



Issue 34/Sep 2024

Tadoba

DIARIES

The Official Newsletter of Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve



Sachin Bagmare

Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve Conservation Foundation, Chandrapur

₹ 30/-

MONSOON PATROLLING A HERCULEAN TASK

Dear Reader

As we embrace another vibrant monsoon season in central India, the forests of Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR) have once again transformed into a lush green paradise. Overflowing streams, rivers, and lakes now promise a year of abundance for the region's wildlife. Although the core zone remains closed to tourism, the buffer zone is bustling with wildlife enthusiasts. For photographers, there's nothing quite like capturing the majesty of a tiger against this backdrop of verdant beauty—a memory to be cherished for years to come.

But behind these picturesque landscapes lies a story of unwavering dedication and hard work. While visitors enjoy the thrill of spotting wildlife, our frontline staff is tirelessly working to protect this magnificent ecosystem. These foot patrols, often unseen, are the backbone of our conservation efforts. Teams of three to five members traverse the forest daily to prevent poaching, illegal logging, and grazing, ensuring that both the flora and fauna of TATR thrive in safety.

Our staff's duties go beyond just safeguarding the land. They also collect crucial ecological data during their patrols—recording sightings and indirect signs such as calls, scats, pugmarks, and feeding behaviours. Monitoring human activity is another essential task, which includes keeping an eye out for illegal tree cutting, trespassing, and poaching attempts. Moreover, any animal mortality or injury is carefully tracked, ensuring swift action when needed.

Supporting their efforts is MSTRIPES (Monitoring System for Tigers: Intensive Protection and Ecological Status), a GIS-based tool that aids in wildlife management and protection. Since its introduction in TATR in November 2016, MSTRIPES has significantly improved the efficiency of our patrols.

Every forest guard is tasked with covering an impressive 125 km per month on foot, and many go above and beyond this requirement. We celebrate their dedication by recognizing the best-performing guards in Tadoba Diaries each month. From February 2021 to July 2024, our patrol teams have collectively covered an astonishing 570,511.658 km on foot. Despite the added challenges of monsoon season, our guards managed to patrol 28,462.04 km in June and July 2024 alone.

Monsoon patrols are particularly gruelling. Dense undergrowth, high grass, and reduced visibility make these months some of the most dangerous for our teams. Tigers, leopards, sloth bears, Indian gaurs, snakes, and scorpions are all ever-present threats. Additionally, chest-deep waters and rugged terrain add to the difficulties they face. Yet, despite these risks, our dedicated staff remains steadfast in their mission, ensuring the protection of TATR's wildlife.

The next time you visit the forest and stand in awe of its beauty, take a moment to appreciate the brave foot soldiers who tirelessly walk these trails. Their efforts keep this wilderness safe for both, the wildlife that call it home and for future generations who will continue to experience the magic of Tadoba.

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, CF & Field Director, TATR | Executive Editor: Anant Sonawane, Communications Officer, TATR.

REWILDING OF VULTURES IN TATR (PART- I)

The Jatayu Conservation Project is an important step towards reintroducing vultures in the TATR landscape. Ten White-rumped Vultures were released into the wild on August 3, 2024. All of them are thriving well in their new environment. Since their release from the aviary at Botezari (Kolsa Range), these vultures have shown encouraging signs of acclimatization and are being closely monitored.

I take this opportunity to share some useful insights on vultures, their importance in ecology, and the painstaking efforts by the TATR and BNHS to rewild them.

Vultures are expansive avian predators that exhibit gregarious behaviour and inhabit all continents except Antarctica and Australia. A vulture is a bird of prey that feeds on dead animals. Their cleaning service is of great value to people. By consuming the remnants of decomposing corpses, they effectively avoid foul odours, greatly reduce carbon emissions, and eradicate harmful pathogens like botulism and plague that may be discharged during decay. Their exposed, devoid of feathers necks, expansive wings, acute eyesight, and extremely acidic stomachs are the evolutionary benefits of scavenging.



There are twenty-three species of vultures in the world; India harbours nine of them. Indian Vulture, Cinereous Vulture, Eurasian Griffon Vulture, Himalayan Vulture, White-rumped Vulture, Slender-billed Vulture, Red-headed Vulture, Bearded Vulture, *Gypaetus barbatus*, Egyptian Vulture.

Vultures possess unique characteristics that enable them to devour decomposed food in a manner impossible for other animals. They are believed to possess robust immunity against infections that might cause illness or death in the other animals. In addition, they possess highly potent gastric acid that effectively eradicates even the most hazardous bacteria and aids in assimilating nutrients from their meal.

What is Rewilding?

Rewilding is a conservation strategy that aims to safeguard wilderness regions and natural processes, enabling environments to function unhindered by human activity. It entails encouraging ecological balance, reducing obstacles to the spread of natural habitats, and reintroducing native plant and animal species. The goal of this idea is to develop self-sustaining ecosystems that resemble how they were before humans influenced them.

Why do we need the Rewilding of vultures?

Performing as nature's cleaning crew, vultures are vital for preserving the ecology.

Here are some reasons why vultures are important for us:

Scavengers: Vultures consume carrion, or the remains of deceased animals, thereby efficiently eliminating corpses and thus mitigating the potential transmission of illnesses. Their effective scavenging contributes to the preservation of a hygienic environment and mitigates the potential transmission of diseases to humans and other animals.

Ecological Balance: By feasting on carrion, vultures help decrease the number of scavengers like rats and stray dogs that can transmit diseases. They help prevent the buildup of rotting organic matter, which could usually contaminate the environment.

Cultural and Spiritual Significance: Vultures are respected as representations of purification and rebirth in several civilizations. Their cultural relevance is shown by the significant roles they play in some societies' spiritual beliefs and rituals.

Why are we at the stage of rewilding?

Vulture populations have drastically decreased during the last few decades for many reasons.

Habitat Loss: Vultures require extensive territories with easy access to open areas for breeding and foraging. The number of vultures has decreased significantly because of habitat loss caused by urbanization, deforestation, and farming.

Collision with Power Lines: During their migration, large vulture species—like the Griffons—are especially prone to collisions with electrical cables. The possibility of fatalities or major injuries from such crashes would further reduce the number of vultures.

Illegal Wildlife Trade: Vultures are the subject of illegal wildlife trade in some areas when their body parts are utilized in rituals or traditional medicine. The vulture populations already in peril are further stressed by this illicit commerce.

NSAID diclofenac: The primary cause of the vulture population decline was the NSAID diclofenac (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medicine). Diclofenac's contribution to a drop in the number of vultures is a noteworthy and heartbreaking illustration of the unforeseen effects of human activity on wildlife.

- Bhanu Pratap Singh Rajawat

Conservation Biologist, Bombay Natural History Society

TYPES OF TIGERS

Patrons of Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve are aware that the tiger found in Tadoba is what is known as the 'Royal Bengal Tiger' and contrary to popular belief, the Royal Bengal Tiger is not limited to the Sunderbans in West Bengal but spread across the geographic expanse of the Indian subcontinent. Fans of the big cat may also have heard of the Siberian tiger or the Sumatran tiger. This raises a very valid question – how many types of tigers are there in the world? Well, the simple answer is that there is only one species of tigers, which is *Panthera tigris*. But tigers can be classified into nine subspecies depending on their physical characteristics and geographic range. In this article, we'll explore what makes these tiger subspecies unique.

The Royal Bengal Tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*)

The Royal Bengal Tiger is found in India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal and is the most abundant subspecies of tiger in the world. There are more than 4000 of these tigers in the wild and they primarily live in dry and wet deciduous forests, grasslands, temperate forests, and mangroves.

The Siberian Tiger aka Amur Tiger (*Panthera tigris altaica*)

Amur tigers are the largest of the tiger subspecies and males can grow up to 10.5 feet and weigh upto 300 kg. These tigers have lighter shades of orange fur and brown stripes instead of black. They primarily occupy the tundra forests of the Russian Siberia and there are an estimated 450 individuals in the wild.

The Sumatran Tiger (*Panthera tigris sumatrae*)

Sumatran tigers are a rare subspecies of tigers found only on the Indonesian island of Sumatra. Sumatran tigers have a characteristic dark coat. Their broad, black stripes are closely spaced and often doubled. They are also the smallest species of extant (currently alive) tiger subspecies, wherein males weight about 120 kg.

The South China Tiger (*Panthera tigris amoyensis*)

South China tigers are found in central and Eastern China and are considered to be functionally extinct i.e. no individuals have been spotted in the wild in a long time and the tigers largely thrive in zoos. Only 40 years ago, there were an estimated 4,000 tigers in the wild but the government declared them as pests and they were persecuted to near-extinction.

The Indo-Chinese Tiger (*Panthera tigris corbetti*)

As is evident from the scientific name, this subspecies of tiger was named after British hunter-turned-conservationist – Jim Corbett. They're currently found in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam and formerly in China. These tigers are a bit smaller than their Indian counterpart and males can weigh up to 180 kg. They are highly elusive and live in remote forests and hilly terrain. This makes it hard for scientists to keep a tab on their ecology.



The Malayan Tiger (*Panthera tigris jacksoni*)

Previously thought of as Indo-Chinese tigers, Malayan tigers were later identified as a distinct subspecies of tigers which were smaller in size than the Indo-Chinese tiger. They are found in the tropical and subtropical forests of Thailand and peninsular Malaysia.

There are also three subspecies of tigers that have now been declared extinct:

The Bali Tiger (*Panthera tigris balica*)

These tigers were recorded in western Bali and have been considered to be extinct since the 1940s largely due hunting, habitat loss, and lack of prey.

The Javan tiger (*Panthera tigris sondaica*)

This non-extinct subspecies of tigers inhabited the Indonesian island of Java and was last recorded in 1976.

The Caspian Tiger (*Panthera tigris virgata*)

Occupying the Western most regions of the tiger's historic geographic range, the Caspian tiger was found in Turkey, Iran, Central Asia, and the Takla Makan desert of China. They became extinct in the 1970s owing to hunting, habitat conversion and losses, and isolation of populations.

- Yashaswi Rao
Wildlife Biologist, TATR

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



In 2015, the United Nations set 17 universal goals as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were to act as a map for finding ways toward a better and more sustainable future for all. They deal with such different, very much interlinked aspects as poverty and inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, and peace and justice. Given the diversity of problems they try to solve, some relate directly to the protection of wildlife, making it clear that human welfare and environmental health are related.

SDG 15: Life on Land

SDG 15 focuses on the protection and sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, including forest management, combating desertification, and halting biodiversity loss. This goal is central to wildlife conservation as it promotes the preservation of natural habitats necessary for viable wildlife populations. In the Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR), SDG 15 is particularly significant due to its rich biodiversity and thriving tiger population. Conservation efforts such as reforestation, anti-poaching measures, and protection of wildlife corridors have contributed to the growth of the tiger population and the overall health of the ecosystem in Maharashtra.

SDG 1: No Poverty and SDG 2: Zero Hunger

The socio-economic conditions of communities living around the protected areas often intersect with conservation efforts related to wildlife. SDG 1, No Poverty, and SDG 2, Zero Hunger, emphasize improving the livelihoods of these communities to reduce dependence on forest resources for survival. Several programs, kick-started around TATR, have aimed at alternative livelihoods, including introducing sustainable agricultural practices, vocational training, and support to small-scale enterprises. By offering the local population alternative means of generating income, they help reduce human-wildlife conflicts and pressure on forest resources and lead to wildlife conservation and poverty alleviation.

SDG 4: Quality Education

TATR aligns with SDG 4 to ensure local educational standards are upgraded. With programs aimed at improving environmental education, upgrading the school infrastructure, and generally improving academic standards



within the schools around the reserve, the TATRCF is doing its best to ensure students get quality education underlying environmentally sensitive development and supporting sustainable development at large.

SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation and SDG 13: Climate Action

The two most important SDGs for ecoregion health are SDG 6, focusing on access to clean water, and SDG 13, focusing on climate action. In Tadoba, check dams, rainwater harvesting, and rejuvenation of natural water bodies ensure access to clean water for both locals and wildlife. Climate action through tree planting and the promotion of practices that are resilient to climate change adds sustainability and resilience to the environment.

SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth and SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

Balancing development with conservation entails the achievement of decent work, economic growth, and responsible consumption. In and around TATR, eco-tourism is a classic model of doing this by objectively creating employment and promoting tourism sensitive to the environment. Initiatives such as guided safaris, community homestays, and eco-friendly tourism operations ensure that the income generated benefits the locals while sustainability is maintained. Most of the revenue gathered from eco-tourism is plowed back into community-based projects, creating a self-sustaining circle of development and conservation.

Chandrapur, home to TATR, is largely forested and a prime wildlife habitat. The TATR administration has played a key role in policy implementation, stakeholder coordination, and ensuring that conservation and development benefits reach local communities. Their inclusive approach fosters community involvement and ownership, leading to sustainable wildlife conservation. The successful implementation of SDG policies not only conserves biodiversity but also enhances the quality of life for nearby communities, highlighting the importance of collaboration and continued investment in conservation and development.

- Saket Agasti
Social Scientist, TATR

A THRILLING ENCOUNTER

I was in Nagpur with my family, and despite it being the peak of the monsoon, we couldn't resist the pull of the wild. So, we decided to take a chance and head to Tadoba for an evening safari. As expected, we were met with intermittent showers, but that didn't dampen our spirits. The thrill of possibly spotting a tiger was enough to keep us going.

Against all odds, our persistence paid off! We spotted not one, but three tigers- a mother tigress and her two playful cubs. But what happened next was beyond anything we could have imagined.

One of the cubs suddenly seemed distracted. Its curious gaze was fixed on something moving in the dense foliage. We held our breath as we tried to catch a glimpse of what had caught its attention. Then, out of the bush came a spectacled cobra!

In an instant, the cub's playful curiosity turned into a cautious standoff. It began to chase the snake, but both maintained a respectful distance, never taking their eyes off each other. For several tense minutes, we watched this nerve-wracking encounter. The cub and the cobra seemed locked in a silent



battle of wills. Just when we thought the situation might escalate, the cobra, sensing it had made its point, gracefully slithered away into the undergrowth. Both the cub and the snake emerged from this face-off unscathed, much to our relief.

The timing couldn't have been more uncanny- a dramatic showdown just a day before Nagpanchami, the festival that celebrates serpents.

This unexpected experience turned our monsoon safari into an unforgettable adventure, reminding us that every moment can bring something truly extraordinary in the wild!

- Mayur Kotlikar
IT Professional, Seattle, US

TWO- IN- ONE

The dominant male tiger in Tadoba, T-126, popularly known as Chhota Matka, is truly the King of the buffer zone. Wildlife enthusiasts are well aware of his fearless demeanour, intense battles with rival males, and his spectacular road shows in front of safari vehicles. From my experience, you can never predict how Chhota Matka will react in any situation.

One rainy morning in July 2023, I was guiding a safari near the Hanuman Temple in the Nimdhela buffer when we spotted Chhota Matka walking along the road. His usual regal stride was a perfect blend of strength and elegance, leaving my guests in awe as they watched this massive tiger casually stroll ahead of us. We followed him for about a Km and a half until we reached Chendai Lake, located near Khangaon and Bothli villages. There, we noticed some cattle grazing by the lakeside. The moment Chhota Matka saw them, his entire posture shifted. Lowering his body and moving stealthily, he inched closer to the unaware herd. It was clear he was in hunting mode.

Suddenly, he sprang into action, launching a powerful attack. The startled cattle scattered, but Chhota Matka swiftly brought one down. Within seconds, the prey was dead. But what happened next left me speechless. Instead of settling with his catch, Chhota Matka dashed towards another cattle,



© Vishwas Ugale

taking it down just as quickly. In no time, the second one too lay lifeless.

Witnessing Chhota Matka kill two cattle in a single hunt was a first for me. It was indeed like watching him 'kill two birds with one stone.'

- Amol Chaudhari
Guide, Nimdhela Gate, TATR

A PARTING GIFT

It was my last day of a 37-day stay in Tadoba in 2021. I had interviews scheduled with two forest officials at the forest rest house near Tadoba Lake. Around 11 a.m., I started my journey with my colleague, Sudhendra. As our Bolero camper entered through the Moharli gate, it started raining. I rolled down the window, took off my mask (Those were lockdown days due to the COVID pandemic), closed my eyes, and inhaled deeply. The wet, earthy smell of the jungle filled my lungs- a truly heavenly feeling!

I had just four hours to wrap up the interviews and soak in as much of the jungle as possible before returning to the concrete jungle of Mumbai. I wasn't even thinking about sighting a tiger. But Tadoba had something special in store for me.

Barely 3 Kms in, we spotted a tiger cub resting near the Purani Vihir waterhole. The driver mentioned that the tigress T-24, popularly known as Sonam, had made a kill nearby and had been seen with her three cubs. However, at that moment, only one cub was present.

We reached the rest house by the lake, where a lady forest guard told us that T-12, the iconic tigress Maya, had been sitting near the compound earlier and had only moved towards the lake when the guard arrived. After finishing the interviews, we drove around the lake, searching for eagles and other birds, when I suddenly spotted a tiger under a tree. I asked the driver to reverse the vehicle a bit. It was Maya, sitting just 25-30 feet away, partially hidden behind a tree. For me, it was always a pleasure to watch Maya in her empire.

Our next stop was Pandharpauri No. 2, where we found a male tiger T-100, Tala, Maya's mate, relaxing in the water. Though not as massive as T-49 Matkasur, Tala's muscular build and thick neck showed his power. Interestingly, we saw a dead wild boar at Pandharpauri No. 1. It did not look like a kill. Despite six tigers—Maya, Tala, and their four cubs—being in the area, none had touched it!



As we continued, we noticed a herd of sambar deer on high alert, with the dominant male giving alarm calls. Our driver was sure that a leopard was nearby. We took three rounds with 0-2 km/hr speed and checked the bushes carefully, but couldn't spot it. I was sure the leopard had seen us.

At Jamni, T-7, another legendary tigress lovingly called as Chhoti Tara, was enjoying her afternoon nap in a nullah. She was collared and being monitored by the Wildlife Institute of India (WII). When our vehicle got stuck, the noise woke her, but after a stretch and a yawn, she went back to sleep.

On our way back, we checked the Purani Vihir waterhole. This time, it was a jackpot! Sonam was sitting in the water and her three cubs were playing with the water pipe. They also pounced on each other. Sonam Sonam watched over them lovingly, licking occasionally. They were enjoying a perfect family time! After a while, Sonam got up and started walking towards her kingdom- the Teliya Lake. The cubs followed her. The last cub saw a two-wheeler on the road some distance and kept staring at it. Thankfully it did not go to check what it was and rushed behind its mother.

I was on cloud nine—seven tigers in four hours! What an incredible parting gift from Tadoba!

- Anant Sonawane
Communications Officer, TATR



Peahen's Plume

Peacocks and peahens can appear similar when the males lose their impressive tails. Her more flamboyant counterpart often overshadows the peahen. Peacocks boast striking blue iridescence that's hard to miss, while peahens, with their subdued grey-brown plumage, may not be as immediately eye-catching. However, looking closely, you will discover the subtle, dark green iridescence on their necks, resembling a necklace of shimmering emeralds. Painting a peahen reveals the intricate layers of her seemingly monochrome body. If you are fortunate enough to see a peahen, especially with her chicks, take a moment to observe her closely!

- Shreya Khadilkar
Visual Designer

GEARING UP FOR THE NEW SEASON



Weed removal

In August, we completed a comprehensive training program for safari guides in the Core area of Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, focusing on enhancing soft skills. We introduced spoken English sessions and welcomed speakers from diverse fields to share their expertise and refresh our knowledge of wildlife.

Further, to improve navigational aids within the Core area, we have recently upgraded the directional signages. Thanks to the creative design by Ms. Shreya Khadilkar, these new signages feature thematic elements that highlight the unique characteristics of each location. For example, Tadoba Lake now showcases a crocodile theme. Additionally, we have utilized wood for the sign poles to blend with the natural surroundings. We encourage you to discover these new thematic signs on your next safari.



New signages

During the monsoon season, we focused on the critical task of weed removal. Weeds, being invasive and non-endemic, disrupt the ecosystem and deplete the availability of palatable species. Timely removal before flowering is crucial for managing the habitat and supporting the herbivore population.

As we approach the peak tourist season starting the first week of October, we are preparing for an influx of visitors by repairing roads damaged during the monsoon and enhancing visitor facilities. We look forward to welcoming you to the enchanting Tadoba soon!

- Anand Reddy

Deputy Director (Core), TATR

Indrajeet Samarth



SLEEPING CHARMER! Even in slumber, the tiger's grace is undeniable. A sub-adult male rests peacefully in the Ramdegi buffer forest, a majestic sight of nature's power and beauty.

HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT

India has a deep-rooted tradition of living in harmony with wildlife, where people and animals have coexisted for thousands of years. This long-standing tolerance, particularly among rural communities, has been crucial in preserving the country's megafauna. Had it not been for this enduring coexistence, much of India's wildlife would have disappeared long ago.

However, this balance is now being challenged. Human-wildlife conflict has escalated in recent years, putting immense pressure on the age-old spirit of tolerance. This is particularly evident in regions like the Eastern Vidarbha Landscape, including the Chandrapur district, home to the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR), where human-populated landscapes border forested areas.

Chandrapur district is home to over 250 tigers, a sizeable number of which now inhabit human-dominated landscapes in the areas in between Protected Areas, in small forest patches managed by Territorial and FDCM Divisions. A significant population of large carnivores thus lives in close cohabitation with a largely agrarian human population, making the district a hotbed of conflict.

Records show that a total of 9,442 conflict incidents occurred in this landscape between 2005 and March 2020, of which 58 percent (5,477) involved tigers. In 2022, total 25 human deaths were reported in Chandrapur district including the TATR, the territorial forests in the TATR landscape, and the FDCM region. In the first five months of the current year i.e. 2024, 12 human deaths are recorded. The details of the human casualties are as below:

Year	Division	Human Deaths	Killed by			Deaths inside Forest Area	Deaths Outside Forest Area
			Tiger	Leopard	Other		
2023	Chandrapur	9	5	3	1	4	5
	Brahmapuri	9	9	0	0	6	3
	Central Chanda	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total (Territorial)	18	14	3	1	10	8
	TATR	7	7	0	0	5	2
	FDCM	0	0	0	0	0	0
2024	Total Chandrapur District	25	21	3	1	15	10
	Chandrapur	1	0	0	1	0	1
	Brahmapuri	3	3	0	0	2	1
	Central Chanda	5	5	0	0	3	2
	Total (Territorial)	9	8	0	1	5	4
	TATR	3	3	0	0	3	0
2024	FDCM	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Chandrapur District	12	11	0	1	8	4

Factors contributing to conflicts:

The increasing number of conflicts can be attributed to several factors.

Loss of Habitat: The growth of the region's human population and the increased demand for land and resources has led to the destruction, degradation, and fragmentation of natural habitats, forcing wild animals to venture more often into human-use areas.



CC: Rajat Kuchambhar

Loss of Natural Forage: Increased grazing pressure from cattle results in less natural forage for wild herbivores. The availability of crops that provide more palatable and nutritious forage in farmlands adjoining forests also draws wild herbivores to these areas.

Loss of Connectivity: Because of various projects like roads and railways, vital wildlife movement corridors are blocked. Lack of connectivity forces wild animals to move through human-dominated areas.

Increased Tiger Population: Successful conservation measures adopted by the TATR have recovered the large carnivore populations inside and outside Protected Areas. This too has resulted in increased interactions between humans and large carnivores.

Impact of the Conflicts:

The impact of these conflicts is profound, affecting both human communities and wildlife.

Human Casualties and Injuries: An encounter with wild animals especially tiger and leopard cause serious injuries or deaths. The feeling of living in the presence of wild animals may interfere with normal working and living procedures. This can result in the poor psychological state of whole communities.

Economic Losses: Tigers and leopards prey on livestock causing economic losses to the villagers. It may lead a family to extreme poverty due to the losses incurred. Sometimes, Wild Bores and deer ruin the agricultural produce on the farmlands.

Loss of Freedom for Wildlife: Sometimes, human casualties and injuries generate negative sentiments about wildlife among the people. The forest department has to capture the nuisance animal in such cases. The captured animal loses its freedom forever.

As human-wildlife conflict is a complex and delicate issue, it needs to be addressed through long-term and consistent solutions. We will have a look at the various measures the TATR management has undertaken to mitigate the human-wildlife conflicts.

- Amartya Jethmalani

Student, Cathedral and John Connon School, Mumbai



CC BY-SA 4.0

RUFIOUS WOODPECKER

I had been eagerly searching for the Rufous Woodpecker (*Celeus brachyurus*) in Tadoba for quite some time. Despite spotting all other woodpecker species in the area, this one remained elusive. One day, while patrolling with my forest guards, we reached compartment number 310 on Dewada Road. Suddenly, a bird flew across from right to left. I quickly asked the driver to stop. To my delight, there it was—a Rufous Woodpecker busy pecking at the bark of a tree! Thrilled, I snapped a few quick pictures. That day, we recorded 45 bird species during our patrol.

Later, I checked the eBird site and discovered that there were only 20 sightings of Rufous Woodpeckers in Chandrapur district, none of which had photos. To my surprise, my sighting was the first documented photograph of the region.

The Rufous Woodpecker is a medium-sized, brownish bird with a short dark bill. Its wings and tail feathers have dark bands, giving it a unique, scaled look. Males and females look similar, except males have a red patch under the eye.

This woodpecker primarily feeds on ants, particularly the *crematogaster* species found on bamboo, as well as their eggs and larvae. Remarkably, the Rufous Woodpecker lays its eggs inside the ants' ball-shaped nests. The ants, interestingly, do not harm the woodpecker's chicks, allowing this bird to thrive in such a fascinating way.

The breeding season for the Rufous Woodpecker falls in the pre-monsoon dry period, typically from February to June. During this time, the female lays two white, matte, thin-shelled eggs that are slightly translucent. The incubation lasts for around 12 to 14 days. Both parents take on the responsibility of feeding and caring for the young, showcasing their strong parental bond.

- Rundan Katkar
Range Forest Officer, Kolsa, TATR

HALDU

The Haldu tree holds a special place among the many trees I admire. You can spot it in our forests, but a great place to see these majestic trees is in the park opposite the DD Buffer's office in Rambaug Colony, Chandrapur. The old Haldu trees stand tall here, showing off their thick, sturdy trunks. Their presence is imposing. You will also find many of these trees in the Melghat forest.

The Haldu tree is scientifically known as *Haldina cordifolia*. Its leaves have a heart-shaped base, which is the reason behind its botanical name. When in bloom, the tree produces clusters of small yellow flowers arranged in round heads about 10 cm in diameter. These flowers look very similar to the Karamb tree (*Mitragyna parviflora*). Many people often confuse these two trees, but a slight difference in their leaves sets them apart.

Haldu wood is light yet strong, making it highly valued. When the wood is cut, it reveals a distinct yellow colour, which is why the tree is commonly called Haldu. The wood is close-grained, making it ideal for carving. It is used in flooring, panelling, railway carriages, construction, and making farm tools. In Ayurveda, the bark and roots are used to treat ulcers and infections in the digestive system. Parts of the tree are also used for treating skin diseases, wounds, indigestion, and liver ailments.

Even though the tree is strong, its leaves are often attacked by leaf-defoliating moths, leaving them with only a mesh of veins. Despite this, the Haldu tree plays a crucial role in the ecosystem. It provides food and shelter to various wildlife species, while its deep roots help prevent soil erosion and improve soil fertility.

- Anirudh Chaoji
Senior Naturalist

GALLERY FOR A CAUSE



They say a picture speaks a thousand words! You can experience this, many times over, when you visit the photographs' exhibition, titled 'Gallery for a Cause'. It is currently live both offline and online. An initiative by the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR), the exhibition is set in the Art Gallery at the picturesque Shradheya Shri. Atal Bihari Vajpayee Botanical Garden, Visapur in Chandrapur.

Bringing together multiple photographers from the wildlife segment, TATR has created this distinct collection of 51 pictures, each breathtakingly stunning, symbolizing the 51st year of Project Tiger. They encapsulate the beauty of the jungles and the majesties of its most iconic citizen - the tiger. Providing beautiful glimpses into a world usually hidden from our eyes, each picture captures this royal cat in many different moods - calm, ferocious, tender, playful!

All pictures have also been captioned. Some depict emotion, talking about the tender love and care of a tigress for her cubs; others proclaim the regality of this wonderful animal. Others are simply a witty take on the situation and tickle your cells adoringly.

The exhibition is also sprinkled with images of the Tadoba landscape and its past - prehistoric to recent.

The entire collection is a curated selection from thousands of pictures that has culminated into the final 51. All the selected images are on display at the Art Gallery and are available for purchase. The entire collection is also available on the TATR merchandise website, www.tadobastore.com for those interested in viewing and purchasing online.

All proceeds shall go directly to the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve Conservation Foundation. It will further help strengthen conservation efforts by its staff and officers.

Only 100 prints of each photograph shall be done, making it a total of 5,100 pieces of exclusivity. Printed with cutting-edge techniques (fine-art Giclée on archival quality media) as if the image breathes. Then dry mounted on a frame - made of sleek aluminium and hi-transparency glazing. This process stands as a guardian of its beauty and ensures longevity.

The exhibition was inaugurated on 16th August by Dr. Jitendra Ramgaokar, CCF and Field Director, TATR.





TRAINING PROGRAM FOR NATURE GUIDES

A nature guide training program focusing on biodiversity and hospitality management is being organized for the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve's nature guides. The training is being conducted in a phased manner. Until August, 227 guides, including 119 from the core, 100 from the buffer, and eight guides from Madhya Chanda, had completed the 7-day training course.

The core area of the TATR has six nature tourism gates with 119 guides, while the buffer zones have 16 tourism gates with 249 guides. In total, 368 nature guides facilitate tourist safaris in the forest using Gypsy vehicles. These nature guides are undergoing training at various stages. The training for the first and second stages was completed in August.

The training program spans seven days, during which expert trainers provide knowledge on various topics related to forests and wildlife. Additionally, field visits are organized to offer practical observational experience. The training covers a wide range of subjects, including the identification of resident animals, bird diversity in Tadoba, butterflies, dragonflies, plants, reptiles, and the biodiversity in the forest. Special training sessions on hospitality management, personality development, CPR-life-saving techniques, and English-speaking courses are also regularly conducted. A one-day field visit to Shradhey Shri. Atal Bihari Vajpayee Botanical Garden in Visapur is also organized.

In August, the nature guide training sessions were effectively conducted by instructors such as Sanjay Karkare, Aniruddha Chaoji, Anil Mali, Bahar Baviskar, Bhimrao Lade, Amit Setiya, Rundan Katkar (RFO), Divya Bharti (IFS), Sumayya Nikhat, Yogita Chhapekar, Kaushalya Dutta, Dr. Tripathi, and Dr. Prasad Bhavsar. These instructors delivered excellent presentations and provided insights during the field visits. An examination was conducted on the last day of the training.

Additionally, training for the remaining nature guides from the buffer zones commenced at the Forest Academy in Chandrapur, with the cooperation of the Pratham Foundation, where 60 nature guides completed their training.

This nature guide training program was organized under the guidance of Dr. Jitendra Ramgaonkar, Chief Conservator of Forests and Field Director, TATR, and led by Lt. Kushagra Pathak, Deputy Director (Buffer), Anand Reddy, Deputy Director (Core), and Sachin Shinde, Divisional Forest Officer, TATR. The Forest Range Officers Arun Gond, Yogita Madavi, and their team put in tireless efforts to successfully conduct this training. The program was coordinated by Prafulla Savarkar, Education Officer.

- Prafulla Savarkar
Environment Education Officer, TATR



Book your safaris only through the official booking site:
<https://mytadoba.mahaforest.gov.in>





EMPOWERED WOMEN

The conservation model adopted by the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve not only promotes responsible eco-tourism but also emphasizes the involvement of local communities in conservation efforts. This approach helps generate alternative livelihoods for the locals through eco-tourism. In addition to working as safari drivers and guides, villagers find employment in resorts. TATR has also partnered with corporate entities and NGOs for skill development, enabling local people to find jobs in the hospitality industry. It is estimated that around 5,000 families depend directly or indirectly on eco-tourism for their livelihood.

What is even more important is that TATR's management ensures its policies are gender-inclusive, providing training and opportunities for women in wildlife tourism. Of the 360 safari guides in TATR, 30 are women. Some of these women used to lead night safaris in the buffer zone, some are specialist birding guides, and a few are even award-winning guides. Additionally, 72 women have been trained as Gypsy drivers. All of these women are from local communities.

Moreover, nature campsites in the villages of Agarzari and Madnapur are managed by their respective Eco-Development Committees. The kitchens in these camps are run by local Women's Self-Help Groups (SHGs). These SHGs consist of women who come together to save money, offer loans to members, explore livelihood opportunities, and address social issues. SHGs play a key role in women's empowerment by providing financial stability, enhancing their decision-making roles, and creating income-generating opportunities.

Last month, I visited the Madnapur campsite to conduct a session during the ongoing safari guides training. The delicious lunch I had there was prepared by members of the Jai Ambika Swayam Sahayata Group. When I complimented the women on their cooking, they were delighted. I spoke with a few of them and was impressed by their dedication.

Madnapur Campsite has tent accommodations, and seven women from Jai Ambika SHG manage the kitchen, serving food to tourists. All these women come from farming families and work hard to ensure visitors have a pleasant dining experience.

Madnapur village is home to around two dozen SHGs, with one group managing the kitchen for a year at a time. The TATR management provides basic infrastructure like the kitchen, utensils, and utilities. The SHG running the canteen handles everything from procuring ingredients to serving food and collecting payments. Importantly, all the revenue goes to the SHG, with TATR taking no share of the profit.

This initiative is a significant step toward women's empowerment. Every woman working here earns a few thousand rupees a month, which helps support her family financially. Regular interactions with tourists also boost their confidence and communication skills. It's truly heartwarming to see their happy, confident faces.

Next time you plan a safari in TATR's buffer zone, consider staying at the Agarzari or Madnapur campsite and enjoy a meal prepared by these empowered women.

- 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. Your photograph/experience must be related to TATR only. The best content will be published with due credit.



NIGHT RAIDER! Captured by a camera trap, a leopard- an elusive predator is seen stealthily carrying its hard-earned kill back to its hidden lair. This rare glimpse into the nocturnal world highlights the leopard's precision and agility in its quest for survival.

THE ACHIEVERS (July-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 July 2024.



Forest Guard - D. D. Dhandare
Beat - Kuwani
Round - Kolsa
Range - Kolsa
Division - Core TATR
Duration - 18 Days
Target - 125Km/Month
Actual Patrolling - 193.97 Km



Forest Guard - S. M. Thamke
Beat - Khandala-II
Round - Warvat
Range - Chandrapur Buffer
Division - Buffer TATR
Duration - 28 Days
Target - 125Km/Month
Actual Patrolling - 390.89 Km

Explore
Tadoba
Like
Never
Before!



Scan for



Tadoba Mavio

Scan for



www.mytadoba.maharashtra.gov.in



**Boating
Site**

Sitarwimpeth

For Booking
Surendra Mangani
M. 8657935941



Kayaking

Moharli

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



Adventure
Agarjani

For Booking
Ajay Kodape
M. 9730853324



**Camping
Site**
Agarjani &
Madinapur

For Booking
Ajay Kodape
M. 9730853324
Rupesh
M. 7083669491



Cycling

Moharli

For Booking
Sanjay
M. 9834689541
Avinash
M. 9158928393

PREY-MANAGEMENT OF A TIGRESS

In the enchanting wilderness of Tadoba, our quest led us to an intriguing scene early one morning. The previous evening, we had witnessed a majestic tigress bring down a large wild boar, a feat that left me eager to see how she would manage her hard-earned meal. With the sun barely rising, we returned to the spot where we knew the tigress would likely be.

As we arrived, a line of vehicles awaited along a narrow road. Our seasoned driver and guide, experts in the art of wildlife tracking, chose a strategic position across a patch of grass. They reasoned that a water body lay between us and the tigress's last known location. According to them, the tigress would drag the boar's carcass towards the water, softening the flesh with its moisture—an insight based on years of experience and observation.

True to their prediction, as the day warmed up, the tigress began her task. With a deliberate and powerful pull, she dragged the wild boar's body from the grassy cover and moved it towards a nearby water pool. It was a remarkable sight—the tigress, a symbol of strength and grace, manoeuvring her kill with impressive skill.

After depositing the boar in the water, our guide anticipated that the tigress would take a rest. Dragging the heavy carcass was strenuous work, and she needed to recuperate while the meat became tender. We decided to wait and observe, hopeful for more insights into her behaviour.

During our wait, other vehicles moved on, leaving the area quieter. We parked our gypsy at the road's edge and resumed our vigil. After a while, the tigress emerged, her coat gleaming with freshness. She approached the water, checked her kill, and then with remarkable dexterity, pulled it out of the pool. Her next move was equally fascinating—she dragged the boar to a different patch of grass on the opposite side of the water.

What a spectacle it was! I had the privilege to witness and photograph the entire process in detail. The tigress's tail played a crucial role, acting as a support and balancing mechanism while she carried, pulled, or lifted the boar's body. This tail work not only showcased her physical prowess but also helped her avoid leaving drag marks, thus minimizing the chances of scavengers following her.

Every detail of the tigress's meticulous work was captivating. From her powerful pulls to her strategic placement of the kill, it was a reminder of the raw, unfiltered nature of wildlife. Each movement showed her strength, strategy, and survival instincts.

As we concluded our observation, I realized that this experience had ticked off another wish from my bucket list. Witnessing such a detailed display of a tigress's handling of her prey was a rare and extraordinary privilege. This encounter provided a deep, satisfying glimpse into the life of one of nature's most formidable predators, making our early morning adventure truly unforgettable.



MY DINING PLACE
MY HOME
MY FOREST



When We Build Your Home in Pune,
We Also Care for Their Home in Tadoba!

- Sanjay Deshpande
Wildlife Enthusiast,
Sanjeevani Developers, Pune



📧 jungle_belles
📞 jungle_belles
🌐 www.junglebelles.in
☎ +91 7756081922



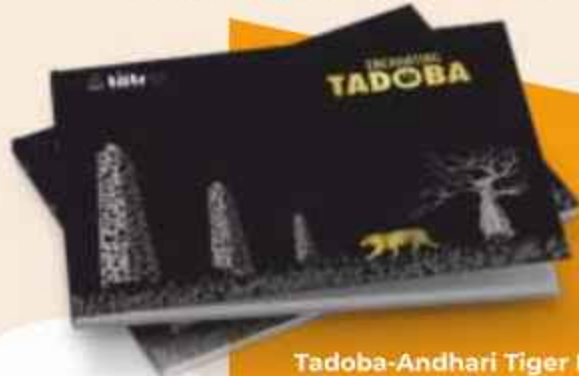
sanjeevanidevelopers 📧
Sanjeevani Dave 📞
www.sanjeevanidevs.com 🌐
020-79648951 | +91 98509 63387 ☎





TADOBA PUBLICATIONS

Available at entry gates & website : www.tadobastore.com/collections/special-issue



₹ 2500/-
only
GET NOW

Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve
Presents
its very own
COFFEE TABLE BOOK
Enchanting
Tadoba



₹ 1000/-
only
Get Now

Limited-time offer!

Tadoba
DIARIES
Collector's Edition-II

A **must-have** book for any Tadoba enthusiast Collated content from the first **12 issues** having **242 pages** full of stunning wildlife photographs, exclusive interviews and behind-the-scenes insights!

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.

Scan QR for UPI Payment



UPI ID: tadoba@okicpb

- ▶ 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.

DIGITAL COPY
Subscription



Tadoba
DIARIES

Scan



Visit the website

OR <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, _____

