



Issue 29/Apr. 2024

# Tadoba

DIARIES

The Official Newsletter of Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve



Makrand Pardeshi

Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve Conservation Foundation, Chandrapur

₹ 30/-





Dear Reader

**W**e are already in the summer of 2024 and those who are visiting these days must have started to feel the heat of our forests here at Tadoba. Central Indian summers are generally very hot and dry. This is very stark, especially in dry deciduous tracts of forests that become leafless and brown with a thick layer of leaf litter on the ground, often to the delight of wildlife enthusiasts and photographers because of the increased visibility of animals. There is also an added excitement of spotting summer migrant birds like the Indian Pitta, Oriental Turtle Dove, and different types of cuckoos, etc. There are of course the exceptions of patches of green evergreen trees along the streams and lakes, but those are few and animals prefer the designated waterholes for quenching their thirst. At Tadoba, we have 151 natural and 191 artificial solar-powered waterholes that become the lifeline and hub of activities for wildlife.

Summers here are important for local communities also as they depend on forest produce like Tendu leaves, Tendu fruits (*Tembhare*), and Mahua flowers which are available only during the brief period of summer. They provide supplementary income to thousands of households.

With increasing global temperatures summers are getting hotter and are throwing up challenges such as increased vulnerability of our forests to forest fires and consequent loss of valuable biomass and soil biodiversity.

This summer is especially crucial for us as the bamboo forests in Tadoba and all the surrounding forests of the district have undergone gregarious flowering. Flowering in bamboo (*Dendrocalamus strictus*) happens in a cycle of 40 years. Around 1,30,000 ha of bamboo forests are experiencing flowering which means all the bamboo in this area will subsequently die and become extremely vulnerable during these hot months. The forest department is taking all due precautions by creating fire lines, deploying fire watchers and fire-fighting teams, and also collecting bamboo seeds that are available in abundance. These seeds shall be supplied on demand to other forest areas and will be used for promoting the regeneration of bamboo in the flowered area through active management such as broadcasting, making,

and dispersing seed balls in areas of deficient regeneration.

These months are also very important for monitoring of tigers and prey species which is known as Phase IV monitoring as per the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) Protocol and involves the estimation of predator and prey densities in tiger-bearing areas across the country. At TATR, we undertake transect-based distance sampling for estimating prey densities and camera-trap-based spatial capture-recapture (SECR) for estimating the densities of tigers and leopards (predators with unique pelage patterns).

For camera-trap-based SECR, an array of camera traps is laid across the reserve in a grid design. Each grid of size 2 km<sup>2</sup> contains two camera traps placed across each other to capture both flanks of an animal (tiger or leopard). At Tadoba we are almost through with half of the area and the exercise is underway in the remaining area. A total of 628 grids were laid across TATR which means a total of 1,256 camera traps were deployed. During each block, the cameras are to be placed for a period of 30 days. A total area of 1,727 km<sup>2</sup> will be sampled in the process.

Just to provide the reader with the scale of data that is generated in this process, in 2023, approximately 9 lakh images were captured during the camera-trapping exercise. Of these, 4,432 images belonged to tigers. By sifting through the images, we were able to identify 93 unique individuals using the stripe patterns. The cameras also captured a total of 39 primarily mammalian species.

Last but not least, we also provide an opportunity to interested professionals from various fields to intern with us for two months of summer (May-June) and contribute to our efforts with new ideas that can bring new perspectives to the management and help us improve our management efforts in all its dimensions.

As we persist in our duty to safeguard our forests and wildlife amidst the scorching heat, I wish you all happy times exploring our natural heritage during this summer!

**Dr. Jitendra Ramgaokar**

Field Director, TATR  
and Executive Director, TATR Conservation Foundation

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## DARSHAN JAROOR HOGA

- Tiku Talsania  
Actor

Senior Bollywood actor Tiku Talsania was in Tadoba last month for his second visit to the land of tigers. *Tadoba Diaries* spoke to him about his experience at TATR.

Here are excerpts from his interview:

**Q: We heard that at the age of 70 years, you came from Mumbai on a bike. Is that true?**

**A:** Yes. I love biking and I am a member of a biking group. Eight members of our group decided to make a trip to Tadoba on our bikes. We took two days to travel from Mumbai to Tadoba and thoroughly enjoyed the journey.

**Q: How did you fall in love with Tadoba?**

**A:** Last year I was shooting in Nagpur. The unit had some free time. Hence I decided to make a quick trip to Tadoba along with my co-actors Bharat Jadhav and Mangesh Kulkarni. We hit a jackpot on the first visit itself with the darshan of the legendary tigress T-12, lovingly known as Maya, and her cute cub. We were mesmerized to see the cub playing with its mother. I could take a beautiful video of the duo showering love on each other. That moment I fell in love with this fantastic jungle and its rich wildlife.

**Q: How was your trip this time?**

**A:** It was exciting as expected. We had three safaris. We could not see a tiger on the first safari but saw a lot of other animals and birds. We saw a sambar deer near the Andhari River, probably wounded by its predator. I also enjoyed

watching the ghost tree and crocodile bark tree. My friends were a little upset for not sighting a tiger, and I told them, "Have patience. *Darshan jaroor hoga.*"

The next morning, we were lucky to spot two tiger brothers. The same evening we sighted two cubs and caught a glimpse of a tigress. We also saw a sloth bear. My friends were super excited.

**Q: What did you like the most about Tadoba?**

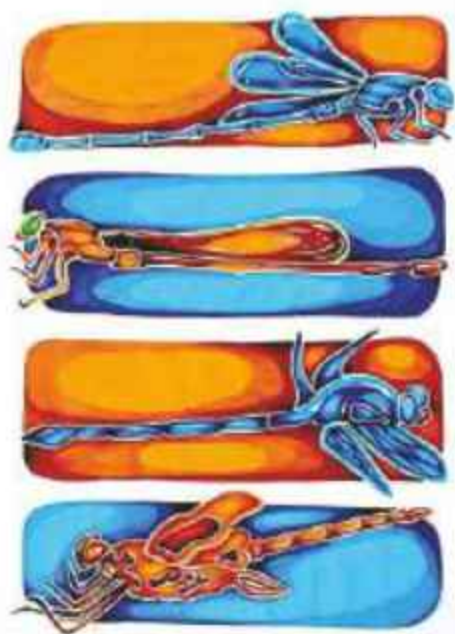
**A:** I have been to many jungles around the world, from Kabini to Kenya, but I love the bold and beautiful tigers of Tadoba. They draw me again and again to this jungle. I would like to compliment the park management for the arrangements it has made for water for the wildlife. The solar water panels installed at the waterholes ensure that the wild animals get a constant supply of water. This is extremely important, especially in the scorching summer heat.

At one place, I saw a lady officer conducting an alcohol test on the safari drivers and guides. I was very impressed to see how the park management is strictly following the rules of responsible tourism.

Of course, there is always room for improvement. One of our star guides was extremely knowledgeable and told us many exciting stories about tigers in Tadoba. I think all the guides should do the same and keep the guests informed and engaged with their amazing jungle tales.

- Team Tadoba Diaries





## Dragons & Damselfs

**H**ands down the coolest-looking insects, dragonflies, and damselflies are also aerial acrobats and amazing hunters. Their shimmering wings, slender tapering bodies, and long legs make them look almost industrial as they sit perched on top of a blade of grass. Appreciating their form is very reminiscent of appreciating a sleek new sports car or a fighter jet. When observed simply, it is very obvious that their control of flight is spectacular, as they flutter about in utmost confidence. Every species of this insect looks so vividly different with their chromatic colours and abstract patterns. Although they may look like a miniature helicopter flying straight at you, they are surprisingly friendly and a delight to observe and draw!

- Shreya Khadilkar  
Visual Designer

## A MOMENT OF MIXED FEELINGS

**I**t was the most memorable moment in my seven-year career as a safari guide at Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve. It was a moment of mixed feelings – thrilled, excited, and upset all at once. I am sure if you were in my place, you would have felt the same.

It was a rainy day in August 2022. I was on an afternoon safari with my guests. Just before reaching Konpatil Lake in the Sirkada zone, we spotted a male tiger strolling. We used to call him Ranga, who had entered this zone from Kolar. Ours was the only vehicle there, and Ranga paid no heed to us as we followed him.

Up until then, it had been a routine tiger sighting for me. But the real drama was yet to unfold. As we reached the lake, we saw a female sambar deer and her little fawn quenching their thirst. Excitement filled our vehicle at the thought of witnessing a live kill. I initially thought the tiger was not in hunting mode. However, as soon as the mother sambar spotted him, she panicked and fled, leaving her fawn alone and confused. The poor fawn stood there, sensing the threat but unsure of what to do. In its confused state, it walked straight towards our vehicle. I felt as if it was seeking our help to save itself from the tiger. I felt sad seeing the fear of death in its eyes but also helpless, knowing we couldn't interfere with nature's law.

The fawn continued walking towards us, unaware of the tiger crouching on the road. It walked straight towards him, and as



Representative image

soon as it came close enough, the tiger pounced. We watched the drama unfold, our hearts beating fast. The fawn's last cry pierced through the silence of the forest and our hearts as the tiger carried its meal to the nearby bushes.

While watching a live kill is always an exciting experience in the wild, for me, the cry for help from the little fawn overshadowed that excitement.

- Raju Alone  
Guide, Sirkada Gate



## THE UNSUNG HEROES

In the heart of Tadoba, where the tigers roar and the leopards prowl, there's a story not many know about—the tale of the ground staff, the true heroes of the jungle. For two years, I've been sharing stories about the amazing things I've seen in Tadoba. But thanks to a friend's advice, I've realized something important was missing: I haven't been giving enough credit to the people who work hard to keep these beautiful animals safe.

Sure, spotting tigers and leopards is like winning the jungle jackpot, but let me tell you, behind the scenes, it's a whole different ball game. Down on the ground, our team faces more challenges than a contestant on a survival reality show—bad weather, bumpy terrain, busted vehicles, and those pesky tick bites that itch like crazy! Last summer, we were imitating monkeys thanks to those tiny troublemakers. And trust me, the fever that comes with it is no fun at all.

Especially during the monsoon season, it's like Mother Nature is throwing a wild party with mud pits everywhere! I remember one time, deep in the forest between Khadsangi and Tadoba, our adventure took an unexpected turn. Despite all our precautions, our vehicle got stuck in the muck, with no network signal and dying phone batteries. There we were, me, Akshay, and Pranav, trying to wrestle the vehicle free as the sun started to set and the chill of the night crept in. But leave it to Akshay to whip out a local trick with a jack, and before we knew it, we were back on track! Instead of grumbling about our misadventure, we turned it into a laugh-filled tale, praising Akshay's quick thinking and learning a valuable lesson about jungle life. It's full of surprises, both challenging and amusing.

Life in the forest isn't just about survival; it's about embracing the unexpected and finding joy amid challenges. It's not always what you see on those glossy TV shows; it's real, raw, and full of genuine adventure. And let's talk about the sacrifices these amazing folks make. Imagine this: in most parts of Tadoba, your mobile phone is just a fancy paperweight—no signal at all. But there are a few magic spots where your phone suddenly lights up with a signal, and then the entire team gets busy taking updates of their dear ones (most of the time it is no privacy zone leaving others to laugh). I have also heard messages over the wireless about the dismissal of family members and longing messages as the signal fades away deep in the forest. Even during COVID, when the world seemed to stand still, these forest heroes kept on prowling.

It takes a special kind of dedication to swap family hugs for



the rustle of leaves and the chirp of birds. But despite all the challenges and sacrifices, these people have hearts of gold. Let me tell you about a beat guard of Thanegaon in Moharli. When he found out, he became "uncle" (not to a baby, but to a tiger!), and we asked for sweets to celebrate! It was like our own little party, jungle-style!

These amazing people don't just see the animals as wild creatures; they treat them like family. They care about their well-being more than anything else, even their own families. It's pretty remarkable when you think about it, isn't it? So, next time you visit Tadoba and see a tiger or a leopard, spare a thought for the real heroes—the ground staff—who work tirelessly behind the scenes to keep the jungle safe for everyone.

- Prajakta Hushangabadkar  
Wildlife Biologist



## GIFTS OF TADOBA

I was born in Navegaon Ramdegi village of Tadoba, thus I have been intimately connected with the Tadoba forest since childhood. Growing up with my father, who worked as a guide in the core zone of Tadoba, I enjoyed my first jungle safari in a private vehicle at the age of 14. From that moment, my love for Tadoba only deepened. Determined to maintain this lifelong association with Tadoba, I pursued wildlife photography after completing my studies, focusing my lens on the enchanting landscapes of the forest.

One memorable day, during a safari with guests from Navegaon Ramdegi Gate, after exploring a couple of water bodies, we ventured towards another. As we arrived, an eerie silence enveloped us, leading us to doubt the likelihood of encountering a tiger in that area. However, our guide suggested we wait for fifteen minutes at that spot. Barely ten minutes into our halt, the piercing call of a Sambar deer echoed through the air. While my guests were apprehensive



about the unfamiliar sound, I reassured them, explaining that such calls indicate the presence of a tiger nearby—a phenomenon known as an alarm call. Each animal has its distinctive alarm call. Gradually, the intensity of the calls increased, and soon, one of the cubs of a tigress T-16, popularly known as Bhanuskhindi emerged, observing the Sambar deer from a distance before settling on the bridge. Moments later, another cub joined, playfully interacting with its sibling, presenting a perfect opportunity for me to capture the moment through my lens.

Though my guests experienced this exhilarating encounter for the first time, I have been privileged to witness many such moments. Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve offers a wealth of experiences, from medicinal plants and grasslands to diverse wildlife and avian species. One just needs to do the simple thing: during jungle safaris, embrace the jungle's diversity beyond the majestic tiger, and glean valuable insights from it.

Tadoba forest has bestowed upon us immeasurable gifts, and words fall short in expressing our gratitude. Yet, we extend heartfelt thanks to the Tadoba forest and its management for their invaluable contributions.

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- Nikhil Chaukhe  
Tour Operator



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## ADRENALINE RUSH

**T**oday, I set out for my morning walk alone, as our then Chief Naturalist, Anirudh Chaoji Sir, was feeling under the weather after receiving his Covid vaccine the previous day. Our accommodations were nestled at the Telia Kuti near the MTDC resort in Moharli village. The lockdown had silenced the usual hustle and bustle of tourist activity.

On my way back around 6:30 am, I walked along the concrete road, separating Moharli Lake from Junona buffer forest. When I was only 500 meters from home, the piercing alarm calls of spotted deer shattered the tranquil air. Suddenly, a langur perched atop a nearby Teak tree, just 20 feet away, joined in the chorus. It signaled a potential encounter with a tiger or leopard!

My heart raced with anticipation as I realized the gravity of the situation. With no one else in sight on the road and the langur's persistent warnings echoing through the silence, it was evident that the predator sought to quench its thirst at the lake. Determined not to obstruct its path, I gathered my courage and hastened my pace of walking, vigilant for any signs of its presence.

Near the Junona gate, my attention was drawn to a young man relieving himself by the lake, while his companion waited on a bike by the roadside. Urgently, I warned him of the imminent danger, pointing out the alarming calls echoing through the vicinity. Heeding my words, he hurried his friend along, understanding the urgency of the situation.

With their presence boosting my courage, I returned to the spot, seeking refuge beneath a big Mango tree. From there, I watched intently as the langur continued its vigil from the Teak



tree, straining my eyes for any movement. Moments stretched into minutes, until finally, the langur fell silent, signaling the predator's retreat into the shadows.

Though I missed the chance for a close encounter with the elusive predator, the adrenaline-fueled rush of those 20-25 minutes will forever remain etched in my memory.

- Anant Sonawane  
Communications Officer, TATR

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# HIGHLIGHTS

A three-day grand event Tadoba Festival was organized in multiple locations in the tiger capital of the world Chandrapur. The festival highlighted the success of the TATR and took it to a global platform with the participation of foreign dignitaries. The event was watched live in more than 145 countries. Here are the important highlights of the Tadoba Festival 2024.



Local artists performing traditional dance at the inaugural ceremony



The Miss World contestant carried the 'Save Tigers' message and released Enchanting Tadoba- the coffee table book, Tadoba Diaries Collector's Edition-II, CSR Booklet, Biodiversity Map of TATR, Grasses of Tadoba and Trees of Melghat.



A sand sculpture made by Padmashree Sudarshan Patnaik. He also presented a live Sand Art Show.



A live musical concert by popular singer Shreya Ghoshal was the show-stopper of the inaugural day.



Nature quiz was an opportunity for the safari guides to test their knowledge of nature and wildlife.



The Forest Department registered a World record by creating the largest word भारतमाता with potted saplings.



The Wildlife Photography Workshop by eminent wildlife photographer Sudhir Shivaram was a great learning experience for budding photographers.



The runners spontaneously participated in the Run for Conservation initiative.



Subject experts, stakeholders, researchers, and scientists participated in the panel discussions on various conservation issues.



Kavi Sammelan by eminent poet Kumar Vishwas and a stunning performance by the Grammy Award winner musician Ricky Kej was a treat to poetry and music lovers.



School students learned and also spread the message of conservation through wildlife quiz and painting competitions.



The cyclists maneuvering through the scenic TATR landscape during the Cyclothon.



Professionals from various industries and wildlife conservationists discussed the scope and challenges of CSR in conservation during the CSR Conclave.



The first Van Bhushan Puraskar was awarded to Chaitram Pawar for his contribution to forest and wildlife conservation.



Ganga ballet highlighting rivers in India presented by the legendary actress Padmashree Hema Malini and group.



Wildlife Goodwill Brand Ambassador Raveena Tandon



Actor Shivaji Satam





## ORIENTAL TURTLE DOVE

**T**he Oriental Turtle Dove, also known as the Rufous Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia orientalis*), is among the six species of doves inhabiting the Tadoba landscape. Although not native to the region, it graces Tadoba's skies from February to June. Distinguished by its larger size compared to other dove species in TATR, its silver neck, faint pink chest, and orange-brown wings add a splash of colour to the scenery.

With a broad native distribution spanning from Central to East Asia, populations of the Oriental Turtle Dove exhibit seasonal migrations. Individuals from higher latitudes migrate south during winter, while those nearer to the tropics tend to remain sedentary. Predominantly granivorous, they scour the ground for seeds of hemp, sunflower, wheat, millet, occasionally supplementing their diet with gastropods.

Breeding season of the Oriental Turtle Dove in Southern India coincides with winter. During courtship displays, males perform noisy wing flapping maneuvers, soaring gracefully before descending with outstretched tails. Nest construction is a joint effort, with both males and females diligently gathering materials. Typically taking two days to complete, the nest, situated at mid-canopy height, is more robust than those of other dove species.

Females lay two white eggs, which hatch after 15 to 20 days of incubation. Both parents share the responsibility of hatching and feeding the chicks, ensuring their well-being until they are ready to fly. In the mosaic of Tadoba's wildlife, the Oriental Turtle Dove adds another layer of beauty and intrigue, enriching this vibrant ecosystem.

- Rundan Katkar  
Range Forest Officer, Kolsa, TATR



[[ Ramish Sualish, Wikipedia

## GREEN GIANT JAMUN

**O**ne of my favorite fruit-bearing trees in the Tadoba forest is the Jamun tree (*Syzygium cumini*). These trees are abundant here and are cherished by the jackals, langurs, and bears. With their lush green foliage, Jamun trees stand out as one of the most striking features of our forest. Even amidst the deciduous landscape, you can spot these beautiful green giants in the damp patches along forest streams. During the monsoon season, they exhibit remarkable resilience, braving the onslaught of torrential waters with extensive root systems firmly anchoring them.

Interestingly, in areas with ample water supply, Jamun trees often form dense canopies alongside Arjun and other riparian species, creating ideal habitats for wildlife, including tigers. In some regions, Jamun trees are substituted by their cousins, the Par-Jamun trees (*Syzygium salicifolium*). These variants can be distinguished by their slender leaves and lighter-coloured bark, while their fruits are smaller and less succulent.

The glossy purple fruits of the Jamun tree are a familiar sight to us all. With a sweet-sour taste, they impart a distinct astringency to the palate, leaving behind stained blue mouths, especially among the little ones.

Jamun trees boast a range of medicinal properties. A tonic derived from fruits is renowned for fortifying dental health, while vinegar is employed in treating chronic diarrhea. The leaves and seeds are useful in managing diabetes.

Though it also makes a good shade tree, many people avoid planting it, as a fruiting Jamun tree attracts mischievous kids and their flying stones.

- Anirudh Chaoji  
Senior Naturalist



## NATURAL HISTORY MOMENTS

**M**y 13-year long journey into the heart of Tadoba's wilderness has been nothing short of extraordinary, offering me profound insights into the intricate world of animal behaviour. During my recent visit to this captivating landscape, I witnessed a series of events that left me awestruck.

Set against the backdrop of Kolsa, one of Tadoba's most enchanting realms, our adventure unfolded after a string of safaris from Kolara Gate. March had ushered in, and our first morning safari was hushed by the gentle patter of rain. It was during the afternoon expedition that we found ourselves enjoying the company of tigress T-14, popularly known as Kuwani, and her playful cubs at a serene water body.



The following day, our quest led us back to the same territory, where we encountered Kuwani stealthily hidden amidst the thickets. Reluctantly, we departed as park regulations dictated, retreating to our lodge to rejuvenate for the upcoming afternoon safari.

Upon our return, we traced fresh pugmarks that led us deeper into the wilderness. As we waited patiently, the forest came alive with the alarm calls of Sambar deer and the distant calls of Gaur. Suddenly, a thunderous roar pierced the air, signalling the imminent clash of titans. In an electrifying display of power and prowess, two magnificent tigresses emerged from the shadows – T-4, famously known as Hirdinala, and the formidable T-14 Kuwani. With bated breath, we watched as they locked eyes and engaged in a fierce confrontation, their primal instincts taking center stage.

As the dust settled, Hirdinala female walked away and Kuwani's maternal instincts took over, leading her to reunite with her precious cubs. What ensued was a heart-warming

scene of familial affection, as the cubs frolicked in the waters under their mother's watchful gaze before vanishing into the depths of the jungle.



Yet, our day of marvels was far from over. In a dramatic twist, we stumbled upon the aftermath of a clash between Dholes and a male spotted deer. The wild dogs caught the deer and started eating it alive. Drawn in by the deer's harrowing cries, Kuwani, ever swiftly intervened, driving away the marauding predators before claiming the spoils for her own.



To witness not one, but two extraordinary chapters of natural history unfold before our eyes was a privilege beyond comparison. In the wilds of Tadoba, every moment introduces you to the raw beauty and untamed spirit of nature, leaving indelible imprints on the soul of every wildlife enthusiast.

- Jignesh Patel

Author, Tigers of Tadoba



## HARMONY IN THE ORCHARD

In the heart of a sprawling orchard, where mango trees stretched their branches towards the sky and the scent of ripe fruit lingered in the air, there existed a village called Pipartola. Surrounded by groves of lush trees and buzzing insects, the villagers of Pipartola lived in harmony with the creatures of the orchard, fostering a unique bond with even the tiniest inhabitants—the insects.

Among the villagers was a young girl named Maya, whose fascination with insects knew no bounds. From the industrious ants that marched in orderly lines to the delicate butterflies that flitted from blossom to blossom, Maya found beauty and wonder in every creature that called the orchard home.

One day, while exploring the outskirts of the village, Maya stumbled upon a colony of honeybees nestled within the branches of a mango tree. Entranced by their busy activities, she watched as they flitted to and fro, collecting nectar from the blossoms that bloomed nearby.

To Maya's surprise, the bees took notice of her presence and welcomed her with gentle buzzing. Sensing their invitation, Maya reached out a tentative hand, offering a silent greeting to her newfound friends. In response, the bees hummed in unison, their vibrations resonating with the rhythm of the orchard.

From that day forth, Maya visited the honeybee colony regularly, learning from the bees and sharing stories of her adventures in the orchard. Together, they formed a bond built on mutual respect and understanding, bridging the gap between humans and insects with each passing day.

As seasons changed and the orchard bloomed anew, Maya's bond with the insects of Pipartola only grew stronger. She befriended ladybugs that dotted the leaves of mango trees, danced with dragonflies that soared above the shimmering surface of the nearby pond, and even shared secrets with the elusive fireflies that painted the night sky with their soft glow.

In return, the insects of Pipartola became Maya's allies,



aiding the villagers in times of need and lending their wisdom to those who sought guidance. When crops faced the threat of pests, the ladybugs emerged to protect the orchard, while the bees pollinated the flowers, ensuring a bountiful harvest for all.

And so, the villagers of Pipartola lived in harmony with the insects of the orchard, their lives intertwined like the delicate strands of a spider's web. Through their bond, they discovered that even the smallest creatures held the power to inspire, teach, and unite them in a world where harmony reigns supreme.

(Koitur = People from Gond tribe/People who live on hills)

- **Mandar Pingle**  
Deputy Director, Satpuda Foundation

### 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.



## WATER GIRLS



**E**very small project that economically connects conservation or eco-tourism with local communities brings about significant change in their lives. Chanda and Vishakha are the best examples of this transformation in the context of TATR.

Both women work at the Zewa Water Project located at the Moharli gate. Launched in November 2021, this project aims to provide clean and safe drinking water to tourists, served in glass bottles. A small unit in Moharli filters the water that comes from the Tadoba forest, sanitizes glass bottles with UV rays, and fills them. Mujibur Rehman manages the project, striving to employ local youth at the unit and the safari gate to sell water bottles. Chanda Pendam and Vishakha Shende were the first to seize this opportunity—Chanda, the daughter-in-law, and Vishakha, the daughter, of

Moharli village—both in dire need of employment.

Chanda, married to Vasant Pendam, a labourer, tragically lost him in a construction accident, leaving her to provide for their two daughters. Desperate for work, she approached Rehman and joined the project, earning a monthly salary of Rs. 6,000/-. Transitioning from homemaker to breadwinner, she now supports her daughters— one in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, the other in 6<sup>th</sup> grade— at a hostel in Chichpalli. Her sole aspiration is to provide her daughters with the highest education possible, empowering them to stand on their own.

Vishakha resides in Moharli with her parents and younger sister, all farm labourers earning Rs.150 to 200 daily, inconsistently. Joining the Zewa Water Project brought steady monthly income, improving their financial stability. Vishakha is grateful to contribute to her family's upkeep, working in the unit while Chanda oversees sales at the gate.

Both Chanda and Vishakha cherish their jobs. Beyond financial independence, they credit their roles for enhancing their skills in customer interaction and boosting their confidence. Standing proudly on their own feet, they serve as inspirations to other women in their communities.

- Anant Sonawane  
Communications Officer, TATR



Wildlife Safaris  
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**THE NIGHT KING!** Captured on a camera trap, the elusive black leopard, popularly known as Blackie, gracefully strolls through the shadows of night.

## THE ACHIEVERS (February-2024)

Please join us in celebrating the accomplishments of the top-performing forest guards at TATR. These frontline warriors of the forest department have conducted the most extensive foot patrols in their respective divisions.

We are happy to announce the top two achievers in February 2024



Forest Guard - S. B. Dhotare  
Beat - Zinkanat-II  
Round - Rantalodhi  
Range - Karwa  
Division - Core TATR  
Duration - 27 Days  
Target - 125 km/Month  
Actual Patrolling - 360.92 Km



Forest Guard - Chankapure  
Beat - Fulzari  
Round - Janala  
Range - Mul  
Division - Buffer TATR  
Duration - 23 Days  
Target - 125 Km / Month  
Actual Patrolling - 292.60 Km

## EMPOWERING WOMEN FOR WILDLIFE CONSERVATION!

**W**e are thrilled to announce the launch of our Women Sensitisation Program in collaboration with Mahila Arthik Vikas Mandal (MAVIM) at Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR). This ground-breaking initiative aims to empower the local women of Tadoba with knowledge and skills vital for conservation and coexistence. Here's what we have been up to:

- 1. Importance of Tadoba for Local Communities:** Delving into the heart of why Tadoba matters to us all.
- 2. Precautionary Measures for Reducing Man-Animal Conflict:** Equipping our participants with the knowledge to live harmoniously alongside our wild neighbours.
- 3. Livelihood Opportunities through MAVIM:** Exploring avenues for sustainable livelihoods, empowering women to thrive while protecting our precious wildlife.



And the best part? We are reaching 445 women of 178 Bachat Gats in 11 villages in the Tadoba Range, and this is only the first phase! Together, we are sowing the seeds of change and nurturing a future where humans and wildlife thrive in harmony. Stay tuned as we continue this journey of empowerment and conservation!

**-Prafulla Sawarkar**  
Education Officer, TATR



## THE JUNGLE SCHOOL OF CIVILIZATION

Every day on our city roads, we witness vehicles running red lights, thugs harassing girls, illicit drug sales, and unauthorized tree felling. Yet, we often remain silent, prioritizing our own comfort, oblivious to the potential consequences awaiting us. If only we had spoken out against such wrongdoings, perhaps we could have prevented future harm. This realization struck me during my recent trip to Tadoba.

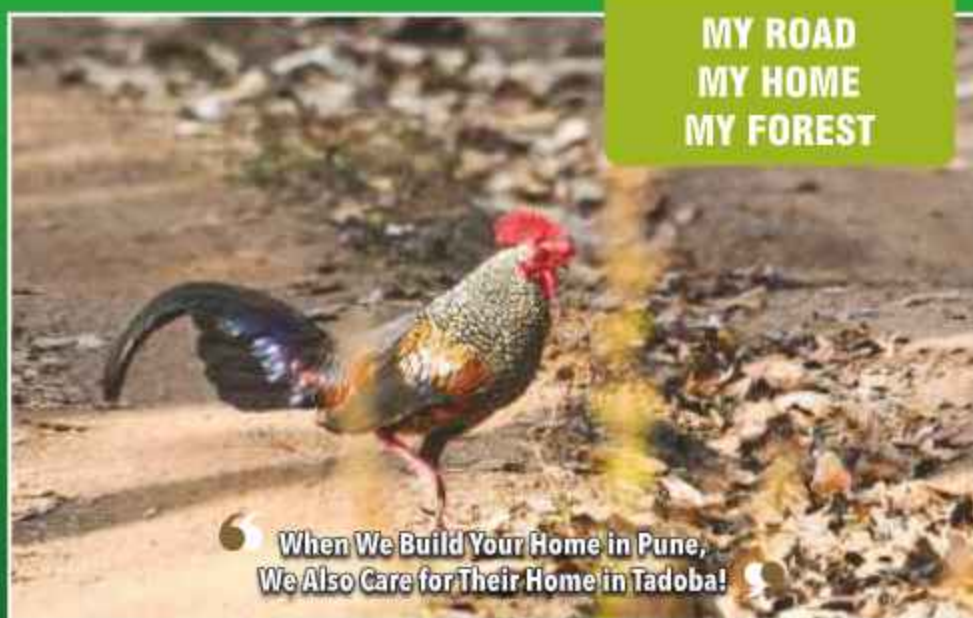
While waiting by a water bank on a scorching afternoon, the onset of summer in central India, I observed a stark absence of wildlife, except for the water body. It was evident that a tiger lurked nearby, a fact known to the deer and monkeys, keeping them at a safe distance from the water's edge. Our decision to wait was affirmed when we heard the alarm call of a Sambar deer from behind the embankment wall. Such warnings are significant indicators of a predatory presence, typically reserved for sightings of tigers or leopards. Despite the deer's initial alerts, silence ensued, suggesting the tiger remained concealed, possibly asleep. Undeterred, we waited patiently, placing our faith in the jungle's code.

After nearly an hour of patient vigilance, while other vehicles dispersed in search of the elusive tiger, we persisted, honouring the jungle's wisdom. Suddenly, the tiger's head emerged atop the reservoir wall, unnoticed by the departed animals. For over an

hour, he relaxed in the water. Then he languidly drank from the water, a customary prelude before rising and yawning several times, signalling its readiness to depart. As it swam towards us, the surrounding animals erupted in warning calls, marking the onset of imminent danger—a vivid display of jungle civilization unfolding before our eyes.

This experience serves as a reminder of the importance of heeding nature's warnings and speaking out against injustice. Just as the Sambar deer alerted us to the tiger's presence, so too must we raise our voices against wrongdoing in our communities. Only then can we hope to create a safer and more just society for ourselves and future generations.

- Sanjay Deshpande  
Wildlife Enthusiast,  
Sanjeevani Developers, Pune



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