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[[Swethakumar Rengarao Bobbili

# Tadoba

DIARIES

The Official Newsletter of Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve

Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve Conservation Foundation, Chandrapur



# DRIVING CONSERVATION THROUGH GREEN MOBILITY

Dear Reader,

**T**he future of conservation depends not only on how effectively we protect wildlife habitats, but also on how responsibly we manage human presence within them. Across the world, protected areas are now re-evaluating tourism practices through the lens of sustainability and climate responsibility. At Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, this vision is shaping a significant transition towards cleaner and greener safari experiences through the gradual introduction of Electric Vehicle (EV) safari gypsies. This initiative reflects our commitment to reducing the ecological footprint of tourism while preserving the integrity of one of India's most important tiger landscapes.

The urgency of this transition becomes evident when we examine the scale of fossil fuel consumption associated with tourism activities within the reserve. At present, nearly 300 conventional safari vehicles operate across Tadoba's tourism zones, collectively consuming more than 1,000 litres of petrol every day. Over time, exhaust emissions, engine heat, and low-frequency vibrations from these vehicles have increased ecological pressure on sensitive wildlife habitats. In landscapes where every sound and movement influences animal behaviour, reducing such disturbances is critical. By shifting towards electric mobility, TATR aims to significantly reduce carbon emissions and noise pollution, creating a quieter and more natural environment for both wildlife and visitors. The silence of EV safaris allows tourists to experience the forest more intimately, where alarm calls, bird songs, rustling leaves, and the subtle rhythms of the jungle become part of the experience once again.

Beyond ecological concerns, the transition also addresses growing operational and maintenance

challenges associated with ageing safari fleets. Continuous off-road usage places immense strain on conventional petrol vehicles, many of which depend on older mechanical systems and increasingly scarce spare parts. Maintenance has become both expensive and operationally demanding for local vehicle owners and mechanics. Electric vehicles offer a more sustainable alternative with fewer moving components, lower servicing requirements, and greater long-term efficiency. At the same time, this transformation requires a strong supporting infrastructure. Charging stations, reliable electrical systems, and efficient battery management mechanisms must be established at key tourism gates such as Moharli and Kolara to ensure seamless operations during peak tourism seasons. Such investments are essential to building a resilient and future-ready ecotourism framework.

At its core, this initiative represents far more than a technological shift. It represents a broader conservation ethic. Sustainable tourism cannot remain limited to promoting wildlife sightings; it must actively contribute towards protecting ecosystems for future generations. The move towards EV safaris demonstrates how innovation and environmental responsibility can work together to redefine wildlife tourism in India. The forests of Tadoba have always symbolised coexistence between people and nature. Today, by embracing green mobility, we take another meaningful step towards ensuring that this coexistence remains balanced, responsible, and enduring in the years to come.

**Dr. Prabhu Nath Shukla (IFS)**

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

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## MACHAN, MOONLIGHT AND MYSTERIES

I have been visiting Tadoba since my childhood. But this visit was different. For the first time in my life, I was going to spend an entire night inside the forest, that too on a machan, as part of the Nisarga Anubhav Programme on the occasion of Buddha Purnima. I was accompanied by Raunak Bansod and our guide Jayant at the Keslaghat gate water body area in Gilbili Zora. This being my first night stay on a machan made me both excited and slightly nervous.

By evening, we reached our machan. The sun was slowly setting, painting the sky in beautiful shades of orange and pink. The full moon had already begun to announce its presence. The hot summer wind was still flowing through the forest, and before darkness completely took over, we decided to finish our dinner.

As we took our very first bites, a group of about 15 to 20 monkeys suddenly started moving towards the tree right beside our machan. I will not deny that for a moment, I felt a little scared. But soon I realised that these were Tadoba's monkeys- calm, disciplined, and wise in their own way. They quietly settled on the nearby tree, almost as if they understood that for this one night only, they had to coexist with us humans- the outsiders in their world.

Soon, the sun surrendered its power to the night, and the moon began ruling the jungle. Around 7 p.m., monkey alarm calls echoed through the silence. Within moments, we heard an animal sipping water. Without even searching much, our eyes caught sight of a leopard standing quietly at the edge of the water body. At that moment, we thanked the monkeys for being

around and for warning us of the movements around us.

Nearly an hour later, we heard footsteps again – the dry leaves crackling softly beneath heavy movement. In the moonlight, we saw a sloth bear slowly walking towards our machan. There was a termite mound near the steps of the machan, which had probably attracted the bear. Watching such a magnificent wild animal from so close, in complete darkness except for moonlight, was both thrilling and humbling.

Around 2:30 a.m., we were half asleep because there had been no movement for a long time. Suddenly, something flew across the trees. At first, our sleepy eyes could hardly believe what we were seeing. It was a flying squirrel. For the very first time in my life, I witnessed this beautiful creature gliding effortlessly from one tree to another like a bird. It was magical beyond words.

But the jungle still had more to offer.

The silence of the forest at night is so deep that even the sound of falling leaves becomes audible. In that silence, around 3:30 to 4 a.m., monkey alarm calls started once again, growing louder and more intense every minute. Then we heard it... the roar.

The experience was truly beyond imagination and something I will cherish forever.

**Rutuja Masurkar**  
Advocate, Nagpur

## A SPLIT-SECOND MISS

**D**uring a recent afternoon safari in the Belara buffer forest, we were returning after more than two hours of sweltering under the 45-degree sun without spotting any tigers. As disappointment writ large on our faces, the forest canopy came alive with a sudden flash of feathers. Without warning, a large raptor swooped down in a breathtaking, vertical dive right in front of our gypsy. It was a textbook ambush. The dry leaf litter exploded into motion as a small creature- perhaps a forest lizard or a scurrying rodent- managed to slip away by a fraction of a second, vanishing into the brush.

Undeterred by the near-miss, the hunter effortlessly banked upward and perched heavily on a thick, gnarled branch just meters away, allowing us to capture this striking frame.

Our guide informed us that the bird was a magnificent adult Changeable Hawk-Eagle, identifiable by its piercing, bright-yellow eyes and the heavily streaked white breast of its pale-morph plumage. We could make out the slight crest that gives the species its alternate name- the Crested Hawk-Eagle.



They are classic "sit-and-wait" predators, using high branches to camouflage themselves against the bark while scanning the forest floor. So perfect was the camouflage, so perfectly did it blend in with the branches, that, but for its dive, we may never have spotted it. We raised a silent cheer to the lucky little fella that lived to see another day.

**N. Viswanathan**  
Retired Banker, Mumbai.

## THE BATHING BEAUTIES

**A**fter two wonderful, separate sightings of the male tigers Kalva and Veer around 6:30 in the evening, near the end of our safari, we continued exploring the beautiful forests at the Shedegaon gate. The jungle had already gifted us unforgettable moments with these majestic cats, and little did we know that another beautiful surprise was waiting for us.

As our gypsy crossed a waterhole, it suddenly came to a halt. Five small quails, called Bater in Hindi, were hurriedly crossing the road in a perfect single line. It looked like a tiny train disappearing into the bushes. Curious, we stopped and tried to spot them again by carefully tracking their movements in the dry undergrowth.

What we witnessed next was simply unbelievable. Hidden under the bushes were the quails taking a mud bath together. A very rare and fascinating sight to witness in the wild. Watching these tiny birds enjoying the cool mud in the middle of the dry forest felt magical.

For a couple of minutes, we quietly observed and

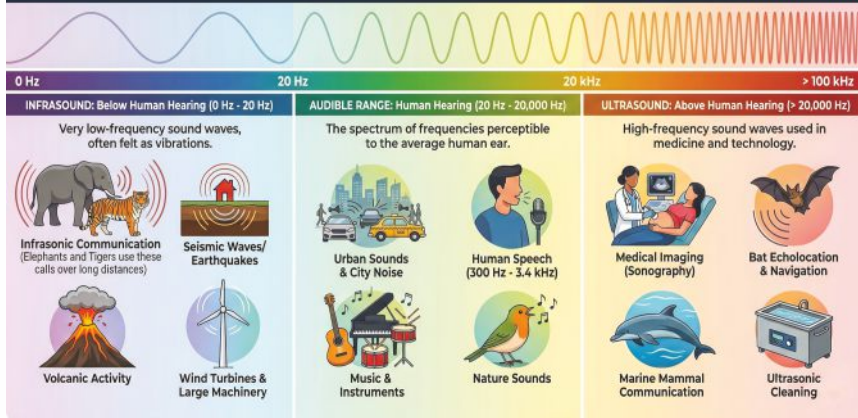


captured this beautiful behaviour on camera. And just as mysteriously as they appeared, they vanished back into the jungle once again in a neat little line- just like a train disappearing into the wilderness.

Moments like these remind us that Tadoba is not only about its majestic tigers, but also about the countless small wonders hidden deep within its forests.

**Anurag Bagde**  
Data Engineer, Nagpur

## UNDERSTANDING THE SOUND SPECTRUM & INFRASOUND



## THE SECRET ROAR

When you think of a tiger, you probably imagine a deafening, earth-shattering roar. It is the classic sound we hear in movies and wildlife documentaries. But what if I told you that a tiger's most powerful roar is one you cannot even hear?

In the dense, sprawling forests of India, tigers possess a hidden acoustic superpower. They can communicate over massive distances using a secret frequency.

Sound is measured in frequencies called Hertz (Hz). The human ear can hear sounds between 20 Hz and 20,000 Hz. Anything below 20 Hz is completely silent to us. Scientists call these ultra-low frequency sound waves Infrasound.

Tigers (much like elephants and whales) have vocal cords thick and powerful enough to produce these deep, infrasonic sounds. They can drop their voices to 18 Hz or even lower. If you were standing next to a tiger making this sound, your ears would tell you it was completely quiet.

Why would a massive apex predator need to whisper? It comes down to the physics of the forest. Imagine trying to shout to a friend across a dense jungle. The trees, leaves, and bamboo act like acoustic sponges. High-pitched sounds bounce off these physical obstacles and get absorbed very quickly. But low-frequency sounds behave differently. They have incredibly long wavelengths that allow them to punch right through trees, bushes, and even the ground without losing their power.

By dropping its voice into the infrasound range, a tiger can send a message that travels for several kilometers through the thickest forest.

This secret roar serves a brilliant evolutionary purpose. Tigers are solitary animals with massive territories. A male needs to tell rival males to stay away, and he needs to know if a female is nearby.

However, there is a catch: if a tiger roars loudly, every

deer, wild boar, and langur within a five-mile radius will know exactly where he is and run away. This will make hunting impossible.

Infrasound solves this problem. It acts like a private radio channel. A tiger can "broadcast" its presence to other tigers miles away, all without alerting the prey standing just a few hundred meters away. The deer simply don't tune into that frequency.

While low-level infrasound is perfect for secret communication, a full-powered roar uses these waves as a short-range weapon. Have you ever heard the old jungle myth that a tiger's roar can literally paralyse its prey? It turns out, it is actually physics.

When a tiger roars during a hunt, the infrasonic waves are so intense that they cause physical vibrations inside the target's body. For an animal like a deer, this sudden, deep physical shaking triggers a subconscious neurological reaction. It causes their muscles to lock up, makes them freeze in place, and can even cause a temporary drop in their heart rate. In the wild, where life and death are decided in fractions of a second, this sonic "stun effect" gives the tiger the vital moments it needs to strike.

While we cannot hear a tiger's infrasound, we can sometimes physically feel it. If you are ever lucky enough to be sitting in a safari jeep near a tiger when it produces these low-frequency waves, you won't hear a roar. Instead, you might feel a sudden, strange vibration rattling deep inside your chest or shaking the metal seats of the car.

It is a humbling reminder that in the wild, the most powerful forces are often the ones we cannot even perceive.



**A MOTHER'S JOURNEY!** Through the dry forests and scorching heat, a langur mother moves cautiously with her little one clinging tightly for comfort and safety. Captured on a camera trap, this tender moment reminds us that the jungle is not only about survival and predators, but also about love, care, and the silent bonds that keep the wild alive.

## AFRICAN WILD DOGS VS ASIATIC WILD DOGS

*The pack of wild dogs is most successful hunters in the wild.*

	African Wild Dog	Asiatic Wild Dog/Dhole
<b>Scientific Name</b>	<i>Lycaon pictus</i>	<i>Cuon alpinus</i>
<b>Local Name</b>	African printed Dog	Dhole/Kolsund/Whistling dog
<b>Height</b>	Male: 23 to 30 Inches Female: 23 to 29 Inches	Male: 18 to 21 inches Female: 16 to 20 Inches
<b>Weight</b>	24 to 30 Kg	12 to 18 Kg
<b>Speed</b>	35 mph	30 mph
<b>Hunting Behaviour</b>	Hunt medium-sized antelopes	Hunt 10 times bigger prey
<b>Pack Size</b>	17-43 members	10 to 15 members
<b>Mating Season</b>	No fixed breeding season	Mid-October to January
<b>Gestation Period</b>	69 to 73 days	60 to 63 Days
<b>Litter Size</b>	6 to 16 pups	4-6 pups



## THE AMBUSH

For the last eight years, I have worked as a safari guide in the forests of Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve. Every safari teaches you something new. Every day in the jungle carries a different mood. Yet, among all those memories, there is one incident that remains deeply etched in my mind even today.

It was a summer morning safari. I was accompanying a group of guests who had traveled from far away with dreams of seeing a tiger in the wild. The morning, however, had been unusually quiet. The jungle seemed almost asleep. There were no alarm calls, no movement of deer, no signs of predators. By around 8:30 a.m., we still had no major sightings.

I decided to try our luck at a waterbody known as Khandala Gaddha. As we approached the spot, everything looked calm and deserted. Yet, something made me stop the vehicle and wait.

Those few minutes changed everything.

Suddenly, from the dense bushes beside the waterbody, a tigress emerged silently. It was Gauri — one of the most beautiful and confident tigresses of the area. The moment my guests saw her, their faces lit up with excitement. Gauri walked gracefully towards the water, completely unbothered by our presence. Her movements were calm, powerful, and full of authority.

She lowered her head and began drinking water slowly. In that golden morning light, the scene looked magical. After quenching her thirst, Gauri quietly moved behind the waterbody and disappeared into the thick bushes nearby. From experience, I knew she was probably resting there to escape the rising heat.

I was just about to leave when another visitor arrived.

A large wild boar walked cautiously towards the waterhole. Unlike deer, wild boars are strong and fearless animals. This one looked healthy and fully grown. Clearly unaware of the tigress hidden behind the bushes, it stepped closer and began drinking water peacefully.

All of us watched silently.



©Mrunmay Desai

And then, within a fraction of a second, the entire jungle exploded into action.

Gauri burst out from the bushes with unbelievable speed. Her front paws stretched forward, claws fully extended, eyes locked on the boar. The attack was so sudden that the wild boar barely had time to react. Before it could understand what was happening, Gauri had already pounced upon it.

Dust rose into the air.

The boar squealed loudly and struggled with all its strength. Gauri had locked her jaws around its throat. The wild boar fought desperately to break free, twisting and pushing with tremendous force. But with every attempt to escape, Gauri tightened her grip even more.

We sat frozen inside the safari vehicle.

Right in front of our eyes, nature was unfolding its oldest and harshest truth — the raw battle between life and death.

For several tense moments, the struggle continued. Then gradually, the wild boar's resistance weakened. Finally, it collapsed.

The forest fell silent once again.

Breathing heavily, Gauri stood over her kill. After resting briefly, she gripped the heavy boar firmly and dragged it towards the forest. Watching her disappear into the dense jungle, I realised she was probably carrying food for her cubs hidden somewhere deep inside the forest.

That day, my guests witnessed much more than a tiger sighting. They witnessed the untamed reality of the wild.

**Sachin Gautre**

Guide, Mamla Gate, TATR (Buffer)

### 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](mailto:tadobadiaries2021@gmail.com). Your photograph/experience must be related to TATR only. The best content will be published with due credit.





## BARONET BUTTERFLY

The Baronet Butterfly (*Symphaedra nais*) is one of the lesser-known yet striking butterflies found in the forests of TATR. With its rich orange-brown wings marked by bold black bands and delicate wavy patterns, it brings colour and movement to the woodland landscape. Often seen gliding swiftly along shaded trails and forest edges, the Baronet is admired for its energetic flight and graceful presence.

### Camouflage & Behaviour

One of the most fascinating features of the Baronet Butterfly is its natural camouflage. While the upper side of its wings appears vibrant and eye-catching, the underside is much duller, closely resembling dry leaves or tree bark. This helps the butterfly remain hidden from predators while resting. Males are usually brighter in colour, whereas females appear slightly larger and paler. Their rapid and unpredictable flight often makes them difficult to observe closely in the wild.

### Life Cycle & Ecological Role

The caterpillars of the Baronet feed mainly on Terminalia species commonly found in dry deciduous forests. The larvae are green and perfectly adapted to blend with surrounding foliage, while the pupa resembles a dry leaf, providing additional protection through mimicry. Adult butterflies are commonly attracted to flower nectar, tree sap, and fallen fruits. As pollinators, they contribute quietly to maintaining the ecological balance of forest ecosystems.

The presence of the Baronet Butterfly is often considered an indicator of healthy vegetation and thriving woodland habitats.

- Yogita N. D. Chhapekar  
Biologist, Nagpur



## CORAL TREE

Among the many flowering trees that brighten the forests of Central India, the Coral Tree (*Erythrina variegata*), locally known as Pangara, stands out with remarkable beauty. During the flowering season, its leafless branches burst into brilliant scarlet-red blossoms that resemble flames rising against the dry forest landscape. At first glance, the tree is often confused with the Palash due to their similar fiery blooms and trifoliate leaves, where each leaf is made up of three leaflets.

### A Favourite of Birds

Rich in nectar, the Coral Tree becomes a lively feeding ground for several bird species. They are frequently seen visiting its blossoms during the flowering months. The tree thus plays an important ecological role by supporting pollinators and maintaining biodiversity within the forest ecosystem. Its vibrant blooms not only add colour to the landscape but also sustain countless small creatures that depend on nectar-rich flowers.

### Ecological & Medicinal Importance

Beyond its visual appeal, the Coral Tree holds significant value in traditional medicine. In Ayurveda, various parts of the tree—including its bark, leaves, roots, flowers, and seeds—are used to treat ailments such as fever, swelling, cough, joint pain, and microbial infections. Traditional healers have also recognised its mild sedative properties for managing anxiety and nervous disorders.

As a fast-growing nitrogen-fixing legume, the Coral Tree also enriches soil fertility, conserves moisture, prevents erosion, and serves as an effective shade and windbreak tree.

- Anirudh Chaoji  
Senior Naturalist, Nagpur



## CORAL FUNGI

**H**idden beneath damp leaf litter during the monsoon months, the Coral Fungi (*Pterula verticillata*) is one of the forest's most delicate and lesser-noticed wonders. Resembling a miniature underwater coral garden, this rare terrestrial fungus emerges quietly from the forest floor in shades of pale orange and soft peach. Its glowing, tree-like appearance creates a striking contrast against the dark, rain-soaked soil of Tadoba-Anhari Tiger Reserve.

### Nature's Tiny Sculpture

What makes the Coral Fungi truly fascinating is its intricate branching structure. Near the base, the fungus divides repeatedly into numerous fine branches, almost like fireworks frozen in motion. The slender tips remain sharp and sterile, adding elegance to its coral-like form. Though small in size, its unusual appearance easily captures the attention of keen nature enthusiasts exploring the forest after the rains.

### Ecological Importance

Beyond its beauty, Coral Fungi plays a silent yet vital role in maintaining forest health. It is a saprotrophic fungus, meaning it feeds on dead organic matter such as fallen leaves and decaying forest debris. By breaking down this material, the fungus helps recycle nutrients back into the soil, enriching the ecosystem and supporting new plant growth.

Appearing mainly between August and October, the Coral Fungi remind us that even the smallest life forms are essential to the balance of nature. Tadoba's wilderness is sustained not only by its iconic wildlife but also by these hidden wonders thriving beneath our feet.

- Muhammed Suhail N A  
Wildlife Biologist, TATR



## SPOTTED OWLET

**T**he Spotted Owlet (*Athene brama*) is one of the most familiar and charming birds seen across TATR. Small in size but full of character, this owl is often spotted perched on tree branches, old structures, or village groves. Despite its name, it is not a young owl but a distinct adult species measuring around 20–21 centimetres in length. Its greyish-brown body, marked with white spots and pale streaks, along with its striking yellow eyes, make it easily recognisable.

### Habitat & Behaviour

Unlike many owl species that remain hidden during the day, the Spotted Owlet is often active during dawn, dusk, and even daylight hours. It is commonly found in open countryside, farmlands, gardens, village groves, and urban edges, usually avoiding dense forests. Its curious head movements, soft calls, and alert nature make it a favourite among birdwatchers and nature enthusiasts.

### Diet & Breeding

The Spotted Owlet is a skilled carnivorous hunter. Its diet mainly includes insects such as beetles, moths, and crickets, along with rodents, bats, small birds, reptiles, and amphibians. By controlling insect and rodent populations, it plays an important ecological role in maintaining balance within the ecosystem. The breeding season generally lasts from November to April.

Classified as "Least Concern" by the IUCN, the Spotted Owlet continues to thrive close to human settlements. Its presence reminds us that even the smallest predators contribute significantly to the rich biodiversity of Tadoba.

- Rundan Katkar  
Range Forest Officer, Kolsa, TATR

## BRICS Delegation Visits TATR



A BRICS delegation visited Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve under India's BRICS 2026 Chairship to observe wildlife conservation practices and community-based sustainability initiatives. During the visit, the delegation went on a safari in the reserve and interacted with local communities engaged in conservation and eco-development activities. The members appreciated Tadoba's integrated conservation model that combines wildlife protection, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable community participation.

## IGNFA Officials Visit TATR



Director of Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy, Ms Bharti, visited TATR along with PCCF & Head of Forest Force, Shrinivas Rao, in the presence of Field Director Dr Prabhu Nath Shukla. IGNFA officers undertook an early-morning safari and gained on-the-ground exposure to forest management and wildlife conservation practices implemented in the reserve. The delegation also interacted with forest officials and staff to understand field-level conservation challenges and management strategies.

## Seed Ball Making Drive



A Seed Ball Making Drive was organised in villages around TATR, with nearly 350 students participating. Students actively prepared seed balls using seeds of Bamboo, Behda, Hirda, and other native species. Through the initiative, participants were educated about biodiversity conservation, afforestation, and the importance of protecting natural ecosystems. The programme aimed to encourage environmental responsibility among students while promoting community participation in conservation activities around Tadoba.

## Biodiversity Day Workshop



On the occasion of International Biodiversity Day, a workshop for Village Development Committee presidents was organised at Madanapur. Representatives from Khadsangi, Palasgaon, and Shivani ranges participated in the programme. Discussions focused on biodiversity conservation, wildlife protection, and the role of local communities in sustainable conservation efforts. Forest officials and education officers guided participants on the importance of preserving natural resources and strengthening community involvement in environmental protection initiatives.

## Another Milestone by 'Chala Mazya Tadobala'



Under the 'Chala Mazya Tadobala' campaign during 2025–26, TATR covered 163 schools with participation from 4,270 students and 339 teachers. The initiative aimed to spread awareness among students about wildlife conservation, biodiversity, and environmental protection through educational and nature-based activities. Through interactive sessions and awareness programmes, students were encouraged to understand the importance of forests, wildlife, and sustainable environmental practices.

## Agarzari: A Butterfly Village



TATR has initiated efforts to develop Agarzari as a Butterfly Village to promote butterfly conservation, biodiversity awareness, and community participation in nature conservation activities. The initiative aims to create awareness about the ecological importance of butterflies while encouraging sustainable conservation practices among local communities and visitors. The proposed Butterfly Village is expected to support eco-tourism, conservation education, and habitat preservation efforts in the region.

## Annual Machan Census



TATR successfully conducted its annual Machan Census on Waterholes on the occasion of Buddha Purnima (1st May 2026). It was conducted in the core area (99 machans, 201 forest staff) and the buffer area (69 machans, 210 participants). A total of 5,765 wildlife sightings, including 42 tiger and 13 leopard sightings, were recorded across the reserve. 3,089 sightings of herbivores were recorded.

## STAR OF THE MONTH APRIL 2026

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



**Prakash Manohar Shirame**  
Forest Guard, Range: Kolara (Core)

- Created a watchtower to control forest fires
- Regular checking and cleaning of waterholes
- Regular foot patrolling in the Chaiti beat
- Ensured regular water supply to the planted saplings



**R. U. Sheikh**  
Forest Guard, Range: Shivni (Buffer)

- Protected forests and wildlife
- 208.039 Km patrolling as per M-Stripe
- Public awareness to avoid man-wildlife conflict
- Completed all assigned tasks in time

## WILD & UNPREDICTABLE

**O**n the evening of 15th May 2026, the forests of Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve gifted us a moment that still feels unreal.

The day had already turned memorable after we spotted Junior Mowgli during the morning safari in Navegaon Core. Naturally, we entered the evening safari in Navegaon Buffer with relaxed expectations. We weren't really hoping for another tiger sighting. But in the jungle, surprises often arrive when you least expect them.

Around 4 PM, the mighty Trishul emerged near a waterhole. Under the harsh summer sun, he sat calmly in the cool water, radiating the confidence of a dominant tiger. After a while, he stepped out and settled in the nearby bushes to rest. Not far away, the tigress Babli was also resting beside another patch of water. Our attention, however, remained fixed on Trishul as we quietly photographed him from the gypsy.

Then came the twist.

Out of nowhere, a sloth bear walked toward the waterhole for a drink. Instantly, Trishul became alert. The tiger and the bear locked eyes as the forest around us fell into complete silence. For a few tense seconds, neither moved.



Rupesh Yadav

Suddenly, the bear rose on its hind legs and let out a thunderous roar that echoed through the jungle. Before we could even process the moment, it charged straight toward Trishul.

To our astonishment, even the powerful Trishul cautiously stepped back. The bear chased him for several meters before calmly disappearing into the forest.

And then, as if nothing had happened, Trishul slowly returned to the waterhole and sat down once again.

That evening, Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve reminded us of a timeless truth - in the wild, every moment is unpredictable, and every creature commands its own respect.

**Dr. Pranil Bhoite**

Medical Practitioner, Phaltan, Satara

## CLAWS VS JAWS

**O**n our 25th wedding anniversary in March 2016, Tadoba generously gifted us the sighting of Bajrang, Choti Tara with her cubs, and yet another tiger, all in only four safaris. It felt extraordinary then. And yet, ten years later-around the same time-we returned, only to find the forest even more indulgent. In six safaris, we witnessed eight tigers-something we had never experienced in over three decades of exploring wildlife sanctuaries of Incredible India.

On a warm afternoon safari in Moharli, we came upon Mowgli-serene, powerful-gliding through the still waters of a forest pond. There was a quiet tension in the air. A seasoned guide nearby told us he had just watched a crocodile bring down a chital and drag it beneath the surface. Mowgli had seen it too-and he stayed. So did we.

For twenty minutes, nothing moved but the ripples on the water. It was a silent contest of patience. The crocodile, bound by its need to breathe, could not claw its prize forever. And then, in a fleeting instant, the forest exhaled-the carcass rose.

Mowgli struck! With explosive precision, his claws



seized the opportunity, hauling the kill from the water and dragging it into the cover of the thicket. A perfect demonstration of instinct meeting opportunity!

When we returned the next afternoon, the scene had transformed. There he was again-Mowgli, stretched out in repose, his belly full, the quiet confidence of a successful robbery etched into his stillness.

It was nature at its most honest. A lesson in patience, strategy, and survival of the fittest-played out without spectacle, yet unforgettable in its intensity. Tadoba, once again, had given us more than sightings. It had given us a story.

**Kavita Pandit**

Wildlife Enthusiast, Mumbai

THE LESSER KNOWN KHAKI #15

CONSERVATION BREEDING PROGRAMMES

are the last resort to prevent extinction of the critically endangered species. It is mostly ex-situ breeding in the zoos, etc followed by release in the wild...



THEY ARE NECESSARY, NOT OPTIONS ...

© Piyusha Jagtap (IFS)

LESSER KNOWN KHAKI

Do you want to know what work the foresters do?

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

Piyusha Jagtap (IFS)

Remedies against own doings!  
WE as humans have taken them close to extinction due to various reasons including loss of habitat and undue interference in the eco-systems!  
WE as foresters are trying to undo some of it...



Ready for a jungle challenge?

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

1. Which animal is known as the "gardener of the forest" because it helps spread seeds?

- A) Tiger
- B) Deer
- C) Elephant
- D) Crocodile

2. What is the sound frequency of the tiger's silent roar?

- A) 20 Hz
- B) Less than 20 Hz
- C) More than 20 Hz
- D) 20,000 Hz

3. Which animal in Tadoba is known for climbing trees with great ease?

- A) Sloth Bear
- B) Gaur
- C) Leopard
- D) Sambar

4. Which season brings the highest butterfly diversity in forests?

- A) Summer
- B) Winter
- C) Autumn
- D) Monsoon

5. Which reptile can sense heat from its prey?

- A) Garden Lizard
- B) Python
- C) Turtle
- D) Crocodile

Check page no. 15 for correct answers.

# JUNGLE DETECTIVE

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

GUESS WHO?

## THE SILENT STRIPES

Golden coat with stripes so bold,  
Through bamboo trails I softly stroll.  
Stealthy paws and amber stare,  
In Tadoba's forests, I rule with care.

I rest by water in summer heat,  
Yet hunt with patience, calm and neat.  
The largest wild cat you'll ever see,  
Can you guess who I might be?

TRACK THE TRAIL

## Who Walked This Way?

Huge round footprints press deep into the soft earth,  
broken branches scattered along the path.  
The trail smells of crushed grass and damp mud.  
Nearby trees bear scraped bark and dusty marks.  
Slow yet powerful, the traveller moved with calm  
confidence.  
Even the forest seems to have made way in silence.



MATCH-UP

## COLLECTIVE NOUNS FOR INSECTS?

Match each Insect with its group!

### Insects

1. Grasshoppers



2. Butterflies



3. Spiders



4. Ladybugs



5. Crickets



### Group

A. Orchestra

B. Lovliness

C. Ramble

D. Cluster

E. Cloud



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

**WILD WISDOM**

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

**GUESS WHO?**

Tiger



**TRACK THE TRAIL**

Elephant



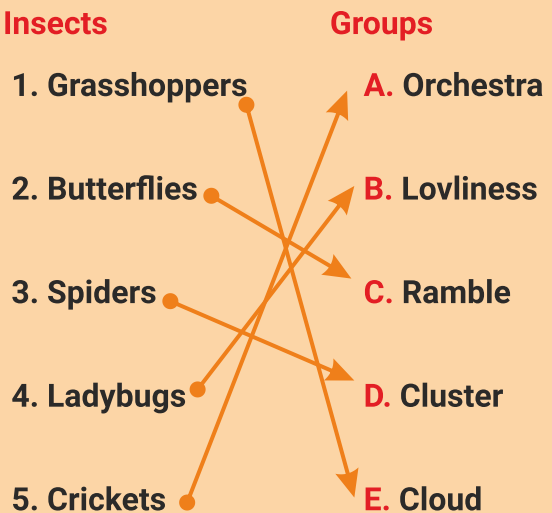
**MATCH-UP:**

**Insects**

1. Grasshoppers
2. Butterflies
3. Spiders
4. Ladybugs
5. Crickets

**Groups**

- A. Orchestra
- B. Lovliness
- C. Ramble
- D. Cluster
- E. Cloud



**SUPER CLICK**

**GOLDEN HOUR ROYALTY!**

Bathed in the glow of the setting sun, the tiger walks the edge of the water like the true monarch of the wild. In Tadoba, even silence feels powerful when the show stopper arrives.



Shashank Phadke

**FINDING THE OPPORTUNITY!**

In the wild, survival belongs not only to the hunter but also to those waiting patiently for their chance. As the dhole claims its prize, the watchful crow stands nearby.



Sahil Baig