

India Wilds®

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Cover Page Photograph:

Tiger
by Jerin Dinesh

Wildlife Conservation & Discovering India :

History attaches lot of importance to travellers to ancient India. The accounts of Megasthenes, Faxian, Xuanxang, Al Biruni, Ibn Battuta help us in understanding the India of that era. Many scholars used to come to ancient India to learn from the various seats of learning like Uddiyana (Odisha), Gandhara, Takshashila, Kamarupa (Assam), Bodha gaya, Banaras etc. Scholars from various parts of India used to also travel to distant seats of learning. These travels used to help the various travellers in understanding and assimilating the local culture and traditions.

In ancient India apart from trade and commerce, a lot of these travels were for learning, some purely for spirituality and some for spiritual learning. The imprints of these travels have remained in public memory. During our childhood days we were told that you become wise when you travel. People who had returned from abroad were called to speak in functions.

In these days of internet where information is readily available, people still yearn for physical travel as despite the structured way of learning about a place, the element of serendipity is missing. People often realise that those small events or details which can be of interest to them will never be captured in standard web presentations. And when real people meet real men and women during their travels they learn from each other's experiences and expertise. Values and beliefs too leave a strong impression in the minds.

When an economy starts doing well, people get some disposable income in their pockets and they start traveling. However, most of the times they get swayed by glitzy advertisements of foreign destinations and hence enrol with a tour operator to travel abroad. The outbound tour market in India was exploding till the Covid 19 pandemic brought it to a standstill. Outbound tours result in lot of outflow of foreign exchange from India. The foreign countries benefit.



Tigress followed by noisy tourists and photographers



Many years ago the Chinese Government realised this and focused on improving the percentage of people travel within their own country. When people travel within their own country, the domestic economy improves. So the Chinese Government even created a National Day celebrations where people get around a week off. With encouragement from Government, people took to travel in massive numbers to the various tourist places.

In India, the campaign by the tourism ministry is focused on getting external tourists to India. There is not much focus on the domestic traveller. However, immense benefits can accrue if the Government encourages more domestic travellers to explore the beauty in the immense diversity that India offers. A major beneficiary of this move, if well thought-out, will be India's environment and forests as well as the local people and economy.

Tourism Potential:

India offers breath-taking scenic locations to unwind after hectic and stressful life in the urban areas. Beautiful snow-covered mountains as well as sand dunes, deserts as well as lush green rainforests, seashores, lakes, rivers, waterfalls, caves, India has all kinds of scenic locations to soothe your soul. Iconic wildlife species like tigers, lions, leopards, elephants, rhinos, Gaurs etc can mesmerise the tourists. There are 101 National Parks and 553 Wildlife Sanctuaries in India and each one of them has something unique to offer. It needs a lifetime to experience each of these National Parks and wildlife sanctuaries.

Tourism pressure:

At the moment people visit mostly the premier National Parks as they had either seen or heard about it online as well as some photographs, so they want to explore these places. However, this also leads to huge tourism pressure on a few wildlife areas. The forest department is happy to receive lot of revenue from some of these premier national parks. However, concentration of all tourists to a handful of wildlife sanctuaries comes at great risk as wilderness areas are ecologically fragile.

The forest staff at these places also spend disproportionate amount of time catering to tourists and important work like foot patrol and scientific management of the wildlife park is ignored. In some of these places deaths of large wild animals like tigers and elephants have remain unnoticed for days. Considering this, it is important that the tourism is uniformly promoted in various National Parks, wildlife sanctuaries, conservation reserves and community reserves. This will ensure less crowd in wildlife sanctuaries and other protected areas and hence tourists would experience more peace and quiet. Recharging the batteries of our soul can only be through peace and solitude.

Experiential Travel:

Ensuring tourists to smaller and less crowded places like conservation reserves, community reserves and smaller wildlife sanctuaries will also help in more interaction with the local communities. This is especially true when the tourism is managed by the local communities. Too often tourism model is based on big resorts where people are treated well. However, people often complain that it is like big hotels where tourists are given all the creature comforts and people go on safari and then come back and stay in their own world. So tourists also cannot have actual experience of the place like understanding the culture and lifestyle of the local communities. In places where the resorts are run by the local communities, tourists have often interacted with them for eg. watching them cook local dishes, watch the local artisans etc or even accompanying people to see them fish, collect palm juice etc. At the moment, a few tour operators bring in a few locals to do some folk dance or play and it sounds too plasticky and soulless. India needs to move beyond the cliched manner in which tours are run.

In India, the local cuisine changes every 100 kms. Our food habits have evolved based on availability, climate as well as religious beliefs. Often we city bred people are amazed by the profound words cloaked in the earthy manner of the locals and hence remember those as lessons. Observing and experiencing local cultures makes one understand the locals better and also helps in national integration.

When we travel in a responsible manner and ensure that our travel funds go to locals instead of middlemen, then the prosperity of the local community is ensured. When there is more income, there is less reason for the local people to migrate to the big cities and endure the filth, squalor and pain there. At a time when big cities are becoming bigger and bigger and hence ecologically unsustainable, any action which helps in ensuring local livelihoods is one step towards a better environment and better earth.

One challenge of the current tourism safari model is the dependence on big canter and too many jeep safaris into the forests which cause much stress to the wildlife. Too often the tourism pressure is causing change in wildlife behaviour.



If the forest department and the tour operators can work together than tourists can be taken on wildlife patrolling treks. Guides can explain the various flora and fauna and the use of various plants. Such treks with overnight camps in the forest can help patrol the place and also provide some authentic and memorable experience to people. Many corporates would love these for team building activities. There are also lot of people who will get real satisfaction in helping out in foot patrol. If done well, the forest department and local communities can get sustained revenue as these activities can become more popular.

If the forest department can call for story competition among all such participants in the entire state/country, more people can be motivated to write travelogues on their experience, and this can further spread the word. This will also help in taking the focus away from clicking tigers and help understand the flora and fauna better.

The reason why our environment and forests are easily devastated is because people in power don't understand the impact of their actions. If people can participate in real experiential and conscious travel then the issues faced by forests as well as local communities can be easily understood and alternate solutions found.

Similarly, with the increased health consciousness people can start understanding the agricultural practices in the various communities, while visiting nearby wildlife areas. This will also help them understand the challenges of the farming community. Many people are tech savvy and if they are able to understand the issues of the farming community, including challenges of synthetic pesticides and synthetic fertilisers poisoning the land, crop loss due to wild herbivores, draught and rain and other such issues then some tourists can perhaps come out with better technological solutions. It has the potential to be win-win for all.

Exploring Herbs:

India prides itself for being the land of Ayurveda. The unprecedented Covid pandemic has made people focus on health juices and other alternate therapies. Tourism to rural areas and forests along with trained guides who can identify various plants and explain their health benefits would be very enriching for people. At the moment there are many ayurvedic practitioners in rural areas who are trying hard to make their living. Tapping their knowledge and making them lead medicinal herb collection tours has the potential to catch the imagination of people. India offers many such potential opportunities for experiential travel. Unfortunately, it is limited due to the lack of knowledge among the tourism professionals.

When money starts flowing to the local economy, the locals will start focusing more on saving the forests. Conservation of wilderness and wildlife has to be seen as intricately linked with the day to day wellbeing of people. Only then India will be able to save its forests and wildlife. In the era of Climate Change, it is imperative that we think in a holistic manner and find out all the different ways and means to save India's forests. Experiential travel can act as an important facet of discovering the uniqueness and soul of India and it will also help in saving India's amazing forests and wildlife.

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PRIDE OF HARYANA: SULTANPUR BIRD SANCTUARY

By Shakti Bishnoi and AS Bishnoi

Sultanpur Bird Sanctuary

The state of Haryana in north India has two National Parks, eight Wildlife Sanctuaries, two Wildlife Conservation Areas, four Animal & Bird Breeding Centers, one Deer park and fifty herbal parks. All these are managed by the forests department. Wildlife and forest areas of Haryana are mainly situated in the foothills of Shivalik hill range in the north and the ancient Aravalli range in south Haryana.

Among its protected areas, Haryana boasts of having the world-famous bird sanctuary at Sultanpur very close to the Gurugram city. Initially designated as a bird sanctuary in 1972, Sultanpur was upgraded to a National Park status on 13th July 1989. Sultanpur National Park is spread over 142.52 hectares and is a wintering ground for numerous migratory birds. Visitors are allowed to park their vehicles at the entrance of the National Park and then enter by foot to observe and photograph the birds. So one can observe the birds in silence and peace.



Sultanpur National Park is just an hour's drive from India's capital. From the hustle–bustle of Delhi to the world of serenity and tranquility in Sultanpur is a big change and hence many visitors make a beeline to visit Sultanpur. When the fog in December started engulfing Delhi, we were encouraged to run away from the concrete jungle. Sultanpur sanctuary being the nearest gateway for exploring nature and since we both wanted our daughter to learn about nature and spend time in observing birds and their behaviour, we often visited the sanctuary on weekends from our house in Delhi. Most of the time we stayed overnight in forest guest house in the sanctuary to be with the wildlife. During such trips, we packed binoculars,

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cameras and winter ladoos (sweets)) made by my mother for our journey.

In our last trip, everything was like a dream. Fog was playing game of hide and seek. Fog was also adding magic to the entire landscape. We could appreciate the beauty of the birds with our eyes and that is our favourite way to learn about wildlife.

Nothing can replace the delight of waking up to the bird songs of migratory birds. So we had decided to stay in the forest rest house adjoining the Sanctuary. After our walk we headed for our room which shares the wall of the sanctuary. Our daughter loves to collect twigs in winter evenings and asked us to make a fire. We roasted sweet potatoes, potatoes, tomatoes and ate to our hearts content. Such small fires, carefully managed so that it cannot spread out of control, gives us heat in winter evenings and fills us with joy and creates lasting memories. After the day's hardwork we slept as soon as we hit the bed.

Next day morning the sweet melodies of birds filled the air at dawn. Our daughter jumped out of the bed. Her enthusiasm was undiminished throughout the day. Soon we headed towards the watch tower as per our plan. Winter was showing its true colours, cool breeze was taking away heat from our body even though we were covered with winter clothing. Our daughter loves to dress according to characters that fancies her. In an earlier trip it was mowgli and now she was Bahubali from the famous film of that name. She was wearing white dhoti and agreed to wear jacket on top. With the silver ankle band, she was joyfully watching everything around her with utmost attention, the fog, trees, water, insects, fallen leaves, flying birds, sitting birds, swimming birds, chatting birds, sleeping birds, fighting birds, snacking birds, neelgai splashing water while running. Big battalions of cranes and great white pelicans surprised our daughter by flying with the huge body. She was constantly comparing her body size with the pelicans, painted stork and other large birds which were 20 metres away from us as if to know whether she can fly. I could see her alternately watching her body and the distant bird and smiling with joy. Visits to these nature parks like Sultanpur helps develop the curious minds of kids and I wish these can be mandatory features for kids of local schools.

The arrowhead formations of Gargeny was wonderful in the fog playing peek-a-boo. Later they jumped splashing cold water on each other. The best part of being pelagic birds is waterproof wings. It reminds us of the power of creation. What is needed for survival is given to all living organisms whether animals or plants. Only humans have problem of accumulating things. And we forget to draw the line and continue to accumulate depriving other humans and other species.

If the water is deep enough on few areas in sultanpur jheel, the common pochards visits, as they are the diving rather than dabbling ducks. If you are lucky, you can also spot the ferruginous ducks. Both the species of geese, greyleg as well as the bar-headed geese visit Sultanpur. They are often spotted wandering the national park all night, and enjoying the morning sun by the lake.

Little stints chirping near the lake shores were enjoying the company of common red-shanks, sandpipers and white-tailed plovers. Large flocks of ruff use the water body only as a transit halt on their way further south, and then on their way back

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north in spring. South of the park is full of larks and wagtails, chasing insects. The acacia woodlands of Sultanpur National Park also play host to black redstarts, canary-flycatchers. During times of good rainfall, the sanctuary has recorded a head-count of around 20,000 birds from October–March, while in those years with scanty rainfall the figure did not even cross 3,000.

We heard Sarus crane call and were filled with joy. We soon started walking towards the northern side of the sanctuary as per the call. As we were nearing the cranes, the calls were becoming louder. And in a clearing, we saw red head shining with the first sun rays on a foggy winter day. Sarus crane pair is very popular in sultanpur jheel and nearby villages because it goes to the fields around the sanctuary. We could see it distinctly now standing more than 5 feet tall. They are the tallest flying birds in the world. Sarus crane was calling to each other very loudly, but



great egret was standing still undeterred by their voices near them. It focused on its goal of catching fishes. Each bird gives us wonderful life lessons, but all we need is to observe them without causing disturbances.

What a sight it was to see them talking loudly with each other. Entire sanctuary was coming to life with their calls. We sat down to soak in the wonderful view of such a majestic creation of God. It made us feel contented with our life, having watched all the selfless creatures around us. We also understood how important it was for us to live in sync with nature.

We too are one of the creatures on this Planet Earth and blessed with tremendous potential to revive the planet we have been exploiting and destroying for centuries. And if we observe carefully, we humans will understand what is needed to be done. And we should do it, rather than wasting our time in futile conversations regarding the same.

We watched the mighty sarus crane for half an hour till they took flight. The Morning sun continued to give us warmth and our spirits soared as the cool breeze started giving us the simulated feel of flying in the open sky. We had a wonderful visit with some lovely sightings. The real feather in the sanctuary's cap is the large number of rare species spotted this season, including the endangered Osprey, the Lesser Flamingos and even the Saker or Cherrug falcon.

As winter comes to an end, these esteemed avian guests start preparing for their journey back home. The atmosphere in the park changes considerably in spring (March–April). There are songs which reverberate in the jheel now would stop. As the

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return journey of gypsies starts, it looks like the interaction amongst them increases manifold, may be they were discussing the route map and plans ahead. The frequency of meetings increases and so is the duration as it appears that there are many heated discussions regarding departure dates and precautions to be taken based on the feedback given. It seems all are in hurry and there is an air of urgency. We feel migrants express heartfelt gratitude towards the resident birds for sharing their land, water and food. Resident birds were expressing how much they enjoyed their stories. Difference between a bird which will migrate and stay back is very simple. The ones who have put on weight will migrate and the ones with normal size will stay back. The birds starts dividing themselves in group like troops preparing for war for the final assault. The waterfowl practice sorties overhead, preparing for their journey back north. On the lakebed, the red-wattled lapwings and black-winged stilts want this to end quickly, they are constantly calling loudly, circling around and showing signs of irritation.



Sarus crane is nowhere to be seen as they have option to find peace in fields nearby. Some resident birds start targeting perfect places for nesting. Coppermith barbet excavate nesting holes. Tailorbirds look for raw material to build a perfect nest to impress their counterpart. And the grey shrike with its eye mask looks around with its detective instincts to observe the territory. The birds starts their journeys and fly in large flocks in the sky. It's a sight to see them so disciplined and systematic to cover the journey of hundreds of miles. Reminds us of the song a hundred miles 'When you hear the birds fly ... for hundred miles.'

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Summer Commences

Summer commences in the month of May and lasts till the end of June. This is the time for the resident birds to enjoy relatively more open spaces and solitude. They now have responsibility to raise their chicks. Red-turtle doves start building their nest on the acacias. The lapwings and stilts still engage in space conflict. With the summer heat peaking, the denizens look forward to the onset of Monsoon season.

Rainfall (Monsoon)

July to September are Sultanpur's most crucial months, for the amount of rainfall determines the extent to which the lake will remain filled in winter. The shortage of water can be reduced by bringing water from a nearby canal via a pipeline.



As the start of Monsoon and first Rainfall were forecasted on early hours of a Saturday morning, we headed for the sanctuary on Friday night to stay there to soak ourselves from a much-needed heavenly downpour on the next day. The first rainfall filled the sanctuary with the fragrance of wet soil and we just sat there without realising how three hours went by. Blades of new grass with shades of green were awake after summer break.

After scorching heat of four summer months the birds were not running away and hiding but, were perched on a place where they could get fully drenched. The state bird of Haryana, the black francolin was calling loudly in joy. By the end of September, the skies clear up and Sultanpur awaits the arrival of migratory birds once again. With all the responsibilities of nest building and rearing of chicks over, the sanctuary echoes with the constant chit chat of relieved birds.

Challenges

- (a) **Water:** the water levels in the sanctuary is receding due to less rainfall. the low levels of water is a threat to lives of both migratory as well as resident birds.
- (b) **Real Estate Business:** Because of real estate development and rapid urbanization, the area has been converted into concrete jungle, choking not only wildlife but humans too. Earlier as per the government guidelines, no constructions were allowed in the ESZ (Eco-sensitive zone) which was five kilometres around the sanctuary boundary, however now the ESZ has been reduced to only 300 meters. What has made the matter worse is a large number of illegal colonies that have sprouted around the area. Lot of residential school and rampant construction is happening as we write.

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(c) **Bunds Destroyed:** The water embankments not only used to drain out the water but also brought rich silts into the region from the annual flooding in the Yamuna River.

Most of the bunds that have now become extinct were set up during the British times. The ones that are surviving continue to remain in a neglected state.

(d) **Extinction of Ponds/Rise of Borewell:** In over 460 ponds spread across Gurugram district, 208 have dried up, 186 are dirty. Even as there has been ban by the court on digging of bore wells, there are over 15,000 illegal bore wells that have been dug up in the city. In most of the areas in the city, the groundwater has fallen to levels of 50 meters. The alarming decline in water levels in the city will affect the Sultanpur Bird sanctuary unless replenished by regular rainwater and river. But that is not possible due to climate change and vagaries of the return monsoon.

(f) **Pesticide:** It is understood that agriculture fields surrounding area of Park, use pesticide for high yield to generate instant income from crop. Although there is demarcated boundary wall /fence to separate sanctuary from cultivable land. But for birds there is no boundary, they can fly outside the perimeter of park in search of food. These birds feed on seeds, insects, fish and grain. They often fly to agricultural fields nearby for food and this can lead to poisoning and might kill them. Efforts should be made to minimize the usage of pesticide and farmers should be encouraged to go nature friendly.

(g) **Climate Change(Global) and Pollution:** We the humans are responsible for climate change and it's time to accept it and take corrective measures on individual levels, household levels, community level and revive the bruised planet earth for our survival, else our time is up.

Covid-19 is the result of human greed. During the Covid 19 induced lockdown, the dominating human race had remained confined indoors and the skies had cleared up due to lack of air pollution, rivers had cleaned up due to lack of industrial effluents. It was a clear sign that nature can quickly heal if the destructive hand of man is removed. Scientists have found that there are many potent viruses buried under the permafrost which are coming out into open due to us and could cause future pandemics. We the human race should get signal that this is the beginning of our end, unless we take immediate steps to save our environment and wilderness places. **We can still save our Planet Earth and ourselves if we think in a holistic manner and act.**



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Conservation News -

1.59 crore rupees Environment Compensation fine on Construction and Demolition entities

5th January

With a view to abate dust and related air pollution from the construction and demolition activities, the Commission for Air Quality Management for Delhi NCR and adjoining areas had directed the Central Pollution Control Board, the State Pollution Control Boards of Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and the Delhi Pollution Control Committee to constitute special teams and launch inspection drives in the premises, processes and transportation of materials related to Construction & Demolition (C&D) activities in the NCR.

Intensive drives were conducted by these agencies from 24.12.2020 to 31.12.2020 by constituting about 227 teams. These teams carried out surprise checks and inspections at more than 3000 C&D sites of which about 386 sites were found to be non-compliant with the various Construction & Demolition (C&D) Waste Management Rules / Guidelines and dust mitigation measures stipulated by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and the Central Pollution Control Board. Further, an amount of approx. Rs.1.59 crore was levied as environment compensation against the defaulting agencies besides orders for stoppage of work at 12 locations.

Compliance with respect to transportation of materials related to Construction & Demolition (C&D) activities was also seen by the inspecting teams. About 325 vehicles, not in conformance with guidelines related to transportation of C&D materials, were levied environment compensation charges of approximately Rs. 1.17 crore.

Such fortnightly drives are planned to be continued to enforce compliance of the C&D waste management rules and related guidelines to abate dust pollution from C&D sector, which contributes significantly to poor air quality in the region.

Joint study group and surveillance squad to check ammoniacal nitrogen in Yamuna

The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) convened a meeting on January 04, with the officials of Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC), Haryana State Pollution Control Board (HSPCB), Delhi Jal Board (DJB), Irrigation & Water Resources Department, Haryana and Irrigation and Flood Control Department, Delhi, to discuss the recurring issue of increase in Ammoniacal Nitrogen in River Yamuna and short and long term remedial actions required.

The long deliberations on the issue identified and agreed that possible reasons could be discharge of untreated sewage from upstream towns in Haryana, discharge from industrial units, Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETPs) and Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs), illegal discharge of sewage from unsewered colonies in outer Delhi through tankers, lean flow in the River Yamuna and anaerobic decomposition of accumulated sludge on river bed.

A study group comprising Delhi Jal Board (DJB), Haryana State Pollution Control Board, Delhi Pollution Control Commit-

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tee, Irrigation and Water Resources Department, Haryana, Irrigation and Flood Control Department, Delhi has been constituted. The group will review uniform monitoring protocol and requirement of strengthening monitoring mechanism, analyse past data and carry out field survey to identify critical hotspots as well as period of high ammonia levels. It has also been asked to suggest short and long term measures for sustained solutions, and submit its report within a month. It was also agreed to constitute a Joint Surveillance Squad comprising DJB, DPCC, Irrigation and Flood Control Department, Delhi, HSPCB and Irrigation and Water Resources Department, Haryana.

It is a well known fact that there is illegal discharge of industrial effluents and untreated sewage into the Yamuna river as well as all rivers in the country. Even the Hon'ble Supreme Court had in the past pointed out that pollution control board officials are corrupt. There should have been regular surveillance to identify discharge of sewage to keep our rivers and other waterbodies clean. Nevertheless, even if regular surveillance is done now still the water quality will improve. However, given the past track records it is very difficult to be optimistic.

Govt. approves advisory for management of Human-Wildlife Conflict in India

The Standing Committee of National Board of Wildlife (SC-NBWL) in its 60th meeting held on 05th January has approved the advisory for management of Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC) in the country. The advisory makes important prescriptions for the States/ Union Territories for dealing with Human-Wildlife conflict situations and seeks expedited inter-departmental coordinated and effective actions.

The advisory envisages empowering gram panchayats in dealing with the problematic wild animals as per the section 11 (1) (b) of Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. Utilising add-on coverage under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna for crop compensation against crop damage due to HWC and augmenting fodder and water sources within the forest areas are some key steps envisaged to reduce HWC. Payment of a portion of ex-gratia as interim relief within 24 hours of the incident to the victim/family.

The advisory also envisages prescribing inter-departmental committees at local/state level, adoption of early warning systems, creation of barriers, dedicated circle wise Control Rooms with toll free hotline numbers which could be operated on 24X7 basis, Identification of hotspots and formulation and implementation of special plans for improved stall-fed farm animal etc.

Some of the other important approvals took place during the meeting are, inclusion of Caracal, a medium size wild cat found in some parts of Rajasthan and Gujarat, into the list of critically endangered species for taking up conservation efforts with financial support under Centrally sponsored Scheme-Development of Wildlife Habitat. Now, there are 22 wildlife species under recovery programme for critically endangered species.

During the meeting, the Standing Committee also recommended the construction of causeway across Jampannavagu to

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Muthapur of Govindaraopet and between Jampannavagu to Motlagudem in Mulugu District of Telengana with certain mitigation measures. It also recommended the proposal for Tinaighat-Castlerock-Caranzol Railway doubling of South Western Railways, Karnataka with certain mitigation measures as advised by the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun.

The other decisions taken at the meeting are construction of a bridge and canal with an aim to augment the water supply and irrigation facilities in villages Madharwa, Thakurapur, Jamdhara and Sugaon in Balrampur District of Uttar Pradesh under the National SaryuNaharPariyojna with certain mitigation measures and the construction of Integrated Bus Terminus cum Commercial complex in Vashi, Navi Mumbai in Thane district with certain mitigation measures. The redeveloped facility will pave way for 17 bus bays and approximately 3,300 bus trips shall be operational, which will greatly benefit in transportation of people in and around Mumbai.

The National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) is constituted by the Central Government under Section 5 A of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (WLP). The Standing Committee of NBWL considers proposals after a series of levels of scrutiny and have recommendations of the State Chief Wildlife Warden, State Government and the State Board for Wildlife. During the meetings of SC-NBWL, the views of the expert members are taken into consideration before arriving at decisions.

76 lakh rupees Air Pollution levies charged on non-compliant entities

With a view to abate dust and related air pollution from the construction and demolition activities, the Commission for Air Quality Management(CAQM) for Delhi-NCR and adjacent areas, directed the Central Pollution Control Board, the State Pollution Control Boards of Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and the Delhi Pollution Control Committee to constitute special teams and launch inspection drives in the project premises and transportation of materials related to Construction &Demolition activities in the NCR.

Inspections were conducted by these agencies from 31.12.2020 to 15.01.2021 by constituting about 174 teams at more than 1600 C&D sites of which about 119 sites were found to be non-compliant with the various C&D Waste Management Rules / Guidelines and dust mitigation measures stipulated by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and the Central Pollution Control Board. An amount of approx. Rs.51 lakhs was levied as environment compensation charges against the defaulting agencies, besides orders for stoppage of work at 27 locations.

Compliance with respect to transportation of materials related to C&D activities was also checked by the inspecting teams. About 563 vehicles, not in conformance with guidelines related to transportation of C&D materials, were levied environment compensation charges of approximately Rs. 25 lakhs.

The CAQM has asked state pollution boards that such fortnightly drives be continued to enforce compliance of the C&D waste management rules and related guidelines to abate dust pollution from C&D sector, which contributes significantly to poor air quality in the region.

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Air Quality Commission ropes in top technical institutions to set up a Decision Support System

The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) in NCR and adjoining areas has begun the process of setting up a Decision Support System (DSS) having a web, GIS and multi-model based operational and planning decision support tool.

This tool will help immensely in capturing the static and dynamic features of the emissions from various sources. It will have an integrated framework to handle both primary and secondary pollutants using chemical transport model. The system will also be able to handle the source specific interventions with the framework to estimate benefits of interventions and will focus on presenting the best results in a comprehensive user friendly and simple format for different users.

The Commission has entrusted the task to expert groups from reputed knowledge institutions of the country given below for framework development of Air Quality Management DSS for Delhi:-

Role of Different Organisations -

Sr. No	Organization	DST Component	Role in DST
1	IMD, Delhi and IITM Pune	Chemistry component	Forecasting in delhi NCR using regional scale WRF-Chem & SILAM models
2	TERI	Physical component (Emission inventory and Observations)	Development/Upgradation of fine resolution Emission inventory in Delhi NCR
3	IIT Delhi and NEERI	Engineering component	Forecasting using Urban air quality models Formulation of control actions at short term and long term basis. Identification of hotspots and their management with city <i>This group will work as bridge between other groups.</i>
4	C-DAC Pune	Interactive user interface and dissemination component	Integration of Physical, Chemistry and Engineering Components at a common platform and dissemination of group output in simple form

The Air Quality Management Decision Support Tool (DST) integrates an emissions inventory development application and database; regional, local and source–receptor modelling; and Geographical Information System (GIS) based visualization tools in a software framework so as to build a robust system to formulate and implement source specific interventions to improve the air quality over targeted sectors of Delhi / NCR. Identification of source specific interventions by the DST is deliberated with the involvement of stake holders.

The sources covered will include industries, transport, power plants, residential, DG sets, road dust, agricultural burning, refuse burning, construction dust, ammonia, volatile organic compounds, landfill etc. For instance, municipalities, industrial associations, industrial development authorities etc. would be the stake holders for identifying interventions related to waste burning, industrial source pollution, respectively.

Upon identification of feasible interventions, the artificial intelligence based expert system which has a hierarchical data base of simulated scenarios, potentially assessing the impact of the identified feasible intervention which would be implemented by the regulatory organization such as CPCB and state PCBs. The on-field implementation is monitored by credible citizen watch groups and professional NGOs independently. Finally, air quality data collected in the vicinity of the area where intervention is implemented will be analysed to understand the real-world benefits of such intervention.

Equipment Discussions -

Sony unveils Airpeak drone

Sony Corporation ("Sony") has unveiled the Airpeak aircraft at CES2021 as part of its drone project in the area of AI robotics.



Sony launched the Airpeak brand with the goal to further develop today's drone technology while achieving the utmost in value creation. As the first phase of this project, Sony will launch a new business targeted for professional photography and video production in the spring of 2021. In order to fully support the creativity of video creators, the payload of the drone can be equipped with an Alpha™ mirrorless camera to capture high quality, full frame aerial photography and video.

Airpeak, the industry's smallest class of drone that can be equipped with the Alpha system, is capable of dynamic filming and precise, stable flight, and aims to contribute to the world of entertainment while also pursuing new possibilities for creative expression. At the moment we don't know if we can use any other camera apart from the Sony alpha cameras. Given the huge popularity of drones and a relatively unknown company DJI becoming a huge player in this game, there has been increasing interest from the big camera manufacturers like Canon and Sony. DJI has been using Sony sensors in their drones. So Sony entering the drone market with quadcopters that can use the higher quality alpha series mirrorless cameras means a higher quality of video output for professionals. With the usage of AI and its integration with Sony alpha cameras, Sony theoretically can help solve lot of issues for the filmmakers. It is to be seen what kinds problems Sony chooses to solve in their initial offering.

The images and videos of the Airpeak drone shows the the landing gear (two legs) automatically moving up so that those don't come in the view of the camera. The landing gear is detachable and needs to be fitted to the drone for its takeoff. There appear to be two batteries that fit on the Airpeak drone. The Sony alpha camera attached to a three axis gimbal is attached to the Airpeak drone. With the new Sony Alpha 1 flagship camera offering even 8k video, the Airpeak drone has the potential of being used by a lot of filmmakers.

Equipment Discussions -



Built-in camera in Sony Airpeak drone

There is a built-in camera in the Sony Airpeak. Sony hasn't explicitly mentioned the purpose of this camera. Nor has Sony provided any detailed specifications of this Airpeak quadcopter.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6kxqEkpMi5M&feature=emb_logo

Sony will continue to post project-related information going forward, and remains engaged in co-creation activities leading up to the launch of Airpeak in order to gain feedback from professional drone users. At the moment Sony is obtaining feedback from professional drone users and seeking collaborators in US and in Japan for its Airpeak project.

The price and full specifications are yet to be announced.

Equipment Discussions -

Sony Announces Alpha 1 flagship mirrorless camera

Sony has announced a new flagship mirrorless camera Alpha 1 which has a 50.1 megapixel sensor and can shoot 8K video at 30p. In 2020 we had seen Canon announcing the EOS R5 as the first mirrorless camera to shoot 8K video and now Sony has joined the 8K video race. The Sony Alpha 1 camera doesn't shoot internal raw video like the Canon EOS R5 but the host of features packed into the Sony Alpha 1 camera certainly makes it mouthwatering.



Salient features of Sony Alpha 1:

- New 50.1-megapixel (approx., effective) full-frame stacked Exmor RS™ CMOS image sensor in combination with an upgraded BIONZ XR™ imaging processing (1) engine with eight times more processing power
- Blackout-free continuous shooting at up to 30 frames per second(2)
- Fast sensor readout enables up to 120 AF/AE calculations per second(3), double the speed of the Alpha 9 II, even during 30fps continuous shooting. This will result in tracking complex motion of subjects and keeping it in focus.
- Bright and large 0.64-type 9.44 million-dot (approx.) OLED Quad-XGA electronic viewfinder with the world's first(4) refresh rate of 240 fps

Equipment Discussions -

- Silent, vibration-free electronic shutter
- World's first anti-flicker(5) shooting with both mechanical and electronic shutter
- Electronic shutter flash sync(6) up to 1/200 sec. for the first time in the Alpha™ series
- World's fastest mechanical shutter flash sync up to 1/400 sec.
- 8K 30p 10-bit 4:2:0 XAVC HS video recording with 8.6K oversampling for extraordinary detail and resolution, in addition to 4K 120p(8) 10-bit 4:2:2 movie shooting capabilities
- Wide dynamic range of 15 stops for stills(9) and 15+ stops for video(10)
- Improved Real-time Eye AF (autofocus) for humans and animals, and new Real-time Eye AF for birds(11), as well as Real-time Tracking that automatically maintains accurate focus
- 5-axis optical in-body image stabilization for a 5.5-step(12) shutter speed advantage
- S-Cinetone color matrix as seen in FX9 and FX6 to deliver expressive cinematic look
- Professional workflow support with the industry's fastest(13) built-in Wi-Fi, SuperSpeed USB 10Gbps, 1000BASE-T Ethernet and more

PRESS RELEASE

SAN DIEGO, CA – January 26, 2021 – Sony Electronics, a global leader in imaging sensor technology and digital imaging, has announced the arrival of the groundbreaking new full-frame mirrorless Alpha 1 camera – asserting their commitment to leading the industry with a stunning combination of innovative new features.

The most technologically advanced, innovative camera that Sony has ever released, the Alpha 1 combines high-resolution and high-speed performance at a level that has never been accomplished in the world of digital cameras. With a brand new 50.1-megapixel full-frame stacked Exmor RS™ image sensor, up to 120 AF/AE calculations per second, 8K 30p 10-bit 4:2:0 video and much more, the Alpha 1 will allow creators to capture what they've never been able to before.

"We are always listening to our customers, challenging the industry to bring new innovation to the market that goes far beyond their expectations," said Neal Manowitz, deputy president for Imaging Products and Solutions Americas at Sony Electronics. "Alpha 1 breaks through all existing boundaries, setting a new bar for what creators can accomplish with a single camera. What excites us the most – more than the extensive product feature – is Alpha 1's ability to capture that which has never been captured before. This camera unlocks a new world of creative possibilities, making the previously impossible now possible."

The newly developed image sensor is built with integral memory and paired with an upgraded BIONZ XR imaging processing engine, making it capable of shooting 50.1-megapixel images continuously at an astounding 30fps with up to 120 AF/AE calculations per second. The Alpha 1's shooting capabilities are further enhanced by a 9.44 million dot OLED Quad-XGA electronic viewfinder, with a refresh rate of up to 240 fps(14), ensuring no black out. Additionally, for the first time in an Alpha series camera, 8K 30p 10-bit 4:2:0 video is available. The Alpha 1 is also capable of 4K 120p / 60p 10-bit 4:2:2 recording and includes S-Cinetone color. The Alpha 1 is also packed with features that support field professionals with faster workflow, including 3.5 times faster wireless FTP transfer speed(15) and more.

Unprecedented Resolution and Speed Continuous Shooting at Up to 30 Frames Per Second

Equipment Discussions -

The Alpha 1 captures moments that would otherwise be lost thanks to its high-speed performance, providing any photographer the speed they require to capture fast-moving objects. High speed readout from the 50.1-megapixel image sensor and a large buffer memory make it possible to shoot up to 155 full-frame compressed RAW images or 165 full-frame JPEG images at up to 30 frames per second with the electronic shutter while maintaining full AF and AE tracking performance.

At an astonishing calculation speed of up to 120 AF/AE per second, the Alpha 1 can maintain focus with high accuracy even for fast moving subjects. It can automatically adjust exposure, even with sudden changes in brightness, with an AE response latency as low as 0.033 seconds(2).

Advanced Electronic Viewfinder with the World's First Refresh Rate of 240 fps

Complimenting the camera's ability to capture images at an unprecedented speed, the Alpha 1 viewfinder features the world's first 240 fps refresh rate, for a super-smooth display. The viewfinder does not black out when an exposure is made to offer an uninterrupted view and allow for seamless framing and tracking, even during continuous shooting. The 9.44 million-dot (approx.), 0.64 type Quad-XGA high-definition OLED display and refined optics deliver the highest resolution in its class. It also offers 0.90x(19) viewfinder magnification, a 41° diagonal FOV, and a 25mm-high eyepoint for clear, low distortion viewing from corner to corner.



Advanced Autofocus

Sony continues to push the boundaries of autofocus technology with the introduction of the Alpha 1, which can easily track complex, fast-moving subjects with high precision. The camera features 759 phase detection points in a high-density focal plane phase-detection AF system cover approximately 92% of the image area – ensuring accuracy and unfailing focus in

Equipment Discussions -

environments where focusing might otherwise be difficult.

Sony's advanced Real-time Eye AF improves detection performance by 30% over the previous system, thanks to the powerful image processing engine, BIONZ XR. It ensures accurate, reliable detection, even when the subject's face looks away. In addition to improved Real-time Eye AF for humans and animals, the Alpha 1 employs high-level subject recognition technology to provide Real-time Eye AF for birds(11), a first in an Alpha series camera. Optimized algorithms ensure that tracking is maintained even if a sitting bird suddenly takes flight, or the framing suddenly changes(20).

The Alpha 1 also features AI-based Real-time Tracking that automatically maintains accurate focus. A subject recognition algorithm uses color, pattern (brightness), and subject distance (depth) data to process spatial information in real time at high speed.

Silent, Vibration-free Electronic Shutter

High-speed readout from the new image sensor has made it possible to reduce rolling shutter by up to 1.5 times when shooting stills, compared to the Alpha 9 II. It also offers silent anti-flicker continuous shooting with an electronic shutter for the first time(5) in the world. The electronic shutter operates silently, without mechanical noise, and is vibration-free. Stress-free continuous shooting is now possible even when shooting in challenging lighting situations with fluorescent or other flicker-prone types of artificial lighting. And for the first time in an Alpha camera, electronic shutter flash sync up to 1/200(22) sec is possible. The advantages of the electronic shutter advantages can now come to life even when using flash for broadly expanded shooting versatility.

Dual Driven Shutter System for 1/400 Flash Sync

The Alpha 1 boasts the world's fastest flash sync speed(5) of 1/400 sec. with mechanical shutter, making it even easier to capture dynamic action. In addition to a carbon fiber shutter curtain, the Alpha 1 features the newly developed dual driven shutter system utilizing spring and electromagnetic drive actuator, offering high durability and lightness at the same time.

High Resolution Shooting Enhancements

Even with this sensor's high pixel count, the Alpha 1 offers high sensitivity with low noise, plus 15+ stops of dynamic range for video and 15 stops for stills, for smooth, natural gradations from shadows to highlights thanks to its cutting-edge processing system, throughout a wide ISO sensitivity range of 100-32,000 (expandable to 50-102,400, when shooting stills).

Additionally, the new camera features an evolved Pixel Shift Multi Shooting mode that composites up to 16 full-resolution images. In this mode, the camera precisely shifts the sensor in one pixel or half-pixel increments to capture 16 separate pixel-shifted images containing a total of 796.2 million pixels of data, which are then composited into a 199 million pixel (17,280 x 11,520 pixels) image using Sony's Imaging Edge™ desktop application. With a flash sync of up to 1/200 sec. in this mode, it is ideal for photographing architecture, art or any other still life subject with a level of detail and color accuracy that is simply stunning.

Equipment Discussions -

Professional Video Quality

8K High-resolution Movie Shooting

For the first time in an Alpha camera, the Alpha 1 offers 8K 30p 10-bit 4:2:0 XAVC HS recording with 8.6K oversampling for extraordinary resolution. Combined with Sony's acclaimed autofocus technology, gradation and color reproduction performance, the Alpha 1 will help the user realize their creative vision with the finest detail. It's 8K footage can also be used for flexible 4K editing during post-production.

Supporting Various Video Formats for Professionals

The Alpha 1 offers in-camera 4K recording at up to 120 frames per second(8) which allows the user to shoot up to 5X slow-motion video(23). In addition to supporting 10-bit 4:2:2 recording, this feature can be used with efficient Long GOP inter-frame compression or high-quality Intra (All-I) intra-frame compression.

The Alpha 1 features S-Cinetone, the same color matrix that produces the highly regarded FX9 and FX6 color and skin tones. It delivers natural mid-tones, plus soft colors and gorgeous highlights to meet a growing need for more expressive depth. The S-Log3 gamma curve makes it possible to achieve 15+ stops of dynamic range, while the S-Gamut3 and S-Gamut3.Cine color gamut settings make it easy to match Alpha 1 footage with video shot on VENICE cinema camera, FX9 and other professional cinema cameras.

Heat-dissipating Structure

A unique heat dissipating structure keeps image sensor and image processing engine temperatures within their normal operating range, preventing overheating while maintaining compact body dimensions. This makes it possible to record 8K/30p video continuously for approximately 30 minutes(24).

Supporting Hand-held Shooting

A high-precision stabilization unit and gyro sensors, plus optimized image stabilization algorithms, achieve up to a 5.5-step shutter speed advantage, maximizing the quality of the high-resolution images derived from the camera's 50.1-megapixel sensor. The Alpha 1 also features an Active Mode(25) that offers outstanding stabilization for handheld movie shooting. When using Sony's desktop applications Catalyst Browse or Catalyst Prepare(26) for post-production, an accurate image stabilization function is available which utilizes metadata generated by camera's built-in gyro.

Other features that the Alpha 1 offers include; 16-bit RAW output(27) to an external recorder(28) via HDMI for maximum post-production flexibility, a digital audio interface has been added to the camera's Multi Interface (MI) Shoe for clearer audio recordings from a compatible Sony external microphone, 5.8K oversampled full pixel readout without pixel binning for high-resolution 4K movies in Super 35mm mode and more.

Equipment Discussions -

Enhanced Workflow with Network Technologies including Connectivity to 5G Compatible Devices

The Alpha 1 has been designed and configured to support photo and video journalists and sports shooters who need to deliver stills or movies as quickly as possible with advanced connectivity options. It offers several features for fast, reliable file transfers. Industry's fastest(8) built-in wireless LAN allows communication on 2.4 GHz and 5 GHz(29) bands with dual antennas to ensure reliable communications. 5 GHz includes 2x2 MIMO support (IEEE 802.11a/b/g/n/ac) offering 3.5 times faster wireless FTP transfer speed than the Alpha 9 II - a notable advantage for news and sports shooters who need to deliver with reliable speed. There is also a provided USB Type-C® connector to support fast data transfer when connected to a 5G mmWave compatible device such as Sony's Xperia PRO and makes high-speed PC Remote (tethered) data transfer available for smooth handling of large image files. The Alpha 1 also has a built-in 1000BASE-T LAN connector for high-speed, stable data transfers, including remote shooting. FTPS (File Transfer over SSL/TLS) is supported, allowing SSL or TLS encryption for increased data security.

In addition to compressed and uncompressed RAW, the Alpha 1 includes efficient lossless compression with no quality degradation, Lossless Compressed RAW. There is also a new "Light" JPEG/HEIF image quality setting that results in smaller files than the "Standard" setting, allowing faster deliver for news and sports photographers who depend on speed. Along with a versatile range of RAW and JPEG formats, the Alpha 1 includes the HEIF (High Efficiency Image File) format for smooth 10-bit gradations that provide more realistic reproduction of skies and portrait subjects where subtle, natural gradation is essential. Images shot on the Alpha 1 can be trimmed in-camera to a desired aspect ratio, size, or position for versatile usage.

The Alpha 1 is also compatible with a variety of apps, add-ons and tools. With Imaging Edge Mobile and Imaging Edge Desktop(30), professionals can easily transfer RAW files and files that use lossless compression and remotely control Touch Tracking and Touch Focus for convenient AF operation. The Transfer & Tagging add-on (Ver. 1.3 or later) can automatically covert voice memos attached to image files to text captions or transfer the files to an FTP server from a mobile device. Desktop applications Catalyst Browse/Catalyst Prepare(26) allow professionals to browse and manage video clips shot by Sony's camera. In addition, the Remote Camera Tool(31) can remotely change camera settings and shoot from a computer con-



Equipment Discussions -

nected via LAN cable and feature a number of refinements for the Alpha 1: faster transfer, touch response, dual slot and HEIF support, and more.

Reliable and Easy Operability

Professional users need more than just refined features and performance. They also need the reliability and durability demanded of any professional tool. The Alpha 1 has two media slots that both support UHS-I and UHS-II SDXC/SDHC cards, as well as new CFexpress Type A cards for higher overall capacity and faster read/write speeds. It also features a durable magnesium alloy chassis, long battery life with the Z-battery which can be extended using the optional VG-C4EM Vertical Grip (sold separately), an improved dust removal feature, shutter close function on power-off to protect image sensor, plus dust and moisture resistance(32) that maximizes reliability in challenging environments. It includes a durable, reliable HDMI Type-A connector, and USB PD (Power Delivery) support, allowing higher power to be supplied from an external source so that users can record for extended periods with minimal internal battery usage.



A revised menu structure provides easier navigation, and touch-responsive menu operation offers fast, more intuitive control with Touch Focus and Touch Tracking on its 3.0 type 1.44 million-dot (approx.) LCD monitor. For easy customization, a subset of the camera's shooting settings now changes according to the selected shooting mode, making it easier than ever to use different aperture, shutter speed and other settings for shooting stills and movies.

Pricing and Availability

The Alpha 1 Full-frame Interchangeable-Lens Camera will be available in March 2021 for approximately **\$6,500 USD**

B&H Link: https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/1619483-REG/sony_ilce_1_b_alpha_a1_mirrorless_digital.html/BII19990/KBID/I3252/DFF/d10-v2I-tI-xI094579/SIDIEZ

Natural History -

COUNTRY NOTEBOOK: Large Grey Babbler: M.Krishnan:- 05-08-1951

The Sunday Statesman (shared by Shri. Saktipada Panigrahi)

"THE Large Grey Babbler, or "Gangai", is a bird of open hillsides and wooded scrub, and by no means a 'rara avis'. Writing of it incidentally, Dewar remarks, "This is commoner than I thought. It occurs in most districts of Uttar Pradesh".

In the Dharwar area and adjoining Karnataka tracts, it is quite a feature of the countryside-its distribution in India is wide in not so arid places. But still I can find no mention of this babbler in the list of "Birds with Remarkable Cries" in books on Indian Ornithology, which is remarkable, for few other birds so dominate the locality where they live.

This is no dingy, unobtrusive bird, though it is a babbler and untidy and it is not shy. Almost a foot long, it is a warm, blotched grey, rufescent on the cheeks, with dark rounded flights, an eye-streak that is clear when one is not too close or far away, and a long tail broadly edged with white on either side, that is distinctive and most conspicuous in its frequent passage from bush to bush. It loves the open, and does not skulk in the undergrowth or hide in foliage- you cannot miss this bold babbler, because of its size and blaze-edged tail; and even if you do, no matter you will notice its fellows. For it is highly sociable, even for a babbler, and goes about in parties invariably, in a loose string whether on ground, in bush or in air. And then of course, there is its voice. One would need to be stone deaf and almost blind to miss this bird where it occurs.



Jitendra S. Katre

Large Grey Babler

Photographed by - Jitendra Katre

There are many birds in our country with compelling voices, but they pass. Spring and the monsoons, resound in countryside with the voices of the cuckoos and rollers and even the hot weather at its peak stimulates certain birds, notably the barbets. However these voices are stilled when the seasons are past-even the koel is silent for six months. But rain or shine, the "quey, quey, quey" of the Large Grey Babbler is heard, In a chorus that persists right through the day. Only the night brings relief from their loud insistent calling. If we could record the total amount of sound by each bird in a year, I think this babbler would have the distinction of being the noisiest.

The call of this bird has been well rendered "a loud, harsh quey, quey, quey" and I suspect the native name ("Gangal") is

onomatopoeic. But these renderings do not convey the whining rhythm of the voice-the nearest I have heard to it is the noise produced by a bull-roarer (the kind that has a clay cup with a tightly stretched membrane over its mouth, Instead of a wooden block). I have also heard a motor car, stuck fast in mud, come out with somewhat similar sounds. The loud querulous whine of this bird's voice dies down and swells with a quality of mechanical repetition. And it is as untiring as a motor.



Large Grey Babbler

Photographed by - Mangru Minz

Like other babblers, the "Gangai" will unite in the face of a common danger, and since they are large and strongly built, hawks think twice before they decide to swoop down on a straggler. Once I saw a Shikara pounce on a Large Grey Babbler sitting on a bough, and the amount and volume of the victim's protests were astonishing. The Shikara was promptly 'mobbed' by the rest of the clan, the victim (which seemed uninjured) joining in the chase and only the superior speed of the hawk saved it.

These babblers breed in the summer, perhaps they breed again, later in the year. The nest is not placed high up, but it usually in the heart of a thick, thorny shrub or tree and well protected. The nestling sketched for this note was taken on 14 July. It was then probably a fortnightly old and just able to fly a few yards. Incidentally, the head is carried well up, with the crown flat, in the live bird-the Jay-like pose of the head in the sketch from the dead, adult bird is never seen, and was unavoidable in the sketch as the bird was stiff."

- M. Krishnan

Wildlife Photography - **Barking Deer by Shyamala Kumar**



Leopard by Mrudul Godbole



Wildlife Photography - **Baby Langur by Sabyasachi Patra**



Tigress by Jerin Dinesh



Wildlife Photography -

Elephants by V S Sankar



Purple Heron with Fish Net by Sabyasachi Patra



Wildlife Photography -

Common Hoopoe by Abhirup Dutta Gupta



Black-winged-stilt by Mangru Minz



Wildlife Photography -

Yellow peach Moth by Prajwal Ullal



Blue Mountains by Sabyasachi Patra





This is the 145th issue of IndiaWilds. With this issue we step on the 13th year of publication. An image of a wild tiger walking on a road passing through a National Park in Kabini adorns the cover page of this issue.

Watching the majestic grace of a tiger in prowl can easily fill the hearts of the most weary traveler with joy. Well thought out and holistic efforts to bring conscious travelers to remote corners of India can be a win-win situation as it would lead to the much needed boost to the local economy as well as result in conservation of our wilderness places.

Fragmentation of wildlife sanctuaries and other protected areas due to roads passing through them is a major challenge for the survival of various wildlife species. Many wild animals die when they are hit by speeding vehicles passing through the forest. Various scientific studies have established that wild animals remain on one side of their road due to the difficulties in crossing the road. That leads to reduced genetic diversity among species. Unfortunately, our authorities turn a blind eye to the problems caused by roads laid through forests. Alternate alignments of roads passing around wildlife sanctuaries can easily solve the problem. Mitigation measures like creating underpasses and overpasses are considered to be costly by NHAI (National Highway Authority of India) and hence is never done to the extent it is required, even when demanded. The authorities will perhaps stop this short-sighted approach only if they understand the linkage between wildlife conservation, tourism, local economic development and its impact on reversing the migration to big cities.

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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