding the reserve's regulations. He has caught many tourists, including a few photographers, trying to enter the park with fake IDs.

Despite his qualifications, Avinash never sought opportunities in bustling cities like Nagpur or Chandrapur. When asked why, his answer is heartfelt: "I've never left my village or my parents. This job keeps me close to them and gives me the chance to serve the forest and wildlife I love. What more could I ask for?"

- 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.





TINY BUT MIGHTY!! A rare glimpse into the life of the honey badger- a mother guiding her little one through the wilderness, a testament to nature's fierce bond and unyielding spirit.

THE ACHIEVERS (November-2024)

Join us in celebrating the outstanding achievements of the best-performing forest guards at TATR! These dedicated frontline soldiers of the forest department have excelled in foot patrolling within their respective divisions.

We are delighted to announce the top two achievers for November 2024.



Forest Guard - S. A. Wasure
Beat - Nimdhela
Round - Bhanuskhindi
Range - Tadoba
Division - Core TATR
Duration - 21 Days
Target - 125 Km/Month
Actual Patrolling - 328.47 Km



Forest Guard - P. P. Shirsagar
Beat - Karwa-I
Round - Karwa
Range - Palasgaon
Division - Buffer TATR
Duration - 26 Days
Target - 125Km/Month
Actual Patrolling - 355.711 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



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

Kayaking
Moharti



**Adventure
Site**
Agarzari

For Booking
Ajay Kodape
M. 9730853324



**Camping
Site**
Agarzari & Madnapur

For Booking
Ajay Kodape
M. 9730853324
Rupesh
M. 7083669491



For Booking
Sanjay
M. 9834689541
Avinash
M. 9158928393

Cycling
Moharti



WITNESSING THE HUNT

For wildlife enthusiasts, every safari promises unexpected moments, some awe-inspiring, others humbling. On one such evening, I experienced something that left me reflecting on the delicate balance of life in the wilderness.

Often, we refer to a tiger's meal as its "kill," a term that has always made me uncomfortable. Imagine calling a restaurant a "kill joint" simply because it serves non-vegetarian food! Yet, for a tiger, survival means hunting- it has no choice but to kill its prey. While I have seen tigers feeding on their catch, I have never witnessed the raw moment of a hunt.

On our way back to the gate, we spotted a massive wild boar grazing near the road. Our driver, excited by the close proximity, asked if I wanted to take a picture. It was getting late, and I declined. We drove past, but mere seconds later, a piercing cry shattered the stillness- a sound unmistakably filled with agony.

Turning back, I saw a tigress leaping onto the wild boar, pinning it down with a grip on its throat. We reversed the gypsy as the scene unfolded in the tall grass: the wild boar's desperate struggle for life against the tigress's unyielding hold. It was over in moments.

Reflecting on this, I realised how close we had been to witnessing the entire hunt. The tigress must have been lying in wait, concealed in the grass, mere feet from its prey—and us. Had we paused for a photograph, the hunt might have played out differently, or perhaps not at all.

The encounter reminded me of the forest's unpredictability and its stark realities. Life and death coexist here, and each moment is a testament to survival. The next morning, I returned to the spot, expecting to find the tigress still near her meal. But that's a story for another time.

This experience marked another tick on my wildlife wishlist- a humbling lesson in nature's raw, unfiltered beauty.

- Sanjay Deshpande
Wildlife Enthusiast,
Sanjeevani Developers, Pune



**MY FOREST
MY FOOD
MY HOME**

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

© Sanjay Deshpande, TATR, January 2025



📍 jungle_belles
📱 jungle_belles
🌐 www.junglebelles.in
☎ +91 7756081922



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



वाचा कधीही न ऐकलेल्या थरारक कथा पहा कधीही न पाहिलेली छायाचित्रे

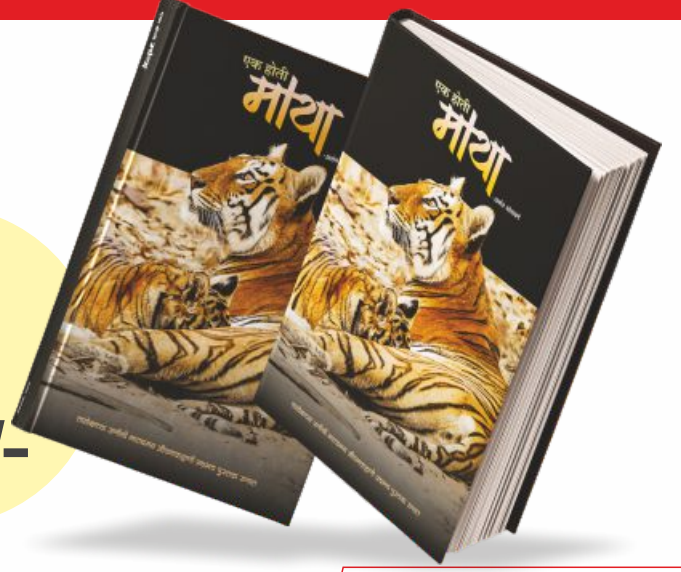


ताडोबाच्या राणीची नाट्यमय जीवनकहानी
प्रथमच पुस्तक रूपात

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@sbil

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, _____