



Tadoba

DIARIES

The official Newsletter of Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve

Issue 9/Aug. 2022



CHIRAN BHATTACHARJEE



Making Room for **TIGERS**

Dear Reader,

July 29th is marked as International Tiger Day. It was founded in 2010, when the 13 tiger range countries came together to create the 'Tx2' goal to double the number of wild tigers by 2022. It is a matter of pride that India achieved this goal ahead of time in 2018 when the census indicated 2,967 tigers, twice the number of the 2008 estimation of 1,411 tigers.

As India, and the world celebrates Tiger Day, we would like to share the news that the Kolsa village has voluntarily relocated from Tadoba-Andhari's core critical tiger habitat making more room for tigers. On June 28, the last of the 144 families from Kolsa shifted out of Tadoba to their new home near Golabhuj in Mul tehsil. The move was voluntary and peaceful; and marked the end of a process that started 15-years-ago.

Relocation of people and the entire village is a lengthy, complex, fraught process and needs to be handled sensitively and emphatically, something that the TATR management is conscious of.

The first phase of Kolsa relocation was in 2007 in when 47 families moved to Bhagwanpur along with Botezari village. Then in 2012-16, 69 families shifted out. The remaining households were reluctant as they had some reservations regarding the proposed relocation land. Since relocation from Protected Areas is a voluntary process, they continued to remain in the reserve through all these years. However, they faced considerable challenges living in the deep interior of the forest where basic facilities of good medical care, education, mobile connectivity, bazaars are lacking due to legal restrictions and remoteness. Come monsoon, roads are washed away leaving the villagers marooned for days together. In our dialogue with the villagers, it was apparent that the people here have aspirations for quality education for their children, job and business opportunities. It is to meet the twin objective of fulfilling the welfare needs and aspirations of the people, as well as to provide inviolate space for tigers that India has formulated a policy to relocate people from tiger reserves.

The beneficiaries are given two options: Option-I that offers Rs. 15 lakh per family as compensation, and Option II which provides two hectares of land, funds to construct house along with the land for it, basic facilities like piped drinking water, electricity, anganwaadi, primary school, sub-Primary Health Care centre, gram panchayat building, drainage, village roads etc are provided for in the new village. The fields are readied for agriculture and villagers built their own houses as per their liking. One remarkable thing here is that relocation is an equalizer, providing equal land to all (as per the option they chose), even the landless.

The villagers now have access to rail-road and internet connectivity, improved infrastructure, amenities, education and healthcare.

And the tigers and other wildlife have gained an additional, undisturbed space of over 125 hectares, or 12.5 sq km. For TATR, it is another milestone in securing inviolate space for tigers.

I am grateful to our management team, both in the office and the field, who have worked very hard—and continue to do so, handholding and helping the villagers as they gradually settle in their new home. I am equally grateful to the villagers – even as they move out voluntarily to better lives and brighter futures, there is no doubt that leaving their homes and land is very hard. And I thank them for making room for tigers.

On July 29, the world will celebrate International Tiger Day, as we will here in Chandrapur. There will be renewed pledges to conserve the tiger and ensure it proliferates and prospers.

And in a quiet corner in Tadoba, the newly emptied Kolsa sees, and celebrates new life. As the human imprint fades, herds of spotted deer and sambar have been reported by our officials. Where there is prey, the predators-tigers will follow, and our staff will be there 24x7 to monitor and protect them.

For us at Tadoba, every day is Tiger Day.

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 Remuka 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.

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Exciting Experience

- Gurfateh Pirzada
Actor

Actor Gurfateh Pirzada, known for his roles in Guilty, Friends in Law and I Am Alone, So Are You visited Tadoba this summer, at the Tadoba Jungle Camp. Tadoba Diaries spoke to Gurfateh at length about his experience at Tadoba.

Q: How did you plan this visit to Tadoba?

A: I had never been to any tiger reserve. I had planned to visit Ranthambore in March. However, I heard from someone about Tadoba and the amazing sightings that happen here. Being closer to Mumbai, it was also convenient to travel to. So I chose Tadoba over Ranthambore and booked a six night stay here.

Q: Wildlife lovers say that Tadoba never disappoints. What was your experience?

A: It was a fantastic and exciting experience for me. My first safari did not get me any tiger sightings. But the second one was bumper lottery! I could see five full grown tigers and three cubs in that single safari! What else could have I asked for? Moreover, the third safari gave me a bonus of three more tigers' sighting. I also enjoyed watching other animals and birds during the safaris.

Q: What was the best moment of your trip?

A: The best moment was when I saw a tigress with her little cubs. During our safari, we went to a waterbody looking for some good sighting and there she was! They call her Queen of Teliya- T-24- Sonam! Her cubs – recently birthed - were with her. They were so playful! They played in the water, under the strict watch of their cautious mother. It was like a dream sequence for me!

There could have been another exciting moment, but I missed it. While I was on the safari, a tiger passed from right behind my room at the resort! Himanshu Bagade, naturalist and General Manager of the resort told me this when I came back from the safari. I would have really enjoyed that moment.

Q: How did you find Tadoba in general and its tourism management?

A: I found it very well organized. I had my doubts about how they must have been managing the mad rush of tourists. However, I was pleasantly surprised to see the disciplined tourism management here. I liked the fact that mobile phones and plastic water bottles are not allowed inside the park. I must also mention that the safari guides here are very helpful and knowledgeable.

Q: Would you like to visit Tadoba again?

A: I would certainly love to do so. This time I came in summer and it was too hot for me as I am not used to so much heat. So I am looking forward to come back during better weather conditions and planning to explore more by going for more safaris.



Boss of Meadows

With Global Tiger Day being celebrated on 29th July, let me introduce you to one of the tiger's favourite delicacies – the Indian Gaur. The Gaur, commonly referred to as the Indian Bison (not just Bison), is the largest living bovine, confined to the Asiatic region. It is the largest extant bovid found in Tadoba, weighing between 650-1000 kg. The Gaur belongs to the group of wild oxen that includes the Asiatic Buffalo, African Buffalo, True Cattle and Bison. The ancestors of the Gaur are believed to have evolved in Asia some 20 million years ago. These animals have an acute sense of smell and good hearing, but the visual senses are relatively less developed. The most striking feature of a Gaur is the muscular ridge on its shoulders, which slopes down to the middle of the back where it ends in an abrupt dip.

The Scientific name of Gaur is *Bos gaurus*. If I interpret the pronunciation of the genus name literally, the Indian Gaur does act as the 'boss' of the jungle. Gaurs really rule over the meadows – one may find them calm, or least interested in bothering others and minding their own business, but if they get threatened, they can kill a tiger as well. There have been incidents when Gaurs have attacked tigers while protecting their calf.

Some more interesting facts about the Gaur:

- The first systematic population estimation for Gaur was done in 2020 in the Nilgiris forest, where Gaur and human conflict is often recorded.
- Gaur is the state animal of Goa and Bihar.
- The 54th Infantry Division of the Indian Army made Gaur their mascot.
- Gaurs are known to feed on the bark of the tree.
- A herd of Gaur is known as a gang or obstinacy.
- A new born calf of the Gaur is brown in colour.
- The spread of diseases from domestic cattle is one of the reasons for declining population of Gaur.

- **Prajakta Hushangabadkar**
Wildlife Biologist, TATR



Tree of Enlightenment

Although Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve is famous for its tigers, there is a lot more to be seen here than the wildlife. One of these wonders is the Peepul tree.

Lord Krishna says, "Among the trees, I am Peepul." This is the same tree, under which Lord Gautam Buddha attained enlightenment. It must be a special tree! *Ficus religiosa* or Sacred Fig is a species of fig native to the Indian subcontinent. In India and Nepal, it is referred to as the Bodhi tree or Ashvattha tree. Many specimens of this tree are known to live well beyond a thousand years! The 'Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi' tree, of Anuradhapura in Sri Lanka was a gift from Emperor Ashoka. At around 2300 years, it is believed to be one of the oldest human planted trees, planted by the then Sri Lankan King, Devanampiya Tissa.

The Peepul tree has an interesting association with *Blastophaga quadricaps*, a tiny wasp, which is the lone pollinator of Peepul flowers. The tree also supports the wasp to continue its progeny within its tiny fruiting bodies, which actually are a flowering inflorescence.

In most *Ficus* species, after the birds have dispersed the seeds, the emerging roots start to strangle the host tree. However, the roots of Peepul penetrate into the stem of the host tree, eventually splitting the stem from within. Soon enough, the host perishes, making way for the Peepul to live for years and years to come.

Interestingly, this and its ability to do well in a variety of climatic and soil conditions has given it a high risk score for 'invasiveness', for example in habitats like Hawaii. The medicinal uses of this tree are also very diverse. It said that the Peepul can be used to treat about 50 disorders as well as illnesses like asthma, diabetes, diarrhoea, epilepsy, gastric problems, and various other ailments.

- **Anirudh Chaoji**
Senior Naturalist

THE BIG FEAST

It was an uneventful afternoon safari with a stillness in the air and the jungle was covered with the canopy of dark monsoon clouds. "It is going to rain", I told my family and "we will not be able to see much" was my forecast. As we drove through the park we witnessed two safari vehicles, standing beside what looked like a huge Indian Gaur lying on the side of the jungle path. It appeared to be a fresh kill. A closer look revealed tigers inside the bamboo grove – it was a female tigress named Kuwani and her cubs! They had brought down this huge Indian Gaur. Soon Kuwani emerged boldly in front of all of us amidst the gushing winds and sound of thunder. Her whiskers fluttered as she closely inspected her kill. The rains had started pouring incessantly. At first Kuwani tried to pull the carcass inside the bamboo groove. But it was too big. She then decided to feast in the open. Revealing her shining claws that glittered, she gripped the carcass and sank her teeth in the tough hide trying to rip open the fallen giant. This revealed the red flesh and she was soon joined by one of her cubs. The feast had just begun, but the safari time was coming to a close. So I had to leave. Thankfully, I also had a safari booking next morning.

On the next morning, it was raining very heavily. It was the last day before the jungle would close for monsoon. It was my only window to see the Big Feast. I was in front of the kill first thing in the morning. I was lucky, I saw Kuwani and all



her three cubs on the kill! All this was happening in the open as I took photographs sitting inside my jeep with rains pouring down. After some times the rains became a drizzle and the feasting continued with frenzy. The sub-adult cubs played in the rain in between their feasting. Kuwani was also giving them the opportunity to learn how to negotiate such a large prey. The cubs looking at their mom at times and rubbing their face with hers as they collectively dipped their face into the gaping hole in the Indian Gaur which Kuwani had helped rip open. Their white fur in the chin turning red with the blood. It was both a beautiful and gory sight at the same time and reminded me of Tennyson's poem- Though Nature red in tooth and claw; with ravens shrieked against the creed that love is nature's law.

After two beautiful safaris watching Kuwani and cubs, I left Tadoba with an experience as rich as what I had seen in countless National Geographic documentaries. This was a safari of a lifetime which only raw Tadoba can offer. I will remember The Big Feast for ever!

- Sanjay Podder
Tourist, Thane

TWO CATS IN ONE FRAME

It happened on an evening safari in the summer of 2021. I entered TATR from the Sirkheda gate of the buffer zone with my guests. For an hour, we did not see much. When reached Konpatil lake, we saw a few gypsies waiting for a sighting of the big cat. I decided to wait too, and within 15 minutes, we were rewarded with an incredible sighting! A handsome male tiger named Dadhiyal and a tigress known as Konpatil Female emerged from the bushes. They were followed by their sub-adult cub Bhima from their previous litter, and a small cub from their current litter. The family headed to the waterhole, had water and came back to the road. All the tourists present were very excited to see four tigers together.

After quenching their thirst Dadhiyal, Konpatil Female and the small cub went in one direction and Bhima went the other way - all of them vanished back into the bushes. All the vehicles left from the spot. However, me and one more guide thought we would wait for some more time. Within 10 minutes, Bhima emerged again, this time very close to my Gypsy!

I then asked the driver to move the vehicle away from the tiger. As we moved a few meters watching Bhima's movement, I suddenly noticed a leopard on a tree - hardly 50 meters away from us! We had a leopard in the front side and a tiger behind the gypsy! Bhima too had noticed and was looking at the leopard. After a few seconds, he started walking towards us and stopped near the tree on which the leopard was sitting. He stared at the leopard for some time and then started his majestic walk again. He continued walking behind us for half an hour and then left the road.

I have seen both the tiger and the leopard many times, but watching them in a single frame was the most memorable moment of my life.

- Santosh Gawade
Guide, Sirkheda Gate



FLORAL DIVERSITY OF TADOBA

A mere mention of Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve takes us to the natural land of tigers. Undoubtedly, it is one of the most popular tiger reserves not only in India, but also in the world. However, Tadoba boasts a lot more than tigers. It has a plenty of mammal, birds and reptile species. Do you know why it has such a rich diversity? It is mainly because of its wealthy flora and fauna.

TATR is Southern Tropical Dry Deciduous forest and is mainly covered with bamboo. The dominant variety of bamboo here is *Dendrocalamus strictus*. Yet the forest has more than 600 species of plants which include trees, bushes, herbs, climbers, grasses and sedges.

Some of the important varieties under each classification are mentioned below. The list includes Marathi/local name and scientific name of the plants.

Trees:

Saag- *Tectora grandis*, Ain- *Terminalia alata*, Bija- *Pterocarpus marsupium*, Shisam- *Dalberia latifolia*, Kalam- *Mitragyna parvifolia*, Haldu-Haldina *cardifolia*, Behda- *Terminalia bellirica*, Hirda- *Terminalia chebula*, Arjun- *Terminalia arjuna*, Dhawda- *Anogeissus latifolia*, Kaateain- *Bridelia retusa*, Movai- *Lennea coromandelica*, Shemal- *Bombax ceiba*, Moha- *Madhuca longifolia*, Surya- *Xylia xylocarpa*, Jambhul- *Syzygium cumini*, Tendu- *Diospyros melanoxylon*, Sehna- *Lagerstroemia parviflora*, Karu- *Sterculia urens*, Shiras- *Albizia lebeck*, Kinh- *Albizia procera*, Palas- *Butea monosperma*, Garadi- *Cleistanthus collinus*, Kakad- *Garuga pinnata*, Kuda- *Wrightia tinctoria*, Kumbhi- *Careya arborea*

Shrubs:

Bharati- *Gymnosporia emarginata*, Ghaneri- *Lantana*

camara, Dinda- *Leea macrophylla* Atai Muradsheng- *Helicteres isora*, Kanduchakka- *Clerodendrum infortunatum*, Rui- *Calotropis procera*, White Rui- *Calotropis gigantea*, Kanthar- *Capparis divericata*, Raan Kapoos- *Hibiscus vitifolius*, Behsram- *Ipomoea carnea*, Sarpagnidha- *Rauvolfia serpentina*

Climbers:

Amavel- *Cuscuta chinesis*, Eroni- *Ziziphus oenophia*, Waghati- *Capparis zeylanica*, Karkari- *Gloriosa superba*, Waghpad- *Ipomoea pestigridis*, Kukutaraanji- *Calycopteris floribunda*

Herbs:

Kombda- *Celosia argentea*, Safed Musali- *Chorophytum tuberosum*, Kaali Musali- *Circuligo orchloides*, Raan Adrak- *Zingiber elatum*, Chikana- *Sida acuta*, Bhutgaanja- *Hyptis suaveolens*

Grasses and Sedges:

Pycnus flaridus, *Cyperus involacratus*, *Dicanthium annulatum*, *Dicantjuim caricosa*, *Themeda quadrivalvis*. As the ample grass variety is available at Tadoba, the density of herbivorous animals is very good here.

There are a few species of plants which are on the verge of extinction not only from Tadoba but also from other forests. Species such as Dhupalas- *Cordia macleodii*, Raankeli- *Dillenia pentagyna*, Borsaal- *Hymenodictyon orixense*, Ranpangaara- *Erythrina indica*, Gongal- *Cochlospermum religiosum*, Teevas- *Desmodium oojeinense*, Palang/Parad- *Stereospermum suaveolens*, Karu- *Sterculia urens* are very rare to find, and need urgent conservation interventions.

- Rundan Katkar

Range Forest Officer, Kolasa, TATR



Cochlospermum religiosum



Amorphophallus marginatifolius



Smilax zeylanica



Cordia macleodii



Habenaria sps



ENCHANTING TADOBA

When I first arrived at Tadoba to participate in the TATR internship program in the second week of July, it rained for four days-straight. Before my arrival, many asked why I had chosen the monsoon season for my visit to Tadoba. This is technically 'off-season' – sightings are far more frequent in the summers; it rains so heavily, the core ranges are shut off for tourists, and your movement can be very limited due to blocked roads, waterlogging and many forest paths being completely flooded.

But few things match the magic of a monsoon forest, and I consider myself so lucky to experience it firsthand during my time here.

My favourite thing to watch out for this monsoon has been noticing the different kinds of mushrooms that suddenly spring up and make themselves visible everywhere you look – on moist larks, at the bases of bamboo trees, on mud piles, around rotten leaves, and just about anywhere else. I have always appreciated how the entire personality of a mushroom seems to be to prop up anywhere and just never seem out of place. I aspire to channel that confidence!

And it's not that you don't get the mammal sightings that most tourists chase in nature reserves. I've met many a sambar and gaur wading through water puddles while it pours down, or splashing across them if the mood strikes - their legs half submerged in the pools of water, their fur dripping as the rain pours down.

When the rain stops and overcast clouds give way to occasional sunlight, the forest and its animals seem to breathe a sense of relief, then making themselves visible. I spotted many monitor lizards basking out when there would be a spot of sunlight after the rains, and then frantically splash across the puddles, back into the water if they sensed a disturbance. It was lovely to encounter a pack of dholes sprawled out on the road and grass meadow

– joyfully playing, grooming each other, even attempting to mate. The yellow-wattled lapwings are out and about too, tactfully digging earthworms out and feasting on them.

It's not just the birds and mammals that are worth paying attention to. There is much for the ears to experience in a monsoon forest. The constant patter of raindrops is therapeutic, and is frequently accompanied by frog song. The monsoons are also the mating season for frogs - you'll hear them, in groups, enthusiastically announcing their search for a mate in croaking symphonies.

Butterflies are frequently seen aggregating over animal dung or rotting mass in this wet season. This is called 'Mud-puddling', where they feed on mud and various excrements and secretions of vertebrates, and carrion to obtain moisture & nutrients.

The best 'sighting' yet unfurled itself in the dark. We were driving back to Moharli through the forests of Moharli-Mudholi road. It was dark - at that point when your eyes take a while to adjust and barely trace a grey silhouette of the canopy above. Our gypsy trailed ahead, and when we turned around for a quick glance, this forest was shimmering with magic. Fireflies all over the canopy, around the bark, a few on the ground like fallen pixie dust.

My home is in India's millennium city of Gurugram, and so every time I think I have spotted a shooting star, or a firefly, I second guess myself (and I'm usually correct to – the glaring city lights are distracting in many ways, and will often crush my wishful thinking). But here as we drove back, I finally saw them- the unmistakable glitter of many, many fireflies, blinking in and out of view.

Any external light – from the passing resorts, or bikes, or cars seemed so jarring – couldn't they see that fireflies were putting on such an enthralling show? They sparkled in and out of view for almost 10 minutes, and it was one of the most surreal experiences of my time here.

I haven't yet met a tiger in Tadoba, but I have no regrets. I carry with me magical memories of countless fireflies lighting up an enchanted forest.

- Vaishali Rawat

Writer and Wildlife Conservationist
Communications Intern - TATR



STAR OF GADCHIROLI Team TATR recently led the camera trap activity in the dense forests of Gadchiroli. The exercise brought many unexplored secrets of the jungle to light. A Striped Hyena is seen here captured in the camera trap installed by the Forest Department.

BUTTERFLY GARDEN

We know you enjoy observing the wild animals and birds at TATR. How about sparing some time for the most beautiful ambassadors of mother nature – butterflies? TATR management has created a unique butterfly garden for you. It has specially designed host and food paths. The butterfly garden also has a dedicated information centre that will answer all your queries. And don't forget to taste the food at the canteen there managed by local women.



Location: Agarzari (Moharli Zone)

Booking : Activity Manager- 9730853324

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PROTECTING THE TIGERS

It was August 2021. I had just joined Special Tiger Protection Force (STPF) at TATR and it was my second day on duty. I was on a routine patrol with 11 of my colleagues. We started from Kolara at around 6 o'clock on a very pleasant morning. The lush green jungle was waking up with the chirping of birds. There was a soothing wet smell in the air. After a few kilometres, we got down from the vehicle and started patrolling on foot.

For the benefit of our readers, let me elaborate that as a STPF team, it is our duty to walk through every pathway in the jungle, check every water source and examine the animals killed by a tiger. It is our job to protect the tiger and the forest. We patrol through the jungle to foil any attempt of poaching and illegal activity in the reserve.

Our foot patrolling becomes much more challenging in monsoon season as the pathways are lost in the dense bushes. The visibility is low and there is a constant fear of getting attacked by a wild animal or bitten by a snake. Yet, in line of duty, we have to wade through the dense forest and chest high waters.

That day we were following our daily patrol routine on the Kolara-Pandharpaulni road. I was walking in the front with a colleague, and other team members were walking a few feet behind us. As soon as I reached an intersection where four roads came together, my colleague and I froze on the spot. A tigress was standing in front of us! She too was visibly stunned to have stumbled upon us so unexpectedly.

I realized that when we were patrolling through the road, the tigress was on her morning walk on another road and

our roads met at the intersection. She was hardly 20 to 25 meters away from us. My team members were unaware of the situation both of us were in as they were yet to catch up to us. It was indeed a tough situation - any wrong move from us would have certainly invited a deadly attack on us. Our training and experience comes into play in such a difficult situation. Both of us raised the sticks in our hands high so that we could project our size as big as possible. We also started shouting loudly. Our team members heard our shouts and immediately joined us. Our team leader instructed us to stay put and stay together. All of us followed the instructions. We stayed together, raised our sticks and made loud noises. To my surprise, the tigress was calm throughout and looked unaffected by our efforts. She stood in the middle of the road staring at us. My heartbeat increased as I lifted her front foot. My head started spinning with a number of questions within a flash of second. What if she comes too close to us? What if she attacks me or any of my team members? What should we do? I am sure others must be going through the same stress. Yet all of us were supporting each other and encouraging ourselves to keep calm.

The tigress put her front foot back to the ground and kept staring at us for some time. Then she turned and went into the forest. There was a big sigh of relief! We hugged each other, thank the almighty and continued with our patrolling, because at the STPF that's what we do!

- Piyushkumar Chakre

Forest Guard,
Special Tiger Protection Force, TATR



THE LEOPARD

There was a lazing leopard called Lotus.

A human-filled safari jeep came into her focus.

The humans nearly screamed.
Like cats lapping cream.
So she turned her back,
walked away from the ruckus...

- Gautami Sahu
Age - 10 Years, Mumbai

MITIGATING TIGER-HUMAN CONFLICT

Chandrapur district has become a hotspot of the tiger-human conflict. It reported 44 human mortalities in the wild animals' attacks. Tigers were involved in around 80% of those incidents. In and around the buffer zone of TATR, villages like Maroda, Karwan, Katwan, Padzari in Mul tehsil were the focal areas of the conflict. After investigating the recent incidents, the BNHS team with the help of Forest Department undertook a special initiative to mitigate the conflict.

TATR buffer management put in best of their efforts to control conflict in the Mul range by using the PRT, field staff as well as STPF. The field staff and PRTs of the concerned villages continuously monitor the area by foot patrol throughout the day. They are also installing the solar fence on the edge of forest and farms. On the other hand, the villagers have to visit their farms as agriculture is the primary livelihood for them. The herdsmen have to go out to graze their cattle. This makes the situation tricky.

Since it is typically believed that tigers attack from behind, the team distributed human face masks to the farmers and herders in these villages. Local honey harvesting troops in the villages around the Sundarban Tiger Reserve wear these masks at the back of the head to deceive the apex predator. This has proved an effective technique to prevent tiger attacks of humans. With the distribution of human face masks, this technique was introduced to the farmers who have their fields on the edge of the forest. The team also approached the herders and explained them how to use the mask.

Considering the fact that wearing a mask alone cannot ensure the absence of any attack from wild animals, the villagers were sensitized on what other precautions are to be taken and what to do when an attack takes place.

- Sanjay Karkare
Assistant Director, BNHS



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.





IN LOVE WITH TADOBA

Intro: Gabrielle Harris is an international tourist, and a regular visitor of TATR. During her recent visit from 5th to 30th June, 2022 she did 51 back-to-back safaris. She sighted total 34 individual tigers, four leopards, six sloth bears, four different packs of wild dogs and many more animals and birds during those safaris. She also celebrated her 75th birthday here. She explains why she is in love with Tadoba.

I am from Lincolnshire in England. I work as a professional artist specializing in printing such as etching and mezzotints in limited editions. My work is inspired by the tigers, leopards and wildlife I see at Tadoba.

My fifth visit to Tadoba would have been in 2021, but it was cancelled due to Covid. This year being my special birthday, I decided to put the two years together, which explains my 51 safaris.

I choose Tadoba for a number of reasons, I have been to four other tiger reserves in India; but everything combined here makes it the place to return to. I love the hotel Svasara Jungle Lodge, the friendliest and most helpful hotel I have ever visited and there I met Prasun Majumdar, Svasara's Naturalist who brought the forest to life for me.

I have always loved cats, any size or colour, but the Bengal Tiger is the apex in beauty and power. My first sight of free, wild tigers brought tears to my eyes! It was T-12 Maya and T-49 Matkasur sleeping in the bamboo. They both got up and walked past me! I heard their footsteps and saw how really powerful they were! I was hooked!

I came back the next year to see her cubs. Maya dominated 97 Waterhole, showing her cubs the noisy and excited creatures on the other side. She also gave me a 'private view' walking out of the bamboo, with Meera and Surya, when we were the only gypsy present there.

That year I also witnessed the truly dreadful fight between Matkasur and a brave Sloth Bear mother. A privilege to witness, but a terrifying insight into nature's brutality!

Tadoba never disappoints. Weaver birds nest building, fruit bats fanning themselves at Pangdi, the stork colony at Belara, red fire ants' nests of leaves and spiders' web...everything is so amazing!

The epic moments do come from the 'big four' - a leopard staring back at you from a tree branch; a mother tiger calling her sub-adult cubs and then walking past me; a sloth bear with cubs on her back for safety and the Dholes ripping a Chital carcass to shreds in minutes. Most recently, a leopard mother with two cubs, so young that they were still learning to walk, crossing the road in front of us! Simply magical!!

During my recent visit to Tadoba, I noticed a few mentionable improvements like reduction in the number of gypsies allowed in the forest and the lowering of speed limit, which are better for both the animals and the tourists.

I am already planning my next visit in 2023. I am sure I will see more changes and will enjoy new excitements. My real thanks to all the drivers, guides and administrators who make Tadoba possible.

- Gabrielle Harris
Tourist, Lincolnshire, England



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A WALK WITH MOMI

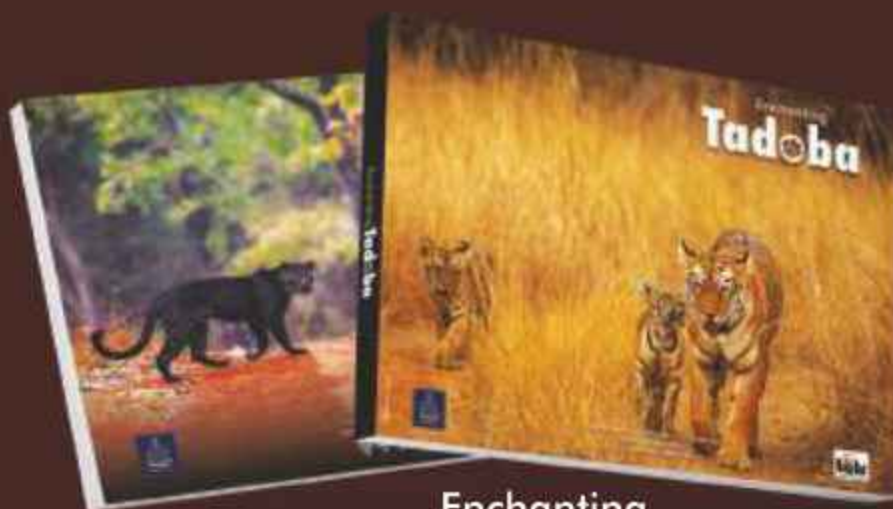
While spotting a leopard in the wild is rare, sighting tiny leopard cubs is a once in a lifetime opportunity. These two little cuties followed their mother in the Moharli zone at TATR and blessed the tourists with a rare opportunity to click them.



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