

India Wilds®

Newsletter

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Cover Page Photograph:

Vatnajökull National Park
by Ranbir Mahapatra

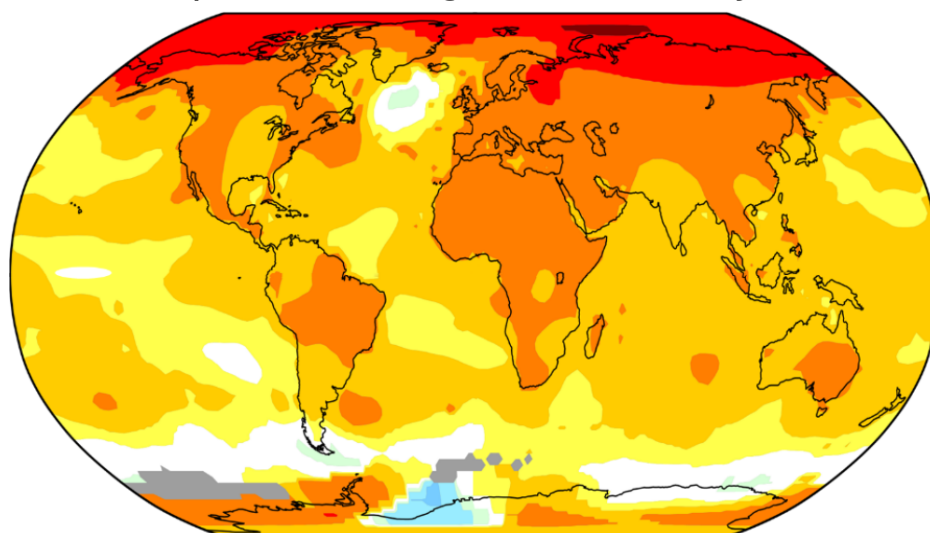
Climate Crisis: Planet Earth in 2020

The Planet Earth is gripped by a Climate Crisis. Unprecedented heat waves in Arctic, melting of permafrost, sudden extreme weather events like landslides, storms, rains etc are increasingly occurring at a regular frequency. Since the early part of 2020 when the severity of the Covid 19 pandemic became known, Climate Change has been forgotten by the various Governments. Despite occasional mouthing of some vague commitments about climate affirmative actions, not much has happened on the ground. In fact pristine forests continue to be diverted for industrial projects and dams, despite protests by environment lovers.

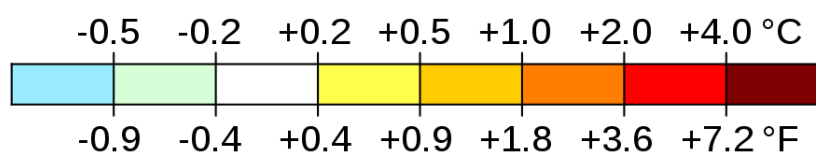
There were some who initially rejoiced as the pandemic induced lockdown resulted in clear skies, and pollution free rivers. However, that was only for a short period of time before things came back to earlier standards. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in its recent “State of the Global Climate 2020” report has said that the pandemic related economic slow-down failed to put a brake on climate change drivers and accelerating impacts. Concentrations of major greenhouse gases like CO₂, CH₄, and N₂O, continued to increase despite the temporary reduction in emissions in 2020 related to measures taken in response to COVID-19.

The extreme weather and covid 19 came as a double whammy for millions of people in 2020. 2020 was the one of the three warmest years of record.

Temperature change in the last 50 years



2011-2020 average vs 1951-1980 baseline





And this is not an isolated incident. The past six years, including 2020, have been the six warmest years on record. Temperatures reached 38.0 °C at Verkhoyansk, Russian Federation on 20 June, the highest recorded temperature anywhere north of the Arctic Circle.

People often fail to realise the real significations of data and can easily ignore 2020 as it is not the hottest year on record. In 2016 which is the hottest year on record, there was an exceptionally strong El Niño which contributes to higher global temperatures. However, in 2020, the El Niño conditions were neutral or comparatively weak to 2016. La Niña contributes to cooling of the ocean surface. By late September 2020 La Niña conditions had developed. So one can realise 2020 could have been worse than 2016.

The global mean temperature for 2020 was 1.2 ± 0.1 °C above the 1850–1900 baseline. The WMO assessment is based on five global temperature data sets. The spread of the five estimates of the annual global mean ranges between 1.15 °C and 1.28 °C above pre-industrial levels and it would be pertinent to mention that Paris Agreement tries to hold the global temperature rise to less than 2 deg c above pre-industrial levels. So if the Paris agreement needs to be effective, then we have to act now or else the temperature rise will be more than 2 °C above pre-industrial levels and then there will be no looking back as it will simply become irreversible.

2020 also saw other extreme weather events. In India, between June and September 2020 the rainfall was 9% more than average. 2020 was one of the two wettest monsoon seasons since 1994. They WMO study finds that “The number of cyclones were above average with 98 named tropical storms in the 2020 northern hemisphere and 2019/2020 southern hemisphere seasons. The North Atlantic region had a very active season, with 30 tropical cyclones this was more than double the long-term average and broke the record for a full season set in 2005.”

Cyclone Amphan which hit India and Bangladesh on 20th May 2020, had reached category 5 in the Bay of Bengal and then lowered to Category 2 storm during landfall. It resulted in 129 deaths because 1.3 million people were evacuated before hand in the state of Odisha. There were large scale evacuations in Bangladesh as well. However, the economic impact was undeniable. Cyclone Amphan caused \$14 billion US Dollars worth economic losses. Similarly there have been many loss of life and economic losses due to other cyclones throughout the world in 2020.

The Arctic and Antarctic are getting impacted by climate change and that is a serious cause of concern. Every year the sea ice melts during the summer and scientists have been recording the minimum level of sea-ice cover. Since the record keepings began, September 2020 marks the second lowest sea-ice recorded in the Arctic. The reports says that the sea-ice retreat in the Laptev Sea was the earliest observed in the satellite era.

The Climate change induced warming is also resulting in massive changes to Antarctica. The Antarctic mass loss trend accelerated around 2005, and currently, Antarctica loses approximately 175 to 225 Gt of ice per year. All this loss of sea ice means the sea water level is rising. It means human habitations along the coasts are going to be inundated soon. Low lying atolls and island nations have nowhere else to go when the sea level rise results in drowning of their cities. Even many coastal cities in India, including some of our metro cities are going to be impacted. The coastal communities are often the most marginal among the communities and their displacement is going to result in lot of economic challenges as well as social strife.

The WMO report points out that *“Over the past decade (2010–2019), weather- related events triggered an estimated 23.1 million displacements of people on average each year. The overwhelming majority of weather-related displacements take place within national borders, though cross-border movements may also occur. Some 9.8 million displacements, largely due to hydrometeorological hazards and disasters, were recorded during the first half of 2020, mainly concentrated in South and South-East Asia and the Horn of Africa.”*

India too has to be prepared to face human displacements due to climate change induced extreme weather events like rains, flooding, landslides, sea level rise etc. It would be difficult for a country like India to handle millions of poor leaving their homes and trying to settle elsewhere. In 2020 we have already seen the painful tragedy of people walking down hundreds of kilometers to reach their villages during lockdown. Such kinds of repeated journeys will take away the faith of the people on Government. A nation remains effective till the time majority of the people have faith in the governance of the Government. Without that chaos will reign supreme.

Climate change is an issue that can't be put on the backburner even while fighting a serious pandemic as actions need to be taken all the time. Else, we will live to regret it.

Photo Feature -

Buff striped keelback catching frog

By Samrat Sarkar

A frog being targeted by a Buff striped keelback snake:



The snake tightly held the hind leg of the frog in its mouth:



Article -

The frog was desperately trying to free itself but wasn't really succeeded:



The snake was trying lift the frog:



Article -

The snake was trying take away the frog in the bushes. So its started dragging the frog:



Finally the frog surrendered its life:



Conservation News -

101 Nobel laureates issue joint statement against burning fossil fuels

In an unprecedented move Dalai Lama and hundred other Noble laureates have signed a joint statement against burning of fossil fuels calling it the major contributor to climate change. Highlighting the fact that the burning of fossil fuels has resulted in 80% of carbon dioxide emissions since Industrial revolution, they have urged to follow science, phase out fossil fuels and invest in renewable energies. This letter had been coordinated by the NGO Fossil fuel treaty. The following is the statement in full.

Nobel Laureates' Statement to Climate Summit World Leaders: Keep Fossil Fuels in the Ground

As Nobel Laureates from peace, literature, medicine, physics, chemistry and economic sciences, and like so many people around the globe, we are seized by the great moral issue of our time: the climate crisis and commensurate destruction of nature.

Climate change is threatening hundreds of millions of lives, livelihoods across every continent and is putting thousands of species at risk. The burning of fossil fuels – coal, oil, and gas – is by far the major contributor to climate change.

We write today, on the eve of Earth Day 2021 and the Leaders' Climate Summit, hosted by President Biden, to urge you to act now to avoid a climate catastrophe by stopping the expansion of oil, gas and coal.

We welcome President Biden and the US government's acknowledgement in the Executive Order that "Together, we must listen to science and meet the moment." Indeed, meeting the moment requires responses to the climate crisis that will define legacies. Qualifications for being on the right side of history are clear.

For far too long, governments have lagged, shockingly, behind what science demands and what a growing and powerful people-powered movement knows: urgent action is needed to end the expansions of fossil fuel production; phase out current production; and invest in renewable energy.

The burning of fossil fuels is responsible for almost 80% of carbon dioxide emissions since the industrial revolution. In addition to being the leading source of emissions, there are local pollution, environmental and health costs associated with extracting, refining, transporting and burning fossil fuels. These costs are often paid by Indigenous peoples and marginalized communities. Egregious industry practices have led to human rights violations and a fossil fuel system that has left billions of people across the globe without sufficient energy to lead lives of dignity.

For both people and the planet, continued support must be given to tackling climate change through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Paris Agreement. Failure to meet the Paris Agreement's temperature limit of 1.5°C risks pushing the world towards catastrophic global warming.

Yet, the Paris Agreement has no mention of oil, gas or coal. Meanwhile, the fossil fuel industry continues to plan

Conservation News -

new projects. Banks continue to fund new projects. According to the most recent United Nations Environment Programme report, 120% more coal, oil, and gas will be produced by 2030 than is consistent with limiting warming to 1.5°C. Efforts to meet the Paris Agreement and to reduce demand for fossil fuels will be undermined if supply continues to grow.

The solution is clear: fossil fuels must be kept in the ground.

Leaders, not industry, hold the power and have the moral responsibility to take bold actions to address this crisis. We call on world leaders to work together in a spirit of international cooperation to:

1. End new expansion of oil, gas and coal production in line with the best available science as outlined by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and United Nations Environment Program;
2. Phase out existing production of oil, gas and coal in a manner that is fair and equitable, taking into account the responsibilities of countries for climate change and their respective dependency on fossil fuels, and capacity to transition;
3. Invest in a transformational plan to ensure 100% access to renewable energy globally, support dependent economies to diversify away from fossil fuels, and enable people and communities across the globe to flourish through a global just transition.

Fossil fuels are the greatest contributor to climate change. Allowing the continued expansion of this industry is unconscionable. The fossil fuel system is global and requires a global solution – a solution the Leaders' Climate Summit must work towards. And the first step is to keep fossil fuels in the ground.

Equipment Discussions -

Canon Announces development of Professional Full-Frame EOS R3 Mirrorless Camera

Canon has announced that it is launching the EOS R3, a powerful fullframe mirrorless camera which is slotted between the EOS R5 and the EOS 1DX Mark III. During the still photography days in the late nineties and early 2000s Canon has its EOS 3 with eye controlled auto focus. Now Canon has brought back the eye controlled autofocus to a camera branded as EOS R3, trying to create a similar segmentation.

The details are still sketchy and we don't know the resolution yet. Nevertheless, it is expected that the overheating issues faced by the EOS R5 will not be seen in the EOS R3.



PRESS RELEASE

Developing News: Canon Announces That The Powerful Professional Full-Frame EOS R3 Mirrorless Camera Is On Its Way

The Company Is Also Welcoming Three New RF Lenses: The Canon RF100mm F2.8 L Macro IS USM, RF400mm F2.8 L IS USM and RF600mm F4L IS USM

Equipment Discussions -

MELVILLE, NY, April 14, 2021– Canon U.S.A. Inc., a leader in digital imaging solutions, today announced that its parent company, Canon Inc., is developing a new, high-performance professional camera — the Canon EOS R3*. When it arrives, the EOS R3 will be an outstanding complement to the three new RF lenses the company also introduced today — The Canon RF 100mm F2.8 L Macro IS USM, RF400mm F2.8 L IS USM and RF600mm F4 L IS USM.

“The development of the Canon EOS R3 and the launch of the new RF lenses are the latest testament to the company’s commitment to professional still and video image and content creators,” said Tatsuro “Tony” Kano, executive vice president and general manager of Canon U.S.A.’s Imaging Technologies & Communications Group. “When the camera becomes available, it will pair well with each of the new RF lenses announced today. Canon is excited to share this news today, and we look forward to seeing the images captured with the new RF lenses and upcoming EOS R3.”

Under Development - The Canon EOS R3

The Canon EOS R3 will join the current lineup of EOS R full-frame mirrorless series cameras. This camera will usher in a new category to the EOS R system, positioned squarely between the EOS R5 and EOS-1D X Mark III cameras. The camera will put great emphasis on superb AF performance and speed, with fast-moving subjects. It is being designed to meet the reliability and durability demands of professionals, even when working in challenging conditions.

At the heart of the EOS R3 camera’s performance will be an EOS camera first, a Canon-developed, full-frame stacked CMOS sensor with a back-illuminated design, providing substantially faster read-out speeds during still-imaging recording. This completely new sensor is designed to produce less “rolling shutter” distortion during Electronic Shutter operation and offer continuous Electronic Shutter still-image shooting at speeds up to 30 fps — with full Dual Pixel CMOS AF and auto exposure¹.

The AF system will leverage technology and performance from the well-received EOS R5 and EOS R6 cameras, using Deep Learning technology to further enhance eye and body detection for even better performance during portrait and action-type shooting. In addition, the EOS R3’s subject detection AF will offer new recognizable subjects for its AF system, bolstering its focusing capabilities during challenging shooting conditions.

The Electronic Viewfinder of the EOS R3 will offer photographers the ability to select the initial area for AF tracking by simply looking directly at the viewfinder location where they want to begin AF. When using the Electronic Viewfinder of the EOS R3 Eye Control AF² will offer photographers the ability to select the initial area for AF tracking by simply looking directly at the viewfinder location where they want to begin AF.

The camera body will be entirely new and accentuates the camera’s high-performance design. It’s a one-piece design, integrating the body with a vertical grip section. The weather and dust-resistance will be equivalent to that of EOS-1D class cameras — an essential consideration for nature, wildlife, sports and photojournalism content creators working in extreme conditions. In addition, news photojournalists will be excited to add the Mobile File Transmitter application for iOS and Android devices that will be available.

Full details of all the EOS R3’s features and specifications will be provided at the time of its formal announcement*.

- *fp L - A big canvas for big moments* Back-illuminated 35mm full size effective approx. 61 megapixels Bayer sensor Contrast detection autofocus + Phase detection autofocus Supports USB power supply
- *fp - A small camera for a big freedom* Back-illuminated 35mm full size effective approx. 24.6 megapixels Bayer sensor

Equipment Discussions -

From Up-Close To Far Away, New Canon RF Lenses Have You Covered

The Canon RF100mm F2.8 L Macro IS USM lens is not only Canon's first RF lens designed specifically for macro photography, but also the world's first³ medium telephoto macro lens with a maximum magnification of 1.4x. The new lens, designed for both advanced photo enthusiasts and professionals, takes macro photography expression to the next level with the introduction of a spherical aberration (SA) control ring. The SA control ring allows users to change the character and appearance of the bokeh and obtain a softer focus effect with a simple turning of the ring to the desired result.



Additional features of the Canon RF100mm F2.8L Macro IS USM include:

- Optical Image Stabilizer with up to five stops of Shake Correction⁴.
- When combined with a camera featuring In-Body Image Stabilizer, up to eight stops of shake correction⁵ is possible with coordinated operation of Optical and In-Body Image Stabilizer.
- Hybrid IS helps to compensate for angular and shift camera shake during macro shooting.
- High-speed, smooth and quiet auto focus with dual nano USM.
- Customizable control ring that allows photographers to adjust exposure compensation, shutter speed, aperture or ISO.
- Rugged Canon L-series dust and water-resistant design.

Equipment Discussions -

Canon RF400mm F2.8L IS USM and Canon RF600mm F4

The Canon RF400mm F2.8L IS USM and Canon RF600mm F4L IS USM are both designed to be optically identical to their EF counterparts. The RF400mm and RF600mm weigh in at 6.37 and 6.81 pounds with a minimum focusing distance of 8.2 and 13.8 feet, respectively. Both lenses share many of the same critical features that help professional high-end super-telephoto lenses stand out from the crowd.

Those features include:

- Ideal for a wide variety of shooting situations, including sports, aviation, trains, automotive, and wildlife, such as birding.
- Optical Image Stabilization with up to 5.5 stops⁶ of shake correction. Including three IS Operation Modes — still subjects, panning, and irregular movement.
- Proprietary Canon lens coatings, Super Spectra Coating (SSC), and Air Sphere Coating (ASC) help minimize ghosting and flaring. Lens placement and coatings are optimized to provide users with clear, high-contrast images even when there is a bright light source.
- Lenses include fluorite and super UD lens elements arranged in such a way to help correct chromatic aberration and make the models more compact. Like the latest Canon EF400mm f/2.8L IS III USM and EF600mm f/4L IS III USM lenses, released in the fall of 2018, weight on these RF-series super-telephotos has been significantly reduced vs. previous-generation Canon super tele designs.
- Compatible with Canon RF 1.4x and 2x extenders, and feature a customizable electronic focus ring, with manual focus capability during SERVO AF.
- A nine-blade circular aperture provides users beautiful bokeh and ideally blurred backgrounds when the aperture is stopped down.
- For added convenience when on a shoot, two focus presets are available. Users can instantly return to one of two memorized focus distances.
- Rugged Canon L-series dust and water-resistant design with vibration and shock resistance. The front element has been dressed with a fluorine coating for easy cleaning.
- Infrared reflective pigments with high reflectance and titanium oxide lens barrel coating with silica provide excellent UV weather resistance and heat reduction.



Canon RF Lenses Pricing and Availability

The Canon RF100mm F2.8 L Macro IS USM, Canon RF400mm F2.8 L IS USM and Canon RF600mm F4L IS USM are scheduled to be available in July 2021 for an estimated retail price of **\$1,399.00**, **\$11,999.00** and **\$12,999.00**, respectively*.

Equipment Discussions -

Sennheiser reinvents the MKE 400 compact shotgun microphone

Sennheiser re-invents the MKE 400 – a compact shotgun mic that delivers the professional features you demand from a camera microphone

APRIL 07, 2021

For vloggers, videographers and mobile journalists, storytelling is equal parts art and craft. Perhaps more than anything else, it is sound that makes a story come to life. Whether interviews, commentary or ambience, sound is the key to captivating and drawing in an audience. To provide creators with a tool to explore their sonic horizons, Sennheiser has launched the new MKE 400 – a highly directional compact shotgun microphone that brings compelling audio to DSLR/Ms and mobile devices alike.

“Much has been said about the importance of good audio for video,” says Kai Lange, Senior Product Manager at Sennheiser. “Now, the new MKE 400 lets users experience how vastly it improves in-camera audio, lifting storytelling to the next level and wowing audiences. We’re replacing the well-known and much loved MKE 400 with this new model, and even die-hard fans will agree that the latest version surpasses the original in many ways. The new MKE 400 now also features a headphone monitoring output with volume control, has a rugged internal shock-mount, clever internal windscreen and automatic on/off function, plus it comes with ample accessories included.”

Your audio upgrade: the MKE 400 compact shotgun microphone enhances in-camera audio for vloggers, videographers and mobile journalists

Everything you need to capture compelling audio

I. A highly directional microphone to focus on your subject and eliminate background noise



Equipment Discussions -

The MKE 400 achieves its directionality with an acoustic interference tube, providing a super-cardioid polar pattern that ensures pick-up from the direction in which the camera is facing while cancelling out distracting noise from the sides. The result: dialogue recordings with presence and clarity that will help bring your content to life.



2. Protection from wind and handling noise

The MKE 400's shock-mounted capsule minimizes handling noise, while the cleverly designed microphone housing doubles as a standard windscreen. For outdoor use, a furry windshield is included: Simply place it over the integrated windscreen for maximum wind protection while recording. The microphone's low-cut filter also does its part in removing problematic low frequencies like the hum from air-conditioning systems or the rumble from wind.

3. Flexible adaptation to any sound source

In your creation process, you will come across loud and confident speakers – but you will also want to catch those softer voices. The 3-step sensitivity switch adjusts the audio level to the mic input of the camera, helping you to address all the differences in dynamics that you encounter on a shoot.

4. Full control over the sound

One of the most important things when recording audio is to check levels and monitor your sound. Therefore, the MKE 400 is not only fitted with a low-cut filter and three-step sensitivity switch to fine-tune your sound but also with a headphone monitoring output and integrated 8-step digital volume control, as not every camera has its own audio output. You can plug any headphone with a 3.5 mm (1/8") jack directly into the MKE 400 and conveniently check levels and audio performance while rolling.

5. Versatility

Your video recording is most likely not confined to one device, and your microphone doesn't have to be either. The MKE

Equipment Discussions -

400 includes 3.5 mm TRS and TRRS locking cables to be used with DSLR/M cameras or mobile devices, ensuring that switching from one device to another is accomplished with ease. The mic's cold-shoe mount with 1/4-20 thread allows for universal mounting atop of cameras, gimbals or even at the end of a boom pole.

6. The luxury of a small package

A wise saying is that the best mic is the one you actually have at hand. The MKE 400 helps you stay ready by being so compact and lightweight that you can take it anywhere. The microphone housing doubles as a standard windscreen, and the shock-mount is inside it – this not only leaves valuable space in the camera bag but also on the camera itself, providing room for other accessories. Speaking of accessories – the MKE 400's cables are coiled and locking so they stay out of your way and stay securely connected while shooting.

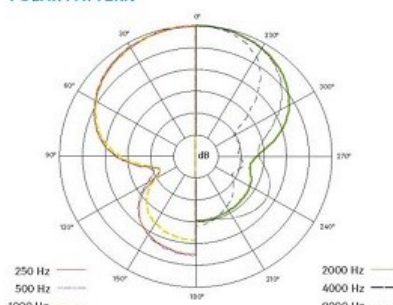
7. Generous operating time

It takes just two AAA batteries to power the microphone for up to 100 hours of continuous audio capture. A low battery indicator will reliably warn you three hours before the batteries run flat – more than enough time to finish the shot you're working on.

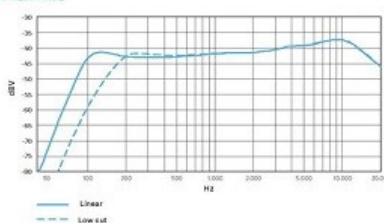
8. Manual or automatic power on/off

When connected to DSLR/M cameras, the MKE 400 automatically powers on/off with the camera. So your mic is ready the instant your camera is, and helps you save energy when you're not rolling. Power detection also works with many smartphone models: if you remove the MKE 400, it will automatically turn off. A manual power button is provided too, featuring an off-delay to avoid any accidental operation.

POLAR PATTERN



FREQUENCY RESPONSE



SPECIFICATIONS

Microphone	
Transducer principle	pre-polarized condenser
Frequency response	50 – 20,000 Hz
Pick-up pattern	super cardioid
Sensitivity at 1 kHz	-23 / -42 / -63 dBV/Pa
Max SPL at 1 kHz	132 dB SPL
Power supply	battery (2x AAA / LR03 size, 1.5 V)
Auto power function	plug-in power required (2 - 10 V)
Operating time	> 100 h*
Low battery indicator	> 3 h of remaining operating time
Microphone output	3.5 mm jack, screwable
Dimensions	126 x 67 x 37 mm
Weight	93.5 g
* less when headphone is connected	
Headphone output	
Headphone output	3.5 mm jack
Min. headphone impedance	16 Ω
Output power at 1 kHz	105 mW (headphone impedance 16 Ω) 70 mW (headphone impedance 32 Ω)
Total harmonic distortion	< 1 % at 50 mW
Digital volume control	8 steps of 6 dB

The Mobile Kit – an ideal option to get started on great sound

The MKE 400 is also available as “MKE 400 Mobile Kit” which additionally includes a Sennheiser Smartphone Clamp and Manfrotto PIXI Mini Tripod in a convenient package for your camera bag or mobile set-up.

The MKE 400 retails at **EUR 199 (MSRP), GBP 179 (MSRP), USD 199.95 (MAP).**

The MKE 400 Mobile Kit is available at **EUR 229 (MSRP), GBP 199 (MSRP), USD 229.95 (MAP).**

Natural History -

COUNTRY NOTEBOOK: Fish Owl: M.Krishnan:- 23-12-1951

The Sunday Statesman (shared by Shri. Saktipada Panigrahi)

"Now that winter has set in, even in the South darkness come early and the day no longer turns to night with that dramatic suddenness beloved of Anglo-Indian writers of romantic fiction. From six O'clock till seven almost, there is a clear twilight that deepens slowly into obscure night. And now is the time to look for greater owls, for the cool grey evenings bring them out prematurely.

Our owls do not say "Tu-whit-to-who", nor mope and complain to the moon- the lesser ones velp, chatter and shriek with



demoniac gusto and the great owls hoot in deep, resonant voices that carry far. None of them, I think, has so unearthly as the Brown Fish-Owl. Soon after it emerges from its daytime retreat, its hollow boom comes floating down the dusk, startlingly sepulchral and near-sounding; later in the night, it sits bolt upright on its perch and chuckles in a muffled, snoring grunt. No doubt this bird is responsible of the evil reputations of certain countryside paths by night.

This is one of our biggest owls, dark and mottled, with a heavy cubist build and a square, eared head. Its squat, erect silhouette hardly suggests a bird, in poor light- once, a friend and I mistook it for a monkey slumped on a rock. The fish-owl haunts ravines, watercourses, resting by day in the secret heart of some ancient clump of trees. It is no city bird, but at night it often visits village tanks or sits on rooftops staring percipiently into the darkness from enormous, round eyes.

The fish-owl is distinguished from the great horned-owls by its flatter "horns" and the fact that its legs are unfeathered and naked. Its feet are strikingly like osprey's, covered with gripping scales and meant for the same purpose, for holding slippery prey. However, it does not plunge headlong into the water after the fish but sails over the surface on hushed wings and lifts its prey out. Though it is much given to fishing, fish and crabs and

such aquatic creatures do not constitute its sole food. It is known to prey on birds and small mammals and I believe it occasionally hunts fair-sized quarry, like rock-pigeons.

I used to know a colony of Blue Rock-Pigeons that had their home in a large natural grotto in a river-rift gorge. Almost all the pigeons disappeared from here suddenly, and a fish-owl was seen about the place at the same time. I realise that this is highly inconclusive evidence, and that it might well be that the departure of the pigeons had nothing to do with the entry of the owl on the scene- perhaps others, more comprehensive in their observation, can confirm or dispel my suspicions.

I know of another instance of a pair of Brown Fish-Owls haunting the abode of pigeons, but I am almost sure that in this case the racing pigeons within were not its attraction. The owls used to come to sit on the domed roof of the loft, on a level with my bedroom window, and lying awake I have often watched them flying soundlessly about in the dew-drenched moon-light, returning periodically to the loft. I think these nocturnal fishers were drawn to the place by the small tanks around it. The way they flapped their broad wings rapidly, threshing the cold, luminous air to rise vertically without the hint of a swish was uncanny; they also used to sail around on spreadwings. Perhaps they were courting, if such sapient-looking birds can descend to such frivolity, for they indulged in much pointless flight.

It is said that the silent flight of owls help them in locating the quarry by its sounds, besides providing a warningless swoop down to the kill. There seems to be much in this, for they have marvellous sight by dimmest light, hearing is an added advantage when the prey is in thin cover. Obviously, a bird flapping its wings noisily can hear little besides its own flight, and since all owls do quite a lot of hunting while coasting around, the silence of their down-lined pinions must be of real value to them. Perhaps fish-owls are more dependent on sight than others of the tribe, and that is why they have such big eyes- but it is a mistake to think that aquatic creatures are silent; fish break the surface of the stream audibly, and even crabs can be heard if there is hushed silence all around."-M.Krishnan

This was first published on 23 December 1951 in The Sunday Statesman

Re-published on 22 July 2012

- M. Krishnan

Wildlife Photography -

Tiger by Sabyasachi Patra



Leopard by Shyamala Kumar



Wildlife Photography -

Black-headed-Ibis with snake by Mrudul Godbole



Painted Francolin by Vineet Shrivastava



Wildlife Photography - **Mating-Millipede by Arun Acharjee**



Ant Mantis Nymph by Prajwal Ullal





This is the 148th Issue of IndiaWilds Newsletter. A closeup of a receding glacier adorns the coverpage of this issue. This image is from Vatnajokull National Park, Iceland.

We are at a time the inefficiency and apathy of the political leaders have exacerbated the impact of Covid_19. When the entire country is in the grips of this pandemic it is easy for everyone to lose focus on the brewing Climate Crisis. Our Planet Earth is giving us signs which we are consistently failing to read. The melting glaciers are receding at a fast pace. While we are busy wondering at the texture and beauty of the ice formations as the glaciers recede, the core issue remains unresolved. When will we take serious steps to fundamentally alter our high carbon lifestyle so that we start limiting the emissions and help contain the global temperature rise to below 2 deg centigrade over the pre-industrial revolution time? Unless people wake up to the reality and demand actions and accountability from their political leaders, our Planet Earth will continue to hurtle down the path of destruction. Public opinion still can change things. So let's give it a last shot to raise awareness.

I look forward to your inputs and support in preserving the last tracts of wilderness and wildlife of our beautiful country. For other interesting articles and images check - <http://www.indiawilds.com/forums/>

To post in the IndiaWilds forums, you can register free of cost using your Full Name as user id at -

<http://www.indiawilds.com/forums/register.php>

If you are already a member of IndiaWilds and have forgotten your user id and/or password you can mail administrator@indiawilds.com

Regards,

Sabyasachi Patra

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Publisher's address: -
Plot No. 1, Akarpuri Colony,
Near Vaithal Temple, Old Town,
Bhubaneswar, 751002
Odisha
Mobile - +919910900446
