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Inside this issue:

Environmental destruction, politics and our responsibility	2
Biodiversity Conservation by Local Communities of Kutch	8
Conservation News	14
Equipment Discussions	17
Natural History	28
Wildlife Photography	30

Environmental destruction, politics and our responsibility:

India celebrates many festivals every year with pomp and show. Perhaps one festival, the festival of elections, which comes up every five years, is very important as it impacts the lives of people. Soon India is going to face its general elections to elect members to the Lok Sabha. Various political parties have been in the process of finalizing their election manifestos, which promise broadly the actions that they are going to take if brought to power. George Schaller, one of the world's preeminent field biologists who have inspired many others, had said that "Conservation, in the final analysis, is culture, economics and politics" (<https://www.indiawilds.com/diary/indiawilds-newsletter-vol-10-issue-v/>) So one may think that issues related to Climate Change, Conservation, Wildlife, forests would have found a place in the manifesto of political parties. Unfortunately that is farthest from the truth.

If all is well in the field of environment and wildlife then one may not raise voice. However, between 2014-2019 during the present term of the central Government, 682 out of 687 project proposals have been cleared by the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL). (99.82% projects in forests got nod, *Hindu*, Feb 13, 2019) So one may think that conservationists would have raised the issues related to environment, forests and Climate Change to get those included in the election manifestos of political parties. Unfortunately, that is farthest from the truth.

Issues related to Climate Change, wildlife, environment are conspicuously absent or some parts of it are hidden somewhere in the manifestos. Why is it so? Simple answer is the Conservationists have failed to do their duty.

Why the champions have failed to include those in the manifestos? Why have the champions

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Tiger
by Sabyasachi Patra



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failed to raise the issues in front of political parties?

Is it fear?

A recent Reuters survey says that 55% of English speaking Indians fear airing their political views online. In 2014 after the NDA Government was elected to power, NGOs were investigated and cases filed against them for misusing laws. NGOs said that they were being persecuted as they raised pertinent issues. Greenpeace was one of the prominent victims. It is easy to learn from others' misfortunes and not take those steps, even if those are right things to do. So leading wildlife NGOs were muted or completely silent. It is true that not everyone has the moral courage like Mahatma Gandhi had so one can't expect people to stand up for their beliefs and face persecution.

There were also some who completely sided with the ruling party's scheme of things as they personally benefitted. That is also understandable as it is human psychology.

If at all any issues of wildlife, forests and environment have got included then it is because of other pressure groups.

The pro-real estate focus of the ruling party made the Central Government to come up with a draft to modify the CRZ (Coastal Regulation Zone) so that construction of buildings, resorts etc. can be done upto 10m close to the waterfront. The leader of a major opposition party Shri Rahul Gandhi while addressing a Fishermen's Parliament in Kerala mentioned his opposition to the CRZ and his intention to change it if voted to power. This was because the fishermen were united against it and they represented a voting block, which the politicians wanted to tap. It is another matter that by 2100 the sea level is projected to rise by 6 meters (19.68 feet) and everything along the coast will be drowned and politicians are not even thinking about it. ("Climate Change: Pushing towards Noah's Ark", IndiaWilds, July 2018, <https://www.indiawilds.com/diary/indiawilds-newsletter-vol-10-issue-vii/>)

Political parties will only listen when an issue is broken down to its parts to show the impact on various groups and hence the possibility of changing voter behaviour for or against it. The clear-cut cause and effect is not shown then no one is interested. Some of our politicians are not educated and also are not well read. The situation is so bad that some ministers have to take extraordinary steps to hide their graduation details. Well it is another matter that our politicians are not alone, as a recent testimony in US congress threw light about US President Donald Trump going to unusual lengths to hide his high school grades. Nevertheless the fact is not many politicians have the ability to understand complex subjects like conservation and its complex relationship with various wildlife and plant species as well as with earth, water and

human lives.

To do this, conservationists or experts have to move out of their narrow domain and take a holistic view and explain it to people and politicians in lucid manner in a language people understand. Whereas publications in scientific journals would give weightage for career advancements, writing articles in popular journals will help change minds. And remember when there is public interest, there will also be more interest in research and funding in your own areas. Recently the HRD minister Shri Prakash Javadekar has said that research should only be done according to some predefined areas by the Government. So some of the research in wildlife biology, botany etc can be struck off from the list. So conservationists should wake up from their slumber.

Conservation is nothing but Philosophy of Life:

Wildlife biologists often point out that there is a complex web of inter-relationships between various species including humans and the wellbeing of all is interlinked. Unfortunately, Conservationists and our Government don't take the same philosophy while talking about conservation. Conservation is all inclusive. The intricate balance of life in this Planet Earth needs to be protected. That ought to be the philosophy of life. Conservation is not simply picking and choosing what or whom to protect. So the approach has to be holistic.

Conservationists have to explain why a particular project is harmful for wildlife or why something is better for wildlife conservation, even if it is not a direct case of forest diversion or wildlife relocation.

Clean Energy:

For example, take the case of renewable energy. Solar power is becoming cheaper by the day. By 2022 there would not be any use case for setting up new coal power fired thermal power plants in India. The cost of Solar power has come down to 2.44 per kWh as per the July 2018 SECI auction. (<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/power/solar-tariffs-once-again-hit-all-time-low-of-rs-244-a-unit-at-seci-auction/articleshow/64834531.cms>) So now the thermal power at around 8 rupees is very costly. So many State electricity boards are officially breaking their power purchase agreements (PPAs) with Thermal Power Plants. Germany has officially announced that it is closing down coal fired power plants in a phased manner. Germany is closing down 12 GW of coal plants out of 42 GW in the next 4 years ie 28% of coal fired power plants are being phased out in next four years. This also amounts to 11.4% of the total power demand in Germany being moved away from fossil fuels. German Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy Peter Altmaier had tweeted "Good for Business and Climate: ... Less co2, more new Jobs. Security of Supply and Affordability: A strong Signal!" (<https://twitter.com/peteraltmaier/status/1089212287586586624>)

However, the players in coal are hitting back in various ways. It is said that along with vast swathes of pristine forests being sacrificed for coal mines, Adani group which has got the controversial nod to operate the Australian Carmichael mine is planning to import coal to India. Already it has got hold of various ports and recently was awarded rights to operate five airports without following the mandatory prescribed procedure of prior consultation with public and state Governments. (<https://www.newsclick.in/Modi-Adani-Privatisation-of-Airports>) So expect that some State Governments, irrespective of which party is in power, will now set up new coal fired power plants which will be operational several years later.

Karnataka has imposed high wheeling charges for renewable projects. So when Solar and other renewable power projects use the grid to transmit the energy they have to pay a high wheeling charge. This five fold increase in wheeling charges are going to hit the renewable power projects and ensure that the existing coal fired thermal power plants remain viable. Other state electricity boards may follow suit.

The Central Government has slapped a humungous 25% duty on imported Solar panels ostensibly to protect the domestic industry. However, given that India has a stated goal of commissioning 100 GW of Solar power generation by 2022, the nascent domestic solar panel manufacturing is not going to cater to the demand. So the solar lobby has said that this duty is prima facie the handiwork of coal fired Thermal power plant lobby.

So conservationists have to also look at these factors and pick up allies whom they are going to support so that our forests are not ripped apart by coal mines and drowned by dams.

Wildlife & Urban ecosystems:

Wildlife is often seen as something esoteric and existing in pristine jungles. While filming wildlife, we often try to hide the ugly hand of man. This gives an impression to people that wildlife as well as proponents of wildlife conservation belong to the jungle. Conservationists have a big task at hand to explain that wildlife lives everywhere and also the so-called wetlands are also abode of many species and its wellbeing is important for our cities.

Wetlands:

Increasingly our cities are getting flooded during the monsoon rains. In 2005 Chennai first faced massive flooding as far as living memory goes. There were reports of marsh crocodiles (*Crocodylus palustris*) entering into homes. That October 2005 rains didn't open our eyes that wetlands were being filled up by construction debris to set up housing colonies. Concretisation reduces the ability of water to percolate into the ground. So the water has nowhere to go and flooding is a natural consequence. In 1980 Chennai city built-up area was 20% amounting to 47.62 Sq. Km. The wetlands area was 186.3 sq.



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Dumping of debris in Wetlands

Km. In 2000, the Chennai city had expanded to 250.58 Sqkm (68% built up area) and wetlands had reduced to 117.48 Sq. Km. In 2010 the built up area in Chennai had increased to 85% (402.1 Sq Km) and Wetlands were only 71.05 Sq. Km. (Care Earth report, <https://careearthtrust.org/flood/>)

Wetlands also act as carbon sink. The concrete buildings create a heat island effect as the air around it get increasingly heated up and envelop our urban areas. Wetlands help in

cooling down the air and help reduce the heat island effect. In UK the urban building codes have now incorporated water-bodies into the mix. It is time that our conservationists too talk about the role of urban wetlands and preserving those. (Climate Change and Heat Island, IndiaWilds May 2015, <https://www.indiawilds.com/diary/indiawilds-newsletter-vol-7-issue-v/>)

Urban forest clearances:

In Mumbai, the Central and State Government have hurriedly given forest clearances for diverting away part of Thane Creek, which was earlier designated as a Flamingo Sanctuary, for a bullet train project. In another part of Mumbai, the State Government is giving away part of Aarey Colony for creating a metro parking shed. Green areas with real wildlife living are being diverted. Conservationists are losing many such battles, in many cases without a fight, everyday. Fortunately common men and women are waking up to take up the cause of such environmental disasters as they are suffering from flooding or air pollution etc. However, these issues don't form part of any election manifesto of the opposition parties. And conservationists have not been able to get these issues as part of discussions by mainstream political parties.

Air:

In Delhi, the air pollution has been severe for the last few years. Delhi has overtaken Beijing as the world's most polluted city. Cancer, bronchitis and other diseases due to air pollution has become prevalent. Citizens have been protesting tree cutting. However, the Haryana Government has attempted to change laws to facilitate the destruction of Aravali. The issue is now in Court. Again this is not a part of election discussion in Haryana and Delhi or for that matter in any other state.

River & Water:

Dams are destroying and throttling our rivers. Sand mining is killing the ability of the river to regenerate, as water can't percolate without sand. Corruption in the pollution control boards is leading to discharge of untreated sewage into the river waters. The proposal to create river waterways by obstructing the flow of water through series of barrages will stop whatever little migration of fish and other aquatic fauna is taking place. Dams also result in increase in silting due to deforestation in the riverbanks and in the upper reaches of the river. Silting reduces the carrying capacity of the river and it leads to more areas inundated by water.

Dams kill the flow of the river and the ecological balance is destroyed. Rivers have a self-healing ability. Unrestrained dumping of untreated sewage and industrial effluents result in killing the river. According to pollution control board our river waters are not fit for human consumption.

Rivers are lifeline of civilisations. Many civilisations have perished due to drought and lack of water when a river changed its course. Our rivers are intricately linked with our religion and culture. Killing a river kills our religion and culture. Though there have been studies to highlight the impact of dams on its downstream victims as well as impact due to drowning of vast forest lands, the menace of dam construction continues. However, a few sadhus (monks) are trying their best to save Ganga, considered to be the holiest of our rivers. Several sadhus have given their life while fasting in support of their demand for Aviral Ganga (free flowing Ganga) and Nirmal Ganga (Clean Ganga). (Save Ganga: National River of India, IndiaWilds October 2018, <https://www.indiawilds.com/diary/indiawilds-newsletter-vol-10-issue-x/>)

The National Ganga Council (NGC) headed by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has not even met once since its formation in October 2016. The Empowered Task Force on River Ganga has only met twice since Oct 2016. It hasn't met even once since September 2017 when Shri Nitin Gadkari took over as minister. It is clear that the ruling party in power doesn't find saving Ganga a priority and the opposition political parties too haven't thought it fit to question the Government about it. To be fair Shri Jairam Ramesh, who was the environment minister for sometime during UPA 2 Government had once met Swami Gyan Swarup Sanand and the Manmohan Singh led Government had agreed to his demands and stopped construction of a few dams. However, there is no sustained pressure on the Government now to Save Ganga and make it free flowing and clean.



Successful Local Environmental Movements:

It would be pertinent to mention that the Chipko movement in the 1970s started because the women in Uttarakhand's Chamoli realized the importance of the forests and hugged the trees to stop them from being cut down. Since the last twenty years, women in Gundalva village in Odisha after realising the importance of forests in saving them from Super Cyclone in 1999 formed the Pir Jahania Van Surakhya Samiti. These women are protecting the local forests from timber smugglers. In virtually every conservation success story there is the hand of local stakeholders or interest groups. However these local groups also need guidance. For example, In the village in Odisha the women don't understand the difference between native and exotic Casuarina species.

Conservationists as a species have more or less failed to take a unequivocal and sustained stand and get our issues adopted as bread and butter issues by the political parties. It is imperative to go to the electorate and explain the impact of Climate change, forests, rivers, wetlands, wildlife etc in our wellbeing so that the stakeholders as one large voting block can force the political parties to listen to them and bring about change.

Till then we can only sigh and make wishful thinking that the next generation will save us. Remaining silent means abdicating our responsibility. Time to Act is Now.

Article -

Biodiversity Conservation by Local Communities of Kutch, Gujarat, India

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While waiting for a binocular from a local lad of Kharadiya Village near Chari Dhand in Nakhtrana Taluka of Kutch District, we saw several posters and colorful hand-drawings and inscriptions on the walls near a local bus stop depicting vultures. Noticing our interest, a small group of school children murmured ‘aa to Gidh che Gidh’ (This is a Vulture). On gentle questioning, the children excitedly discussed with us about this endangered species. They explained to us in a very lucid manner the key reasons for vultures vanishing from these potential landscapes.

We were surprised to see that the locals (especially young generation) were well aware about the value of this large scavenger species (vulture), which used to be once found in large congregations in Kutch (Dr. Hiren B. Soni, *Status of Vultures in Kachchh*, Vulture News, Africa, 2007, *Pers. Comm.*). They told us about the steps needed to conserve the depleting population of vultures in arid and semi-arid landscapes of Kutch. They also highlighted and summarized the possible and probable ways for better conservation of the prevailing population and revival of vanishing roosting sites of this species. Hearing them talk, we were surprised as well as very excited.

With the ringing of the school bell the boys left. However, one lanky boy *Abdul* approached us, and inquisitively asked us about the purpose of our visit to this locality. After introducing ourselves we asked him a series of questions about the posters like who prepared and pasted the posters on the walls, how the school children were aware of such detailed information about vulture species and its surroundings, the conservation efforts, threats, their moral and ethnic duties to protect this avian species and who made them aware about all these details about vultures. Listening to all these questions, Abdul took us to a nearby village, to meet some elder members, who were sitting on a charpoy (traditional woven bed) enjoying the morning sunlight.

After Abdul explained to them the purpose of our arrival in their vernacular language (*Kutchi*), they said to us in *Hindi* ‘*Dekhiye hum log do saal se prakruti vaividhya ko bachane ke liye kaam kar rahe he* (For the last two years, we are putting our best efforts to conserve nature)’. They also focused on the facts about the conservation efforts implemented by the villagers for the last two years for the survival of the vultures.

We were still eager to know more about the perception of the villagers about their biodiversity, conservation and management agenda behind the concerns of this endangered species. On asking the same to Abdul, he told us about the Biological Diversity Act (BDA), Biodiversity Management Committee (BMC) and PBR (People’s Biodiversity Register) processes

Article -

started in the local communities with the help of a Bhuj-based NGO.

We were over-whelmed to see such information from a boy, living in a small village with limited network of cell phones and poor road network. Listening to him we forgot that we had to actually go to the conservation reserve for sighting the migratory birds. We continued to silently observe *Abdul*, as he surrounded by small children shared his knowledge '*hum logone milke People's Biodiversity Register (PBR) banaya he, aur usme sabko laga ki hamare Gidh vaapis aa sakte he, agar sab log milke kaam karenge to* (We have prepared a PBR, and if we all work together, vultures will surely return)'.

These people also had formed the BMC in their village *Panchayat* involving active and subject experts as members. Among them were, *Khimaji Kaka*, who was well versed about conserving and managing adjacent forest areas and its abiding wild-life. *Rafik Usman*, had expertise on conserving native seeds of several crops. *Salim Mama*, came from a family who for generations practiced traditional healing and use of medicinal plants to cure incorrigible livestock diseases. *Madhu Ba*, knew almost all of the plant species which existed in the close vicinity of her village. Other members of the committee like



BMC Training to Panchayat

Ramila Ba, *Varsha Masi* and *Rana Kaka* were also well-versed personalities of the village, who had an in-depth knowledge about growing environmental issues of their province. *Abdul* told us about the Biological Diversity Act and the crucial role of BMC to address any illegal cutting, thatching or lopping of trees, hunting and poaching of domestic and wild animals, unwanted and harmful invasion of *Gando Baval* (*Prosopis juliflora*) in grassland and adjoining marshy habitats.

While enjoying tea with the villagers, relaxed on the *Charpoy*, *Salim Mama* explained about their participatory planning

Article -

on development of action plan to conserve the prevailing biodiversity. This included wildlife, plants, native seeds, native breeds of plant and animal species, habitat improvement and purposeful removal of *Gando Baval* from the landscapes. Meantime, *Abdul* brought many other posters and brochures depicting different species of plants and animals from BMC *Panchayat* office. We realized the importance of planning of local awareness activities involving BMC at village level. *Rana Kaka* shared their painstaking efforts of involving school teachers and students in such programs and arrangement of nature education camps with help of the forest department.



Workshop on Biodiversity Conservation among School Children

Ramila Ba and *Varsha Masi* shared their views on illegal hunting and poaching of animals by local tribes. They also shared the information regarding initiatives and actions taken by BMC to conserve important wildlife and birds including migratory species, along with endemic reptilian species viz. Spiny-tailed Lizard (*Sandho*).

They said ‘*Ye log abhi deshi vriksh ke beej ekattha kar ke BMC ko de rahe he, aur BMC uska Gando Baval jahase nikala he vaha plantation karte he* (Local people collect indigenous seeds of native tree species to be given to BMC, and it will carry out plantation program of native trees in the degraded areas where the invasive plant *Prosopis juliflora* have been uprooted)’. They all were very firm in preventing illegal hunting of the native species of plants and animals. Lastly, all elders shared their views on traditional ban on hunting and cutting of native trees in their landscape. We all were surprised to see that without being informed, educated and trained, they all were trying their best to protect the native wildlife and their landscapes. We realized the importance of knowledge and information about species and their conservation among elders and teachers.

We realized that these people were doing the real conservation work on the field, while we, the so-called ‘Scientists’ or ‘Researchers’, were only engaged in paper work in the form of reports, documents, articles, etc. The only thing achieved by that was to get a few publications to our credit. The question to ask ourselves was, in reality had we actually conserved any species during our entire job tenure? After listening to these people, we came to know their voices and the challenges faced

Article -

by them. They had no expectations of getting awards or rewards or any recognition.

We, the so-called literate people with degrees, experience and so many resources at our behest should salute these youth and elders for their incessant and perspiring efforts to conserve their landscapes and its biodiversity.

While walking around the village, *Rana Kaka* shared his childhood experience with the forestland, grazing pastures and the marshlands surrounding the village. He recollected how in the olden days they used to start their journey to graze the cattle from 6 am in the morning along with a packed lunch, and return home only after dusk. Several times, they sighted wild species like Jackals, Foxes, Hyenas, Wolves, Blue Bulls, Wild Boars and Jungle Cats etc. We asked them if they didn't feel scared of the wild animals; *Rana Kaka* smiled with wrinkled fingers on his long white mustache, and said “*ye hamara bhi ghar he aur unka bhi; hume malum he agar woh nahi rahe to hambhi khatam ho jayenge aur unko bhi shayad aisa hi lag raha hoga* (This is our home as well theirs; we know that without wildlife, our survival will be in danger and vice-versa)’. This was what was taught to us as the eternal coexistence of humans and animals on the same *terra firma*. These people have learned all these things from their experiences by being in and with nature.

Rana Kaka told us that sometimes, along with his family members they used to go to a forest patch adjacent to the village to stay for a couple of days. At night in the jungle, in the bright moonlight, they used to sleep under the trees on the grass, like a ‘Kid in Mother’s Lap’.

He said these days; wolves were rarely seen in their areas due to the poisoning of the prey (kill) by the villagers. This ultimately resulted into gradual increase in the population of the Blue Bull and Wild Boars, as there were hardly any predators left to hunt their young ones.

As we reached *sim* (grazing pastures), we saw that large numbers of *Gando Baval* (plants) were removed from there, and a signboard was displayed which said ‘*Dumping Site for Vultures*’. As explained by *Khimaji Kaka* earlier, after several consultations with the local people, they had decided to restore this site for rehabilitation, roosting and feeding of vultures. Here they had started to dump their dead livestock, cross-checked for diclofenac-free carcasses. The site was installed with camera traps, and a group of researchers also helped them to monitor it. Still, the vultures had not started to visit this site.

The Dhinodhar Forest Area, around two decades earlier was a favorite place for vultures for their night roosting. Recently however, very few vultures visited this site. Without losing hope, *Khimaji Kaka* and *Salim Mama* were still briefing the possibilities and probabilities to restore the wild population of vultures again. They were conducting awareness programs for researchers, pastoral communities, farmers, Government Departments like Animal Husbandry and Forest Divisions, etc. A fortnight earlier, they had organized a local level seminar on ‘*Rejuvenation and Conservation of Vultures*’ in school, and invited the stakeholders to help them for preparing a roadmap to restore and revive this dwindling species. We all were moved seeing the actions taken by them and found it hard to come up with words to appreciate their selfless efforts with a momentous confidence and courage.

Article -

While returning, we saw few school children accompanied by their teachers going on a wild trail after school hours. The trail helped them to gain knowledge about the tracks and signs of wildlife, like 'V' shaped tracks of Chinkara (Indian Gazelle), scratches of hedgehogs in under-bush, spines of porcupines, pellets of hares, tracks of cats and jackals, etc. This was really an enjoyable way for the children to know about existing wildlife species around them and learning to co-exist.

On approaching a small wetland, *Salim Mama* and a few other shepherds, who normally came there with their cattle, told us about the presence of Marsh Crocodiles. These crocodiles are locally known as '*Chhaniyo Mugger*' means Dung-eating Crocodile. As we were new to the place, we were scared to go closer to the waters but, *Abdul* told us confidently that '*abhi mugger ka aaram karne ka vakt he, woh firse shaamko active hoga, aap log daro mat* (It's resting time for the Crocodiles now, they will only be active during the evening hours, so no need to fear). We were amazed to see how he knew about this activity and diurnal rhythms of Crocodile. After looking at our amazed looks, he explained about the routine behavior of this species during morning and evening hours. He said he used to document all these activities from a safe distance. We were astonished to know this wonderful practices and keen observations of local villagers about diurnal, crepuscular, and nocturnal habits of wild animals.

As the day progressed and the sun shone overhead, the scorching heat grew and so we gradually moved on. After reaching a village, we halted for some time and were amazed to see that the women of the village had already arranged a traditional *thali* (Lunch) for us. It consisted of *bajari roti*, *sabji*, *garlic chatni*, *ghee* and *gud*. We enjoyed the delicious food with immense gratitude. We realized that this thali was far better than the food served in any of the 3-star hotels in the city. *Ramila Ba* and *Varsha Masi* while insisting us to have more *rotis*, shared with us the fact that how local *bajra* (millets) has disappeared from the landscape. They said *Bajra* was actually a native grain crop and it bears a drought resistant capacity and a sweet taste. Presently there is a grave scarcity to procure its seeds for sowing purpose. However, with piloting efforts of BMC, a few farmers were fortunate to have some kilograms of seeds this year, which they already had sown in their fields. *Rana Kaka* additionally informed us that '*maine padha tha ki agar bajri ke deshi beej ko vaapis leke ayenge to Ghorad* (Great Indian Bustard) *panchhi bhi bach jayega* (I read somewhere that if more farmers cultivated millet crop, then there was a chance to save the Great Indian Bustard)'. Appreciably, BMCs of Abdasa Taluka, Western Kutch, have taken painstaking efforts to survive, sustain, and save the natural grassland habitats for this flagship species associated with other important flora and fauna. He also stated that a few months earlier, few members of different BMCs participated in the regional workshop, organized by some NGO, and shared their experiences on biodiversity and landscape conservation.

Jitubhai from Lathedi village stressed upon the conservation of rediscovered small plant species called *Sudiyo* (*Olox nana*) by his village BMC. He said, with an appreciable involvement of forest department and faculties from different universities they had produced more saplings using tissue culture technique. They developed some standard and legal norms to avoid grazing practices of their cattle during flowering and fruiting seasons. They also tried to create artificial hedges around the plants and created awareness among local people and other concerned pastoral families to protect this small, endemic, newly discovered plant. *Jitubhai* also added with confidence '*hamare sabhi bachcho ko yeh vanaspati ke bare me malum he, aur sabhi log Sudiyo vanaspati ko bachane ke liye pura prayas kar rahe he*' (All our children know about this medici-

Article -

nal plant and we all are trying hard to save this plant species). Same information was shared by Rana Kaka, Satayabhai and Shanti Bapa from Nani Virani and Sayra villages, respectively.



Habitat Conservation of *Olax nana*

They also had initiated small-scale conservation efforts at local level for a small rare bird species called *Kabari Ram Chakli* (White-naped Tit). To protect this species, they removed *Gando Baval* at mass scale, and thus revived the natural habitat for survival of this rare bird. Several nest boxes were installed with the help of a technical team and other researchers of the area. With great enthusiasm, almost all the villages have established IEC (Information, Education, and Communication) materials in local language on target species for their conservation and management, assisted by *panchayats*. Most of the BMCs and Village *Panchayats* have documented some “Do’s and Don’ts” for conservation of biodiversity and potential habitats locally. They have started employing small-scale efforts to form several resolutions on thrust areas, to be shared with Government Departments and other replica agencies to implement their action plans in near future.

Presently, with the help of villagers, around 15-20 BMCs in Kutch District of Gujarat have started working on similar approaches to conserve the threatened biodiversity including crops, plants, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals in their supportive ecosystems.

At the end of the day, after enjoying the delightful company of the villagers and learning about the grassroot level work done by them (we can call them as ‘Conservationists in a true sense’). We realized the importance of timely awareness of biodiversity among villagers, and need-based actions taken by them for better conservation and management of local biodiversity of Kutch, Gujarat, India.

Conservation News -

Resolutions on Single-use Plastics & Sustainable Nitrogen management at Fourth United Nations Environment Assembly:

In a significant first, India piloted resolutions on two important global environment issues relating to Single-use Plastics and Sustainable Nitrogen management at the fourth session of United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) which was held in Nairobi from 11th to 15th March 2019. UNEA adopted both the resolutions with consensus. The theme of the UNEA this year was Innovative Solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable production and consumption.

The global nitrogen use efficiency is low, resulting in pollution by reactive nitrogen which threatens human health, ecosystem services, contributes to climate change and stratospheric ozone depletion. Only a small proportion of the plastics produced globally are recycled with most of it damaging the environment and aquatic bio-diversity. Both these are global challenges and the resolutions piloted by India at the UNEA are vital first steps towards addressing these issues and attracting focus of the global community.

India also hosted, in the High-Level Segment of UNEA, a session on “Global Partnerships: Key to Unlocking Resource Efficiency and Inclusive Green Economies”. The side event was attended by representatives of Member States, Civil Society Organizations, private sector organizations including leading financial institutions. The Side Event had a panel discussion which had High Level diplomatic participation from Germany, Brazil, South Africa and senior management of international financial institutions. The mainstreaming of resource efficiency and use of secondary raw materials through partnerships and action at scale is critical for moving towards green economy.

It emerged that collaborations and action at scale is key to success. The actions should be oriented towards having an inclusive green economy and blended finance will help in implementation whereas public finance should be provided to de-risk private finance in transformational projects.

The Indian delegation also participated in the panel discussion in High Level Segment on “*Need for additional commitments of public finance and the ways to maximize mobilization of climate finance*”.

It was highlighted that climate finance is an important lever for climate action related to both mitigation and adaption in the developing countries. The contributions to climate finance need to be in consonance with the basic principles of common but differentiated responsibility and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC). Climate finance is more of an obligation of the developed countries, based on their historical emissions. The availability of sufficient, additional and predictable climate finance is a key for action. Importantly, the lack of pledged funds in Green Climate Fund and the potential reliance on private sector has been highlighted by many developing countries. India has been initiating domestic climate actions, both related to climate change mitigation and adaptation, primarily through its own financial resources. There is a sense of urgency for financial support to developing countries, which have not been so responsible for these global environmental concerns.

Conservation News -

India Cooling Action Plan Launched:

India is one of the first countries in the world to announce a comprehensive Cooling Action plan to address the cooling requirement across sectors and lists out actions which can help reduce the cooling demand. Cooling requirement is cross sectoral and an essential part for economic growth and is required across different sectors of the economy such as residential and commercial buildings, cold-chain, refrigeration, transport and industries

Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dr. Harsh Vardhan released the India Cooling Action Plan (ICAP) in a function in New Delhi. The Environment Minister said that the thrust of the India Cooling Action Plan (ICAP) is to look for synergies in actions for securing both environmental and socio-economic benefits. *“The overarching goal of ICAP is to provide sustainable cooling and thermal comfort for all while securing environmental and socio-economic benefits for the society. This will also help in reducing both direct and indirect emissions.”* said Dr. Vardhan.

The minister further stated that the India Cooling Action Plan (ICAP) provides an integrated vision towards cooling across sectors encompassing *inter alia* reduction of cooling demand, refrigerant transition, enhancing energy efficiency and better technology options with a 20 year time horizon.

The India Cooling Action seeks to (i) reduce cooling demand across sectors by 20% to 25% by 2037-38, (ii) reduce refrigerant demand by 25% to 30% by 2037-38, (iii) Reduce cooling energy requirements by 25% to 40% by 2037-38, (iv) recognize “cooling and related areas” as a thrust area of research under national S&T Programme, (v) training and certification of 100,000 servicing sector technicians by 2022-23, synergizing with Skill India Mission. These actions will have significant climate benefits.

The following benefits are expected to accrue to the society over and above the environmental benefits: (i) Thermal comfort for all – provision for cooling for EWS and LIG housing, (ii) Sustainable cooling – low GHG emissions related to cooling, (iii) Doubling Farmers Income – better cold chain infrastructure – better value of produce to farmers, less wastage of produce, (iv) Skilled workforce for better livelihoods and environmental protection, (v) Make in India – domestic manufacturing of air-conditioning and related cooling equipment’s, (vi) Robust R&D on alternative cooling technologies – to provide push to innovation in cooling sector.

Cooling is also linked to human health and productivity. Linkages of cooling with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are well acknowledged. The cross-sectoral nature of cooling and its use in development of the economy makes provision for cooling an important developmental necessity. The development of ICAP has been a multi-stakeholder inclusive process encompassing different Government Ministries/Departments/Organizations, Industry and Industry Associations, Think tanks, Academic and R&D institutions.

Conservation News -

Amendment in Hazardous Waste (Management & Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016

In order to strengthen the implementation of environmentally sound management of hazardous waste in the country, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has amended the Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management & Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016 vide notification G.S.R. XX (E), dated 01 March 2019.

The amendment has been done keeping into consideration the “Ease of Doing Business” and boosting “Make in India” initiative by simplifying the procedures under the Rules, while at the same time upholding the principles of sustainable development and ensuring minimal impact on the environment.

Some of the salient features of the Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management & Transboundary Movement) Amendment Rules, 2019 are as follows:

1. Solid plastic waste has been prohibited from import into the country including in Special Economic Zones (SEZ) and by Export Oriented Units (EOU).
2. Exporters of silk waste have now been given exemption from requiring permission from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
3. Electrical and electronic assemblies and components manufactured in and exported from India, if found defective can now be imported back into the country, within a year of export, without obtaining permission from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

Industries which do not require consent under Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1974 and Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1981, are now exempted from requiring authorization also under the Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management & Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016, provided that hazardous and other wastes generated by such industries are handed over to the authorized actual users, waste collectors or disposal facilities.

Equipment Discussions -

Blackmagic Design Announces New URSA Mini Pro G2 Camera

Blackmagic has announced the version 2 of URSA Mini Pro camera and it is badged as URSA Mini Pro G2. According to BMD the G2 has got new electronics, S35 sized sensor with 4.6K resolution and HDR abilities and other goodies. It would work as a good documentary camera as well as for lower budget indie features.



Here are the salient features of the camera:

Sensor size: Super 35 4608 x 2592 pixels

Resolution: 4.6K

ISO: Upto ISO 3200

Dynamic range: 15 stops

HFR: The Blackmagic URSA Mini Pro G2 has high frame rate of 120p at 4.6K, windowed 4K DCI at 150p, windowed 1080p at 300 fps

Dynamic range: 15 stops

Port: USB-C port for direct recording to external SSDs

Equipment Discussions -

Internal ND Filters: There are 2, 4, 6 stop internal ND filters with IR compensation

Mount: EF mount is standard. PL mount is optional as well as B4 mount.

Internal recording: Dual CFast 2.0 cards for full resolution Blackmagic RAW.

Dual UHS-II card for Blackmagic RAW 8:1 or 12:1. Relay recording available.

DaVinci Resolve: Free full copy of DaVinci Resolve editing and colour grading software

Price: \$5995 US dollars

PRESS RELEASE:

Fremont, California, USA - March 5, 2019 - Blackmagic Design today announced URSA Mini Pro 4.6K G2, a second generation URSA Mini Pro camera featuring fully redesigned electronics and a new Super 35mm 4.6K image sensor with 15 stops of dynamic range that combine to support high frame rate shooting at up to 300 frames per second. In addition, URSA Mini Pro 4.6K G2 supports Blackmagic RAW and features a new USB-C expansion port for direct recording to external disks.

URSA Mini Pro 4.6K G2 is available now for \$5,995 from Blackmagic Design resellers worldwide.

The new URSA Mini Pro 4.6K G2 is a dramatic advancement over the original model as it now features entirely new electronics for higher speed processing. Also included is a new Super 35mm 4.6K image sensor that captures up to 4608 x 2592 pixels with 15 stops of latitude at up to 3200 ISO. This allows customers to record full sensor 4.6K images at up to 120 frames per second, windowed 4K DCI at up to 150 frames per second, and windowed 1080 HD at an amazing 300 frames per second. That makes URSA Mini Pro 4.6K G2 ideal for capturing stylized fast action documentary work, nature photography, sports and more.

In addition, URSA Mini Pro 4.6K G2 can capture Blackmagic RAW images in both film and extended video modes, making it perfect for high end feature films, television shows, commercials, and indie films as well as broadcast news, studio and even live multi camera production.

Blackmagic RAW is a revolutionary, next generation codec that gives customers visually lossless images, extensive metadata support and highly optimized GPU and CPU accelerated processing. Blackmagic RAW combines the quality and workflow advantages of traditional RAW formats with the speed and ease of use of standard video codecs. With Blackmagic RAW, customers can choose compression levels up to 12:1 and still get stunning images that can be used for feature films, documentaries and broadcast programming. Blackmagic RAW settings such as 12:1 are important to allow customers to get the highest frame rates from the camera, and this means only Blackmagic RAW can allow high frame rates while retaining enough quality for professional results.

Equipment Discussions -

URSA Mini Pro 4.6K G2 also uses Blackmagic Design Generation 4 Color Science for superior imaging that results in extremely accurate skin tones and gorgeous, lifelike colors that rival those of cameras costing tens of thousands of dollars more. Blackmagic RAW images are encoded using a custom non-linear 12-bit space designed to provide the maximum amount of color data and dynamic range. These formats can be recorded onto CFast or SD cards, as well as direct to flash disks using the new USB-C expansion port.

URSA Mini Pro 4.6K G2 is designed to be extremely tough and fully featured. It includes everything customers need in a compact handheld magnesium alloy body that's durable and light enough to use anywhere. There's an external high visibility backlit LCD status display for viewing critical shooting information, a foldout touch screen for reviewing shots without needing an extra on-set monitor, professional connections such as 12G-SDI, XLR audio, built in high quality stereo microphones and more. Plus, every single control on the camera is redundant, including the power, so if anything should go wrong in the field, the camera can still be used.

URSA Mini Pro 4.6K G2 features neutral density (ND) filters with IR compensation for quickly reducing the amount of light that enters the camera. The 2, 4 and 6 stop filters are specifically designed to match the colorimetry of the camera and provide additional latitude, even under harsh lighting conditions. That means customers can use different combinations of aperture and shutter angle to achieve shallower depth of field, or specific levels of motion blur, in a wider range of situations. The IR filters evenly compensate for both far red and infrared wave lengths to eliminate IR contamination. The ND filters are true optical filters with a precision mechanism that quickly moves them into place when the ND filter dial is turned.

The broadcast camera design of URSA Mini Pro 4.6K G2 puts powerful external control buttons, switches, knobs and dials on the outside of the camera, giving customers direct access to the most important camera settings. The controls are laid out in a logical order that makes them easy to remember so cinematographers can operate the camera without having to look at the buttons, hunt through menus, or take their eye off of the action. URSA Mini Pro 4.6K G2 also features a high visibility status screen that displays important information such as timecode, shutter and lens settings, battery, recording status, and audio levels. The status display features a backlight and is designed to be clearly visible in both dimly lit studios and outside in direct sunlight.

URSA Mini Pro 4.6K G2 comes standard with an interchangeable EF lens mount for working high quality photographic lenses. If the camera is being used on a high end film or commercial shoot that calls for large cinematic lenses, simply remove the EF mount and replace it with the optional PL mount. There's even a B4 broadcast lens mount for working with broadcast HD lenses. URSA Mini Pro 4.6K G2 also includes a standard 12 pin Hirose lens control connector.

Featuring both dual C-Fast 2.0 recorders and dual SD UHS-II card recorders, customers can choose the media that works best for their projects. C-Fast cards are ideal for full resolution Blackmagic RAW 12 bit recording, while UHS-II SD cards are inexpensive and commonly available, making them perfect for recording Blackmagic RAW 8:1 or 12:1 for Ultra HD and regular HD files. With dual slots for each media type, the camera never has to stop recording because when the first card is full, it automatically continues onto the next card. Full cards can be swapped for empty ones, all without stopping

Equipment Discussions -

the camera.

URSA Mini Pro 4.6K G2 also includes a new and innovative high speed USB-C expansion port for adding accessories such as an SSD for external recording. That means customers can now record for even longer durations without stopping. Plus, they can record directly onto the same external disks they will use for editing and color correction.

URSA Mini Pro 4.6K G2 includes the full DaVinci Resolve Studio software, giving customers a complete post production solution. This powerful software combines professional nonlinear video editing with the world's most advanced color corrector for importing, editing, color correcting, finishing and delivering projects shot on URSA Mini Pro 4.6K G2. DaVinci Resolve Studio works natively with Blackmagic RAW files from the camera, so customers can take them directly into post production without having to convert or change them. Every single bit of quality is preserved because it is a true lossless workflow. Using DaVinci Resolve Studio is the fastest and highest quality way to work with Blackmagic RAW files from URSA Mini Pro 4.6K G2.

“The original URSA Mini Pro has been an extremely successful and very popular camera,” said Grant Petty, CEO, Blackmagic Design. “Blackmagic URSA Mini Pro 4.6K G2 is exciting because it gives customers second generation electronics and an even higher performance image sensor so they can shoot at extremely high frame rates for crystal clear slow motion images. URSA Mini Pro 4.6K G2 is powerful enough to be used on high end feature films and television shows, versatile enough to be used for broadcast news and live multi camera event production, and affordable enough for indie filmmakers and even students! It's like getting 3 cameras in one!”

Blackmagic URSA Mini Pro 4.6K G2 Key Features

- Digital film camera with 15 stops of dynamic range.
- Super 35mm 4.6K sensor with Blackmagic Design Generation 4 Color Science.
- Supports project frame rates up to 60 fps and off-speed slow motion recording up to 120 fps in 4.6K, 150 fps in 4K DCI and 300 fps in HD Blackmagic RAW.
- Interchangeable lens mount with EF mount included as standard. Optional PL, B4 and F lens mounts available separately.
- High quality 2, 4 and 6 stop neutral density (ND) filters with IR compensation designed to specifically match the colorimetry and color science of Blackmagic URSA Mini Pro 4.6K G2.
- Fully redundant controls including external controls which allow direct access to the most important camera settings such as external power switch, ND filter wheel, ISO, shutter, white balance, record button, audio gain controls, lens and transport control, high frame rate button and more.
- Built in dual C-Fast 2.0 recorders and dual SD/UHS-II card recorders allow unlimited duration recording in high quality.
- High speed USB-C expansion port for recording directly to an external SSD or flash disk.

Equipment Discussions -

- Lightweight and durable magnesium alloy body.
- LCD status display for quickly checking timecode, shutter and lens settings, battery, recording status, and audio levels.
- Support for Blackmagic RAW files in Constant Bitrate 3:1, 5:1, 8:1 and 12:1 or Constant Quality Q0 and Q5 as well as ProRes 4444 XQ, ProRes 4444, ProRes 422 HQ, ProRes 422, ProRes 422 LT, ProRes 422 Proxy recording at 4.6K, 4K, Ultra HD and HD resolutions.
- Supports recording of up to 300 frames per second in HD, 150 frames per second in 4K DCI, and 120 frames per second at full frame 4.6K.
- Features all standard connections, including dual XLR mic/line audio inputs with phantom power, 12G-SDI output for monitoring with camera status graphic overlay and separate XLR 4 pin power output for viewfinder power, headphone jack, LANC remote control and standard 4 pin 12V DC power connection.
- Built in high quality stereo microphones for recording sound.
- 4 inch foldout touchscreen for on-set monitoring and menu settings.

Includes full copy of DaVinci Resolve software color grading and editing software.

Availability and Price

URSA Mini Pro 4.6K G2 is available now from Blackmagic Design resellers worldwide for US\$5,995. Also available from resellers are the optional URSA Mini Pro PL lens mount for US\$245, optional F lens mount for US\$375 as well as the optional URSA Mini Pro B4 HD lens mount for US\$385. URSA Mini Pro comes standard with an EF lens mount, and additional replacement mounts can also be purchased for US\$175.

Blackmagic URSA Mini Accessories

The Blackmagic URSA Mini Pro 4.6K G2 is compatible with the full range of URSA Mini accessories available from Blackmagic Design resellers worldwide:

- Blackmagic URSA Mini Pro PL, B4 and F lens mounts each sold separately.
- Additional Blackmagic URSA Mini Pro EF lens mounts also sold separately.
- Blackmagic URSA Mini Shoulder Kit features built in rosettes, rail mounts, viewfinder mount, integrated tripod quick lock release and top handle.
- Blackmagic URSA Viewfinder is a high resolution viewfinder that includes a full HD OLED display and true glass optics for perfect focus.
- Blackmagic URSA Studio Viewfinder featuring 7" screen, variable tension mounting points, grab handles, external controls and more.
- URSA VLock Battery Plate provides a VLock compatible plate for attaching third party batteries.

Equipment Discussions -

Leica launches Q2 full frame sensor compact camera:

Leica has launched Q2 with a full frame sensor and a fast 28mm Summilux f1.7 lens.

Here are the salient features of this compact full frame camera:

Resolution: 47.3 megapixel still and 4K video

Sensor: Full frame

Lens: Summilux 28mm f1.7 lens. 11 elements in 9 groups, 3 aspherical elements

ISO: from 50 to ISO 50,000



Lens modes: auto, manual and macro

Macro: close focusing distance 17cm

Viewfinder: OLED 3.68 megapixels

AF Speed: Leica Q2 focuses in less than 0.15 seconds

Equipment Discussions -

Burst shooting speed: 10 fps

Video: UHD 4K video at 24fps or 30fps.

Full HD (1080p) at upto 120fps

Media: records to SD, SDXC, SDHC memory cards

External Flash: The Leica Q2 doesn't have a built in flash. External flash can be connected via hotshoe.

FOTOS App: Leica FOTOS App helps share images and videos using Wi-Fi. Connect to smartphone for remote shutter release as well.

Construction: Magnesium alloy and protective sealing against dust and water makes it weather resistant.

Dimension: 5.1" x 3.1" x 3.6" . It is like a smart phone, just a bit wider.

Weight: 718 gms without batteries.

Price: \$4995 US Dollars

To buy click B&H Link: https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/1464271-REG/leica_19050_q2_digital_camera.html/BID/13252

PRESS RELEASE

Datacolor debuts SpyderX, a ground-breaking color calibration solution for monitors

LEICA Q2: THE NEW GENERATION OF THE COMPACT CAMERA WITH A FULL-FRAME SENSOR AND A FAST PRIME LENS

Leica Camera AG presents the Leica Q2 – the next-generation model of the Leica Q line of cameras. With a newly developed full-frame sensor, a fast Leica Summilux 28 mm f/1.7 ASPH. prime lens, fast autofocus and innovative OLED EVF viewfinder technology, the new model carries the performance attributes and timelessly elegant design of its predecessor into the next generation and offers a range of new features and functions. It is the only camera in its class with protective sealing against dust and water spray and is ideally equipped for shooting in all weather conditions.

The Leica Q2 features a 47.3 megapixel full frame sensor that captures both highly-detailed still pictures and 4K video at ISO sensitivities up to 50,000 and, together with its Leica Summilux 28 mm f/1.7 ASPH. lens, ensures exceptional imaging performance. The fast initial aperture of f/1.7 guarantees optimum picture quality in even the most difficult lighting situa-

Equipment Discussions -

tions. This all makes the Leica Q2 the perfect companion for all areas of street, architectural, landscape, and portrait photography. The practical locking element for the choice of manual or automatic focusing and simple switching to macro mode with a close focus distance of 17 cm is located on the lens and highlights the greatest possible creative freedom provided by the camera in all shooting situations.

Thanks to the extension of the integrated digital zoom function up to 75 mm, users now enjoy even more flexibility for composing their pictures. In addition to the uncropped 28 mm focal length of the camera lens, a crop factor can be chosen to simulate exposures made with focal lengths of 35, 50 or 75 millimetres. The selected crop is displayed as a bright-line frame in the viewfinder and on the rear display panel. The cropped image from the framing selected is saved in JPEG format with correspondingly reduced resolutions of 47.3, 30, 14.7, or 6.6 megapixels. The uncropped image is always saved simultaneously as a DNG file with the full resolution of 47.3 megapixels.

The Leica Q2 also features a newly developed, high-resolution OLED viewfinder with a resolution of 3.68 megapixels. The high resolution provides complete control over the subject at all times and also leads to considerably improved image depth and higher contrast. In contrast to LCD technology, in which only whole sectors of the viewing image can be darkened, the brightness of each individual pixel in the viewfinder of the Q2 is adapted. Despite the high resolution, power consumption remains low. The viewfinder is activated as soon as the camera is brought up to the eye and shows the subject reliably and without any perceptible delay at all times.

The autofocus system of the Leica Q2 focuses sharply on the subject in less than 0.15 seconds, and makes it one of the fastest cameras in its class. Ongoing improvements to the processor from the Maestro II family have enabled a higher sequential shooting rate with an impressive 10 frames per second at the full resolution of 47.3 MP that ensures that the truly wonderful moments in life will never be missed. The range of creative options has been further expanded by the new video mode with 4K resolution. Brilliant, true-to-life video recordings can be made with 3840 x 2160 pixels and frame rates of 30 or 24 fps or, alternatively, in the familiar full HD format with 120, 60, 30 or 24 frames per second. In combination with the Leica FOTOS App, the camera's integrated Wi-Fi module makes it possible to quickly and easily share pictures and video in social media, change numerous camera settings from a smartphone or even or even remotely control the shutter release of the Leica Q2. Thanks to Bluetooth LE (Low Energy), a permanent connection is established between camera and smartphone.

The design of the Leica Q also carries forward the Leica tradition of reduction to the essentials. The 'Made in Germany' seal of quality guarantees that only the finest and most resilient materials are employed in its construction. The distinctive

Equipment Discussions -

thumb rest of the new Leica Q2 and the sophisticated diamond pattern of its leather trim ensure optimum grip and highlight the accomplished symbiosis of form and function. Also new is the camera's uniquely intuitive handling concept. A highlight of this is the redesigned dioptre compensation setting dial on the back of the camera that prevents inadvertent shifting of the compensation value. In contrast to the Leica Q, the shutter release button of the Q2 now controls only the On/Off function; the second detent for the continuous shooting function has been removed and is now in the camera menu.

A comprehensive range of optional accessories is also available for the Leica Q2. These include, for example, Protectors and carrying straps in premium-quality leather in the colours black and brown, and an opportunity to add a fashionable touch with versions in red and pink. The new and elegant 'Ettas' line of soft, coated canvas pouches for various Leica camera models will also be launched on the same date as the Leica Q2. The pouches will initially be available in the colours mid-night blue, stone grey and red, and will be followed later by a range of other versions. The range also includes technical equipment for the Leica Q2 such as the Leica SF 40, SF 60 flash units, the SF C1 remote flash control unit, an additional thumb rest and a handgrip. Perfectly matched to the camera, all accessories are functionally designed for easy handling and are manufactured from only the finest materials to ensure reliability and a lifetime of use.

The Leica Q2 is on sale from today at authorised Leica dealers.

Equipment Discussions -

Ricoh launches THETA Z1 360 deg camera:

Ricoh's has announced its flagship THETA Z1 360° Camera offers 23 MP raw still photos and 4K videos. This camera will be highly useful as it offers high quality 360° photos and videos in a compact form factor.

The Theta Z1 360° Camera uses dual 1"-type back-illuminated CMOS sensors. Ricoh claims that they have improved the algorithm so the resulting imagery from this camera will have low noise and also better spherical photos and videos.

The Theta Z1 360° Camera has two 23MP sensors and two lenses which help capture two simultaneous wide-angle photos



and the camera will automatically stitch those into a seamless 360° image. The lenses have 14 elements in 10 groups. Despite its tiny form factor, the camera offers users to select aperture from f2.1, 3.5, and 5.6 so one can use it for lowlight as well as for depth of field control.

This camera has an automatic dynamic range compensation to ensure that highlights are not blown away. 3-axis image stabilization feature is built-in into the camera. The microphones capture audio from four directions to give an immersive experience.

This camera can help in Live stream to social media platforms or the Theta

360 dedicated website. One can also use the Remote Playback plug-in and a wireless receiver to display the photos/videos on a bigger screen.

Equipment Discussions -

The THETA Z1 360° Camera has a built-in internal memory of 19GB. In today's world where memory is cheap one can argue that this could have been higher.

According to Ricoh one can record up to 5 minute clips in 4K and up to 25 minutes in 2K with a total of 40 minutes 4K and 130 minutes of 2K. It can record 300 raw stills or 2400 jpeg still photos. The battery will be sufficient for recording 60 mins of video or 300 photos.

THETA Z1 is constructed from a magnesium alloy. There is a small 0.93" OLED to show the status.

Price: \$999.95 US Dollars

Availability: April 2019

Natural History -

COUNTRY NOTEBOOK: The Mocking Bird : M.Krishnan - 5 October 1969

The Sunday Statesman (shared by Shri. Saktipada Panigrahi)

HARIAL (Green Pigeon)

" Those who have spent some time in the deeper forests might have heard, probably when they were alone and immobile, a loud, fluent, mocking bird voice and looked for its source and found nothing. Bird-calls are difficult to render in words because, lacking consonant and even defined vowels, it is only their fortuitous resemblance to familiar phrases in their syllabic break-up that provides the rendering into words, and this is dependent as much on the hearer as on the call. But about the undercurrent of mockery in this particular call-to human ears- there is little doubt.



Green Pigeon (HARIAL)

Photograph by - Sandipan Ghosh

The first time I heard the call I had been following a herd of elephants along a forest road, and on leaving the road to continue following the great beasts lost them suddenly round a bend (a thing which is quite easy to do, in spite of the huge size of elephants). After a while I realized that I had also my way, and didn't have the foggiest notion where the road was. I tried getting back to the road along a nullah and after two miles sat down in the shade of a giant flax for rest and reorientation. It was then that I heard this call. I could not place the direction from which it came exactly, though the call was loud and seemed quite close, and although I looked hard all around and above I could see nothing that might have been responsible

for the sound. Then I heard it again and though I could not see the bird, it was very clear to me what it was saying. "You fool !" it said "you are miles from the road". I was.

It was only after another such experience with the voice that I located its owner; it was the Harial (the Green Pigeon) and naturally I had missed seeing it; against a leafy tree top the bird is almost invisible- and with a call so uncolumbine in its accents and intonation, even if I had seen a Harial near where the call came from, I would have looked elsewhere for my bird.

Last summer, near Churna in M.P., I tried sitting up during the day beside the only stream in the neighbourhood, a mere chain of half-a-dozen elongated, shallow puddles in the dry, sandy, rocky bed of the stream. It seemed most unlikely that any animal would come there during the scorching heat of the day, but the concentration of Sambar and Pig slots on the impressionable sand tempted me to put up a hide of dry grass and sit up for two days. At the end of it, it was clear that the animals came to the water only after sunset, but the bird life of those little pools was most interesting. In the evening flocks of Harial and Rose ringed and Plum- headed Parakeets came there, to guzzle the coarse river sand.

Right by my hide there was a leafless, twisted tree, bristling with dry branches, and I counted over 30 Harials in it they quarreled for perches on it like all pigeons, and they were very pigeon- like in their take off with audibly flapping wings, and they sat there for an hour or longer peeking all round to make sure that no one was there in the neighbourhood, before they dropped to the stream-bed to drink and eat sand. I had ample opportunity to listen to them and noticed that a cock serenading a hen on a treetop, further up the bank, had a recognizably pigeon-like call, very different from the usual, mocking call. I thought of many renderings of the common call, but came up with nothing better than
"You fool ! You are miles from the road".

- M.Krishnan

This was published on 5 October 1969

Wildlife Photography -

Nilgiri Tahr by Sabyasachi Patra



Tusker at Masinagudi by Murugan Anantharaman



Wildlife Photography -

Paradise-Flycatcher by Anil Kumar Verma



Chestnut-headed Bee-eater by Samrat Sarkar

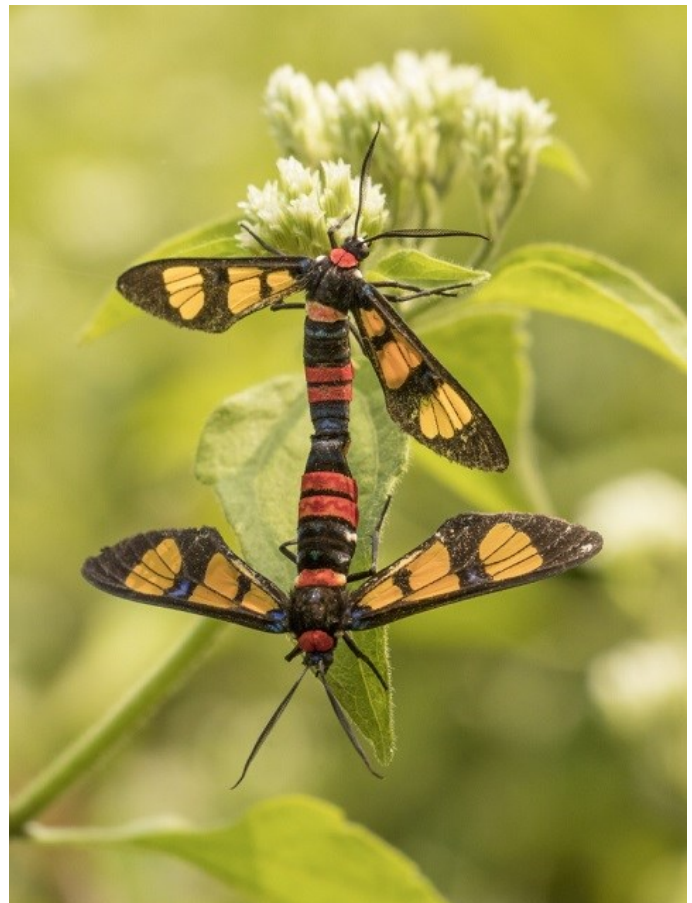


Wildlife Photography -

Sarus cranes by Abhishek Jamalabad



Painted hand maiden moth by Prajwal Ullal





This is the **123rd Issue of IndiaWilds.**

In this 11th year of publishing IndiaWilds Newsletter, we find the challenges in preserving India's wilderness, wildlife and environment is much more than before. However, the issues are not considered as important by politicians as the manifestos of political parties hardly feature any conservation related challenges. So it is time for us to raise more awareness especially among people who vote in elections.

The photo of a tiger drinking water adorns the cover page. We often see images of tiger and feel confident that everything is fine with our forests. However, this majestic creation of God is in trouble. The habitat of tiger is systematically decimated to make way for mines, industries, public projects, dams etc. Its habitat is also increasingly becoming empty of herbivores, its prey species. Without prey can a predator survive? Our forests are also over run by invasive plant species reducing the species richness and food availability for herbivores. The linkage between various wilderness areas have been cutoff in most of the cases. So once a forest loses its tigers, then scientists have to translocate tigers from other areas. Not every forest is so lucky to get back tigers. With the advent of Climate Change and consequent increase in extreme weather events like sudden deluge and prolong droughts, it is tough for tigers to survive. We the humans have to make every effort to provide contiguous inviolate forests to our National animal so that the roar of the tiger can be heard by the subsequent generations as well.

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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