



Issue 19/June 2023

# Tadoba

DIARIES

The official Newsletter of Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve



# Conservation translocation

## A tool for ensuring long term survival of endangered species of wildlife

Dear Reader,

It is widely known that endangered wildlife primarily inhabit protected areas, including national parks, sanctuaries, conservation reserves, and community reserves. These areas span approximately 173,629 km<sup>2</sup>, which accounts for less than 5% of our total geographic area. Unfortunately, these regions are often fragmented due to human-dominated landscapes and diverse land use patterns aimed at meeting our various needs. In comparison to other parts of the world, our protected areas are relatively small, with an average size of only 175 km<sup>2</sup>. This fragmentation of wildlife habitats has resulted in severe isolation among populations that were historically and evolutionarily connected. As a consequence, these populations now struggle to exchange genetic material, leading to reduced genetic diversity and increased inbreeding. Prolonged isolation may render these populations vulnerable to stochastic events and prone to local or landscape-level extinction.

To address this issue, one effective and practical solution is to introduce new genetic material from one population to another. This entails facilitating gene flow between physically disconnected populations that would otherwise remain isolated and potentially face extinction over time. Recently, such an effort was made with the successful translocation of two female tigers from the Tadoba landscape to the Navegaon Nagzira Tiger Reserve (NNTR). These tigresses, named T4C2 and T4, were captured from Tadoba and released into identified habitats within NNTR. They have now settled in NNTR and are being constantly monitored through satellite collars that were fitted onto them prior to their release. This endeavor marks the first of its kind in Maharashtra and signals the beginning of a new era in which source populations, like the Tadoba landscape, are artificially connected with other potential wildlife areas that are currently depleted in terms of wildlife presence. In the natural course of events, such animal migrations may occur, but they could take years and entail

uncertainties associated with long-range migration.

Beyond increasing the genetic diversity of populations, these scientific practices also serve to enhance the capacity of wildlife managers and frontline staff in monitoring wildlife using modern tools and techniques. Additionally, they can help rectify any distortions in the sex ratio, which, if left unaddressed, could result in a drastic reduction in population and disrupt the ecosystem. Furthermore, these efforts can potentially boost tourism in areas where it has been limited due to small wildlife populations and low visibility.

Another important reintroduction initiative is currently underway as we prepare to release Gyps vultures into the Tadoba landscape. Over the past two decades, the population of three resident Gyps vulture species in India has experienced a drastic decline, with over 99% of the population disappearing by 2007. This decline was primarily attributed to the veterinary use of the drug diclofenac in cattle treatment. Vultures are exposed to this drug when they feed on the carcasses of cattle that had been treated with diclofenac within 72 hours of their death. Presently, there are only approximately 20,000 resident Gyps vultures surviving in the wild in India. To prevent their imminent extinction, the Conservation Breeding Programme was initiated, along with a ban on the veterinary use of diclofenac. The conservation of remaining wild vulture populations and those held in vulture conservation breeding centers is critical to saving these species from extinction. Therefore, captive-bred vultures raised in conservation breeding centers are now being considered for release in vulture safe zones, such as national parks and sanctuaries. We hope that these efforts contribute to the recovery of these critically endangered species and strengthen our ecosystems.

**Dr. Jitendra Ramgaokar**

Field Director, TATR  
and Executive Director, TATR Conservation Foundation



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## A Hunter Turned Wildlife Lover

Uttam Singh

**W**e all know music director Uttam Singh for his hit compositions in Hindi films like "Dil To Pagal Hai" and "Gadar: Ek Prem Katha," but he is also a passionate wildlife lover. Despite his past as a hunter, Uttam Singh has experienced a transformation that led him to embrace and appreciate the beauty of wildlife.

*Tadoba Diaries* spoke to him at the Orchids Jungle Camp.

**Q: How was your experience at Tadoba?**

**A:** This was my first visit to Tadoba, and it was also my first safari experience. I was completely mesmerized by the natural beauty of this place. I had the opportunity to see various animals in Tadoba, including two tigers, wild dogs, sloth bears, blue bulls, sambar, and spotted deer. I also enjoyed a nature walk where I tasted the Tendu fruit, Mahua flower, and Kawath fruit. It was a fantastic experience overall.

**Q: How did you become attracted to wildlife?**

**A:** I have been in love with the jungle since childhood. However, I have an interesting story to share. I used to enjoy hunting, and I even obtained a gun license in December 1972. I spent a lot of time hunting and would sometimes walk for 48 hours in the forest for that purpose.

**Q: When did you stop hunting?**

**A:** My story took a major twist 28 years ago. Once, I went hunting with a friend, and at the last moment, his rifle malfunctioned. Luckily, mine worked perfectly, and I managed to kill a wild boar with a single shot. This incident had a profound impact on me. Soon after, while visiting the famous Bombay Gun House for some work, I encountered the owner and other people who were grieving. When I inquired about their sorrow, the owner revealed that his 14-year-old son had died suddenly from a brain hemorrhage while writing an exam. He said, "I am reaping what I sowed. I have killed many animals. I have sold many guns. God has punished me for my sins." These words struck me deeply.

When I returned home, my wife, who had always been against my hunting, advised me to stop hunting for at least a year, believing it would bring positive changes to my life. I accepted her advice and not only quit hunting but also stopped consuming non-vegetarian food. That same year, I received the opportunity to compose music for the film *Dil To Pagal Hai*, which brought me immense fame. Since then, I have completely abandoned hunting and now find wildlife safaris to be a much more fulfilling experience. It gives me immense pleasure to observe freely roaming wild animals in places like Tadoba.

**Q: What role do you believe nature plays in creativity?**

**A:** Nature is the source of music. If you listen to the sounds of birds and animals, you will find music in them. Once, in Mussoorie, I recorded a bird's sound for ten minutes, and it maintained its rhythmic tempo throughout without missing a beat. Music is everywhere in nature; you just need to have the heart to experience it.

**Q: What message would you like to give to your fans?**

**A:** I would like to request everyone to cultivate a love for nature. Take care of our jungles and animals. Avoid hunting and follow the rules and regulations set by the authorities. Whenever possible, engage in nature tourism. Ultimately, these actions will contribute to conservation efforts.

- Team *Tadoba Diaries*



## BOVs for Responsible Tourism

The Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR) attracts over two lakh tourists annually, offering them an opportunity to witness the captivating wildlife within its boundaries. As the management of the reserve, our primary objective is to conserve wildlife while promoting responsible tourism. To strike a balance between these goals, we have embarked on a plan to introduce battery-operated vehicles (BOVs) by modifying the existing Gypsy vehicles.

Currently, over 500 Gypsy vehicles take tourists on safaris in both the core and buffer areas of TATR. However, to reduce the environmental impact and enhance the visitor experience, we have initiated a project to convert these vehicles into BOVs. The plans are in a preliminary stage, and we have successfully converted one of our old Gypsy into a BOV, which is currently undergoing test runs in the core and buffer areas.

The introduction of BOVs brings several advantages. Firstly, by utilizing battery power, we significantly reduce emissions and contribute to a greener environment. Unlike traditional vehicles, the BOVs cause zero emissions, ensuring minimal disturbance to the delicate ecosystem of TATR. Moreover, the BOVs have a battery management system that ensures safe

and efficient charging without the need for specialized charging stations. The battery can be easily charged from any 15-ampere plug.

Additionally, the BOVs offer enhanced functionality and safety features. Equipped with a four-wheel drive function and hill assistance, these vehicles automatically prevent rolling back, ensuring a smooth and secure safari experience. Furthermore, the rechargeable battery has a cycle life of five years, ensuring durability and longevity.

During the trial phase, the converted BOV demonstrated impressive performance. With a single full charge of six to eight hours, the vehicle can cover a distance of 100-120 kilometers, which is sufficient for completing two safaris comfortably. Once the ongoing trials prove successful, we plan to introduce these BOVs for regular safari operations.

We are proud to have the support of the Honourable Forest Minister of Maharashtra, Sudhir Mungantiwar, who has been a vocal advocate for the use of electric vehicles in safaris due to their numerous advantages. The guidelines of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) also direct the tiger reserves in India to encourage BOVs. We have taken the first step towards implementing sustainable and responsible tourism practices.

The introduction of battery-operated vehicles at TATR marks a significant stride towards sustainable tourism and wildlife conservation. By retrofitting the existing Gypsy vehicles, we aim to reduce emissions, enhance visitor experiences, and contribute to the long-term preservation of the pristine ecosystem at TATR. As we continue to refine and expand this initiative, we are confident that it will serve as a model for other wildlife reserves seeking to balance conservation and

**- Kushagra Pathak**  
Deputy Director, TATR (Buffer)

## Indian Blue Robin

It was the most unusual summer week of April, with balmy days and nights with thunder. The weather patterns were not consistent with any of my past summer experiences here at Tadoba while working as a Naturalist with Red Earth. On one such post-rain-drenched noon we were sitting under a Mahua tree watching beautiful birds like Sparrows, Bulbuls, Paradise Flycatchers, Fantails, White Eyes, etc. The stream that meanders through our resort lends a generous chill and a vantage point to observe these diverse foraging birds. A small blue bird landed below the Mahua tree.

At first, what we thought was Tickell's Blue Flycatcher, then observed the white brow and the orange underparts. And we were like 'Woah! That's a new bird'. Indian Blue Robin was a lifer not just for us but probably for Tadoba too.

**- Kavya Vilwanathan**  
Naturalist, Red Earth Tadoba, Zari



## Tiger Capture: Challenging Endeavour for Conservation

A month ago, our colleague at the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) received a call from the office of the Field Director, urging us to rush to the field and prepare for the capture of a tigress from the Chimur range in the Bramhapuri forest division. The tigress was to be relocated to send her to the Navegaon Nagzira Tiger Reserve (NNTR), an area encompassing 653.67 sq. km. We rushed to Bramhapuri, which has emerged as a significant area for tiger conservation, recording the highest number of tiger sightings outside of the tiger reserve, accompanied by high human-wildlife conflict.

The sub-adult female from the Chimur range, identified as a potential candidate for relocation, was spotted by a patrolling team at Khadsangi. Since she was a sub-adult (older than one year) and recently separated from her mother, the team decided to capture her. She was found within a 500-meter radius from the Khadsangi tourism gate, concealed under the thicket patch of Ukshi, known as Kukud Ranji.

Within hours, the rapid rescue team arrived on-site. The Range Forest Officer in charge of the Khadsangi range had already deployed field staff. Each team member had their assigned task. Veterinary doctor Suresh Khobragade and shooter Ajay Marathe prepared the dart gun—a specialized air-pressure gun loaded with immobilization medicine. We decided to wait for her to emerge from the thicket patch of Ukshi, as darting her while she remained hidden would impede post-operation search efforts. Live cameras equipped with SIM cards, which transmitted images through the internet, were deployed. Until then, our confidence remained high, and we were optimistic that she would soon come out, allowing us to capture her with minimal effort.

As everyone busily worked, excitement filled the air, although silence prevailed—no one wanted to disturb the tigress. The fading sun cast golden hues upon the Arjuna tree. It was then that the silence was interrupted by the bellowing of a sambar and the sight of a massive sloth bear crossing behind our vehicle, unbeknownst to most of us. Evenings in the forest are always lively, with animals prowling their territories and waterholes resonating with songs and calls. The day came to an end and we returned to base camp.

The next day, around 5 am, we learned from the team deployed at the site overnight, that the tigress had moved a little at midnight to drink water from a nearby waterhole, only to return to her previous spot. Another day passed by, with us stationed in the same place for more than eight hours—an arduous task. While we were at least sheltered in the vehicle, Ajay stood on a Machan, a platform built on a tree just a few meters away from



her, using the tree and Kukud Ranji for cover. A part of the Security Hut was transformed into a makeshift kitchen, serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner. After 48 hours, she was still nestled under the Kukud Raji, occasionally venturing out at midnight when darting was not possible, before returning to sleep for the entire night. As day two neared its end, a wireless message arrived, signaling a successful darting. Our hearts leaped with excitement as everyone hurried to the location where she was darted. It was 5 pm, and we had a mere 20 minutes to locate her, collar her, and transport her to a cage for further relocation. Unfortunately, a sudden change in the atmosphere occurred—hot winds turned into a crisp breeze, and distant lightning forecasted the imminent arrival of rain. The search for the tigress was abruptly called off. I observed the search party retracing their steps as darkness settled in and the rain poured. In our haste to move the equipment to a safer location, I glimpsed a line of lights from head torches gradually ascending—those of the search party walking through the forest. Day two concluded with mixed emotions. We had missed the opportunity to capture the tigress due to the sudden rain—a reminder that nature is unpredictable.

Day three, four, five, and the entire week unfolded in a similar fashion. The tigress would move only at midnight and spend the entire day in the same location. On one rainy day, the team lost track of her.

Tiger capture is a highly specialized and regulated process conducted by trained professionals. Strict protocols are followed to ensure the safety and well-being of both tigers and the people involved in the capture operations.

Given the challenging field conditions, we identified another tigress from the Sindewahi range. Led by RFOs of Kolsa and Karwa, the team successfully captured a sub-adult tigress, later relocated to NNTR. I had the privilege of being part of the collaring team.

I hope she will thrive in her new home at NNTR. All of us at Tadoba will always remain curious about her whereabouts. She will always be remembered as the tigress of Tadoba who found a new home in the land of Saras—a symbol of love and commitment.

- Prajakta Hushangbadkar  
Wildlife Biologist, TATR



## Truly Enchanting

**T**he thrill of our February 2023 adventure began on the day of our arrival with the night safari. We did not anticipate spotting the big cat at night but were in for a pleasant surprise. We were thrilled to see wild cats, wood owls, a small common krait, and spotted deer grazing in the dark. The clear western skies also treated us to a beautiful display of the Jupiter and Venus conjunction. We spent a good amount of time in the vast, chilling wilderness, accompanied by the calls of nightjars as they circled around us.

We anticipated that the morning safari would be even more rewarding, and indeed it was! The mighty and majestic Paras tiger graced us with his leisurely walk. We were incredibly lucky to arrive at the spot just as Paras decided to come out of his hideout, right in front of our anxiously waiting convoy of

gypsies. One of our teams was even luckier to witness his long and relaxed siesta!

The afternoon safari brought even more rewards and thrills! We spotted the charming tigress T-127 Choti Madhu and the majestic and powerful T-185 Taru at various locations and in varied moods, thanks to our three teams. In addition, we were delighted to see bison, crocodiles, and a variety of water birds, adding to the excitement of our safari.

We couldn't stop expressing our gratitude to our lucky stars and appreciating the experienced guides and the management of the tiger reserve for providing us with this once-in-a-lifetime experience. These memories will be cherished by our family until our next visit to TATR in the near future!

**- Rashmi Urdhwaeshe**

Former Director, Automotive Research Association of India, Pune

## Cubs' Day Out



**O**n our first canter safari in the Kolara core area in the morning, we could get a glimpse of a male tiger whom the guides called Yuvraj. He quickly disappeared into the dense jungle.

The following day, we headed to Shirkada gate with high hopes, as we had heard of frequent sightings in this area. Upon entering the gate, we noticed a jeep stop ahead and learned that a tigress popularly known as Choti Rani, and her cubs were sleeping in a bamboo shed. We patiently waited for two hours, and finally, the cubs slowly emerged and approached the jeeps.

It was a majestic experience as the cubs playfully interacted with each other. At times we felt like they could be picked up and taken home! Of course, that was only a wishful thinking. The mother also appeared and showed her affection towards her cubs, even feeding them in front of us. It was a sight that would be etched in our memories forever.

The next day, we entered the Madnapur gate. Our guide took us to a spot where we witnessed T-82 tigress known as Junabai crossing the road right behind us. We followed her as she marked her territory while her cubs played at a distance. She looked very comfortable with our presence. Overall, our experience in Tadoba was truly majestic and marvelous. We are already looking forward to our next visit.

**- Varun Chikhale**

Lav/ Student, Mumbai



## The Battle for Supremacy

**W**e recently spent a really good time in India on our fifth trip which included our third visit to the beautiful Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve.

The afternoon drive on 23rd February was proving rather quiet up until the point we arrived at Tadoba Lake when that all changed! Initially, all seemed calm and uneventful, just a few birds and some Sambars, but this was a classic case of something ordinary turning into something quite extraordinary! Two male sambars were eyeing each other and then launched into a full-on battle for supremacy.

The noise of their clashing antlers, the swirling dust as they pushed each other back and forth, was both thrilling and

mesmerizing, occasionally pausing for breath, antlers still locked in combat. This lasted for around 20 minutes before the challenger, and the smaller of the two, emerged as the victor, with the defeated retreating and seeking solace in the lake. There was further drama as a crocodile headed off in pursuit, but for whatever reason decided not to pursue the matter.

It was a privilege to see such an event that will stay in our memories for a long time. Nature is unpredictable and breathtaking in equal measure! Simply a fantastic experience it was!

- Gill Greaves  
Tourist, U.K.



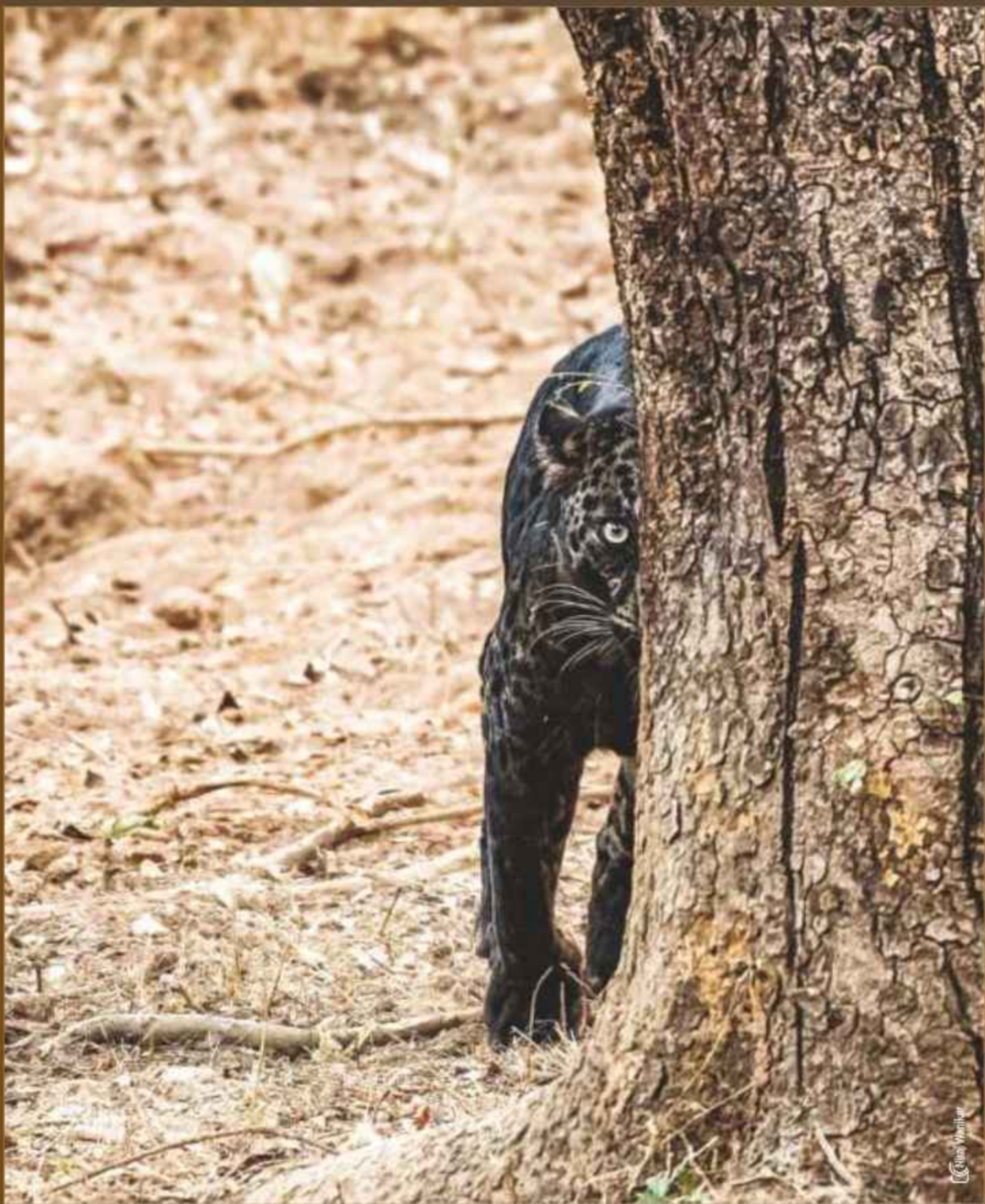
## Double Sighting

**I**t was my first time in Tadoba. I took the night train from Mumbai to Nagpur with my family and arrived at Tadoba for the afternoon safari. We entered through the Moharli gate and headed straight to the Jamunzora water body. Under the tall bamboo, our naturalist Deepak Pate spotted Sonam, the tigress taking her afternoon nap. Suddenly, she woke up. She had heard something! She started walking towards the meadow. Pate uncle noticed a leopard on a tall tree of Tendu.



Seeing Sonam approaching, the leopard climbed up the tree. Sonam waited under the tree. But the leopard showed no signs of coming down. Sonam got tired of waiting and roared impatiently. She then marked her territory by spraying urine on the tree and walked into the jungle.

- Rahi Alva  
Age- 7 years, School - Bombay Scottish, Mahim, Mumbai





## Ek Bear Ho Jaay!

**W**henever I find myself in the forest, I make sure to participate in all field activities that go beyond my regular duties. Even during my 37-day stay at Tadoba, I took part in various exercises such as camera trapping and foot patrolling. This active involvement exposed me to a completely new realm of experiences.

On one particular day, I was traveling through the Kolara range of the TATR core zone with my colleagues from the field team. Suddenly, our driver Balu Dada exclaimed, "sloth bear!" Instantly, all of us began scanning the road and the dense thickets nearby. As I was sitting just behind him, I immediately understood what he was referring to - not the entire sloth bear, but only a few parts of it! I could see a bear paw right under my window, with nails as big as my fingers, measuring almost four inches long. There were some large bones with very little flesh left on them, and the breastbone was around three feet away. Balu Dada was a bit bothered by the foul smell, but our excitement was so overwhelming that we persuaded him to stop.

It appeared to be a kill, most likely done by a tiger. The

encounter between these two giants is always fierce and terrifying. Many of us may recall the viral video of the fight between the famous tiger Matkasur and a sloth bear. While we were discussing what might have transpired here, we noticed that the remains were scattered precisely between two camera traps. Prajakta, our Wildlife Biologist, got out of the vehicle and instructed all of us to stay inside and keep watch for the presence of a tiger. She swiftly removed the memory card from one of the camera traps and returned to the vehicle. While examining the captured images, we discovered the victor of the battle - Bubly, the tigress! In the images taken two days prior, she was seen relishing the sloth bear meat. The fight had occurred elsewhere, and she had dragged the dead bear to this spot to enjoy her meal in peace. The bear's skull was thrown precisely beneath the other camera trap.

I was so enthralled by the entire episode that I couldn't resist creating a PJ- In the scorching summer heat, Bubly might have jokingly said to herself, "Ek bear ho jaay!" (Let's have a beer!)

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

## A Scary Moment

I have many beautiful memories of the safaris I experienced during my career as a guide. However, there is one particular moment that I will never forget because it was incredibly frightening. It occurred during a morning safari in 2021.

At the start of the safari, I was showcasing the forest to my guests. We had only traveled about 20 kilometers into the forest when our Gypsy turned onto a narrow road, and suddenly, I heard a deafening roar! It was a sub-adult tigress charging towards our vehicle!

In retrospect, I realized that the tigress had been sitting in the grass, and we had failed to notice her presence. Moreover, due to the narrowness of the road, we had unknowingly come too close to her, making her uncomfortable. As soon as our Gypsy made the turn, she sprang to her feet and began sprinting towards us. With her mouth wide open, we could see her menacing canine teeth and her tongue, colored a vivid red. Both my guests and I were overcome with fear, as this unexpected encounter unfolded. At one point, the tigress was merely two feet away from our vehicle!

Reacting instinctively, I shouted loudly in an attempt to scare her away. Startled by the sudden noise, she took a few steps



back. Seizing the opportunity, I instructed the driver to move the vehicle forward. As we distanced ourselves to a safer position, the tigress continued to gaze in our direction but did not pursue us. It became apparent that her intention was not to attack but rather to warn us against getting too close. Subsequently, this particular tigress, identified as T-155, gained fame as the W Mark female.

I returned the vehicle to the entrance gate, ensuring my guests were comfortable, and then we resumed our safari.

- Diwakar Kulmethe  
Guide, Devada-Adegaon Gate

## Kuda: Monsoon Bloom

If you recently visited Tadoba, you would have witnessed the enchanting sight of beautiful white flowering shrubs in full bloom. These plants belong to the species *Holarrhena antidysenterica*, locally known as Pandhra Kuda or Doodhi. The exquisite white flowers, which emit a delightful fragrance, are often referred to as Easter flowers due to their appearance around the time of Easter. Interestingly, they continue to bloom as the first monsoon showers arrive to cool the scorching earth. It is no surprise that Kalidasa mentions these flowers in Meghdoot, capturing the romance that we Indians associate with the arrival of the first rains.

For me, the allure of Kuda extends beyond the aroma and romance of the rains—it is closely connected to my gastronomic experiences. Sindhutai Atram from Agarzari Campsite has regularly prepared a delectable sabzi using boiled Kuda flowers. She also never fails to mention its beneficial effects on the stomach!

Kuda is extensively utilized for its medicinal properties, particularly for treating dysentery, fever, piles, and skin issues. The alkaloids present in Kuda seeds possess antidiarrheal and antibacterial properties, making them valuable in allopathic medicine. These seeds are commonly known as Indrajav among Ayurvedic practitioners, as they are believed to have originated from the nectar that fell from the bodies of



the Vanaras (monkey-like beings) slain during the battle between Rama and Ravana. This connection has earned Kuda the name "Indravruksha".

While Kuda has the potential to grow into a medium-sized tree, it is mostly found as shrubs in our region. Interestingly, goats and cattle do not consume their leaves, making Kuda suitable for reforestation efforts in our hills. The distinguishing feature of Kuda pods is their unique shape—they consist of two narrow, cylindrical pods that converge at the apex.

If you haven't yet had the opportunity to savor Kuda sabzi, I highly recommend booking a stay at the Agarzari Campsite and treating yourself to a delicious meal that incorporates this delightful ingredient.

- Anirudh Chaoji  
Senior Naturalist



### ALERT SIESTA!

A tigress popularly known as Bijali with her cubs. A perfect example of a mother having an alert afternoon siesta.

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## The Victorious Queen

It is a day to be remembered forever - 7th May 2023! After four not-so-exciting safaris in Tadoba buffers, thanks to the unseasonal rains, this was my first drive to the core from Kolara gate. We missed T-12 tigress, popularly known as Maya a couple of times in the first two hours, as she wasn't following her regular trail. Only gypsies that suddenly bumped into her got her glimpses while crossing roads near the Magar Tank.

I kept saying what bad luck I have on this trip that Maya who has always made my trips to Tadoba memorable, is also not showing up this time. But Nikhil assured "In jungles it only takes a moment for the luck to flip" & that's exactly what happened with this 'Once in a lifetime sighting!'

Then we reached a place called Chital Road, where a tiger was sitting in a water body. We thought it was Maya at first but it turned out that it was another tigress known as Roma who was being sighted after almost a month. After a while, she got up & climbed upwards towards Jamunbodi. We thought of taking a chance and reached Jamunbodi hilltop via the main road. I was excited since I only saw Roma briefly on one of my previous trips. As we had anticipated, a tiger was walking towards us.

But then to our astonishment, there was another tiger following Roma! And it was none other than Maya! Unaware of Maya's presence, Roma was casually walking the track & marking her territory, and the Queen of Tadoba was following her hiding, ducking, stalking. What an OMG moment that was, two dominant females walking the same road towards us, which I had never even dreamt of. And then my heart started to skip a beat, what next!

Maya kept following and watching the other tigress's every move in her territory. It was only after a while that Roma realized the Queen was following her. And next second, my mind started to question me, what will happen, will they fight, or will that be a face-off, I am also thinking about Roma's 2 cubs now & worried that nothing should happen to her. I was praying & my hands shivering & I was also trying to not miss any action here.

Roma tried to avoid confrontation and kept trying to run away from Maya, but each time Maya chased her down. She made Roma bend down and circled around her. The roars and the growls were deafening while the tigresses fought!

Eventually, Roma had to obey the Big Lady of Tadoba and move out with a run. Thankfully, there was no blood drawn this time!

It's been over a decade since Maya inherited the legacy and territory of the Pandharpauri Lake and Meadows to the Tadoba Lake and the Hilltop of the Land of Taru, from her late mother Leela. During all these years, many tigers came, tried to establish their territory in and around Tadoba, and disappeared too, but one name that still holds the ground is Maya.

She has always been a photographer's delight, a tourist frenzy, and a favourite amongst the dominant male tigers. There has been nobody who is able to match her aura! She is a Queen for a reason!

- Sadaa Sayed  
Actress







## Handmade Paper Project

**U**nder a unique livelihood Initiative for the women in the villages of TATR buffer, a Handmade Paper Project was inaugurated recently. This project is set up in the Satara village by Eco-Development Committee and Wildland Conservation Trust, in association with Parimal Trust and TATR. This unit will help to generate livelihood for the women in Satara village. It will also have an impact to reduce the man-animal conflict and dependency on the forest. As a token of appreciation for their contribution to producing the handmade paper, the participating women were presented with cheques worth INR 11,000/- in advance by the Bachat Gat (Self-Help Group).

This is how Tadoba fulfilled my both the wishes.



### HOW DO I LOOK?

Tadoba has a great treasure of biodiversity that includes some rare species of animals. Here a Chausingha-four-horned antelope, which is not widely sighted, is looking straight into a camera trap.

## The Achievers April 2023

**P**lease join us in celebrating the achievements of the best-performing forest guards at TATR. These frontline soldiers of the forest department have done the maximum foot patrolling in their respective divisions.

We are happy to announce the top two achievers in April 2023



Forest Guard	- R. B. Waghare
Beat	- Tamsi
Round	- Katezari
Range	- Tadoba
Division	- Core TATR
Duration	- 19 Days
Target	- 125 km/Month
Actual Patrolling	- 172.46 Km



Forest Guard	- D. B. Karade
Beat	- Karwa-II
Round	- Karwa
Range	- Palasgaon (Buffer)
Division	- Buffer TATR
Duration	- 25 Days
Target	- 125 km/Month
Actual Patrolling	- 342.02 Km



## Survival of the Fittest

For a long time, I had nurtured a desire to capture a photograph of a majestic male wild boar with its impressive tusks. Many people who are unfamiliar with this species may not know that wild boars do possess tusks. Although not as long as those of an elephant, they are still strong and lengthy enough to enable the boar to dig deep into the earth for food and defend itself against formidable adversaries like tigers. However, wild boars are not known for being particularly camera-friendly creatures unless they happen to be quenching their thirst at a water hole. Thus, this wish of mine remained unfulfilled for quite some time.

During my recent visit to Tadoba, one pleasant early morning, while standing at a crossroad, my eyes caught sight of a massive black figure slowly walking towards us from a distance. Initially, I mistook it for a sloth bear, but upon closer observation through my camera lens, I realized it was a limping wild boar. Its front leg appeared to be broken, rendering it almost incapable of using it. Unlike a typical wild boar, this poor creature did not scamper away when our vehicle approached. Instead, it cast a glance in our direction and painfully dragged its enormous body, gradually disappearing into the dense undergrowth beside the road.

The guide accompanying us commented, "If it is seen by a tiger, it will surely meet its demise." Typically, a tiger would hesitate to take on such a formidable wild boar, as the hunting process itself poses a significant risk of injury to the tiger. However, given the weakened state of this male wild boar, it would be an easy target for a tiger to overpower and kill. All I could do was offer a prayer for the limping creature, but even now, the helpless expression in its eyes continues to haunt me. A forest is a place where the only law is survival of the fittest, where one must rely solely on own abilities to endure.

- Sanjay Deshpande

Wildlife Enthusiast, Sanjeevani Developers, Pune



Gray Fish Eagle Silhouette @ Tadoba © Sanjay Deshpande, TADR, May 2023

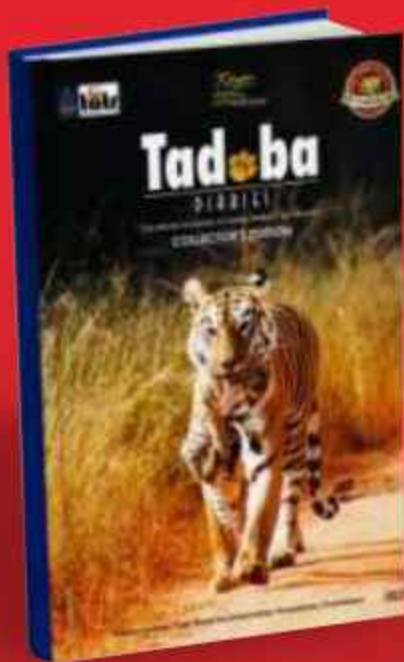


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