



Issue 35/Oct.2024

Tadoba

DIARIES

The Official Newsletter of Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve



A STEP TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE WORLD

Dear Reader

As we step into another season of post-monsoon fieldwork and ecotourism, we celebrate Wildlife Week—a time to reflect on our interconnectedness with nature and the urgent need for conservation. Simultaneously, Navratri, with its celebration of the divine feminine, reminds us of our role as stewards of Mother Earth.

At Tadoba, where the buffer areas remain open even during the monsoon, we eagerly anticipate the reopening of the tiger reserve. The lush green forests, meandering streams, and vibrant wildlife sightings beckon nature enthusiasts. However, alongside this excitement lies a challenge: the impact of human activities on our fragile ecosystems.

Unsustainable practices associated with tourism—especially the indiscriminate use of plastics—threaten the delicate balance of our national parks and sanctuaries. During recent cleanliness drives at Tadoba, we collected a staggering 1,402.5 kg of plastic waste from just four villages. These single-use plastics, designed for convenience, wreak havoc on our environment.

Consider the following facts that explain the seriousness of the problem:

- India generated approximately 3.47 million tonnes of plastic waste in 2019-20.
- Despite bans on certain items, illegal use of single-use plastics persists.
- These plastics take centuries to break down, harming wildlife through ingestion and entanglement.
- Marine mammals, sea turtles, and terrestrial species suffer the consequences.

Enter Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment), a beacon of hope. Rooted in our sustainable cultural traditions, this mission encourages seven key themes:

- **Reduce Waste:** Reduce our ecological footprint by curbing unnecessary waste.
- **Reduce E-Waste:** Responsible disposal of electronic devices matters.
- **Adopt a Healthy Lifestyle:** Our well-being is intertwined with that of the planet.
- **Embrace Sustainable Food Systems:** Choose wisely; our food choices impact ecosystems.
- **Say No to Single-Use Plastics:** Every refusal matters.
- **Save Water:** A precious resource we must conserve.
- **Save Energy:** Small steps lead to significant change.

By adopting these principles, we can collectively shift the tide. Let's make Mission LiFE a part of our daily lives, not just within our borders but as global citizens. As nature lovers, it's our duty to protect the planet—one mindful choice at a time.

Together, we can create a more sustainable world.

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 Renuka 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. Please share your feedback on tadobadiaries2021@gmail.com or call us on 07172-277116, 9579160778 / 8010539472 | For advertising call : 8169730713

Editor: Dr. Jitendra Ramgaokar, CCF & Field Director, TATR | Executive Editor: Anant Sonawane, Communications Officer, TATR.

REWILDING OF VULTURES IN TATR (PART- II)

Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, or NSAIDs, like diclofenac, are frequently used in veterinary medicine to treat animals. Vultures feasting on the carcasses of cattle treated with diclofenac are exposed to the medication when the animals die. Due to their extraordinary sensitivity to diclofenac, vultures can die from even tiny dosages.

Diclofenac poisoning caused catastrophic population reductions in numerous vulture species in South Asia, especially in India, Nepal, and Pakistan, during the 1990s and early 2000s. In some locations, their populations collapsed by over 95%.

In vultures, diclofenac triggers renal failure, known as visceral gout. Renal failure is a painful and fatal illness experienced by vultures that eat carcasses tainted with diclofenac.

Significant Steps taken by BNHS: The BNHS and Royal Society for Protection of Birds (RSPB) have been managing four Vulture Conservation Breeding Centers (VCBC) across the country in partnership with the Governments of Haryana in Pinjore (2001), West Bengal in Rajabhatkhawa (2005), Assam in Rani, Guwahati (2007), and Madhya Pradesh in Bhopal (2011).

The BNHS is establishing Vulture Safe Zones (VSZs) in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Assam and Vulture Release Zones (VRZs) in Haryana and West Bengal. It is making significant progress on various fronts, including the conservation breeding of endangered species. We have successfully raised over 800 vultures at our four captive breeding centers and created more VSZs in India.

The BNHS collaborates with the Maharashtra Forest Department and the M.P. government to create a VSZ. In M.P., we work in the Pench Tiger Reserve; in Maharashtra, we work in the Vidarbha region, including the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve.

What is a pre-release aviary?

An aviary is a large enclosure or structure where birds are kept, usually for observation or breeding purposes. Compared to cages, aviaries provide a more natural habitat for birds. Aviaries are constructed in a natural environment to make birds relaxed and comfortable. In the TATR, we built an

aviary to keep 10 White-rumped Vultures shifted from our captivity breeding center, Pinjore, Haryana. It measured 100 x 40 x 20 feet, ideal for 30 to 35 adult vultures.

The aviary had a 6-inch-thick sand coating that was easy to clean and improved water drainage. One side of the aviary was covered with a green net to keep the birds safe. There were three sitting perches in the aviary, each coated in coconut rope to provide a rough surface and reduce the risk of pressure sores, which could lead to bumble foot disease. Two water troughs were available for drinking and washing and were monitored by a closed-circuit television camera (CCTV).

To diagnose sick vultures and prevent other vultures from infection, we also built a hospital aviary.

A day in pre-release aviary: We monitored the aviary from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., observing every action of the vultures throughout the day. Before releasing the vultures, we conducted a survey within a 100-kilometer radius to assess critical factors such as food availability and the presence of diclofenac in the market.

We fed the vultures with the goats twice a week. To minimize the impact of any medication, we separated the goats for seven days before feeding. Following the goat's placement, all the vultures descended to the ground and began to eat. They began by attacking the anus, or head, portion of the meal and engaged in combat to obtain their favourite section. Then, they spread their wings and showcased their strength to each other. In 25–30 minutes, they finished half of the goat.

After eating, they bathed, groomed themselves, or began sunbathing to dry their wings. They spent a lot of time on the perch and grooming feathers. Following that, they took a nap. They wanted to perch after being disturbed by flying insects. They actively engaged in everyday activities, including feeding and bathing together. This is how the vultures spent their day in the pre-release aviary.

- Bhanu Pratap Singh Rajawat

Conservation Biologist, Bombay Natural History Society



WELCOMING THE NEW SEASON

With the rains easing in September, the softened soil made removing weeds and unpalatable species easier. These weeds are removed by hand, as it is crucial to uproot them rather than simply cutting them with machine cutters. Though using machines may seem easier, it is less effective as the plants tend to grow back quickly. Continuous efforts in this habitat management practice are essential until their presence is minimized.



Weed Removal

The District Forest Sports Meet was held in Chandrapur on the 5th and 6th of September, with six divisions participating. It was a proud moment for the core division as they emerged as the overall champions. Sports play a key role in motivating staff by enhancing physical and mental well-being, fostering teamwork, building confidence, and promoting healthy competition. These benefits directly contribute to conservation work, where teamwork, leadership, and resilience are essential for tackling challenges and maintaining high morale.



The District Forest Sports Meet

It was heartwarming to see guides from Moharli volunteering for Shramadaan (voluntary work) every Sunday morning to clean their village. If you happen to be around Moharli on a Sunday morning, consider lending a hand to help keep Tadoba clean.



Clean Moharli Drive

In a separate Shramadaan drive guides from Pangdi and Zari contributed in the repairing of the tourism roads on their safari routes. It reflected their commitment to eco-tourism and the guests who visit Tadoba to witness its rich biodiversity.



The entrance gate of a safari is essential for creating a positive first impression and ensuring a smooth experience for visitors. A well-managed gate provides important safety information, and park rules, and builds excitement for the adventure while reinforcing the significance of conservation. Along these lines, the safari entrance gates in the core area are being upgraded. The Moharli gate now features an entrance gate, waiting hall, food court, parking facilities, souvenir shops, and an interpretation center, all designed around a local landscape theme. Kolara gate is getting a new entrance and parking area, while Pangadi, Zari, and Khutwanda gates are being equipped with new entrance gates.

All geared up to welcome you!

- Anand Reddy
Deputy Director (Core), TATR

Wonder Weaver



The monsoon season has refreshed us by providing a welcome shift from the intense Central Indian summer heat. The landscape has transformed from dry and yellow to a rich, steel-blue hue. As the rains recede and winter approaches, this muted blue-grey backdrop has become constant. Against this cool canvas, the vivid yellow of the Baya Weaver bird stands out beautifully. Its intricate nest on the flowering Ain tree is a remarkable sight. The bulbous nest hanging from a branch is proof of the marvellous engineering of these little birds. The ochre strands weave in and out producing a rustic texture like no other, worthy of inspiring the world of interior design. This small bird as it perches on its nest is no different than a sculptor looking out from atop his ever-evolving masterpiece!

- Shreya Khadilkar
Visual Designer

LEOPARD VS WILD DOGS

On the morning of June 8, 2024, we set off for a safari in the Pangadi Buffer. By then, I had already seen over 50 tigers across both the buffer and core areas, so this time, our focus was on spotting the elusive black leopard, nicknamed 'Blacky'. According to the guides, there were two black leopards in the area, and we were determined to find one.

We began our journey towards Aswal Chuha 1, a water body where Blacky was often seen. After waiting for a while with no luck, we decided to explore deeper into the jungle. Along the way, we saw several well-known tigers of the Pangadi Buffer, but no sign of Blacky yet.

As we crossed to the other side of the forest, we noticed a group of gypsies stopped by a tree. Curious, we pulled up beside them and quickly realized why. A pack of wild dogs was gathered below the tree, all staring upward. When we looked up, we spotted a leopard perched at the highest point, roaring at the dogs below.

The tension in the air was palpable. For 15-20 minutes, the leopard held its ground while the wild dogs circled the base of the tree, eyes locked on their prey. The monkeys nearby gave



alarm calls, adding to the drama. I managed to capture the entire scene on video.

Suddenly, the leopard began its descent. It reached a Y-shaped branch and roared again at the dogs below. Then, out of nowhere, it leaped! I can still see it in slow motion—its legs fully stretched, soaring through the air. The wild dogs rushed toward it as soon as it landed, but the leopard sprinted off into the forest, escaping in the nick of time.

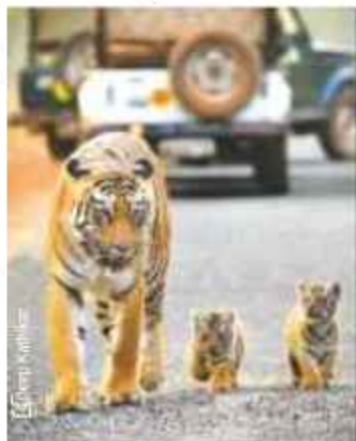
- Prajwal Bhujbalrao
HR Professional, Chandrapur

FIRST DAY, FIRST SHOW

October 1, 2023. It was the first safari on the first day of the new tourism season. My safari vehicle was filled with six female tourists, all extremely enthusiastic, as it was their first visit to Tadoba. They were eager to spot a tiger in the wild. While I assured them I would put forth my best efforts and skills to track one, I also reminded them that tiger sightings are a matter of luck and can't be guaranteed.

As we reached Jamun Bodi, I learned from other guides that tigress T-114, popularly known as Roma, had been sighted on the main road. However, by the time we arrived, she had already moved towards Kumbhi Tank. When we reached Kumbhi Tank, we saw the tigress sitting on the dam wall. And she wasn't alone—her two eight-month-old cubs were with her! My guests were overjoyed, having hit the jackpot: three tigers in one spot on their very first safari!

Unfortunately, we didn't have much time to stay, as the safari was nearing its end. All the vehicles gathered there began to withdraw and start the return journey. Ours was the last vehicle to leave. As my driver, Vikas reversed the Gypsy, we suddenly realized that one of our tires had punctured! We couldn't move. Though we had a spare tire, it was too dangerous to step out and change it with tigers nearby. My



guests grew anxious when they learned about the puncture.

Roma soon added to their concerns as she climbed down from the wall and started walking towards the road, her cubs following closely behind. The women were now visibly scared. As I tried to console them, Roma came onto the road and sat around 250 meters from us, her cubs by her side. This made the ladies panic even more, fearing the tigers might attack. I reassured them that nothing would happen and asked them to remain calm. Without a mobile phone to call for help, I decided to wait patiently.

For the next half an hour, I witnessed a touching display of motherhood. Roma lovingly licked her cubs while they rubbed their heads against her in affection. But my guests, still nervous, couldn't appreciate the beauty of the moment.

Finally, a forest department vehicle arrived. Forest Guard Latpate contacted the gate using his wireless, and another vehicle was dispatched to assist us. As soon as it arrived, we quickly transferred into the new vehicle and returned to the gate. The ladies breathed a collective sigh of relief.

It was a safari I would not forget ever, filled with both excitement and tension, a reminder of the unpredictable beauty of the wild.

- Sangita Zade
Guide, Khutwanda Gate, TATR

THE SPECTRUM OF TIGERS

Some visitors at Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve may have been lucky enough to spot 'Blacky', the black leopard along Hilltop road, and accompanying guides would have informed them that black panthers are not a separate species of big cats but a colour morph of the common leopard (*Panthera pardus*). What does that mean? Well, it basically means that some genetic variations in the DNA structure of certain individual leopards change their physical appearance. In this case, the pelage of the leopard appears dusty and black instead of the usual golden. On closer inspection, you would see darker black rosettes along the pelage of the black panther, which is characteristic of the common leopard. Have you heard of tigers having similar colour morphs or variants?

As we explored in the last article, depending on their geographical location and habitat, tiger subspecies range in their physical appearance and occur in a colour gradient from lighter yellow shades to dark orange. However, there are some unusually occurring colour variants of tigers that are rarely seen in the wild. The most

commonly known tiger colour morph is the white tiger. For the longest time, I thought the white tiger was the Siberian tiger found in the Eastern Russian tundra. On reading further, I came to realize that the white tiger or the 'bleached tiger' is a leucistic morph of the tiger. White tigers have the typical black stripes with a white or near-white coat and blue eyes. White tigers lack the pigment 'pheomelanin' in orange Bengal tigers. For a white tiger to be born, both parents must carry the recessive gene for white colour, which happens naturally only about once in 10,000 births. If you go to Mukundpur Zoo in Madhya Pradesh, you could take the white tiger safari as selective breeding has allowed the zoo managers to create more white tigers. What could be the implications of such selective breeding for the overall longevity and health of such tigers? **Hint:** Read up on health issues associated with different dog breeds.

In recent news, you may have also come across the golden tiger seen in Kaziranga Tiger Reserve, Assam. Golden tiger or the 'strawberry tiger' is a colour morph of the Bengal tiger that features a golden pelage with light brown stripes and very bright white fur under the belly. Tiger enthusiasts across the country heralded the spotting of the golden tiger in Kaziranga as a win for tiger conservation. The reality is not as

exciting though. The golden colour of these tigers is caused by the presence of a recessive gene which becomes dominant through inbreeding. The morph is very rare in the wild and to find it in Kaziranga is an indication of poor genetic variability and fragmented connectivity between Kaziranga and neighbouring forests.

Slightly more cryptic is the pseudo-melanistic tiger which has been spotted in Simlipal Tiger Reserve, Odisha. This is a Bengal tiger which has very thick black stripes which almost appear as patches on the pelage of the tiger. The pseudo-melanistic tiger is a result of a genetic mutation that leads to an increased production of melanin in certain individuals leading to the blotched



thick black stripes along the body of the tiger. Scientists are currently exploring the genetic circumstances that lead to this particular colour morph of the Bengal tiger to facilitate a better understanding of why these darker tigers are being found in the wild and why they are concentrated in the Eastern Ghats of Odisha.

Interesting factoid: Different permutation and combinations of genes and mutations allow some other colour morphs of the tiger like the white strip-less tiger or the white pseudo-melanistic tiger.

- Yashaswi Rao
Wildlife Biologist, TATR

VANISHING ARTS

A CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVE

Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve in central India is renowned not only for its wildlife richness but also for its tribal richness. The tribes around Tadoba have gained attention for their warm, vibrant traditional arts, which include intricate paintings, gripping dances, and heartfelt songs. This colourful cultural tapestry often first comes to the mind when thinking of dwellers of the forests, in a more recent echo of online searches related to such keywords. However, as modern influence impinges on their lives, the future of such valued arts is increasingly unsure; they reflect the larger impact of global development on both natural heritage and the people who live in these pristine forests.

Tribal art in Tadoba is more than a cultural expression because Gond paintings, traditional dances, and music characterize the spiritual and social fabric of the community. Gond paintings are in colourful intricacy telling stories related to nature and mythological facts. Similarly, traditional dances and songs play important parts in various festivals and rituals, thereby connecting the community with their ancestral roots and nature around them. However, these valuable customs are gradually overpowered by the glamour of modern entertainment. Television, cell phones, and Bollywood music nowadays are accomplished visitors in people's lives, and traditional practices are not often seen to be done. The move toward this modern world is motivated by a variety of such pressures, which range from financial pressures to exposure to urban lifestyles. The increasing attraction of the new generation to modern entertainment poses a subtle risk to the transmission of traditional arts to future generations.

Historically, the forests surrounding Tadoba have been vitally important to the lifestyle of tribal communities, offering resources for crafts and medicine and inspiration for artistic expression. However, as the external influences and reduction in wildlife and habitat have begun to affect these communities, there has been a noticeable shift. A world of change and changing lifestyles dictates a decline in the area of traditional arts in question; it reflects the broader challenge that these communities face in reconciling their cultural heritage with a changing world.

The decline in tribal arts also reflects broader socio-economic transformations. A changing economy based more on market principles means a new agenda, with a danger of some previous forms of life, subsistent forms, for that matter, being neglected and downplayed and therefore a reduced focus on such traditional practices. Besides all this, new opportunities for education and improvements in social mobility have come to influence cultural involvement, a process that is often contrary to the long-standing traditions



of tradition.

Addressing this issue requires a multifaceted approach. Community-based programs which provide workshops, exhibitions, or educational activities can play a vital role in preserving and revitalizing traditional arts. Cultural preservation would also find itself involved with the larger agenda of conservation. These arts will have to be recognized and sponsored in both cultural and economic contexts if they are to survive.

In the fading of tribal arts at Tadoba is an important reminder of fine balance necessary for tradition and modernity; for, as the region enters this watershed, there arises an increasing concern for initiating environments in which traditional arts can be preserved while at the same time giving the tribal residents an economic boost. If these art forms are valued and included in the contemporary frameworks, then, indeed, there is hope for a future that will combine the rich cultural heritage of Tadoba with all the advanced items of modern life. This exploration of the vanishing arts of tribal, therefore, posits an importance in preserving such traditions not only for cultural enrichment but as a way of identity and environmental heritage. It calls for another renewed effort to safeguard the artistic legacy of Tadoba so that these vibrant expressions of tribal life remain vibrant for eternity.

- Saket Agasti
Social Scientist, TATR



Sanjeev Singh

SAVE TREES! A young tigress, daughter of T-20 (Jharni) and T-126 (Chota Matka), hugging a tree in the Alizanza buffer.

Sumit Bhodhi Waghmare



A Honey Buzzard feeding on a honeycomb.



Sumedh Polewar

A Mottled Wood Owl posing for a photograph.



A Rusty Spotted Cat clinching her thirst.

Gaurav Dhole



SPECTACLED COBRA

In India, we have a tradition of worshipping wild creatures, and the Indian Spectacled Cobra (*Naja naja*) is one of them. This highly venomous snake is found throughout most parts of India and is considered one of the "Big Four" venomous snakes commonly seen here. The cobra mainly feeds on rodents, frogs, and other snakes, and is often found in agricultural fields, cow barns, old houses, and food storage areas where rats are common.

In India, many snake bites are caused by the Big Four: Spectacled Cobra, Russell's Viper, Common Krait, and Saw-Scaled Viper. The cobra's venom is neurotoxic, meaning it affects the nervous system, making it extremely dangerous. According to government data, about 50,000 people die from snake bites in India each year, and many of these are due to cobra bites.

There are some common myths about cobras in rural India, which I'd like to clarify.

Does the cobra drink milk during Nag Panchami?

No, cobras are hunters, and milk is not suitable for them. In fact, milk is harmful to snakes.

Does the cobra take revenge on humans?

No, snakes have small brains and cannot remember or seek revenge. They are only focused on food and survival.

Does a cobra's hissing spread venom?

No, the hissing is a warning, not a venomous action.

The Spectacled Cobra can grow up to four feet long. It lays 10-15 eggs between January and February. In Tadoba, brown cobras are common, but black ones are sometimes seen too. If threatened, they raise their hood and hiss. If bitten by a cobra, rush to the nearest hospital—traditional remedies don't work.

- Chinmay Deshpande
Naturalist



KARAMB

There are two trees with similar-looking flowers that you may notice around Chandrapur. The more common one in the city is the ornamental Kadamb, also known as the Cadamba tree (*Neolamarckia cadamba*). This fast-growing evergreen tree is planted for its fragrant, globe-shaped orange flowers, which are about 4-5 cm in diameter. However, once you enter Tadoba, you'll find this tree replaced by its wild counterpart, *Mitragyna parviflora*, known locally as Karamb. The Karamb tree produces much smaller but similarly globular flowers, measuring just 1-1.5 cm in diameter.

The Karamb tree is more prevalent in the countryside and is likely the tree that has been misidentified and celebrated in literature as the Kadamb tree. Its fragrant, spherical flowers are said to have been beloved by Lord Krishna. According to legend, Krishna, in his youth, often spent time in groves of Kadamba trees, enchanted by their sweet scent and beauty. However, the Karamb tree was likely the one frequently depicted in devotional literature and art as a symbol of Krishna's divine presence and playful nature. Poets like Kalidasa, Subhadra Kumari Chauhan, and many others have also celebrated this tree as the 'Kadamb' in their poetry.

The Karamb tree's flowering inflorescence, unlike that of the Kadamb, is much smaller and typically white or greenish, later transforming into brown or black fruits. The tree grows well in the forest, often reaching out for sunlight in crowded areas. Its bark has a somewhat aged appearance, but the tree is a striking sight when it produces a fresh canopy of glossy brown leaves. The plant contains several alkaloids, some of which are of pharmacological interest for treating stomach ailments and fever.

- Anirudh Chaoji
Senior Naturalist



LIME BUTTERFLY

During my childhood, I was unaware that the bird poop-like structures I often saw on lime and Curry Patta leaves were the larvae of the Lime Butterfly. These structures, which resemble bird droppings, are the early stages of this intriguing insect. The Lime Butterfly (*Papilio demoleus*) typically lays its eggs on the tender leaves of its host plants.

This butterfly is polyphagous, meaning it can lay eggs on a variety of host plants. In urban areas, you can often find its larvae on Lime and Curry Patta trees. In forested regions, however, it prefers to lay eggs on plants such as Bhera, Kavath, and Bel. This adaptability allows the Lime Butterfly to enjoy a diverse diet and utilize a range of food plants.

Interestingly, the Lime Butterfly is also known as a 'botanist' due to its remarkable ability to identify its host plants. It can locate suitable plants without external guidance, showcasing the wonders of nature.

The female Lime Butterfly lays a single egg per place, usually on the top of tender leaves, occasionally on bark or nearby surfaces. A single female can lay between 100 to 150 eggs in one go. However, only about 30 to 40% of these eggs successfully hatch into adult butterflies. This species is commonly observed in Tadoba throughout the year.

In addition to feeding on flowers, the Lime Butterfly engages in a behaviour known as mud puddling. During this process, male butterflies gather on wet, muddy surfaces to suck up essential minerals through their proboscis. These minerals are then transferred to the female during mating, enhancing reproductive success.

- Yogita N. D. Chhapekar

Biologist, Shradhey Shri. Atal Bihari Vajpayee Botanical Garden, Visapur



WATER CLOCK

On July 14, 2024, I visited Moharli Lake after seeing a notification about a Water Cock sighting on the E-bird website. I spent around half an hour on the MTDC road, where I spotted various water birds like Cormorants, Swamp Hens, Kingfishers, Cotton Pygmy Geese, and Jacanas. However, I couldn't find the Water Cock. I then went to the other side of the lake but still had no luck. While talking to some fishermen on my way back, I finally saw a male Water Cock flying right in front of us. I quickly took 4-5 photographs. Later that evening, I saw another Water Cock foraging in the backwaters of Irai Dam.

The Water Cock (*Gallicrex cinerea*) is a large bird, about 43 cm long, often found in marshy areas with dense vegetation. It is elusive and can be difficult to spot in its habitat. The male is distinctive with a red and yellow bill, black body, brown-edged wing coverts, and a spiky red frontal shield on its head. In contrast, females and juveniles are brown with tan faces and lack the frontal shield. During the breeding season, which lasts from June to September, males become very vocal, producing liquid-sounding calls.

The Water Cock builds a cup-shaped nest out of grasses in marshy fields, making it even more challenging to spot in the wild. Despite being hard to find, spotting one is always a thrilling experience for birdwatchers.

- Anirudh Chaoji

Senior Naturalist

A SPECTACULAR SHOW



As I stepped foot onto the enchanting land of Tadoba, located in Chandrapur, I boarded the safari Gypsy. I seated myself accordingly, ready for the adventure that awaited me. The tour guide and driver entered, closing the door and turning the key, triggering the roar of the vehicle.

Our safari began, passing through the Sikada Gate. Nature

greeted us with beautiful plants and animals. Through the bumpy, thrilling ride, the true treasure of Tadoba was soon revealed. Within 15 minutes, we spotted the majestic Tigress, Chhoti Rani, and her 17-month-old cub. It was an unforgettable sight as the cub enjoyed a dip in the pond and played with a fallen branch, showing affection to its mother by rubbing against her. Soon, both were resting like little kittens, yawning like fearsome hunters.

Moments later, a Langur appeared on a nearby fallen log to observe the tigress. The cub, suddenly alert, jolted up from its slumber and entered a bold hunting stance. It was captivating to witness such wild beauty up close. However, the tigers sensed our presence, bringing the spectacular show to an early end. Though I wished the experience could last forever, seeing these magnificent animals in their natural habitat was truly mesmerizing.

- Abhang Vaidya

Age 12 years, Class -7, CPSI, Nagpur

A CALL, A KILL, AND SILENCE...

It was our second day at TATR, and we were on our first safari of the day. As our Gypsy passed Teliya Lake, we spotted an Indian Gaur grazing. We slowed down to take pictures, but something was off. The gaur kept looking up every 30 seconds at the thick bamboo, sensing danger.

Suddenly, a loud deer call echoed through the forest. The gaur jerked its head up and bolted toward the bamboo thickets. All the gypsies on the trail turned off their engines, waiting to see what would happen next. Would the gaur run back out? Would the tiger appear? The air was thick with anticipation.

For about half a minute, everything was silent. Then, we heard a scream- an animal in pain. The sound repeated three times, then silence. Our guide reminded us that it was the territory of tigress T-24, popularly known as Sonam, and she had two cubs about 10 months old. He speculated that a wild dog might have been attacked.

All the vehicles came to the main road on the other side of the bamboo thicket to spot the tigress and her cubs. As we reached the spot, it was eerily quiet. A guide from another Gypsy mentioned seeing a wild dog run into the bamboo before the commotion began, confirming our guide's suspicion.

We stood up in our vehicle, straining to spot any movement, but nothing happened. No tigress emerged with a kill, no cubs followed behind. Just stillness!



Disappointed, we drove away. We had hoped to see Sonam within the first hour, but the forest had its secrets. Whether the wild dog survived or not is a mystery known only to Sonam, her cubs, and the bamboo thickets.

- Aditi Avinash Birnale

Age: 18, Class- FYBSc, PES University, Bangalore

FROM LABOURER TO ENTREPRENEUR



Every year, around three lakh tourists visit the biodiversity-rich forests of Tadoba, bringing with them not only curiosity about wildlife but also new opportunities for the local communities. Eco-tourism has become a lifeline for many, offering alternative livelihoods. It is estimated that around 5,000 families now depend on eco-tourism in Tadoba. While some, like gate managers, safari guides, and Gypsy drivers, benefit directly, others find employment in resorts, restaurants, and shops. For small business owners, like those running souvenir shops, and eateries or renting binoculars and cameras, eco-tourism has opened doors that were previously unimaginable.

One such story of transformation is that of Shamal Nannaware, a young man whose life has been completely changed by Tadoba's eco-tourism boom. Today, Shamal owns a thriving souvenir shop near the main safari gate at Moharli. But his journey to success wasn't a smooth one—it was as bumpy as a safari ride itself.

Shamal was born into a farming family in Bhamdeli, a small village just two kilometres away from Moharli. The youngest of three siblings, Shamal's early life was tough. After failing his 12th standard exams, he started working as a labourer to help support his family. But deep down, Shamal knew he wanted something more. He learned to drive and earned his license in 2008, quickly finding a job as a Gypsy driver for safari tours in Tadoba. He loved the thrill of driving through the forest, watching wildlife up close, but his entrepreneurial

spirit wouldn't let him settle for just that.

In 2012-13, Shamal got his first big break. Through his village's Eco-Development Committee (EDC), he learned that the Forest Department was looking for local youth to run a food stall at Moharli. Shamal, along with three friends, took a loan of 50,000 from the EDC and started a food stall selling poha, tea, and coffee. While they worked hard for over a year, the venture wasn't profitable enough. After paying off expenses and repaying the loan, the four friends were left with very little. Eventually, three of Shamal's partners lost interest and quit, but Shamal persisted for a few more months. However, the Forest Department later decided to run the stall themselves, and Shamal was hired to work there.

Though this wasn't the financial success Shamal had hoped for, it taught him valuable lessons in running a business.

Then, in 2014, Shamal saw another opportunity when the Forest Department decided to allot shops near the Moharli safari gate to local community members. This time, Shamal applied for a shop and decided to do something different—he opened a souvenir shop. With 25,000 saved up, he bought t-shirts, caps, magnets, and keychains from Chandrapur and started his business. As time went on, he began traveling to places like Hyderabad to find new and unique items for his shop. The forest officials also supported him by providing guidance.

Shamal says, "Customers are my best teachers. I learn from them about what's popular in the market, and then I try to bring those items to my shop."

Today, Shamal runs his souvenir shop full-time, even employing another young person from the community. He lives with his wife, five-year-old son, newborn daughter, parents, and brother's family in a joint family setup. While Shamal runs the souvenir shop, his brother owns a safari Gypsy, and together, their family has found a way to thrive thanks to Tadoba's eco-tourism.

Shamal's story is the best example of the opportunities eco-tourism can provide. From struggling as a labourer to becoming a successful entrepreneur, he has shown that with hard work, persistence, and a willingness to learn, dreams can indeed come true. Today, Shamal and his family are enjoying the fruits of Tadoba's eco-tourism, and his journey continues to inspire others in the community.

- Anant Sonwane
Communications Officer, TATR

Contribute to 'Tadoba Diaries'

Are you a forest department staff, tourist, guide, driver, working with a resort, managing a home stay or a community member from TATR vicinity? Do you want to join our effort to spread awareness on forest and wildlife conservation through 'Tadoba Diaries'? Please share your interesting photographs (not less than 4 MB) and experiences (not more than 250 words) on tadobadiaries2021@gmail.com. Your photograph/experience must be related to TATR only. The best content will be published with due credit.



FAMILY FEAST! Captured by a camera trap, this intimate glimpse into the wild shows a protective mother wild boar with her young piglets, distinguished by their characteristic light brown coats with pale stripes running along their backs. These stripes provide camouflage, helping them blend into their forest surroundings during their early months.

THE ACHIEVERS (August-2024)

Please 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 August 2024



Forest Guard - V. B. Madavi
Beat - Nimdhela
Round - Bhanuskhindi
Range - Tadoba
Division - Core TATR
Duration - 22 Days
Target - 125Km/Month
Actual Patrolling - 361.07 Km



Forest Guard - D. R. Balki
Beat - Talodhi-I
Round - Talodhi
Range - Khadsangi
Division - Buffer TATR
Duration - 27 Days
Target - 125Km/Month
Actual Patrolling - 340.08 Km

Explore
Tadoba
Like
Never
Before!



Scan for
Tadoba Movie



Scan for
www.mytadoba.mahaforest.gov.in



Boating Site
Sitarampatti

For Booking
Suresh Mangam
M. 8657935941



Kayaking
Moharli

For Booking
Sanjay Junde
M. 9834689541
Avinash Rathod
M. 9158928393



Adventure
Agarzari

For Booking
Ajay Kodape
M. 9730853324



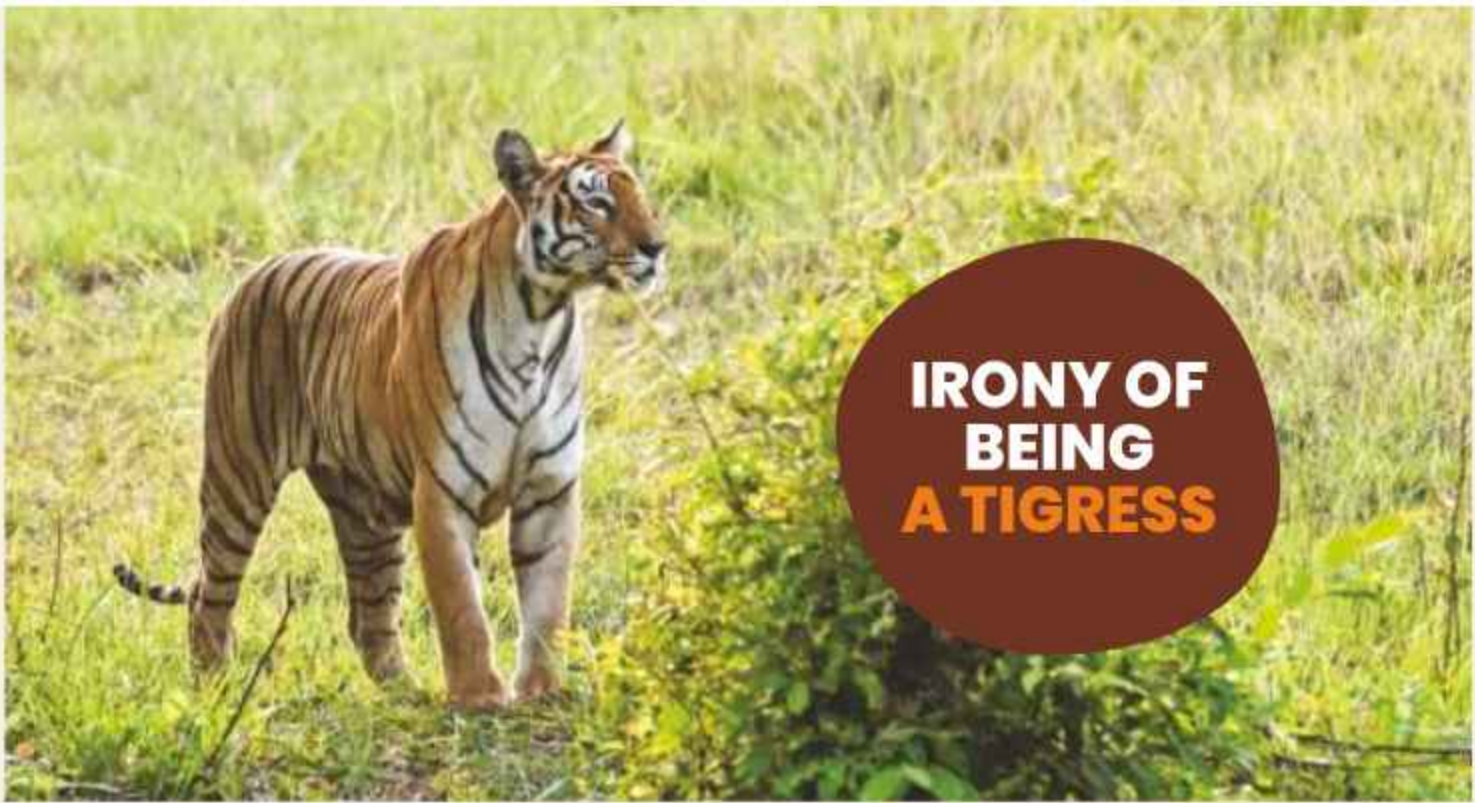
Camping Site
Agarzari & Madnapur

For Booking
Ajay Kodape
M. 9730853324
Rupesh
M. 7083669491



Cycling
Moharli

For Booking
Sanjay
M. 9834689541
Avinash
M. 9158928393



Tadoba is blessed with some amazing moms i.e. the tigresses, who are nurturing the park with new life every year. Every zone has a mother tiger, contributing to Tadoba's growing tiger population, and making the park richer! Raising cubs, however, is no easy task, even in a protected area like Tadoba. The little cubs are vulnerable not only to other male tigers but also to other dangers of the forest- even tigresses can be a threat!

The mother has to hunt to feed herself and her cubs, always making sure to leave them in a safe spot. We should appreciate the fact that this all happens in broad daylight, visible from nearby verandas, while farmers are working just 200 meters away, and villagers are gathering their cattle or walking to work. What tourists travel miles and spend a lot of money to witness is a regular part of life in Tadoba!

It may seem incredible to us, but for the people living in huts around these areas, it's not always easy. They walk in the dark, close to where these tigresses live. Likewise, it's challenging for the tigress too, constantly living under human eyes. Yet, both humans and tigers have adapted to this life, coexisting peacefully. This is true coexistence at its finest!

And remember, while we may fear the tiger, the tiger is more afraid of us. You learn this when you observe them in the wild. A tigress is especially cautious when her cubs are around- imagine the stress she must be under! As tourists, it is important to stay quiet and calm, allowing the tigress a peaceful time with her cubs. I have seen many visitors get overly excited when they spot a tiger, which is natural, but instead of shouting and alerting others, try to signal quietly and just absorb the beauty of the tiger in front of you.

This is what makes these tigresses the true Super Moms of Tadoba. Here, we have a tender moment of such a Super Mom, T-14 popularly known as the Kuani tigress with her cub, ruling the Kolsa range. Yet, despite her strength, she still has to fight for her territory with her own mother, T-4 lovingly called the Hirdinalla female, to protect her cubs. That is the irony of being a tigress!

- Sanjay Deshpande

Wildlife Enthusiast,
Sanjeevani Developers, Pune

**MY MOM
MY HOME
MY FOREST**



jungle_belles
 jungle_belles
 www.junglebelles.in
 +91 7756081922



sanjeevanidevelopers
 Sanjeevani Dava
 www.sanjeevanideva.com
 020-79849951 | +91 98509 63387



वाचा कधीही न ऐकलेल्या थराटक कथा पहा कधीही न पाहिलेली छायाचित्रे



ताडोबाच्या राणीची नाट्यमय जीवनकहानी
प्रथमच पुस्तक रूपात

एक होती माया

**GET
NOW**

किंमत
₹ 450/-



इंद्री गेट आणि वेबसाईट वर उपलब्ध : www.tadobastore.com/collections/special-issue

पैसे भटल्याचा स्क्रीनशॉट, पीनकोडसह संपूर्ण पत्ता व्हॉट्स अॅप करा- 8591190721

HARD COPY
Annual Subscription
Rs. 300/-

Tadoba
DIARIES

Please follow these simple steps to subscribe :

- 1 ▶ Transfer Rs. 300/- to following account.
Executive Director, Tadoba-Andhari Tiger
Reserve Conservation Foundation, Chandrapur
SBI A/c No: 42331115800
Branch Code: 1941 | IFSC: SBIN0001941
Branch: Shastrinagar, Chandrapur
 - 2 ▶ E-mail us the screen shot of the payment confirmation or UTR/Ref. No. on
subscriptiontd@gmail.com or What's App us on 8010464632 along with the
following information:
Name | Mobile No. | What's App No. | e-mail ID
Address - House No./Name, Building No. Name, Street, Area,
Village/City, Tehsil, District, State, Pin Code.
- ▶ You can also pay the subscription fees at any of the safari gates at TATR.
▶ Your Tadoba Diaries copy will be delivered to you by post every month.

Scan QR for UPI Payment



UPI ID: tadobastore@upi

DIGITAL COPY
Subscription



Tadoba
DIARIES

Scan



OR

Visit the website

<https://www.tadobastore.com/collections/tadoba-newsletter>

● Buy a single issue OR become an annual subscriber. ● Buy old issues also

Book-Post

From,

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

To, _____