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Tadoba

DIARIES

The Official Newsletter of Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve

Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve Conservation Foundation, Chandrapur

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A NEW VISION, CHALLENGES, STRATEGIES, AND FUTURE GOALS



Dear Reader

I took charge as the Field Director of the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR) on February 17, 2025. It is an immense privilege to oversee one of India's premier tiger reserves, a landscape that harbours a rich biodiversity and plays a crucial role in wildlife conservation. My predecessor, Dr Jitendra Ramgaokar, has left an indelible mark by implementing innovative conservation measures, and I am committed to building upon these foundations.

At the core of our strategy lies habitat management, an essential pillar for safeguarding our wildlife. Our interventions aim to ensure a secure and thriving ecosystem that provides adequate water, food, and shelter throughout the year. This approach will not only help sustain wild populations but also mitigate human-wildlife conflict by reducing the likelihood of animals straying into human-use areas. Grasslands serve as the backbone of forest ecosystems. They prevent soil erosion, aid in water retention, maintain nutrient cycles and provide critical habitats for prey and predators. We have launched a long-term initiative to restore, maintain, and enhance grassland ecology within the Critical Tiger Habitat.

Our habitat management efforts encompass the removal of invasive weeds across TATR's buffer and core areas. To enhance the effectiveness of these measures, we will

continue to conduct workshops and field visits to train beat guards in weed identification and management techniques. Similarly, meticulous water management is crucial during the dry season when water scarcity can drive wildlife toward human settlements, increasing the risk of conflict. Our water management strategies are tailored to beat-level requirements, ensuring effective conservation and resource availability for wildlife. Another pressing concern is forest fires, especially during the dry months. Fire-prone zones have been mapped, and a comprehensive Crisis Management Plan has been developed to prevent, monitor, and control fire outbreaks.

Beyond habitat restoration, research-driven conservation initiatives will be a key focus area. We are keen to foster collaborations with research institutions, universities, and conservation organizations to advance scientific studies and improve our conservation strategies. Sustainable wildlife conservation requires long-term commitment and the active participation of all stakeholders. Hence we will continue to engage with local communities, public representatives, NGOs, scientists, and wildlife managers,

Dr. Prabhu Nath Shukla

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



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CELEBRATING GRASSLAND MANAGEMENT

What? Around 80 species of grasses? This is the typical reaction from many participants attending the grassland ecosystem management training frequently held in TATR. While Tadoba is thriving with a rising tiger population, several factors contribute to this success, and grassland ecosystem management is one of them. Under the guidance of Prof. Gajanan Muratkar, known as the Grassman of India, every field staff member is now well-versed in year-round grassland management activities.

The 80 grass species found in TATR are categorised as palatable and non-palatable from a management perspective. This classification ensures the regular and time-bound uprooting of non-palatable grass species before they flower. Developing and maintaining grassland habitats is a continuous and meticulous process that must be followed consistently for years. It primarily involves identifying soil types, selecting grass species suitable for each soil type, and eradicating non-palatable species prevalent in the area.

After this initial assessment, non-palatable grasses are uprooted and removed. Seeds of grasses and legume species are collected mainly from existing grasslands. The collected seeds are dried, stored, and sown from May 25 to June 10. All these activities are scientifically planned according to a yearly calendar for grassland management. Regular classroom and field training sessions ensure that ground-level staff clearly understand their roles. TATR has also become the first tiger reserve to publish a book on its grass species, detailing each species' name, scientific name, flowering and seeding time, uses, and identification features.

To further motivate field staff, Shri Anand Reddy, Deputy Director (Core), introduced a herbarium competition and a grass seed collection competition. The response exceeded expectations, with almost all forest guards and round officers participating. Many participants collected over 50 grass and legume species, but Forest Guard Miss Payal Tiple stood first with an impressive collection of 78 species in her herbarium. In the seed collection competition, several candidates gathered over 900 kg of seeds individually, but Forest Guard Shri Andumbar Barar secured first place with 940 kg of grass and legume seeds from 19 species. Both



winners were felicitated by Shri Ashok Uike, Hon. Guardian Minister, Chandrapur, while several other participants received recognition at the Field Director's office on Republic Day, along with certificates and cash prizes.

Grasslands are the soul of the forest, providing not only grazing areas but also essential nesting, hiding, and resting habitats. They sustain herbivores, which in turn support carnivores like tigers. Thus, grassland ecosystem development is crucial, particularly for a tiger reserve.

With a well-established ecosystem, TATR now has over 35 grasslands, ranging from tiny 2-hectare plots to the vast 275-hectare Navegaon grassland. Without effective grassland management, relocating villages from the core forest would have had limited benefits for wildlife conservation..

With dedicated field staff, proper training, available resources, and strong leadership, there is much more to achieve in enhancing the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve's grassland ecosystem. Let us witness this journey together!

- Aniruddha Dhage
A.C.F, TATR (Core)

THERE'S MORE TO A FOREST!

A very commonly asked question after the Jungle Safari is whether one spotted the tiger, and if spotted, how many? How close? How long? In fact, many tourists knowingly or unknowingly visit Jungles only to see the tigers and get disappointed if the tiger is not spotted. However, forests are much more than the tigers. In the quest to look only for tigers, we miss out on many other aspects of the forest. The jungle offers much more provided we have the farsighted vision and zeal to look for it.



Things to do in Tadoba

Take the case of the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR), popularly known as the Land of Tigers. Though TATR is famous among tourists for tiger sightings, there are equally thrilling and mesmerising experiences and activities in the wild beyond the tiger sightings such as nature trail, nature camping, cycling trail, adventure activities, kayaking, sailing, birding machan, butterfly world garden, log-hut stay, Home Stay, and Souvenir Shops. Facilitating such eco-tourism activities offers the surrounding villagers and tribal communities a source of alternative livelihood, boosts their income, reduces their dependence on forests and stops their migration to urban areas.



Nature camping site

Reflecting on my last visit to TATR, I felt the following could be some of the 'To-Do' activities for the tourists during their visit to the wilderness.

- Observe the percentage of local staff employed at the resort where you are staying. If it is negligible, provoke the owner to boost local employment as it boosts the local economy. The local people won't have to migrate to nearby cities in search of better occupation or jobs.
- The villages adjoining the forest mainly belong to tribal communities. For instance, the Basod community has an ancestral occupation of handcrafting bamboo products. With the advent of plastics, their products are dying a slow death. Try to purchase and promote their products. It costs nothing!
- Prefer to stay at a local homestay. It not only allows villagers to serve you but also gives you an opportunity to get a feel for local culture.
- Eat local. The traditional cuisines made on Chulha are mouth-watering and provide an alternative source of livelihood for rural people. Remember, their economy depends on you.
- Don't blow horns or listen to loud music. Instead, hear the mesmerising sounds of the jungle, the sound of a freshwater stream, the chirping of the birds, the rustling of the leaves, etc.
- The souvenir shops at forest gates keep exclusive tribal and traditional products. Buying these products offers the local artisans a ready-made market. It's a good practice to gift such products on birthdays and anniversaries.
- Don't throw away waste or plastics in the pristine forests.
- Visit the Tourist Interpretation Centre to understand the flora/fauna of the particular forest.
- Spend a day in a rural setting to understand the local customs, traditions, and culture. Understand the challenges these people face and if we can take any corrective measures to solve their problems.
- Educate other people about sustainable ways of being in the forest.

Thus, the Next time you visit a forest, be on the lookout for the activities mentioned above and take in the holistic feel of the pristine forested areas.

- Abhishek Gawande
Social Scientist, Nagpur

A GOOSEBUMPS MOMENT

For a one-day vacation, my friends and I decided to spend time in nature and have a thrilling wildlife experience. I booked an afternoon safari at the Palasgaon Buffer Gate in the Kolara region for March 3, 2024. Before reaching the gate, we had lunch and completed the entry formalities. Luckily, we could even hire a camera at the gate for our safari. We were assigned a gypsy with driver Rahul and guide Jeevan, both highly experienced in wildlife. As soon as we started, they shared fascinating insights about the tigers and other animals found in the area.

About an hour into the safari, we spotted sambar and spotted deer, but there was no sign of a tiger. We remained patient, and our patience paid off! After some time, we spotted a giant male tiger T178, popularly known as Xylo, resting in the dense forest. We waited there for two hours until he finally woke up. After a while, he walked towards a small waterhole, sat in it for some time, and then started walking in our direction.

That was the most thrilling moment! As he came closer to our gypsy, we felt goosebumps. After pausing for a moment, he slowly walked back into the jungle.



This was by far the best safari experience I have ever had! Huge thanks to driver Rahul, guide Jeevan, and TATR for making this adventure possible.

- Akshay Ane

Bank Officer, Wani, Yavatmal

A Tender, Loving Moment

One of the most unforgettable moments of my career as a safari guide happened just a year after I started working. It was in 2010, and back then, Tadoba's tiger population wasn't as thriving as it is today. The park was quieter, with fewer tourists, which made those moments even more precious.

That morning, I was on a safari with a guest from my village. By 7:00-7:15 AM, we had reached Ainbodi in the Kolara range—back then, it was part of the Tadoba range. Ours was the only vehicle there, and the excitement in the air was palpable. We were all eyes, eagerly watching a tigress, whom we affectionately called Leela, as she sat by the water. She had recently given birth, but no one had seen her cubs yet.

As we watched her with bated breath, Leela made a soft sound, and from the left side of our vehicle, I heard some faint rustling. When I turned to look, my heart skipped a beat. Not one, but four tiny cubs popped out of the grass! They were no more than two months old, and I had never seen cubs that young before. They were the cutest little fur balls, their innocence shining through their tiny, wobbly movements.

But what really struck me was how these cubs didn't rush to their mother. They stayed hidden in the grass, cautiously peeking out, as Leela didn't signal them. She drank from the water, soaked herself, and then approached them, calling them softly. And then, the most beautiful thing



happened—Leela showered her cubs with love, licking them gently.

It was such a tender, loving moment I will never forget. What I did not know was that one of those cubs was about to become the Queen of Tadoba- Maya!

- Vijay Jiotode

Guide, Kolara Gate (Core)

HOW DOES A TIGER COMMUNICATE?


 A tiger is shown in a forest, standing on its hind legs and leaning against a large tree trunk. The tiger's head is tilted back, and its front paws are resting on the tree. The background is filled with green foliage and trees.

©Mahavir Surana

If you're a regular patron of TATR, you may have been lucky to see a tiger lift its tail and 'spray-mark' a tree or a pillar while on their daily patrol of their territory. Your accompanying guide would have informed you that the purpose of the spray-mark is to let other tigers know that if they can smell this scent, they are trespassing and may invite a territorial dispute. But how does such a message go through, and how can other tigers sense it? In this article, we will talk about how tigers communicate with other tigers and also with other species (including humans). We will also talk about the various modes of communication that tigers use.

Let's start with the spray-mark. It is a mode of chemical communication that tigers use to talk to each other. A spray-mark involves a tiger releasing a chemical concoction from specialised glands around its anus in the form of a spray. Tigers also rub their heads and cheeks against prominent structures like trees or rocks to leave a scent-mark and sometimes leave a pile of smelly poop on trails along with a scrape mark, which is basically scraping the ground with their feet. All of these marks are meant to send a message with smells as a medium of communication. But how do other tigers decipher this message coded in scents? Well, tigers' strong sense of smell allows them to pick up on scent signals and then this message is processed in their 'Jacobson's organ' (Jacobson's organ, also known as the vomeronasal organ (VNO), is a sensory organ that helps animals detect pheromones) that tells them what the message means. While processing a scent message, tigers make a typical face, which resembles a tiger showing aggression but is actually its Flehmen response.

Tigers also use vocal cues to communicate. During a safari, you may have heard a tiger calling out to other tigers using a low frequency "aaaaaunnnn" sound. This is called a moan, and tigers use it to call out to potential mates. Tigers also use loud roars for long-distance communication. Roars are infrequent and so loud that they can be heard up to 3 km away. Tigers also use low, rumbling growls as a display of

aggression. Growls often serve as a warning to other tigers and even humans when they venture too close. These are just some of the vocalisations that tigers use. In reality, however, tigers use a whole suite of sounds to communicate with mates, competitors, and cubs, including sounds like grunting, chuffing, snarling, and hissing.

Lastly, tigers also use some visual cues to communicate; these include physical marks left along their territories, like scrape marks made using paws on the ground or rake marks left high up on trees by standing up on their hind legs and using their foreclaws to scratch into the bark of the tree. On your next safari, be on the lookout for a rake mark on the trees in TATR.

But why do tigers communicate? In a previous article, we talked about how tigers are solitary creatures and rarely share their space with other tigers. For the most part, visual/vocal/scent cues serve as an indication of a tiger's territory. During the twilight hours, tigers patrol the fringes of their territories and leave strong territorial cues for their competitors. Tigers also use vocal cues to attract potential mates or intimidate and threaten rivals, and to warn humans that they have ventured too close and may be in for a surprise if they don't back off immediately. Tigers also make some cute and playful sounds when communicating with their cubs.

Fun fact: Have you ever smelled the aroma of boiled rice in the forest? Well, if you have, you are lucky to tell the tale because many foresters have described that as the fragrance of a tiger's fresh spray marking!

Fun fact: Have you ever smelled the aroma of boiled rice in the forest? Well, if you have, you are lucky to tell the tale because many foresters have described that as the fragrance of a tiger's fresh spray marking!

- Yashaswi Rao
Wildlife Biologist, TATR



TADOBA: A LEGACY OF COEXISTENCE

For centuries, communities living on the edge of the forests have not just survived but thrived alongside the wilderness. Their relationship with nature was never one of dominance or fear but of deep understanding and respect. In the north-eastern states of India, the locals consider tigers as their brothers, and in other areas, the tiger is worshiped as a protector. Among the forest-dwelling tribes of central India, the belief in coexistence was not a choice but a way of life. Even in the face of hardship—when crops failed, wild animals took their livestock, or even when a human life was lost—their response was not of retaliation but of acceptance. The ancient belief system did not view wildlife as an adversary but as a force that one must learn to live with. This tolerance, passed down through generations, is what has allowed the forests of Tadoba to exist in their vastness despite human settlements being interwoven within them.

The very name 'Tadoba' carries within it a story of sacrifice, reverence, and history. According to legend, long ago, a clan leader named Taru fought bravely against a tiger to protect his people. Though he succumbed in the struggle, his act of courage was immortalised by the villagers, who built a shrine in his honour near a lake. Over time, he came to be known as 'Taruba'—the suffix 'ba' being a mark of respect in the local dialect. When colonial administrators arrived, unable to pronounce 'Taruba', they altered it to 'Tadoba', a name that has since remained. Yet, the essence of the legend continues. Even today, the tribals make annual visits to the shrine, offering prayers to Tadoba, the warrior whose spirit they believe still watches over the land.

The belief in coexistence extends beyond legends and into tangible customs practiced to this day. Among the

indigenous tribes, tigers have never been seen merely as dangerous predators. Instead, they are revered as divine entities, and their presence is woven into the fabric of their spiritual world. The concept of 'Waghoba' or 'Waghai'—a deity associated with the tiger—reflects this deep-seated respect. If a member of the community falls prey to a tiger, the people do not seek vengeance. Instead, they build a statue of a tiger at the boundary of the village and the forest. They believe that the soul of the deceased resides in the statue, guarding the village and ensuring that further conflict between humans and wildlife is minimised. Even today, as one journeys through the forests of Tadoba, these silent sentinels—statues of Waghoba—can be seen standing where tradition has placed them, marking the edge of human habitation and the untamed wilderness.

Living in proximity to the wild has never been easy. The forest is unpredictable, its dangers real, and its challenges relentless. Yet, the communities of Tadoba have found ways to endure, drawing strength from tradition and the wisdom of their ancestors. The belief in divine guardians like Waghoba, the reverence for warriors like Taru, and the acceptance that humans and wildlife are bound by fate are not just folklore; they are survival strategies, ways of cultivating tolerance in a world where helplessness could otherwise take over. Perhaps, it is this deeply ingrained understanding that has safeguarded the forests of central India for centuries. Despite human habitation, vast stretches of woodland remain, testaments to a philosophy that refuses to see nature as an enemy but as a force to be honoured, adapted to, and ultimately, coexisted with.

- Saket Agasti
Social Scientist, TATR



Indrajeet Samarth

GOLDEN HOUR MAJESTY! As the sun dipped below the horizon, Navegaon Meadows glowed in golden light, setting the perfect stage for a sloth bear's evening stroll. The warm hues of sunset wrapped around its silhouette, creating a breathtaking moment in TATR. Nature's beauty at its finest!



AWARENESS WORKSHOP FOR SHEPHERDS

In the first half of February, the TATR organised a series of workshops across seven forest divisions in both the buffer and core zones. These workshops were designed to educate shepherds from 60 villages—totaling 300 participants—on preventing human-wildlife conflict and implementing effective mitigation measures.

The workshops focused on understanding how to avoid conflicts with wildlife, precautions to be taken, and various preventive strategies. These sessions were conducted in an interactive format, combining presentations and discussions. Each session was attended by 44 to 50 shepherds. The workshops provided detailed insights into the natural behaviour, habits, and physical characteristics of key wildlife species such as tigers, leopards, sloth bears, and snakes. Participants were educated on essential safety measures to minimise human-wildlife conflict, supported by real-life examples and case studies. Discussions emphasised that tigers and leopards do not intentionally attack humans; rather, such incidents occur accidentally. For example, tigers have X-ray-like vision that perceives crouching objects as four-legged animals, leading to accidental attacks in forested areas. This concept was explained in simple terms through interactive discussions, making it easy for the shepherds to understand. As part of the initiative, all participating shepherds were provided protective bamboo sticks fitted with bells and blunt iron tips. The continuous sound produced by these sticks helps deter wildlife.

During the workshop, the shepherds shared their own experiences, agreeing that tiger and leopard attacks on humans are not deliberate but accidental. Many shepherds expressed their gratitude for this initiative, stating that they now have a clearer understanding of the precautions and



safety measures they should take while grazing their livestock. The workshop also helped them gain more profound knowledge about the behaviour and ecology of tigers and leopards.

To further enrich the experience, a Tadoba safari was arranged for all participating shepherds after lunch. For many, this was their first-ever safari; the highlight was witnessing a tiger in the wild.

- Praful Sawarkar
Environment Education Officer, TATR



RAT SNAKE

The Indian rat snake (*Ptyas mucosa*) is one of India's most commonly found and often misunderstood snakes. Despite its formidable appearance, this species is entirely non-venomous. It thrives in agricultural fields and areas near human habitation and is crucial in maintaining ecological balance.

Rat snakes are highly agile and fast-moving. They are excellent climbers and can grow up to an impressive length of 11 feet. These snakes are diurnal hunters, meaning they actively hunt during the daytime. Their smooth scales, broader head compared to the neck, and round pupils help in easy identification. They exhibit a range of colours, including pale yellow, brown, and black, often with distinct black stripes running across their bodies.

Their diet consists of frogs, rats, birds, other snakes, and smaller prey, which they often swallow alive. The breeding season extends from March to September when females lay 10 to 15 eggs. A common myth surrounding the Indian rat snake is that it carries venom in its tail, which is entirely false. While their bites can be painful and may cause minor injuries, they are not dangerous and require minimal medical treatment.

When threatened, rat snakes raise the front part of their body and produce a loud hissing sound to ward off predators. Their presence is extremely beneficial, as they help control the rat population in agricultural fields, thereby reducing crop damage. Understanding and conserving these misunderstood reptiles is essential for maintaining a healthy ecosystem.

- Chinmay Deshpande
Naturalist



©Dinesh Valke, Wikipedia

KUSUM

The month of March is a delight for tree lovers as many trees burst into bloom or prepare to do so. One of the most striking trees during this time is the Kusum tree (*Schleichera oleosa*), which adorns itself in brilliant red foliage. The sight of a tall Kusum tree draped in red is truly mesmerising! As time passes, these leaves transition to green and serve as valuable fodder for livestock, particularly favoured by shepherds.

Native to the Indian subcontinent, including Nepal and Sri Lanka, the Kusum tree plays a crucial ecological and economic role. Often referred to as the Lac tree, it is an essential host for the Indian lac insect (*Kerria lacca*), which produces high-quality, light-coloured lac. While other trees like Palas and Ber also host lac insects, Kusum yields the finest quality of lac, making it economically significant.

Kusum seeds are another valuable resource. Though unsuitable for human consumption due to cyanogenic compounds, the oil extracted from these seeds is widely used in traditional medicine to treat skin ailments. Additionally, it is commonly used for lighting diyas in homes and temples. The bark's decoction is known for its medicinal properties, particularly in treating ulcers.

In Indian traditions, the Kusum tree is revered, symbolising prosperity and harmony with nature. It frequently appears as an emblem of beauty and strength in regional poetry and art. Beyond its ecological contributions, the Kusum tree is deeply woven into cultural and spiritual practices, making it a true treasure of the natural world.

- Anirudh Chaoji
Senior Naturalist



© J. M. Garg, Wikipedia

CRIMSON ROSE

In the wilds of Tadoba, the Crimson Rose butterfly is an enigmatic creature that showcases nature's ability to blend beauty and danger. This butterfly is not harmful to humans, but its striking red abdomen serves as a warning in the animal kingdom. The crimson hue is not just for show—it's a sign of the butterfly's poison, which it accumulates during its caterpillar stage.

As larvae, the Crimson Rose feeds on the *Aristolochia indica* plant, also known as Iswarmul in Marathi. This creeper, found in the forests of Tadoba, contains alkaloids that the caterpillar absorbs, making it toxic. When the butterfly emerges, it retains this poison in its abdomen, which turns red, signalling to predators that it is best avoided. There are reports of birds suffering cardiac arrest after consuming these butterflies. A fascinating mimicry exists in the form of the Common Mormon female, which adopts the same red abdomen to deceive predators into thinking it is also toxic.

The lifecycle of the Crimson Rose is equally captivating. The eggs are laid on the tender leaves, bark, and flowers of the *Aristolochia* plant, with red-coloured eggs signalling the presence of the dangerous caterpillars. These larvae are black with red bristles, further emphasising their unpalatability. The chrysalis of the butterfly takes on a dry, wood-like appearance, blending seamlessly with the surroundings.

The Crimson Rose is an example of the delicate balance of nature, where beauty and danger coexist in a fascinating display of survival.

- Yogita N. D. Chhapekar
Biologist



JUNGLE NIGHTJAR

The Jungle Nightjar (*Caprimulgus indicus*) is a commonly found nocturnal bird in the TATR. Despite its name, it is not restricted to jungles and thrives in wooded areas, open grassy patches, and scrublands. This bird's intricate camouflage allows it to blend seamlessly into its surroundings, making it challenging to spot during the day.

One of its distinguishing features is a golden patch behind the ear, though this is often hidden when the bird is at rest. Its plumage is a mix of grey and brown tones with black streaks, providing excellent concealment. The wings bear pale tan spots, which differentiate it from the similar-looking Savanna Nightjar, which has a denser pattern and lacks these markings. Male Jungle Nightjars display bright white patches near their wingtips and on the edges of their tails, while females exhibit buffy-brown tones instead.

Measuring between 21–24 cm in length, the Sri Lankan subspecies (*ssp. kelaarti*) is notably smaller. The male has a distinctive white throat patch, broken at the middle, whereas the female has a rufous throat patch with submoustachial streaks. Unlike the Savanna Nightjar, which prefers roosting on the ground, the Jungle Nightjar perches on tree branches during the day.

Its song is truly unique, resembling a futuristic sound effect: a long, bouncing series of "pooKIHpooKIHpooKIH" notes, often compared to a cartoon laser gun. It also produces a series of thacoo or chuck notes at regular intervals, sometimes ending in quick whistling foo-foo sounds, similar to air blown over an open bottle. A previously misattributed call, uk-krukroo, was later identified as belonging to the Oriental Scops Owl (*Otus sunia*).

- Rundan Katkar
Range Forest Officer, Kolsa, TATR

EMPOWERING YOUNG MINDS

I am working as a volunteer teacher to support the TATR CSR initiative to improve the quality of education in the Zilla Parishad Schools within the buffer zone of TATR. Over the past six months, I have been actively engaged in five schools across four villages in Chimur Taluka. While in these schools, I learned that students had never been felicitated with trophies or merit certificates for their school-level achievements. Seeing this as an opportunity to boost the morale of both students and their parents, I, in collaboration with TATR, successfully organised an inter-school competition between the schools I teach.

The competition featured various categories, including 'Speech on Democracy' in English, best handwriting, sentence making, concentration game, poem recitation, best from waste, sports, dance, and Project Work. The sole aim was not only to enhance English Proficiency but also to nurture creativity, confidence, and teamwork among students.

The prize distribution ceremony was graced by distinguished guests, including RFO Yogita Madavi, Vinayak Autkar, Kendra Pramukh- Zilla Parishad, village Sarpanch and other dignitaries. The winners were awarded trophies, gold and silver medals and merit certificates – A historic first for these students. The guests were amazed by the students' confidence while delivering speeches on democracy in English and their remarkable improvement in handwriting.



Witnessing their enthusiasm and talent filled my heart with joy and pride.

This initiative encouraged students and reinforced the love for learning among parents and the community, building confidence to help their holistic development.

- Sumaiya Nikhath
Volunteer Teacher, Bengaluru



WEED TO WEALTH

In the heart of the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR), a transformative story of empowerment is unfolding. In 2023, TATR embarked on an initiative that not only addresses an environmental issue but also creates new opportunities for local women. The result? A remarkable journey from weed to wealth.

Today, all the towns and villages are facing a common problem- water hyacinth, a stubborn, invasive weed clogging the water bodies. Every year, millions of rupees are spent to remove it, but the issue remains. The TATR administration, in collaboration with Ajay Multipurpose Organisation, found an innovative solution: instead of treating the weed as waste, why not transform it into something valuable?

In February 2023, a group of 30 women from villages around TATR joined a training session to learn how to turn water hyacinth into beautiful, marketable products like bags, baskets, and decorative gift items. The training, held from February 17th to March 8th, equipped them with the skills to clean, dry, and weave the weed into sellable goods. It was a win-win – the environment benefited from the removal of the invasive weed, and the women gained new skills that opened doors to economic independence.

As the women honed their craft, self-help groups were formed, and soon, orders began to roll in. Their creations were sold in souvenir shops, exhibitions, and even caught the attention of corporate buyers. By 2024, 15 women from Chorgao and 12 from Nimbada were actively producing these products, with a few women stepping up as Master Trainers to share their knowledge with others. The ripple effect spread, reaching 40 women in Madhya Chanda, who are now part of the initiative.

This initiative has not only provided an alternative livelihood for these women but also uplifted their financial status. Each woman now earns between 8,000 and 15,000 per month, contributing significantly to her family's well-being. The



empowerment goes beyond finances; it has broadened their horizons. Some of the women, who had never traveled outside their villages, were given the opportunity to visit Uttar Pradesh aboard the Vande Bharat train. Some even showcased their creations at an exhibition in Delhi and had the honour of meeting Hon. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi.

Swati Dhopkar, Chairperson of Ajay Multipurpose Organisation, reflects, "This project has not only provided financial stability but has also opened up the world to these women. It's incredible to see how they've transformed their lives while contributing to the conservation efforts of TATR."

TATR's Weed to Wealth initiative is more than just a livelihood project; it's a step towards sustainable development. By equipping women with skills and creating a market for their products, TATR is preserving its natural heritage and empowering local communities to thrive in the eco-tourism sector. The future looks brighter for these women as they continue to transform an environmental challenge into an opportunity for growth.

- 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.





FIGHT IN THE NIGHT! Under the cover of night, the mighty Indian gaurs clash in a battle of strength—captured by the forest department's vigilant camera trap.

THE ACHIEVERS (January-2025)

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. A. Tiple
Beat - Parna
Round - Karwa
Range - Karwa
Division - Core TATR
Duration - 18 Days
Target - 125 Km/Month
Actual Patrolling - 317.25 Km



Forest Guard - Durga D. Dethe
Beat - Chorgaon
Round - Warvat
Range - Chandrapur Buffer
Division - Buffer TATR
Duration - 27 Days
Target - 125Km/Month
Actual Patrolling - 313.87 Km

Explore
Tadoba
Like
Never
Before !



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Tadoba Movie



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www.mytadoba.mahaforest.gov.in



**Boating
Site**
Sitarampeth

For Booking
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M. 8657935941



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Moharli

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Sanjay Jumde
M. 9834689541
Avinash Rathod
M. 9158928393



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Agarzari

For Booking
Ajay Kodape
M. 9730853324



**Camping
Site**
Agarzari & Madnapur

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SHADES OF TADOBA

Forests don't just show you shades of colours; they show you shades of life. To truly witness these shades, one must venture into the wilderness. Every visit brings a new perspective, a fresh lesson, and a deeper connection to nature. I have been fortunate to visit forests countless times, but every time it's Tadoba, I feel even luckier!

February, in my opinion, is the best month to visit Tadoba. Tiger sightings may be slightly lower (Shades of Tadoba though I have returned empty-handed even in peak May!), but the forest itself is in transition, bridging winter and summer. The grasslands display a mesmerising blend of green, yellow, and black. Mornings are misty, noons are scorching, and evenings bring a cool, soothing breeze. The tigers, perfectly camouflaged in the tall grass, thrive this season as it favours their hunting. Even with binoculars, spotting a tiger hiding in the grass is challenging. No wonder unsuspecting prey like gaur, deer, and wild boars often fall victim, leading to dramatic hunt sightings.

The grass, though beginning to thin and dry, still stands at an impressive height of three to four feet—enough to conceal even a large male tiger unless he steps into the open. This natural tapestry is a haven not just for tigers but for a vibrant ecosystem of life thriving in its embrace.

Though I am not a professional photographer, Tadoba offers sights that need no lens to capture their magic. Sometimes, it's best to set the camera aside and absorb the wilderness with bare eyes, letting the moments etch themselves onto the mind's permanent memory. Every frame in Tadoba feels like a dream, a moving portrait of life itself.

Nature teaches invaluable lessons. Life and death are two sides of the same coin in the wild. One's loss is another's survival. Wildlife embodies duty, care, compassion, aggression, fitness, and alertness. Yet, unlike humans, it knows no cruelty, deception, or sorrow. Here, survival is the only rule, and every day is a celebration—where life itself is the ultimate prize.

- Sanjay Deshpande
Wildlife Enthusiast,
Sanjeevani Developers, Pune

MY SEASONS MY FOREST MY HOME

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



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Maikrand Pardeshi

I AM WATCHING YOU! The elusive Blackie- the shadow of the jungle- keeps a watchful eye on his empire, staring straight into the camera with regal intensity.

Mayank Sapte

READY TO HUNT! A silent sentinel by the water, the brown fish owl waits patiently, its keen eyes ready to strike at the perfect moment.

Swethakumar R Bobili

FUTURE RULERS! These two tiny cubs fearlessly pose on the dirt road, already owning the jungle with their confident stare.

From,
Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve Conservation Foundation
 Mul Road, Chandrapur, Maharashtra, 442401
 Ph. 07172 - 251414

Book-Post

To, _____
