

India Wilds

Newsletter

Vol 9. Issue I

January 2017

ISSN 2394 - 6946





Inside this issue:

Jallikattu: Role of the State, Culture & Conservation	2
Eastern Imperial Eagle Attacks Desert Fox	7
Kyongnosla: an imagination of 'such a late goodbye'	11
Conservation News	18
Equipment Discussions	23
Natural History	35
Wildlife Photography	37

Cover Page Photograph:

Shaheen Falcon by
Sandipan Ghosh

Jallikattu: Role of the State, Culture & Conservation

Thomas Hobbes in his 1651 book the Leviathan wrote “a government is formed more or less by everyone agreeing not to kill or rob each other under the penalty of law”.

Article 21 of the United Nation’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights which was adopted on 10 December 1948, which India voted for, states “The Will of the People shall be the basis of the authority of the Government”.

The elected Governments at the Centre as well as the Government of Tamil Nadu seem to be narrowly interpreting these arguments and immediately acting as per the wishes of people to create an Ordinance and an Act to promote the gory bull harassing Jallikattu.

In Political philosophy the Government should Govern with the “consent of the governed”. The Government’s legitimacy and the moral right to govern over the people comes from their consent which is generally exercised by the people through the ballot in elections. Unfortunately, in democracies where the Government is elected for a specific period of time, individual actions of the Government may be too outrageous and be without the consent of the people and still the Government continues to govern till the next elections.

George Sabine paraphrases Theodore Beza to give us the concept of just and lawful government “*The people lay down the conditions which the king is bound to fulfil. Hence they are bound to obedience only conditionally, namely, upon receiving the protection of just and lawful government..*”

The concept of a just government goes beyond simply the will of the people. People can at times look at their own narrow ends and demand certain things or they may at times fail to adhere to universal concepts of justice. In such situations a Government is not bound to merely be a rubber stamp and agree to the demands of the people. The Government is expected to adhere by the principles that the country stands for.

India’s constitution has two articles that emphasises the responsibilities of the State as well as its people in protecting nature and all living beings in this country. Article 48A of our constitution under Directive Principles of State Policy states “***The State shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country***”. Article 51A (g) of the Constitution under Fundamental Duties states “***Fundamental duty of every citizen to protect and improve the natural environment, including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife and to have compassion for living creatures***”.



However, people do fail to do their duties, else the role of the Government would have been reduced and self-help groups could have run the country. It is a common knowledge that people do fail in their fundamental duties else India would have been in a better place.

The country has promulgated Animal Cruelty laws. The Jallikattu events where a bull is released into an open ground and people one after the other try to hold onto the hump of the bull or remove a bag of coins from the horns is often promoted as a heroic activity. Often the bull is purposefully irritated and enraged by repeated twisting of its tail, rubbing of chilli powder on eyes, stabbing it with sharp sticks and knives etc before releasing it into the arena. Else, the bull won't attack and the event would be a flop show. In several places they feed the bull with alcohol before releasing it. There are incidences of bulls breaking their legs, dying as well as people dying. In Virudhunagar on 23rd January 2017, the bull instead of moving into the open arena turned back and gored a cop. These days it is promoted as a part of our culture.



3 men on a bull in a Jallikattu event in Tamil Nadu

Unfortunately, in every era in every country, there have been people who have resorted to hedonistic and atavistic pleasures. At times those were promoted by the rich and the powerful in the society and have been documented in medallions, stone carvings etc. In primitive societies, man had to live cheek-by-jowl with animals. With danger lurking at each corner, it was literally survival of the fittest and hence the strongest of men were praised and received accolades. Taming the bull in those days would have been very relevant measure of virility. Today there are enough Olympic sports to test the limits of human strength and endurance and one doesn't need to engage in bull taming. Terming those events as part of our culture and glorifying it today is completely out of place. Nevertheless, it fits in with the narrative of the ruling dispen-

sation that all our old traditions are glorious.

Association of Animals with Gods:

In India, each and every animal has been associated with one of our Gods for example owl and elephant with Goddess Laxmi, Elephant with King of Gods Indra, Tiger and Lion to be vehicle of Durga/ Sherawali Maa, Peacock with Lord Kartikeya etc. The bull is associated with Lord Shiva. So when someone is harassing a bull on the pretext of a sport, followers of Lord Shiva are offended. Nevertheless, any voice against bull harassment in Jallikattu has been violently throttled down with an actress event getting rape and murder calls. So it may have been easier for the ruling dispensation to agree for a rule change to allow Jallikattu.



Goddess Laxmi on Elephant

Ideas, customs, social behaviour, values, beliefs constitute culture of a society. With time culture changes. There was a time when bull was offered as sacrifice and eaten writes Swami Vivekananda “*You will be astonished if I tell you that, according to the old ceremonials, he is not a good Hindu who does not eat beef. On certain occasions he must sacrifice a bull and eat it*”. (The Complete works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol. 3, pg 536). In the same volume he also writes that even beef was eaten by Brahmins “There was a time in this very India when, without eating beef, no brahmin could remain a Brahmin”. (The

Complete works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol. 3, pg 174). Today, Hindus don't eat beef and many Brahmins are vegetarian. Practices that were prevalent in the past are no longer in vogue due to changed social mores. So using culture as a pretext to justify animal cruelty doesn't bode well for India's image.

Animal vs Animal Blood Sports

Jallikattu is not the only sport where cruelty is inflicted on animals. In different parts of India, there have been practice of animal fights before the harvesting season. In Assam, people organise buffalo fights and also bulbul fights just before Bihu. In Odisha, there used to be ram fights in villages. These fights are very bloody.

There are also cock fights organised in Odisha, Andhra, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu etc. These fights are gory as a sharp curved knife is attached to one leg of the cock and they try to slash each other with it. One person was reported to have died when he got slashed by the curved knife. I had to take evasive action while shooting the following documentary on cock fights: <https://youtu.be/eRQjcEzoMoQ>

There are significant number of people who watch these events and a lot of betting is involved. That makes these events very lucrative for people. It is estimated that in Andhra alone cock fighting gets 200 crores in bets. Since a lot of money is involved, the organisers of these events have an added incentive to mobilise people to protest for repealing the rules. After Jallikattu, now there will be more demands for repealing the bans on buffalo fights, bulbul fights, cock fights etc.

Since people use culture as a pretext for conducting these animal fights, now it becomes an accepted fact to brand any activity as part of our culture. In fact the ruling BJP had pushed for allowing people to pour milk in holes where snakes live. Immediately after coming to power at the centre in 2014, the Modi Government had constituted TSR Subramanian Committee to modify environment and wildlife laws and it had recommended Nag panchami to be allowed inside forests so that people can enter into forests and pour milk in snake holes and anthills.

Demand for conducting other Animal Fights:

Taking a cue from the Jallikattu event, tribals will now demand that they be allowed to hunt wild animals. In Odisha and in other states the Santhal and other tribals conduct "Akhand shikar" for three days. Large parts of forests are set fire and they kill the animals fleeing the fire. In Similipal Tiger Reserve, even three to four thousand people start hunting during that time. With the Modi Government bowing down to the Jallikattu lobby the Pandora's box has opened. Will the Government now agree to tribals hunting animals in the name of their cultural practices?

Sometime ago animals like goats, calves, buffaloes etc were sacrificed in rituals in temples. Several State Governments have put an end to animal sacrifices. In some places social reformers started movements to stop it, as was the case in Odisha where in the early '80s Dr. Harekrishna Mahatab, former Chief Minister of Odisha, raised his voice against animal sacrifice and got it banned. With the Government allowing Jallikattu, it has given a signal that it is amenable to revoking bans, so some religious leaders might now start raising their voice to allow animal sacrifices. Will the Modi Government allow it?

Can a civilised country permit violence on animals?

Swami Bhoomananda Theertha in an interview to News18 has said about Jallikattu “*such kinds of tradition are not permissible at all. We cannot use them for our enjoyment. In the name of religion, culture or tradition one has to be sublime or peaceful. Instead of doing this he makes it a scene of cruelty. Culture is supposed to be a source of religious refinement. While we talk about all this so much, do even know that there is no word like Hindu? The word only came to be known in 1700 AD, while the British were using it since 1200 AD to identify us. But we were known for our dharmas and shastras, which were pre-historic. Hence, we should have known that for us dharma is self-sustaining which also gives us the power to protect and sustain a living being*”.

As the human species evolved from hunter gatherers and the thought process got refined, anthropocentric belief - which views everything as per benefit to people – has given rise to ecocentrism. The Hon’ble Supreme Court in its landmark judgment on lion relocation to Kuno (Centre for Environment law, WWF-I vs Union of India & Others) on April 15, 2013, talked about principles of ecocentrism where human interest doesn’t automatically take precedence over animals. “*Sustainable development, it has been argued by various eminent environmentalists, clearly postulates an anthropocentric bias, least concerned with the rights of other species which live on this earth. Anthropocentrism is always human interest focused thinking that non-human has only instrumental value to humans, in other words, humans take precedence and human responsibilities to non-human are based benefits to humans. Ecocentrism is nature-centred, where humans are part of nature and non-humans have intrinsic value. In other words, human interest does not take automatic precedence and humans have obligations to non-humans independently of human interest. Ecocentrism is, therefore, life-centred, nature-centred where nature includes both humans and non-humans.*” For more details check : <http://www.indiawilds.com/diary/indiawilds-newsletter-vol-5-issue-iv/>

If we permit events like Jallikattu and other forms of animal fights, then imagery of such gory events will be etched in the minds of the present and future generations. As per theories of Transaction Analysis in psychology, these imagery will get recorded in the “child ego” state of people. Kids go on to evaluate things based on the events recorded in their child ego state. So the violent imagery recorded in their minds will also lead to change their behaviours. Violence against animals as well as others will be a much more acceptable behaviour for them. Given that we the present generation have largely failed in protecting the wilderness and wildlife of India, these gory events have the potential to move away the future generation from preserving nature and environment of our country.

In 2014, on the occasion of World Environment Day, PM Shri Narendra Modi had tweeted “We are blessed to be a part of a culture where living in complete harmony with the environment is central to our ethos. Let us serve as trustees, where we utilise our natural resources for the present and at the same time ensure happiness of our future generations. Let us ensure that even the smallest step we take in our daily lives will be an effort towards conserving nature and natural resources”. Though his Government hasn’t been walking the talk, his tweet reflects our culture accurately and all efforts should be made to preserve it.

Using culture as a pretext for these violent and cruel acts against animals doesn’t behove a country, which boasts of Buddha and Mahatma.

Eastern Imperial Eagle Attacks Desert Fox:

When I watch our wildlife battle for survival, I also feel as if a Strategy masterclass is unfolding in front of my eyes. In our MBA classrooms one students are taught many theories and many myths are also propagated. Many corporate head honchos make strategic missteps with often-disastrous consequences.

In corporate warfare, if you trip, you lose whatever you have painstakingly built over the years. However, there can be another chance of relaunching a different product, brand or service or even another company. In the wild, if you lose you pay with your life and most of the times the loser becomes the food of the victor. So you can find some of the finest strategies adopted by the wildlife warriors. It is never about brute strengths. Each combatant brings to the table a set of weapons and strengths and tries to fight the battle according to their own strengths.

Consider this battle between an Eastern Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*) and an Indian Desert Fox (*Vulpes vulpes pusilla*).



Have a look at this video before you proceed to read further: <https://youtu.be/iwi5np4xO3Q>

Strengths & Weaknesses of Eastern Imperial Eagle & Desert Fox:

One of the mightiest predators from the Sky is the Eastern Imperial Eagle which can soar high up in the sky and swoop down and make a kill. The Eastern Imperial Eagle is between 28 to 35 inches tall and can weigh from 2.45 kgs to 4.55 kgs.

The cute Indian Desert Fox weighs upto 3 kgs. The Desert Fox is omnivorous and feeds on rodents, gerbils, insects and even fruits. On the other hand the Eastern Imperial Eagle predates on small and medium mammals, birds and reptiles. So can the Eastern Imperial Eagle kill the Desert Fox?

The body weight of the Eastern Imperial Eagle is mostly bigger than the Desert Fox unless a juvenile Imperial Eagle tries to

take down an adult desert fox.

The Eastern Imperial Eagle with its huge wingspan ranging from 5.9 feet to 7.1 feet can come down from the sky with a huge momentum and sink in its talons and beak into the desert fox and kill it. The Eastern Imperial Eagle has the speed advantage over the desert fox and can make a quick attack.

The desert fox on the other hand is agile in the bush and can make quick dives and jumps over vegetation. Whereas the eagle can't fly inside the dense thorny vegetation as its wings will get entangled and ripped off. The Eastern Imperial Eagle



can't just take off vertically. It needs to hop a couple of steps while beating its massive wings to take off. When the eagle is on the ground, it can't just rush headlong and attack the desert fox inside the bush.

The Eastern Imperial Eagle has sharp talons and beak and can jump while fighting and use its talons to tear up the opponent. So if the desert fox tries to make a frontal attack then it can also get ripped apart by the talons of the eagle. The Desert fox can side step and jump over the eagle if it is not careful. So on the ground the Eastern Imperial Eagle has to be watchful and now the balance of power between these two combatants have shifted from the eagle and has become neutral.

Convert your opponent's strength into weakness:

Both the Desert Fox as well as the Eastern Imperial Eagle know their own strengths and weaknesses. The Eastern Imperial Eagle knows that it can easily kill the desert fox in the open where it can attack from the sky. The Desert fox knows that too. However, the desert fox only faces the opponent in the area where the desert fox has strength and the Imperial Eagle's strength becomes its weakness.

The desert fox doesn't understand that this is what is taught in MBA schools ie to convert your opponent's strength into weakness.

During 70s and early 80s, Bajaj scooters used to have a long wait list. In those days one could jump the queue if the payment was made in US dollars. The long waiting sign was treated as a symbol of success. In the early eighties, LML tied up with Piaggio to launch LML Vespa scooter. Apart from its better features like better headlight, both front and rear brakes working, single seat, the major thing was that the Vespa scooter was available directly to test, buy and drive away from the showrooms. Why wait for Bajaj when a good rival product is available? Vespa turned the long waiting period of Bajaj, which was earlier seen as a strength into weakness and asked people to just go and buy from the showrooms. There have been many such cases in different fields.

In the recent American Presidential Election, Donald Trump converted Hillary Clinton's strength into weakness. Hillary Clinton has an amazing resume and was touted as the most qualified candidate to have ever run for American President post. Even President Obama said so. However, Donald Trump who was never in politics, branded Hillary Clinton's long service as proof that Hillary as a Senator and Secretary of State was corrupt and was in cahoots with the system. Donald Trump promoted himself as someone who was trying to break the system or establishment.

Stick to Your Strength:

In MBA schools people often talk about SWOT analysis (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat). However, most of the time there is talk of overcoming your weakness. If the Desert Fox would have gone to an MBA school, then it would have perhaps tried to fly like an eagle? Perhaps not, as true forms of insanity is only known to afflict the human species. Mostly humans indulge in such stupidity.

So people try to improve their strengths in areas where they have no talent whatsoever. So students are often berated for not having a talent in say singing or writing poetry or studies like the other student. A musically gifted individual may not be adept in doing karate. Forcing such an individual to also practice Karate would be stupidity. It is better to spend 10,000 hours to hone your skill in a particular discipline and become a master in that discipline rather than be a jack of all trades who is average in everything.

We often find race cars racing against an aeroplane. Invariably the aeroplane overtakes the race car. The Indian Desert Fox didn't make the mistake of running straight in an open desert for a long time as the Eastern Imperial Eagle would have just gleefully snatched it up as a nice lunch. The Desert fox stuck to its strengths and only faced the opponent in the forest patches where the Eastern Imperial Eagle's advantage was neutralised.

Panic leads to stupid reactions:

The Desert fox didn't panic. While running away from one forest patch to the other, at times it was running slowly and was keenly aware about the movements of the eagle. It was putting sufficient distance between itself and the eagle. The moment the eagle starts hopping a few steps and beating its wings to raise itself into the air, the desert fox would have been half way near the other forest patch and used to vary its pace depending on the speed of the eagle. When someone is nervous, there are high chances of committing mistakes.

If the desert fox would have panicked and decided to run to a forest patch which is far away, then it would have become an easy meal. It didn't panic as it knew its strengths well.

History is mute spectator to many battles fought and lost when one side panics. Impregnable forts have been abandoned as the inmates panicked and patience ran thin.

The Knights in the old days used to often choose their rooms according to the length of their swords. If you have a long sword then it is better to stay in a room, which is big enough for you to swing your sword against attackers without hitting the walls. Even though there would be more enemies swarming outside the door, one can save himself. However, if the person panics and tries to run away, he will surely fall victim.

The famous villain Gabbar Singh from one of the all time great hindi movie “Sholay” says “*Jo darr gaya samjho marr gaya*” which loosely translated means one who panics dies.

Ethics

Even though the Desert Fox was being hunted it had once kept an eye on me as well as the Eastern Imperial Eagle. So I decided to be farther away and only film with my longest lens with focal lengths upto 1200mm so that the combatants didn't get disturbed. That is the primary rule of Wildlife Filming and Photography. It is ethical to not interfere in the ways of nature. It was 10.45 am and the heat waves in the desert ensured that the footage becomes soft due to the distance between me and the combatants. Nevertheless, I kept my distance and often circled a long way to shoot them without alarming them.

In the end, the desert fox proved its cunningness and foiled the plans of the eagle. So the eagle gave up after about 25 minutes.

Travel Article

Kyongnosla: an imagination of ‘such a late goodbye’:

Paromit Chatterjee, Krishnendu Mondal

(Zoological Survey of India, Kolkata.)

“Let me recommend the best medicine in the world: a long journey, at a mild season, through a pleasant country, in early stages” : James Madison, 4th President of USA

Landscapes of Sikkim are unforgettable. Here the picturesque countryside makes you feel that the journey matters as much as the destination. It can be the golden Khanchendzonga or the ‘Silk Route’ in Ganthang Plateau, Ladakh of Eastern India, or the Chhangu Lake. Journey to each of these destinations is mesmerising. Another beautiful area to explore in Sikkim, which is not so well-known to tourists, is the Kyongnosla Alpine Sanctuary.

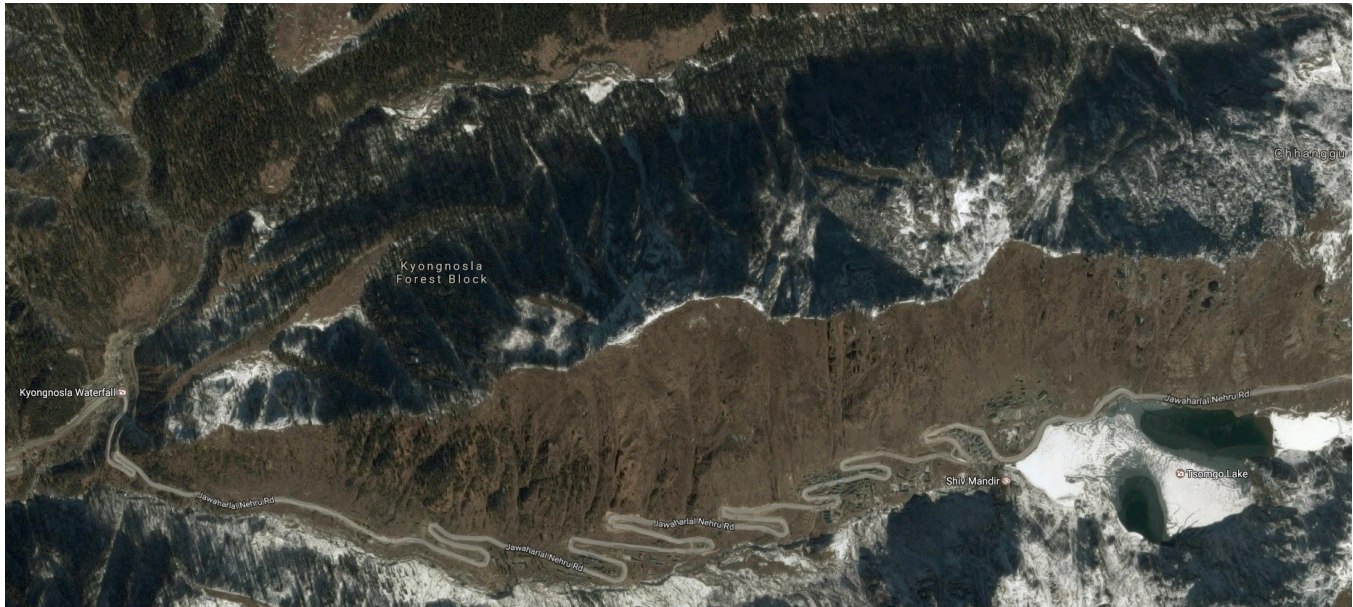


On the Way to Kyongnosla

Location:

The sanctuary is located inside the Kyongnosla Forest Block, East Sikkim district. It is about 31kms from Gangtok and is situated adjoining to the Tsomgo Lake and covers an area of about 31 square kilometers.

Travel Article



Satellite location of Kyongnosla

Forest Permissions & Logistics:

Sikkim Forest department has log huts for night stay just outside the sanctuary. The Log-huts have bed, electricity and water supply. These log huts need to be booked from the Sikkim Forest Department office at Deorali, Gangtok. The Sikkim Forest Department has kept the accommodation costs low at only 350 rupees per head per night. However, only two or three huts are available.



Travel Article

The entry fee to the sanctuary is 30 rupees per day per head and only 25 rupees for still camera. These bookings have to be made the day before the journey and identity proofs are required for the permission. Once these bookings are done next step is car renting which can be easily done from the Sikkim tourist information centre located just above the forest department office in Deorali. Car rents are about 4000 rupees to and fro from Gangtok. One can reach the sanctuary by car and the same car can pick up on the day one is supposed to return. For this, the permission should be made that way and the driver must be provided with a copy of that permission. Before leaving Gangtok, it will be better to have some snacks picked up in the car as the road to the sanctuary doesn't have further shops up to 15th mile, up in the mountains.

The Journey:

The journey to the sanctuary takes about four to five hours depending on the weather conditions. Throughout the journey the amazing sceneries of Sikkim will keep you looking out of the car window. The more you go up, the more beautiful are the sightings. The sanctuary is at a height of more than 3200 meters above mean sea level. One can easily spot the clouds floating in the valley and the winding roads moving above the clouds.



© Krishnendu Mondal/www.indiawilds.com

Watching the clouds floating down below you is simply stunning. Having dinner in wooden cabin at the 1st floor of a shop with hot soup in a chilly night is just an amazing experience. In front of the log hut one can also start a bonfire and can enjoy the night.

Travel Article



Shops and Hotels at Kyongnosla

As we drive up, we also cross the tree line. At the height the Sanctuary is, trees are absent. The entire alpine sanctuary is covered majorly with only Junipers, Silver firs and Rhododendrons. One can also find a number of other different alpine plant species here. Sikkim government have introduced the extremely rare ground slipper orchid in this sanctuary.

The place where these forest log huts are present is known as '17th Mile' which is near the camp of Indian Border Security Force. From here up goes the forest trek to explore the sanctuary up to Panch Gothe. Trek routes in this sanctuary are truly



astonishing. With all the scenic beauties and birds chirping along with the appropriate weather the trek will be a memorable event to treasure. Along the trek one can easily observe the Pika which can look like a cross between a hare and a rodent. They are also known as mouse hares and belong to the Lagomorpha order and Ochotonidae family.

**Royle's Pika (*Ochotona roylei*)
Representative image**

Travel Article

This sanctuary has plenty of birds to watch like Sunbirds, Besra, Redstarts, Laughing Thrush, Finches etc. There are also plenty of butterflies, bees, and spiders for the nature lovers.



Another route starts from the sanctuary gate and runs to Panch Gothe. In this trek, the most amazing sighting will be the Tseten Tashi Cave. Among the other sights, the beautiful landscape of Rong River is also comforting to the eyes. Taking a



Travel Article

field guide from the Forest department will be a good idea, as they will detail the places along with the stunning sightings.

This is a remote wilderness and census says only about 50 people reside in the area. A handful of shops are present. While residing at the log huts, these shops are the only place where one can eat and drink. Although, the number or size of these



shops is small, one can find almost everything they need here. Most of the food items and vegetables are brought from the market below the mountains, sometimes even from as far as Gangtok. So, visitors should expect the price of food to be a bit high. Maggi, Yi-Yi (Noodles), Soup, Roti, Rice, Chicken and Pork are fairly available here.

As the site is in a remote location and up in the mountains people primarily survive from their earnings from tourism. Most of the people have shops which are mainly run by the women while men drive car for tourists or work in Government sponsored projects like road building, construction etc. Only during the tourist season they become busy, stocking groceries, food, drinks, sweaters, jackets and other gift items in their shops while rest of the year earnings are much less. People here are very amicable and one can get a feeling of family just within a day or two.

Best time to Visit:

Best time to visit this sanctuary would be from the end of the September to early December. Cold can be an issue here as night time temperature drops well below five degrees.

A few drops of rain can also make the narrow trek routes pretty hard to walk on. But even with all these obstacles, one can

Travel Article

forget everything when one gets to see the beautiful early morning Sunrise and the local Buddhist temples with their colourful flags.



Anyone who undertakes this trip will doubtlessly cherish it for a long long time.

Conservation News

Uttarakhand High Court Bans killing & Display of so called maneaters:

The Uttarakhand High Court has banned the killings of animals like Leopards and tigers after being branded as maneaters. A division bench of Uttarakhand High Court comprising Justices Rajiv Sharma and Alok Singh have put a stop to this abominable practice of killing of wild animals by declaring them maneaters and ordered ban on display of the dead bodies of these wild animals in the print and electronic media.

The division bench ordered “The wild animal who pose threat to human life should be captured alive by using tranquilizer gun in the presence of a veterinary doctor and shall be thereafter released in nearby forest”. The order also mentions that whether an animal poses threat to human life is to be decided at the highest level by a committee comprising the Principal Secretary (Forest) and Principal Chief Conservator of Forests.

In Uttarakhand as well as in neighbouring Himachal Pradesh there have been many cases of leopards declared as man-eater and then hunters called in to kill them. Tigers and leopards are protected species and hunting is banned. However, the hunting lobby has found a loophole of killing these magnificent wild animals by declaring them as man-eaters. The powerful hunting lobby is hand in glove with the local officials and periodically declare these animals as maneaters.



Hunter Joy Hukil with dead leopard in Oct 2014, Masaun dhar, Pauri

This is not a recent practice. The late Kailash Sankhala writes “Sometimes man-eaters were created in a summary court

Conservation News

inquiry in order to prevent payment of a hunting fee and to claim benefits for free shooting. Unfortunately a close analysis of the permits issued shows that the recipients were the friends of influential people. One officer was always preceded in his district posting by reports of man-eaters! He used to enjoy free tiger shikar in the course of his duties. I had to take up the issue with the State Government, which was pleased to order that no government officer was to issue a permit for shooting man-eaters or cattle-lifters in his own name, and that particular official never came across another man-eater for the rest of his life.” (Tiger! The Story of the Indian Tiger by Kailash Sankhala, page 138).

These days there are many reputed researchers, wildlife tour agents, NGOs who are too willing to placate the people and declare carnivores as man-eaters and order killing of those. When the entire society is slowly but steadily abandoning ethical values, it becomes easy for stakeholders to collude and declare a particular animal to be man-eater, vermin etc and ready to be killed.

Genetically unique humpback and bottlenose dolphins in North Bay of Bengal

Marine mammal movements in the Northern Indian Ocean region is sparsely studied. The Indian Ocean is landlocked at this north by India and Bangladesh. The waters from Ganga, Brahmaputra, Meghna rivers fall into it bringing with them significant nutrients. The unique mangrove ecosystem of Sundarbans also helps in nutrient recycling further due to the intricate relationships between species in the mangrove ecosystem is further accentuated by the location of a more than 900m deep submarine canyon which upwells the nutrients supplied by the three rivers. Despite lack of physical barriers the movements of marine mammals is restricted by water temperature and depth. Surface currents, upwelling, rainfall, salinity and oxygen content also serve to determine the distribution of these species (Gaskin 1968, Polacheck 1987, Parsons 1998). Not many studies had been conducted on the mammals in this area. Fortunately, a study in Bangladesh on Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin *Tursiops aduncus* and Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin (*Sousa chinensis*) has shown significant results.

The Common bottlenose dolphin *Tursiops truncatus* and Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin *Tursiops aduncus* from Bangladesh are found to be distinct from others. Similarly the Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin (*Sousa chinensis*) is also found to be distinct. This findings have been published in a study titled “Oceanographic drivers of population differentiation in Indo-Pacific bottlenose (*Tursiops aduncus*) and humpback (*Sousa spp.*) dolphins of the northern Bay of Bengal” (Amarlal *et al.*, Conservation Genetics, Nov 2016)

Conservation News



Bottlenose Dolphin in Arabian Sea

The researchers sequenced the mtDNA of 17 bottlenose dolphins and 15 humpback dolphins and then compared the findings with previously published data. They found that both the Bangladesh bottlenose dolphins and the humpback dolphins are genetically different from their neighbouring populations. “*While the Bangladesh T. aduncus seem to be more closely related to the African T. aduncus form than the Pacific form, Sousa spp. seem to be more closely related to individuals from Australia.*”

The researchers used minimally invasive biopsy darting using a cross bow in coastal waters offshore the Sundarbans mangrove forest.

This finding enhances our ideas regarding speciation. Given that the Sundarbans spread over 10,000 square kilometres of area in India and Bangladesh faces huge population pressure in both the countries with new constructions, reclamation of mangrove areas, oil spills, motor boat movements, fatal interaction of dolphins and other marine organisms with fisheries, it is very important to preserve this marine ecosystem for posterity.

Blackbucks released from enclosure in Kanha

Blackbucks now roam in the wilds of Kanha National Park.

There was a time when blackbucks (*Antelope cervicapra*) used to roam in many parts of India and chased by cheetahs.

Though its main predator Cheetahs are extinct from India, habitat conversion from grasslands to agricultural land and shooting resulted in blackbucks locally exterminated from many areas of India. In Kanha National Park, blackbucks were found in the meadows but were declared locally extinct in 2005.

The forest department started the reintroduction programme in 2011 and had brought the blackbucks to Kanha and kept them in the enclosure. Many of them had died. However, their offspring have now grown and reached adulthood. Out of those, the first batch of 27 blackbucks have been released into the wild in the Kanha zone. It is hoped that they will gradually move and occupy the meadows as they used to do in the past.

George Schaller in his book *The Deer & The Tiger* has written, "The blackbuck population in Kanha Park has probably never exceeded 200 individuals. Brander (1953) after a visit to the area in 1928 reported "two good herds", and a census in 1938 gave a count of 168 animals. Since 1955, when 88 were tallied, the population has declined quite steadily, with only 30 reported in June, 1963, all on the Kanha meadow. By January, 1964, the herd had dwindled to 12 individuals, but from then on it increased, reaching 20 or possibly 21 by June, 1965." (*The Deer & The Tiger*, pg 153)

"One fawn, about four months old, disappeared from the Kanha herd in January, 1964, apparently having been taken by a predator. From then until March, 1965, a period of fourteen months, there were no further deaths, perhaps indicating that the predators find it difficult to stalk the animals successfully on the meadow. The steady decline in the population prior to 1964 was probably due largely to poaching." (*The Deer & The Tiger*, pg 155)

E. P. Gee based on his 1962 visit had termed the blackbucks as Kanha's most precious possessions. "There are, fortunately, still a few blackbuck left in Kanha, though not as many as in 1953. Only about forty to forty-five still survive. At all costs these must be preserved, because they, once such a familiar sight all over India except in the north-east, are now dying out.

Blackbuck, the fastest creatures in the world on four legs, love the wide open spaces where speed is their surest protection against enemies. Kanha is not typical blackbuck country, but these forty-odd antelope are one of the park's most precious possessions. Long may they continue to flourish." (*The Wild Life of India*, E. P. Gee, pg 53)

Blackbucks are classified as Near Threatened in the IUCN Red List. With the blackbucks roaming the wilderness of Kanha Tiger Reserve once again, hopefully this will be one long march towards a stable population and least concerned classification throughout the country.

Impact of pollution on Flamingos in Thane Creek to be studied

Maharashtra Government had declared a Flamingo Sanctuary in parts of Thane Creek in 2015. Lesser and Greater flamingos started visiting Thane creek sometime in the mid 1990s. Since then the pollution in the Thane Creek has increased. Now the Mangrove and Marine Biodiversity Conservation Foundation has decided to study the impact of pollution on the flamingos and the study would be carried out in Thane as well as in Kutch. Whether the pollution impacts the breeding, feeding and general behaviour needs to be seen. The study is to be completed in a year.



Both Greater Flamingos (*Phoenicopterus roseus*) and Lesser Flamingos (*Phoeniconaias minor*) visit Thane Creek and a few of them seem to have become resident there. The flamingos are seen in greater numbers during winter in late December feeding in the mudflats during lowtide times in various parts of Thane creek like Airoli, Bhandup, Sewri etc and in floating in the water during high tides. Presence of such charismatic birds can give a big boost to tourism interest.

“The world is not dangerous because of those who do harm but because of those who look at it without doing anything”. – Albert Einstein

Equipment Discussions -

Panasonic Unveils the GH5 mirrorless camera

Panasonic has finally unveiled the GH5 mirrorless camera. Last year it had released some information about the camera to arouse interest. Now the full specifications are finally confirmed by Panasonic.

The Panasonic DMC-GH5 camera has a 20.3 Mega Pixel Micro Four Thirds sensor. The size of the sensor is 17.3mm x 13mm

It features a newly developed Venus engine which is reputed to increase the processing power and among other things results in better data rates and better noise reduction.

For still photography, the camera has a fast 1/8000 shutter speed and flash sync at 1/250 s.

GH5 can shoot at 12 frames per second.



Video specs:

The GH5 can shoot DCI 4K video at 23.98 p at a 400Mbps in ALL-I 10 bits at 4:2:2 internally recorded in camera to dual SD cards which are UHS-II U3 variety. This will be available via future firmware release in summer.

4K 50p (PAL)/60p (NTSC) can be recorded internally at a reduced data rate of 150Mbps in IPB in 4:2:0 colour space at 8

bits.

UHD 4k ie 3840x2160 resolution can be recorded internally at 24, 25 and 30 fps at 10 bits in 4:2:2 upto 400Mbps data rate using ALL-Intra recording. Interestingly this camera can also simultaneously output in 10 bits via HDMI and recorded externally. A full sized HDMI connector is present instead of Micro-HDMI in the previous GH4 camera.

Full HD at 23.98p, 29.97p, 59.94p can be recorded internally at 200Mbps in 10 bits.

Full HD upto 180 fps can be recorded internally at a reduced data rate. This will be available via a future firmware release in April.

Panasonic will also make available a vLog profile at a later date at an additional cost. Using this log profile one can shoot at 12 stops of dynamic range. Panasonic has not specified a dynamic range without the log profile.

The GH5 camera has got 5 axis sensor stabilisation

30fps and UHD video at upto 50/60 fps.

The GH5 has a OLED Live View Finder with 3.86m-dot resolution and 0.76x magnification.

LCD Monitor: There is a 3.2" 1.62m-dot LCD at the rear and it can tilt and swivel for help during shooting as well as for playback.

The GH5 is freeze proof upto -10 degree centigrade (14°F)

The camera also has multiple assignable buttons and has a built-in 5 GHz Wi-Fi connectivity with Bluetooth and NFC.

BUY: Cost of GH5 is 1999.99 US dollars. You can preorder it from the following B&H link:

https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/buy/Panasonic_GH5/Ntt/Panasonic%2BGH5/N/0/kw/search/BI/19990/KBID/13252/DFF/d10-v1-t12

PRESS RELEASE

Panasonic LUMIX GH5 DSLM Camera Featuring the World's First 4K 60p/50p and 4K 30p 4:2:2 10-bit Video Recording Function

Panasonic once again pushes still and video boundaries with the LUMIX GH5

Panasonic has today announced the LUMIX GH5, the latest flagship model of LUMIX G DSLM cameras based on the Micro Four Thirds system standard. The new camera delivers a high-end, hybrid performance to photo enthusiasts and professional videographers looking to capture moments in 4K 60p/50p video and 6K PHOTO.

Defying all the general concepts of what a mirrorless camera can do, the LUMIX GH Series has reached a number of milestones with this introduction. Packing a host of innovative advancements in picture quality, response and performance into an unimaginably small-sized body, the new LUMIX GH5 opens the door to a new stage of photographic and cinematographic culture.

Unprecedented Picture Quality in the History of LUMIX Cameras

The LUMIX GH5 is able to achieve high-quality images with real-life details through excellent resolution, image rendering and color reproduction. Its new Digital LIVE MOS Sensor increases the pixel count by 25% compared to the GH4, from 16.05 to 20.3 megapixels, while also removing the low-pass filter.

The camera also comes with a new image processor Venus Engine, which achieves improvement especially in natural texture expression. The engine's Multi-pixel Luminance Generation renders clear, sharp images by referring to a 9x larger area of pixel information during the de-mosaic process for precise detail reproduction. With Intelligent Detail Processing, the characteristic of every single pixel is analyzed to detect whether the pixel is located at a flat, detail or edge part of the picture. Optimum processing according to the characteristic of each pixel is then applied. This results in high-precision yet natural images with stunning detail suppressing false colors at its edges.

Also, Three Dimensional Color Control detects not only hue and saturation, but also brightness, and applies optimum control according to the value of each factor. This achieves rich color reproduction from shadows to highlights of the image. The conventional Multi Process NR (Noise Reduction) is upgraded to High Precision Multi Process NR. It boasts 4x the noise identification accuracy compared to the previous engine and preserves details even after the noise reduction process. As a result, photos can be clearly shot even at high sensitivity ISO values of up to 25,600.

The LUMIX GH5 also incorporates the 5-axis Dual I.S. (Image Stabilizer) ²³, which suppresses blurring in more powerful and advanced ways for both photo and video recording, including 4K video. Combining an O.I.S. (Optical Image Stabilizer, 2-axis) and B.I.S. (Body Image Stabilizer, 5-axis), it compensates for larger movements which were conventionally uncontrollable. The LUMIX GH5's high-precision gyro sensor controls both the O.I.S. and B.I.S. compensation by studying the focal length and shooting conditions, making it possible to use a max. 5-stop slower shutter speed⁴. This is highly beneficial not only for wide-angle and telephoto shots, but also in adverse situations, such as at night-time or when shooting with one hand.

The world's first DSLM camera that meets professional quality standards

The LUMIX GH Series created an epoch-making industry sensation by achieving outstanding video recording performance with advanced features that meet the needs of professional quality levels and standards.

With the LUMIX GH5, the signal readout speed has been accelerated by max 1.7x in the new Digital Live MOS Sensor, and the new Venus Engine processes signals at max 1.3x higher speed. This synergy realizes 4K 60p/50p ultra high-definition, smooth, video recording for the first time in a DSLM camera. It is also capable of internal 4:2:2 / 10-bit video recording, which is the color subsampling commonly used for film production, for even more faithful color reproduction⁵.

The high-sensitivity MOS Sensor and Venus Engine effectively suppress rolling shutter distortion and realize high-speed readout of full digital signals. This ensures an outstandingly high image quality for every single frame. In addition, the focal length in video recording is kept the same as that in photo shooting (no cropping).

Users can freely choose between MOV, MP4, AVCHD Progressive and AVCHD formats at a variety of frame rates, and there is no recording time limit for both FHD and 4K video. Professional users working globally can set the system frequency to 59.94Hz, 50.00Hz or 24.00Hz.

While 'Cinelike D' and 'Cinelike V', which have similar gamma setting characteristics for film production, are available in Photo Style for video recording, the LUMIX GH5 also provides 'Like 709' for compatibility with HDTV. A paid software upgrade to support V-LogL video recording is also available.

In response to requests from professional users, the LUMIX GH5 comes with a Waveform Monitor and Vector Scope. It also embeds SMPTE-compliant Time Code either in Rec Run or Free Run count-up methods, which makes it easy to synchronize multiple video footage or sound sources in the post production workflow. Luminance levels can be selected between 64-1023 / 64-940 / 0-1023 (10-bit). Synchro Scan mode suppresses flicker and Color Bars (SMPTE / EBU / ARIB Standard) are also available.

New AF system with advanced DFD Technology never misses a once-in-a-lifetime moment

The LUMIX GH5 comes with a newly improved Depth from Defocus⁶ and Contrast AF technology, which not only calculates the distance to the subject by evaluating two images with different sharpness levels, but also analyzes the form, size and even motion of the subject comprehensively. Thanks to the new Venus Engine, the time for measuring the distance to the subject is 6x faster, while factoring the distance into in-plane or in-depth is 2x faster.

The speed of sensor drive during auto focusing in photo shooting mode has been increased to 480 fps, which is 2x faster than that of the GH4. Consequently, the LUMIX GH5 realizes ultra-high-speed AF of approximately 0.05 sec⁷ and 12 (AFS) / 9 (AFC) fps high-speed burst shooting using a mechanical shutter in full resolution. By analyzing every single frame precisely, it achieves a maximum 200% higher precision frame detection with minimum motion detection error for higher tracking tolerance against moving subjects.

For even more precise focusing, the number of focus areas has been increased from 49 to 225. Users can create a group of focus areas depending on the composition and can control it easily with a new joystick located on the thumb position, without taking your eyes off the subject. This is possible even when using the LVF or releasing the finger off the shutter button. If focus is not exactly as the user intended when the shutter is pressed, the LUMIX GH5's Post Focus function⁸ enables users to select the specific focus point even after shooting – particularly helpful in situations like macro shooting where severe focusing is required. In addition, the camera also features a Focus Stacking function. Taking a single macro photo with specific areas in focus can sometimes be difficult, Focus Stacking enables users to take multiple images of the same frame with different focus points. You can then combine them into one image with the defocus as you like.

The LUMIX GH5's new 6K PHOTO⁹ function makes it possible to capture unmissable moments at 30 fps by extracting the frame with the best timing out of the 6K burst file (in 3:2 or 4:3 aspect) to save as an approximately 18-megapixel equivalent high resolution photo. 4K PHOTO has also been upgraded enabling 60 fps high speed capture in approximately 8-megapixel equivalent resolution. In 6K/4K PHOTO, three exclusive modes are available to choose from depending on the situation; 6K/4K Burst, 6K/4K Burst (Start/Stop) and 6K/4K Pre-burst.

By compensating the signal information between the frames, the Venus Engine makes it possible to apply Post Recording Refinement over the pictures to correct distortion and reduce noise when playing back or cutting images out of the 6K/4K burst file. As a result, the picture quality of 6K/4K PHOTO shot at high shutter speed in high sensitivity or those shot in panning are dramatically improved.

High mobility in rugged design for heavy field use

To be tough enough to withstand even heavy field use, the LUMIX GH5's main structure is composed of a magnesium alloy, full die-cast front/rear frame. Secure construction and the sealing of every joint, dial, and button makes the camera not only splash/dust-proof, but also freeze-proof down to -10 degrees Celsius.

The LUMIX GH5 is equipped with a double SD Memory Card slot compatible with high-speed, high capacity UHS-II for the first time in the LUMIX digital cameras. Users can flexibly choose the recording method either in Relay Rec, Backup Rec or Allocation Rec.

The LUMIX GH5 has a large LVF (Live View Finder) with a stunningly high magnification ratio of approximately 1.52x / 0.76x (35mm camera equivalent). The high-precision, high-speed OLED display features 3,680K-dot high resolution and 100% field of view. Adopting a static-type touch control system, the 3.2-inch free-angle rear screen in 3:2 aspect with 1,620K-dot high resolution achieves approximately 100% field of view.

Finally, the shutter unit is durable for approximately 200,000 releases.

Expandability, optional accessories, other features

- The LUMIX GH5 integrates **Bluetooth 4.2 and Wi-Fi® 5GHz (IEEE 802.11ac) connectivity** to offer a more flexible shooting experience and instant image sharing with easy operation.
- The LUMIX GH5 is compatible with the new **Battery Grip DMW-BGGH5**. By using two batteries, one in the camera and the other in the grip, the DMW-BGGH5 extends the battery life for longer time shooting.
- The optionally available **microphone adaptor DMW-XLR1** is a plug-in type adaptor for XLR microphone to record high quality stereo sound.
- **To save power**, the camera automatically enters sleep mode after detecting the eye is off the LVF sensor. **Various shutter systems** are available with the LUMIX GH5: A mechanical shutter with maximum 1/8000 sec, an electronic-first curtain shutter with maximum 1/2000 sec which can be used with flash while suppressing the shutter shock, and an electronic shutter without shutter shock with maximum 1/6000 sec. **Firmware updates** will add: Full HD 4:2:2 10bit video recording capability (scheduled for April 2017); 400Mbps 4:2:2 10bit All-Intra video recording in 4K 30p/25p/24p; Full HD, high resolution video recording in Anamorphic mode; Hybrid Log Gamma in Photo Style mode which enables popular 4K HDR video recording and USB tethering (all scheduled for second half of 2017).

The Lumix GH5 will be available (body only) in late March for \$1999.99. For more information please visit LumixLounge.com. Panasonic is proud to share that the GH5 is a CES 2017 Innovation Award Honoree.

[1] As a Digital Single Lens Mirrorless camera as of 4 January, 2017

[2] As an interchangeable lens system camera as of 4 January, 2017

[3] 5-axis Dual I.S. 2 can be used with the H-FS12060 and H-FS14140 (requires firmware update) lenses as of January 4, 2017. The firmware for the use of 5-Axis Dual I.S. 2 with H-RS100400 will be released in February 2017. The newly introduced lenses H-ES12060, H-HSA12035, H-HSA35100, H-FSA45200 and H-FSA100300 are all compatible with 5-axis Dual I.S. 2.

[4] Based on the CIPA standard [Yaw/Pitch direction: focusing distance $f=50-140\text{mm}$ (35mm film camera equivalent $f=100-280\text{mm}$), when H-FS14140 is used.

[5] 4:2:0 8-bit in 4K60p/50p recording on SD Memory Card

[6] Contrast AF with DFD Technology works only with Panasonic Micro Four Thirds lenses.

[7] In AFS, at wide-end with H-ES12060 (CIPA).

[8] The Post Focus function needs to be activated manually in the camera menu.

[9] 6K PHOTO' is a high speed burst shooting function that cuts a still image out of a 4:3 or 3:2 video footage with approx. 18-megapixel (approx. 6000 x 3000 effective pixel count) that the 6K image manages.

Equipment Discussions -

Nikon launches D5600 DSLR

Nikon has launched the new D5600 DSLR camera with 24.2 MP DX-format CMOS sensor with EXPEED processor. The sensor size is 23.5mm x15.6mm which in 35mm terms can be said to have 1.5x crop factor. So a 100mm lens has a field of view of 150mm lens.



The Nikon D5600 camera has an ISO range of 100 to 25600 and shoots stills at 5fps. It can also shoot video at 1080p at 60fps/50fps for slow motion as well as 30fps, 25 and 24 fps in H.264/MPEG 4. It also has a built-in microphone for recording audio in stereo mode to the video clips.

It has a 3.2 inch rear LCD which has a variangle design and 1.037 M dots. The LCD has a 170 degree viewing angle.

The eyepiece optical viewfinder covers 95% area and has a magnification of 0.82x .

The AF system is based on Phase detection and has 39 point Autofocus points with 9 cross type sensors. The autofocus sensitivity is -1 to +19 EV (@ISO 100, 20°C/68°F)

The flash sync speed is 1/200 second. The fastest shutter speed is 1/4000 and slowest is 30 seconds.

The Nikon D5600 has built-in SnapBridge connectivity which helps in transferring images to a connected mobile device. With the help of BLE (Bluetooth Low Energy) technology in the D5600 camera, low resolution images can be automatically transferred to a mobile or any smart device. One can use the mobile phone and can remotely see the live view image and click the camera. Wi-Fi and NFC is also built-in to the camera and helps in wireless transfer of images and videos to connected smart devices. SnapBridge helps in seamlessly shifting between Wi-Fi and NFC and making them more usable.

The D5600 records to SD/SDHC/SDXC cards and weighs 415gms.

BUY: http://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/buy/Nikon_D5600/Ntt/Nikon%2BD5600/N/0/kw/search/BI/19990/KBID/13252/DFF/d10-v1-t12

Equipment Discussions -

Aputure Deity Microphone

Aputure, the company which used to sell economically priced good quality LED lights have now ventured into microphones.

Aputure has now released a shotgun microphone named as Deity. This microphone is of the same size and diameter as the Sennheiser MKH 416 microphone. Even the outward appearance is also the same.

According to Aputure their microphone Deity is comparable to the Schoeps CMC641 and Sennheiser MKH-60. The pricing of 369 US Dollars is way less than these two microphones.



Aputure has also launched a Kit version with the Rycote lyre softie mount at \$429 US dollars.

The Aputure Deity has a Frequency range of 50Hz to 20 KHz and a maximum SPL of 130dB @1KHz. The specs are close to the Sennheiser MKH 416, though the MKH 416 would be a bit more sensitive and will have higher off-axis noise rejection.

Published Specs of Aputure Deity Microphone:

Polar Pattern	Super Cardioid
Maximum SPL	130dB SPL(@1KHZ,1% THD into 1K)
Frequency Range	50~20kHz
THD	≤0.5%
Nominal Impedance	75Ω
Min. Terminating Impedance	approx. 800Ω
Sensitivity	-32±2dB re 1V/Pa @1kHz
Equivalent noise level	12dB (A-weighted), 24dB (CCIR 268-3)
Input Voltage	24V or 48V phantom powering
Current consumption	1.5mA
Temperature range	-10℃ to +70℃
Dimensions	Φ19 x 250mm
Output	XLR
Weight	198g

Microphones normally are much better investments than cameras in terms of depreciation as the same microphones remain in action for many decades and retain their value better. The popular Sennheiser MKH 416 has continued to be in use for some four decades. So it is always advisable to invest in good quality premium microphones. In such a scenario a new player in order to be acceptable has to challenge the traditional pricing structure and Aputure has done the same. Nevertheless, we will have to see how these new microphones work after being in the field for a while. However, Aputure says that its microphone is splash proof.

Since the Aputure Deity and the Sennheiser MKH 416 has the same length and diameter, the same microphone mounts as well as rycote zeppelins and softies will work. At less than half the cost of the MKH 416, the Aputure Deity microphone would find many takers among the new shooters.

It is available in B&H: http://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/buy/Aputure_Deity/Ntt/Aputure%2BDeity/N/o/kw/search/BI/19990/KBID/13252/DFF/d10-v1-t12

Equipment Discussions -

Canon Powershot G9 X Mark II Camera

Canon has launched the 20.1 MP Powershot G9 X Mark II camera with 1 inch sensor. It has a focal length of 10.2mm to 30.6 mm which is equivalent to 28-84mm in 35mm full frame terms.

So the optical zoom is 3x and it also has a digital zoom of 4x.

The Powershot G9 X Mark II has got a Digic 7 processor.



It has got a TTL autofocus as well as manual focus mode. It has a 3.0 inch colour liquid crystal LCD monitor at the back for composing as well as viewing images and videos. The LCD has 1.04 million dots.

At the wide angle end, the maximum aperture is f2.0 and in the tele end ie at 84mm the aperture is f4.9

In the auto mode the shutter speed varies from 1-1/2000 seconds. In the manual mode the shutter speed can go from 30-1/2000 seconds. In the manual one can also engage the Bulb mode.

While shooting videos, the shutter speed can go down to as low as 1/6 seconds.

The ISO sensitivity in auto mode is from ISO 125 to ISO 6400. In the P mode the ISO can go upto 12800.

There are three metering modes: Evaluative, Centre weighted average and spot metering.

Exposure compensation can be set at +/- 3 stops in 1/3rd increments while shooting stills as well as videos.

There is a Time-Lapse Movie functions mode in this camera which helps in recording a series of stills over a set time period

and then automatically merging those stills to create a time-lapse video.

Still shots can be clicked in RAW as well as in jpeg mode. The Powershot G9 X II can shoot at the rate of 8.1 fps in one shot AF mode for upto 38 shots and at 5.3 fps upto 102 shots in High speed Servo AF mode.

In one shot AF mode, this camera can also shoot in RAW at 8.2 fps for 21 shots.

The videos are recorded in MPEG-4 format in Full HD at upto 1080 60p. The videos can be continuously recorded upto 29 Min 59 seconds. There is a built-in stereo microphone for recording audio while shooting video.

The still shots and videos are recorded to SD/SDHC/SDXC and UHS-I cards.

The camera body weighs 182 gms and is 3.9 inch x2.3 inch x1.2 inch

Since shooting in RAW gives the maximum amount of details in the shot, many people are likely to keep it in their pocket and go to places where you can't carry your DSLR and use the RAW mode while using this camera. There are many people wanting to get their kids initiated into photography. Instead of a heavier DSLR for pre-teens and teens, this camera with RAW might be better due to the lightweight nature and RAW mode. The design is also trendy and would be appealing to the younger generation.

Powershot G9 X II has a built-in Wi-Fi with NFC which can be used to wirelessly transfer images to a linked mobile. One can also pair it with Bluetooth to connect to smartphones or tablets to permit remote control over the camera from your device using the Canon Camera Connect app.

Cost: \$529 US dollars

Availability: March 2016

One can preorder it in B&H: http://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/buy/Powershot_G9_X_Mark_II/Ntt/Powershot%2BG9%2BX%2BMark%2BII/N/o/kw/search/BI/19990/KBID/13252/DFP/d10-v1-t12

Canon India MRP: Rs. 30,995/-

Natural History -

COUNTRY NOTEBOOK: M.Krishnan: 'The King Cobra'

The Sunday Statesman: 26-April-1964 (shared by Shri. Saktipada Panigrahi)

THE KING COBRA

(Hamadryad)

" SOME years ago, I visited King Cobra country and spent a few days trying to get a glimpse of royal snake, which I had seen only in zoos before. And to this day I do not know whether or not, I have seen a wild King Cobra.

The king cobra which is found in many parts of South India where there are still natural forests left, is probably the most dreaded of all snakes because it is said to attack at sight, with no provocation. I have always felt that this reputation for ag-



gressiveness was a myth, or rather, untrue. There are many recorded instances of people having approached king cobras in Burma (where too they occur) without being attacked, "Eha" shot one in Konkan, when it was up a tree, (the alternative name, hamadryad, suggests its liking for trees), without any provocation from the snake, and others have recorded similar killings.

But there are also many stories in Anglo-Indian literature of sudden and unprovoked attacks by king cobras (there is one in Mervyn Smith's improbable book) and while many of these are definitely fanciful, some may be true. After all, active intelligent snakes like those of the cobra tribe, do develop a strong sense of territory, and will demonstrate against intruders even if they do not attack. The cobra, which is a lesser version of its snake-eating cousin, will display this aggressiveness, where it has long been in possession of the ground, as I can testify from my knowledge. Once I occupied an old cottage which had known no human tenants for years; immediately after moving in, I found that two cobras were in possession, and knew no peace till both had been disposed of.

On the other hand, too little attention has been paid by naturalists to the quite astonishing tolerance of humanity that a cobra, allowed to live in some place along with people, displays. The practice of letting a cobra live as a co-tenant, once not uncommon in South India, has become almost obsolete with the great increase in human population and the consequent rarity of bungalows in large compounds and the wane of religious and superstitious traditions. But I may assure the reader that "resident cobras" (as they are called in Tamil) have long been known in South and that their innocuousness was quite

well-established. Even today, in certain temples, the cobras have free entry, and the worshippers move within inches of them with no fear in their hearts, and no consequences.

Well, it is true that the King Cobra is not merely a cobra but a regal one, and that it is much more of a forest snake but the possibility of its developing a certain tolerance to humanity in places is not to be ruled out. And since it has powerfully developed territorial feelings, the possibility of its attacking fiercely without provocation is always there, particularly when it is guarding the eggs. In short, there is much to be said on both sides.

But still, I am sure its aggressiveness has been grossly exaggerated. Being such an alert, fearless and large snake, it raises the first 6 feet of its length vertically the better to see who has ventured on its territory and expands its huge hood almost automatically -- and the man who has chanced upon the king cobra bolts in terror at once, and afterwards tells a blood-curdling tale of how the brute chased him -- when it was merely demonstrating or just hospitably seeing off the departing guest. The fact is that few have had the scientific curiosity to stay put and watch the snake's next move. A scientifically-minded man, I deplore this waste of opportunity to study the behaviour of one of our least-known snakes, but I also understand this "no-enthusiasm". I believe the venom of the king cobra is no more virulent than that of a young, two-foot long cobra but there is 20 times as much of it and so a bite usually has practically instant results. I myself missed the opportunity to take what would probably have been the first-ever picture of a wild king cobra for an equally reprehensible lack of scientific awareness.

This was in Annamalais, and I was on foot accompanied by a tribesman of those hills, a Malai-Malasar. We are coming home from a long and vain search for the Lion-tailed macaque, along a footpath thickly flanked with bushes and trees. I was in the lead, and noticing a slight movement to my left, stopped dead. A great black glistening snake, as thick as my arm, was in a depression to one side of the path and uncoiling itself, it crossed the path ahead of me, unhurriedly. The snake was about 15 feet from me and took its time crossing the path and disappearing into the thick bush-growth to my right. I turned to ask my companion if it was a King Cobra, and found him already up a tree, an action that struck me, even then as singularly pointless.

I turned back to the snake, and watched it closely as it went away. And I cannot tell how long it was precisely or give a fuller description of it. Perhaps it was fully 12 feet long and was a just-adult King Cobra -- perhaps it was only about nine feet in length and was the grandfather of all rat snakes. I had a loaded camera in my hand and could have photographed the snake -- the light was excellent -- but feared that the thud of the shutter might irritate the snake. Only after it had disappeared did I realise that snakes are wholly deaf to airborne sounds and that I missed a great opportunity if it was a king cobra -- anyway, in a photograph with the head shown slightly away from the onlooker it would have looked a king cobra. All that I can now say in self-defence is that my companion acted no more sensibly for if it was only an enormous rat snake he needn't have climbed the tree and if it was a king cobra he gained no added security by his effort."

- M. Krishnan

This was published on 26 April 1964 in The Sunday Statesman

Wildlife Photography -

Tiger by Jerin Dinesh



Leopard Scratching Tree by V.S.Sankar



Wildlife Photography -

Tiger in Corbett by Ashok Sorout

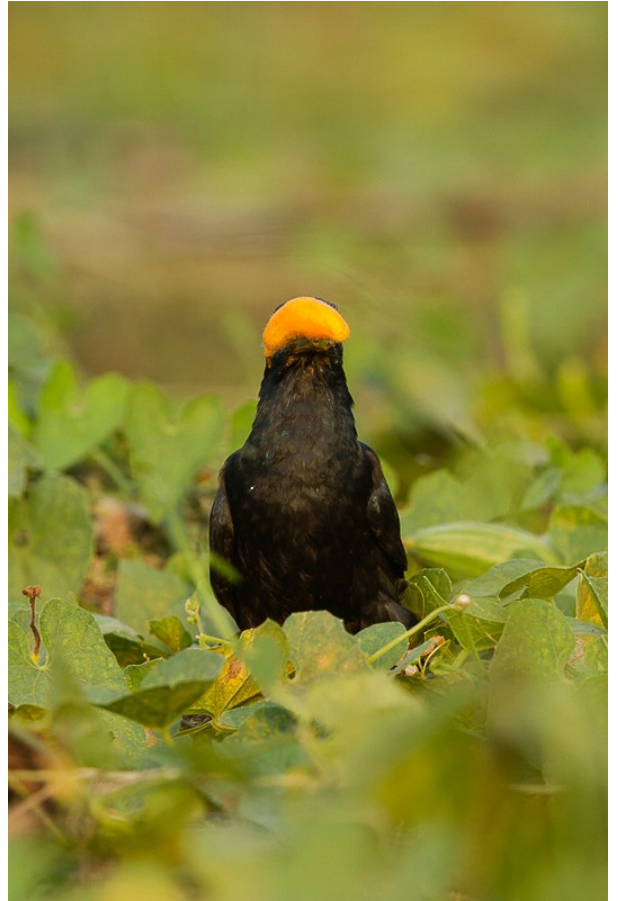


Indian Grey Mongoose by Uday Kiran



Wildlife Photography -

Asian Koel by Samrat Sarkar



Spotted Owlet by Rajbir Oberoi

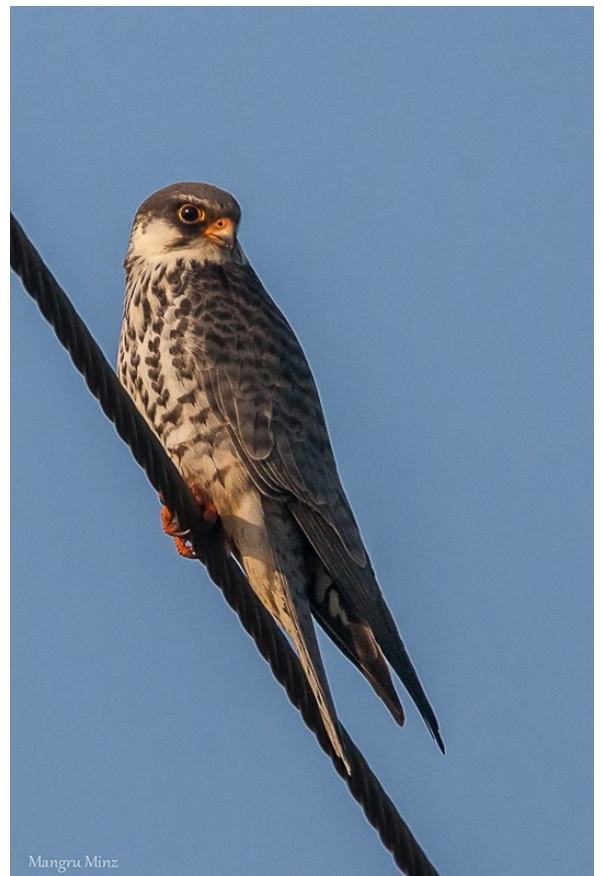


Wildlife Photography -

Amur Falcon by Abhishek Jamalabad



Amur Falcon by Mangru Minz



Wildlife Photography -

Yellow Monitor Lizard by Abhirup Dutta Gupta



Beautiful couple by Prajwal Ullal



Wildlife Photography -

Tortoise Beetle by Arun Acharjee



A wintery morning by Prajwal Ullal





With this issue of IndiaWilds we set foot in our 9th year of uninterrupted publication of this journal which started as a newsletter and continues to evolve. I look forward to your inputs and support in preserving the last tracts of wilderness and wildlife left in 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

Profile: <http://www.indiawilds.com/about.htm>

Contact: <http://www.indiawilds.com/contact%20us.htm>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/IndiaWilds/132629240481>

Diary: <http://www.indiawilds.com/diary/>

Equipment reviews: <http://www.indiawilds.com/diary/category/equipment/>

Forums: <http://www.indiawilds.com/forums/index.php>

Channel: <http://www.youtube.com/indiawilds>

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