



IndiaWilds Newsletter

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Responsibility of our Popular Icons

A popular teen-flick featuring chocolate hero Tobey Maguire had a memorable dialogue “With great power comes great responsibility”. This oft quoted dialogue need not be trashed just because it was popularised by a hollywood film, as this idea probably has been around since time immemorial. A couple of centuries ago, in 1732, Voltaire had written the same wise words “with great power comes great responsibility”. These words in french are engraved in his tomb “*Un gran pouvoir impose un lorde responsabilité.*”

In a country like India, where we virtually deify our cinema superstars, even some fans building temples in their name, the impact of the cinema superstars are all too evident. Their smiles, antics and product endorsements are virtually flashed non-stop in TV, print, hoardings etc. Fans take great pains to speak, walk and dress up as their favourite superstars. So our cinema superstars do wield great power over their fans. Since their conduct influences millions of people, they should be conscious about their responsibility. There might be a few superstars like Shahrukh Khan who had famously said “mein bhand hoon” when he was questioned why he dances in weddings of rich people and charges them money. However, that doesn’t take away the fact that “with great power comes great responsibility”.



Aishwarya with daughter

Recently, Ms. Aishwarya Ray Bachchan choose to dress her baby in leopard prints.

It should be noted that animal prints came into vogue in the fashion world when a number of countries started banning use of animal skin in dresses. There are still reports of use of tiger and leopard skins in certain rituals. The revered Dalai Lama had earlier made an appeal against the use of these skins in the festivals. Till the time we continue with the animal prints in clothes, the idea that animal skins are attractive as a fashion accessory will continue. With Amitabh Bachchan keenly participating in save the tiger campaigns, his daughter-in-law should take a cue and promote conservation awareness rather than parade her kid with atavistic animal print dresses.



Preservation of our natural heritage ought to be instilled into the people from childhood days. Earlier it used to happen culturally through the various stories in Puranas, Upanishad's etc.



With the modern generation far removed from our culture which used to shape the beliefs of people, we have no way but to depend upon the public figures who take up thousands of hours of air time in TV. The actions of these people, howsoever subtle it might be, shapes our values and beliefs. Now who will teach these celebrities?

Born Free: Now behind bars :

Every species have a right to live life without being subjugated by others. The laws of our society says that when a man is born free, he/she has the right to live a free life. No one can be bonded to a life of slavery. If so, is this law be applicable on other non-human species? This debate has come to the front when in a sad case a wild tiger wandered into the Nandankanan zoo on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar, Odisha and was trapped by the authorities. This tiger was found entering into the zoo and wandering around the animal enclosures during the midnight and leaving the zoo during the early morning hours. The zoo authorities waited for the tiger to enter the zoo and when they saw it through the CC TV cameras, closed the gates to trap the tiger.

The zoo authorities are delighted to have a new tiger free of cost in their enclosure, as the story is going to attract many visitors to the zoo. To make their act look bona fide, they even say that this will improve the gene pool in the zoo as they will ensure that the wild tiger is mated with the captive tigresses inside the zoo. This makes us wonder what is the true purpose of the zoo? Is it entertainment? Is it just to make money from visitors? The zoo authorities probably can lay claim for better performance as they could successfully capture a tiger and increase the overall revenue. It pains me that very few voices are raised to ask questions whether this act is a Pro Conservation move?



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It is a fact that zoos have lost their original intent of in-situ conservation. No animal has been reintroduced into the wild after raising in zoos. Why do we need to continue to capture the animals just for the hedonistic pleasure of the paying public *a la* roman amphitheatre?

There are a few others who want to do a detailed study as to which forest this tiger might have come from. This tiger has done nothing wrong. It's only fault is that it perhaps couldn't find sufficient food and/or mate for itself - as our forests are devoid of herbivores and predators- and reached Nandankanna zoo. When the tiger population in the wild is in a precarious state with very less genetic diversity, it is an unpardonable act to capture a wild tiger and keep it in the zoo.



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This tiger was born free and has a right to live freely in the wild. You may kindly raise your voice to free this tiger by writing to the authorities.

Low genetic diversity in Tigers:

Our forests are fragmented by roads, human settlements, canals, dams etc. With the massive increase in India's population, the landscape has been altered drastically. During the days of the British raj when our human habitations were surrounded by wilderness areas, today the situation has been reversed. Now the wilderness areas have shrunk and look like dots encircled by human habitations. No wonder, it becomes extremely difficult for wildlife to move from one wilderness area to another. In this backdrop, a study measuring genetic diversity in the 21st century tigers and the ones during the British raj has shown up some very interesting things.

This study titled (Demographic loss, genetic structure and the conservation implications for Indian tigers – Mandal Samrat *et al*) has rang alarm bells. The mitochondrial DNA variants found from the tigers from British raj days were high whereas the tigers of today have about 93 percent less variants. Interestingly the study found that the

tiger populations today which are isolated from each other has increased the genetic differentiation between these species. Given that most of the populations were connected roughly 50 to 100 years ago, this genetic differentiation is pretty rapid.



In a country which is fixated on the tiger numbers, debating the methodology of estimation etc, the fact that genetic diversity is getting lost due to fragmentation of our forests is not on the top of mind of our authorities. When forests are connected, tigers can move in from one forest to another to repopulate an area where the resident tiger might have died due to old age or the menace of poaching. Unfortunately, without the corridors, our wildlife can't move from one place to another. It is perceived to be glamorous to reintroduce tigers by airlifting from one forest to another and ministers and senior officials flock to witness the event. In an era where managers and leaders need to show their performance, albeit political leaders seem to be not answerable to anybody, the attraction of quick fix solutions score over the difficult to implement long term solutions. The political community know that conservation is hard work. It needs true leadership and the requires painstaking effort. Naturally, people shy away from the long term solutions and our forests increasingly become isolated from each other.

Unless we restore the lost corridors between our wilderness areas, we seem to be presiding over the last act in the life of tiger in India's wilderness areas.

PMO pressurised MoEF to ease coal mining rules:

The present UPA Government and its head PM Manmohan Singh have been often accused of presiding over the decimation of India's wilderness areas despite grandiose statements to the contrary. This perception is bound to accentuate further with the revealing of a letter via an RTI petition that the PMO had forced the MoEF to ease the rules to allow coal mining. A letter by Pulok Chatterjee to the Minister for MoEF Smt. Jayanthi Natarajan, dated 12th October, 2012 had asked for "doing away with the necessity of public hearings for obtaining environment clearance in cases where 25 per cent expansion is required". Hardly a month and a half later in December 2012, MoEF did the changes as directed by PMO to do away with the requirement of public hearings for getting environmental clearances in situations where 25% expansion is needed.

In India, most of the EIA (Environment Impact Assessment) reports are shoddy to say the least. In the last few years due to the protests against such shoddy EIA reports, the industry has become worried and so are the political leaders who want to allow industries at any costs. Earlier the protests by locals against polluting industries like nuclear power in Ratnagiri and Kundakulam were mercilessly quelled. Now, in one stroke the Government has taken away even the basic right of the people to voice their protests. It is sad that the world's largest democracy has decided to muffle the voice of its citizens.

With such actions by the Government to further fragment our forests through mining, any chance of recreating the corridors between our forested areas to help in strengthening the gene pool of our wildlife in general and tigers in particular seems like a mirage.

Terrorism & Conservation: Terrorists massacre 28 people in Chattishgarh:

In one of the shocking incidents, 28 people belonging to Congress party returning from a rally were massacred by several hundred terrorists in Bastar. The convoy of the political party was attacked by blasting IED (Improvised Explosive Devices) and were fired upon by several hundred terrorists. The security personnel guarding the leaders ran out of ammunition as they were not prepared to fight a gun battle for more than an hour. Even more shocking was the incidents, which resembled the beheading of our soldiers by the Pakistani a few months back. These Maoists defiled the dead leaders by dancing over their dead bodies.

India has followed an ambivalent strategy towards these terrorists. Branded as Maoists, their acts have been described as LWE (Left Wing Extremism). Many intellectuals try to justify these acts as the act of someone who has been deprived of governance and due to lack of development. Naxalism which had started with an ideology, has now degenerated to extortion, drug trafficking and poaching and smuggling wildlife skins and articles. More than 13 percent districts in India are hit by the menace of Left Wing Terrorism. The corporates operating in these areas pay ransom to these Maoists. The Government is loathe to declare that it doesn't have control over 83 districts as these terrorists employ guerrilla warfare and strike at their own will. Without adequate knowledge of the jungle many police and CRPF jawans have lost their lives. The Government on the other hand doesn't want to use the helicopters to fire upon these people, as it is sitting on an idealistic notion that these are our people. Even the Chattishgarh CM said that we are not at war. Unfortunately, we have to agree that India is at war against these left wing terrorists.

For the first time, one Union Minister Shri Jairam Ramesh used the term terrorists. Else, they were always branded as Maoists. The Government has to wake up, drop its ambivalence and take strong measures to quell the terrorists and restart development projects to bring governance to these areas.

Much of these areas contain some of our dense forests. Unfortunately, due to these terrorism these areas are now out of bounds for us. The forest officials are routinely kidnapped and are often killed. Researchers, filmmakers, naturalists, in short anyone who wants to venture into these areas face the wrath of these terrorists. As a consequence, the wildlife populations or whatever has remained now is not known. So any news of sighting of an endangered species is a welcome news.

Endangered Wild Buffalo herd spotted in Indravati :

In a piece of good news emanating from the terrorist infested Bastar region, two herds of Wild Buffalo – *Bubalus arnee* – were spotted in the Indravati National Park in Chattishgarh. This raises hope for the conservation of this species. There are plans of relocating a female from this herd to Udanti Wildlife Sanctuary. The population of wild buffaloes in Udanti is limited to nine individuals with their genetic purity questionable. The male to female ratio as well as demographic characteris

tics of the herds in Indravati should be properly ascertained before translocation to Udanti.



© Mrudul Godbole/ www.indiawilds.com

Indian Elephant and Dolphin most likely to go extinct:



© Sabyasachi Patra/ www.indiawilds.com

According to a Zoological Society of London classification of top 100 mammals facing extinction threat, the elephant comes at number seventeen and the dolphin at sixty. Poaching and habitat destruction has come across as major factors for the rapidly dwindling populations of these species.

Most of our forests are ravaged by mindless mining with the Government opening up more and more forests for mining every day. Coupled with the Left wing terrorists, the mining has ensured that there is no place for our elephants. Tuskers are killed for their tusks. Others are pushed away from their homes. It is indeed a curse to be born as an elephant in today's world.

Most of our rivers have turned into gutters due to unrestrained discharge of industrial effluents as well as sewage. Our rivers do have a natural ability to heal. However the rivers need a long stretch of about 40 kilometers to handle the pollution. Unfortunately, due to human population explosion, there is not a single kilometre in the river banks which doesn't have human population. These polluted waters severely restrict the areas where dolphins can live.

Wild India – Love in the Wild:

The happenings in the past few months is deeply disturbing. The violations of women and children, systematically hunted by pack of maniacs raises several questions for which I find no answer. The Hon'ble High Court of Delhi has said that behaviour of police in trying to suppress the information of such crimes coming to light and beating up innocent protesters is worse than animals.

Earlier, Amitabh Bachchan, megastar of Indian Cinema, had said in twitter “Wanted to say so much of the day.. but so disturbed by the gang rape case in Delhi.. atrocious and unforgivable!!... The fear of system, of order, of conduct guided by justice, is fast disappearing. Is this the freedom that our elders fought for!! “On this public platform I dare not even attempt to mention the details of the rape case... even an animal would not behave so,”

This repeated assertion by people indicates that animals are worse than humans. However, one can find unalloyed joy by watching the true love and affection displayed by the animals.



This short film explores the bonding between mother and child from the various wilderness areas in India. It includes Wild Ass, Wild buffalo, rhino, elephant and gaur calf suckling from mother. For more details check -

<http://www.indiawilds.com/diary/wild-india-love-in-the-wild/>

Conservation News -

Eating insects can help tackle food insecurity, says FAO

13 May 2013

United Nation's The Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) believes the solution for tackling hunger around the world is simple. Eat insects is its prescription. Instead of trying to reduce the tremendous amount of waste of food grains (Yes we produce more than our requirements), the FAO suggests people to eat insects. I am sharing the article from UN News Centre:

Eating insects can help tackle food insecurity, says FAO

13 May 2013 – While insects can be slimy, cringe-inducing creatures, often squashed on sight by humans, a new book released today by the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) says beetles, wasps and caterpillars are also an unexplored nutrition source that can help address global food insecurity.

The book, *Edible Insects: future prospects for food and feed security*, stresses not just the nutritional value of insects, but also the benefits that insect farming could potentially have on the environment and on addressing the rapidly increasing demand for food worldwide.

While the idea of eating a worm, grasshopper or cicada at every meal may seem strange, FAO says this has many health benefits. Insects are high in protein, fat and mineral contents. They can be eaten whole or ground into a powder or paste, and incorporated into other foods.

"Insects are not harmful to eat, quite the contrary. They are nutritious, they have a lot of protein and are considered a delicacy in many countries," said Eva Muller, the Director of FAO's Forest Economics, Policy and Products Division.

Although they are not staples of Western cuisine, insects currently supplement the diets of some 2 billion people and have always been part of human diets in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Of the 1 million known insect species, 1900 are consumed by humans. Some of the most consumed insects include beetles, caterpillars, bees, wasps, ants, grasshoppers, locusts and crickets.

"If we think about edible insects, there's a huge potential that has essentially not been tapped yet," Ms. Muller said. "Most [insects] are just collected and there's very little experience in insect farming, for example, which is something that could be explored in view of a growing population."

According to the book, which was launched today at the Forests for Food Security and Nutrition conference, taking place through Wednesday at FAO headquarters in Rome, farming insects for human and animal consumption is particularly relevant at a time when population growth, urbanization, and the rising middle class have increased the demand for food while simultaneously harming the environment that enables its production.

By 2030, over 9 million people will need to be fed, along with the billions of animals raised annually for food and as pets. Meanwhile, land and water pollution from intensive livestock production and over-grazing are leading to forest degradation, thereby contributing to climate change.

"Domesticating and rearing insects can help sustain insect populations while also helping counter nutritional insecurity and improve livelihoods," said Afton Halloran, a consultant for the FAO Edible Insects Programme. "Farming insects has a huge global potential for both animal feed and food production. We are already seeing producers creating animal feed from insects and research. And development is occurring around the world in order incorporate insects into menus and processed foods."

The production of greenhouse gases by insect farming would likely be lower than that of livestock. For example, pigs produce 10-100 times more greenhouse gases per kilogram than mealworms.

Insects also feed on bio-waste, use significantly less water than livestock, and can be farmed more easily, the book states. Insect farming could also offer important livelihoods to people in rural areas as minimal technical or capital expenditure is required for basic harvesting and rearing equipment.

Their high nutritional value and relative ease of en-masse production will not be enough to make insects part of people's dishes all over the world, and FAO knows this.

"Consumer disgust remains one of the largest barriers to the adoption of insects as viable sources of protein in many Western countries," Ms. Muller said in an interview. "Nevertheless, history has shown that dietary patterns can change quickly, particularly in the globalized world."

She added that Western countries, most notably in Europe, have also been recently expressing interest in incorporating insects into their cuisine.

"We have already seen cookbooks show up that offer recipes on edible insects, and there are a few restaurants in capital European cities that actually offer edible insects on their menus," she said. "I don't expect it to be something that happens very quickly, but if we remember that 20 years ago nobody in Europe would think of eating raw fish, and everybody now loves sushi, things can change, so even the cultures that are not used to eating insects may eventually develop a taste for them."

A common misconception of insects as food is that they are only consumed in times of hunger. However, in most instances where they are a staple in local diets, they are consumed because of their taste, and not because there are no other food sources available.

Insect trading is thriving in cities such as Bangkok and Kinshasa, and there is high demand from urban consumers. In such places, insects often arouse feelings of nostalgia for the rural countryside. In other cases, insects are seen as a snack.

The book stresses that there is still a long way to go before insects can be universally incorporated into both human and animal diets. Mass-production technologies need to be perfected, potential allergies to certain species need to be explored, and legislation must be enacted on insect farming.

The food industry, including industry professionals and chefs, must also help raise awareness about insects' potential as food to increase the level of acceptance among consumers.

"Although it is unrealistic to see families in the West eating insects for their Sunday lunch within the next decade, the potential of insects is huge and we hope that slowly but surely this potential will be realized," Ms. Halloran said.

Meghalaya gov bats for bat meat, says it's tasty and healthy

Rahul Karmakar , Hindustan Times Guwahati, May 21, 2013

We have enough examples of responsible people behaving in an irresponsible manner. Now, to add to that list, the Governor of Meghalaya Hon'ble Ranjit Shekhar Mooshahary has advised people to eat bats.

He said that bat meat is tasty and healthy.

"The caves of Meghalaya have bats that can yield healthy meat rich in proteins," Mooshahary said while releasing adventur-

ist Bryan Daly Kharpran's book Caves for the Uninitiated in Shillong on Monday. He further went on to advise the state government to go for bat-breeding, citing the United Nations' call for eating nutritious insects to justify bat meat consumption and in the process made some outrageous claims. "Bats eat only flowers and their meat is clean and delicious," Mooshahary said.



© Sabyasachi Patra/www.indiawilds.com

Animal rights activists panned the governor for getting his facts wrong and trying to promote an "illegal" meat industry.

"Bats also eat mosquitoes and other insects, besides fish, frogs, lizards and birds," Sangeeta Goswami of People for Animals said. "But more importantly, bats are categorised as wild animals and breeding or eating them are punishable under Sections 9 and 39 of Wildlife Protection Act, 1972."

"Besides, bat meat is not a notified food item," Goswami said, adding that encouraging people to eat ecologically sensitive bats useful for humans in plant pollination and pest control was not becoming of a governor.

Bat meat is not popular among the tribes of the North-east although they eat a variety of animals, reptiles, birds and insects. Bat meat is a craze in South-east Asian countries such as Indonesia. People there believe the bile of bats — the giant fruit bats in particular — cures asthma and other respiratory diseases.

India has 117 of the 1,116 species of bats (Chiroptera) identified so far across the globe. More than a quarter of these are found in caves in the North-east. Meghalaya is often referred to as India's "cave capital" with 1,350 caves identified and 850 explored so far.

Maharashtra gives Rs 3lakh each for 2 bat conservation projects

Sandeep Ashar, TNN | May 20, 2013, 02.06 AM IST

MUMBAI: Close on the heels of a successful tiger conservation campaign, an initiative to conserve bats has now been taken up in the state.

Alarmed by dwindling number of bat colonies in Maharashtra, the state government has sanctioned Rs 3 lakh each for two unique conservation projects, under its call for green ideas initiative.

The projects will involve using GPS and bat detector devices to assess roosting places for various bat species. A unique ID will be assigned to the roosting spots to implement conservation actions.

"Conservation of bats is vital to maintain balance in the food chain. While insectivore bats enable vector control, fruit bats, which thrive on ripe fruits, give timely indication to farmers that their produce is ready," said Mahesh Gaikwad, who is spearheading of one of the two projects.

While Gaikwad will implement the project first in eight talukas of Osmanabad, another agency will implement a similar drive in Bhandara. Environment secretary Valsa Nair Singh said the idea is to encourage such innovative projects in biodiversity conservation to sensitise the public towards environmental issues.

Gaikwad, who has a doctorate in bat biodiversity conservation, said his project would also involve identification and colour-coding of trees. "The idea is to encourage locals to conserve these trees," he said.

He identified the trend to replace traditional trees, such as palm, banyan, tamarind, with exotic varieties as one of the prime reasons for the loss of habitat for the mammals. He added that bat colonies were being adversely affected by redevelopment of old buildings and cave restoration projects. "We tend to overlook preservation of bat colonies while taking up such restoration and redevelopment projects," Gaikwad said.

With loss of habitat and rampant hunting seen as two main reasons for the decline of the bat population, the project will involve conducting rallies, workshops, dramas and lectures to spread awareness among the public. It will also involve studying and recording economic advantages of bat conservation for the society. While there is no official census, Gaikwad said, there were documented instances and records pointing to a worrying drop in number of bats. "More than 2.5 lakh species of a particular bat variety were recorded in Robert's Cave in Mahabaleshwar in 1932. Our survey of the site in 2002, revealed that the number has dropped to 50,000. Another species found in abundance inside the cave earlier is not sighted anymore," he said.

British conservationists say the Malabar Civet may have become extinct

Kounteya Sinha, TNN | May 17, 2013, 01:50 PM IST

LONDON: Western Ghats' rarest and most threatened mammal - the Malabar Civet may have become extinct.

The Zoological Society of London in the first map of the world's most unique and threatened mammals and amphibians released today say that the population status of the Civet is presently unknown.

The species was thought to be near extinction by the late 1960s and was declared possibly extinct by the IUCN in 1978.

The species was rediscovered by the Zoological Survey of India, which obtained skins of two recently killed Malabar civets in 1987.

"There were further reports of the species in the late 1980s and early 1990s. However, there have been no sightings or published proof of the survival of the species since, leading researchers to speculate once again that the species may be extinct," ZSL said on Friday.

This small, dog like carnivore has been pushed to the brink of extinction by hunting and habitat loss.

Once widespread in the Western Ghats, the species was declared possibly extinct in 1978. Although it was rediscovered nine years later, it has never been photographed and there has been no published proof of its continued survival for over a decade.

"If the species survives at all, it is likely to be as a series of relic populations, largely confined to thickets in cashew nut plantations," ZSL added. According to British conservationists the Malabar civet once inhabited the lowland forests, lowland swamp and riparian forests in the coastal plain districts of Western Ghats.

ZSL said "However, now that natural forests have disappeared from the entire stretch of the coastal Western Ghats, the species now appears to be largely confined to thickets in cashew plantations and to highly degraded lowland forests in northern Kerala."

"This species is endemic to the Western Ghats of India. It has been recorded in southern India from Kanyakumari (in the state of Tamil Nadu) in the extreme south to Honnavar in Karnataka in the north. However, given that it has lost almost all of its primary habitat, it is likely that the species is now represented by relic populations in sub-optimal habitats along the foothills and lower slopes of the Western Ghats."

ZSL has therefore suggested an immediate and urgent field survey to identify the location of any remaining populations along with research into the species' ecology and threats.

"This information will help to inform the development of a Species Conservation Strategy. Captive breeding and reintroduction (if suitable undisturbed areas exist) may also be necessary. In addition, increasing awareness among forest department staff, local communities, field researchers and members of the scientific community has also been recommended," ZSL added.

Natural History -

COUNTRY NOTEBOOK: Goggle-Eyes :M.Krishnan The Sunday Statesman 5 May 2013a (by Saktipada Panigrahi)

" THROUGHOUT India and even far beyond, where the country is sufficiently dry, stony and scrub-jungly, you will find a brownish, much-streaked bird with enormous eyes trotting over pebbly riverbeds on long yellow legs, scuttling through the scrub, crouching low and merging instantly with the earth. It is a bird of many aliases, all of the descriptive and non-flattering.



It is the Stone-Curlew, the Thick-knee or the GOGGLE-EYED Plover, it is the "bastard-florican" of Anglo-Indian sportsman - I have even heard it called "bastard-florican". However it is ornithologists that have been least kind to it. Formerly it was termed 'Oedichnus scolopax', but apparently it was felt that the second, specific part of the name was too easy; so now they call it 'Burhinus oedichnus'!

Thick-kneed-goggle-eyed-bustard-plover-stone-curlew would be completely descriptive. The bird has the three-toed, yellow running legs of the bustards, and carries the body horizontally; when it runs, with quick, mincing steps, its head low, in a line with the body. By day it is inactive, especially when the sun is bright and cover scanty, but as the light fails it emerges singly and in pairs, moving on quick, silent feet through the scrub looking for insects.

The obliterative plumage is almost invisible in the dusk, but you may hear it, for with nightfall it grows vocal and often keeps calling till quite late, especially when the moon is bright. And listening to its wild, high, repeated "curlew, curlew", a call suggestive of desolate, wide wasteland, you know at once why it is called the Stone Curlew.

In places it is only less common on the night road than the nightjar. When caught in the beams of incoming car, it scuttles to the shelter of the nearest bush and stays put beneath it, only its big, black-and-yellow eyes betraying it- or else it flies swift and low for a short distance, the white bar in each wing clearly displayed, before touching ground again and scuttling away. It never flies high or far when disturbed, for it is a ground bird that trusts its thick-kneed legs, but I have heard a pair flying

fairly high and calling to each other in the cold, clear moonlight.

Often a bird disturbed at night on the road will fly alongside the car or right over it, before turning away, somewhat in the manner of the nightjars. Once I caught one from an open lorry, putting up my hand as it came skimming over, and what impressed me was the way it went limp and yielding in the hand, and its surprising lightness. Most birds lack weight remarkably in the hand, but I think, the Stone-Curlew (it is definitely larger than the partridge) is exceptionally light, even for a bird.

I would like to know more about the courtship of this earth-loving bird, whether that is terrestrial. Does love inspire its wings at anytime or was it just the moonlight that exhilarated the birds I heard, more than once, flying high? Growing curious on this point I questioned a number of people who lived where these birds are common. They could tell me nothing, but directed to a gang-foreman whose knowledge of the fowl was said to be considerable. After missing a few opportunities, I met this expert at last, and this was what he told me, "Yes, they can fly, but that's not the point. Sometimes they fly a little, and sometimes a little further, but mostly they like to run. The point, however, is this: try them cold in a sandwich."

Unfortunately, I am a vegetarian and can add no personal recommendation, but that was the expert advice."

- M.Krishnan

This was first published on 24 January 1954 in the Sunday Statesman.

Fact - Lesson to Sub Adult Tiger Cub by Tigress mother

(by Debashish Bose)



This is a true fact that was recorded by Kanha National Park authorities. It goes like this - Banshi was a Baiga tribal from a local village close to Kanha National Park and employed by the forest department. He was a seasoned tiger tracker and had a bloodcurdling encounter with a sub-adult tiger in Kanha.

One morning, while monitoring a waterhole in Kanha Tiger Reserve, Banshi ran by mistake into sub-adult tiger cub. Seeing a human being close to him, tiger charged on him. Banshi ran from the site and in no time safely scrambled up a tree. The sub adult tiger cub was so furious that he continued to the charge and not ready to leave the place.

At the same time, a large tigress roared from behind. She was with two more cubs. Banshi was trembling with fear. Tigress kept on roaring at her sub adult cub, but it was not to terrify Banshi but to instruct the furious sub-adult tiger to come back. Cub was in no mood to leave the place and kept on ignoring the call of tigress. Ultimately, tigress reached the spot and gave louder call to cub in a forceful manner, this time cub reluctantly obeyed the call of mother tigress and followed her back towards dense on far side away from waterhole, stopping and occasionally looking at the tree.

After confirming and reconfirming that the tigers had left the area with the help of jungle calls and forest sounds, Banshi slid down the tree and returned to his camp to tell the experience. This was an interesting case learned by forest department of a tigress teaching her cubs that human beings are dangerous, not their natural prey and one should avoid them. NIKON 3100, F4 @ 78mm, ISO 540, 1/125s

Equipment Discussions -

Canon 200-400 f 4 L IS USM Released and Shipping

Finally Canon has announced the EF 200-400 f4 L IS USM lens. This lens was first announced as a lens in development in Feb 2011. After more than two years and trials of this lens during the recent Olympics in London, Canon has now officially announced this as a production version.

The Salient features of this lens:

- *Constant aperture of f4 through out the 200-400 range.
- *Built in 1.4x converter that can be switched on with the flick of a button.
- *4 stop optical built-in image stabiliser.
- *Along with Fluorite and Ultra-low dispersion elements, it has advanced anti-reflection SubWavelength Structure Coating (SWC) and Super Spectra Coating to reduce ghosting and flare

Price: 11499 USD.

The official press release is given below.

Cheers,

Sabyasachi



Introducing the EF 200-400mm f/4L IS USM Extender 1.4x – improved performance and versatility for professional sports and wildlife photographers

London, UK, 14 May 2013 – Canon today adds a new category to its range of high-performance super-telephoto lenses, with the introduction of the EF 200-400mm f/4L IS USM Extender 1.4x to Canon's acclaimed L-series. The EF 200-400mm f/4L IS USM Extender 1.4x features a flexible 200-400mm focal range with a fixed f/4 aperture, 4-stop optical Image Stabilizer and for the first time in a commercially available lens, a built-in 1.4x extender. These features combine to provide an outstandingly versatile lens for professional sports or wildlife photographers. A robust magnesium alloy design, environmental protection and specialised lens coatings also make it ideal for mobile use, combining with the finest quality optics to deliver exceptional results, even in the harshest conditions.

Get closer to the action with superior image quality

The reach of the EF 200-400mm f/4L IS USM Extender 1.4x is boosted by its internal 1.4x extender, which is engaged or disengaged at the flick of a lever to provide an extended focal length of 280mm to 560mm – allowing photographers to get even closer to distant action. Ensuring the highest image performance, the optical design includes both fluorite and Ultra-low Dispersion (UD) lens elements, which help minimise chromatic aberration and eliminate colour blurring. Advanced anti-reflection SubWavelength Structure Coating (SWC) and Super Spectra Coating also reduce ghosting and flare. Thanks to the use of the latest optical technologies, image performance is unaffected when the integrated extender is used.

With a constant f/4 aperture the use of high shutter speeds to capture fast-paced action or a low-light scene is possible. A newly designed optical Image Stabilizer, which provides users with a four stop advantage, while IS 'Mode 3' applies image stabilisation only at the time of exposure – ensuring that photographers can pan with fast-paced action without IS overcompensating for movement. This feature is ideal for sports photographers, who typically have only a split-second to capture a subject in front of them.

Powerful, flexible focusing

The EF 200-400mm f/4L IS USM Extender 1.4x features Canon's pioneering ring-type Ultrasonic Motor providing fast, silent autofocus. For those who prefer to fine-tune focus themselves, full-time manual override allows photographers to manually focus at any moment when using AF. The Power Focus (PF) mode also increases versatility during movie shooting with the EOS-1D C or EOS-1D X, enabling photographers to achieve an accurate pull-focus effect at one of two speeds, simply by twisting the focus recall ring and stopping at a pre-set distance.

High-performance design for professional demands

Designed to answer professional demands for superior image quality and versatile zoom range, the EF 200-400mm f/4L IS USM Extender 1.4x boasts a premium-quality design befitting Canon's industry-renowned L-series lenses.

The tough magnesium alloy chassis ensures that, despite the inclusion of the 1.4x extender, the lens is a similar weight to lenses of comparable focal length. Fluorine coatings on the front and rear lens elements also reduce the ability of dirt to cling to the lens surface, while a dust and water-resistant construction allows photographers to shoot in challenging weather conditions. The combination of outstanding optical performance, versatility, weight and tough construction will make it an essential part of any professional sports or wildlife photographer's kitbag.

Image of the Month -

I am pleased to announce the Image of the Month for April 2013. The honour goes to Anshul Jain's Nilgai image. I liked the action. This image also reinforces the fact that animals that are common (Nilgai is very common in North India), can help you in getting action images.

Congratulations Anshul!

Details of the image provided by Anshul:

Nilgai @ Sultanpur

There were two of them when suddenly they started running.

7D, 100-400mm @ 400mm

1/320, f7.1, Iso200, very slight crop from the bottom and right.



Wildlife Photography -

Rhino by Mrudul Godbole



Marmot by Gajanan Bapat



Flying Blackbuck by Keerthy Rajagopal



Macchli by Vijay Rajan



Wildlife Photography -

Leopard Sprint at Kabini by Bhargava Srivari

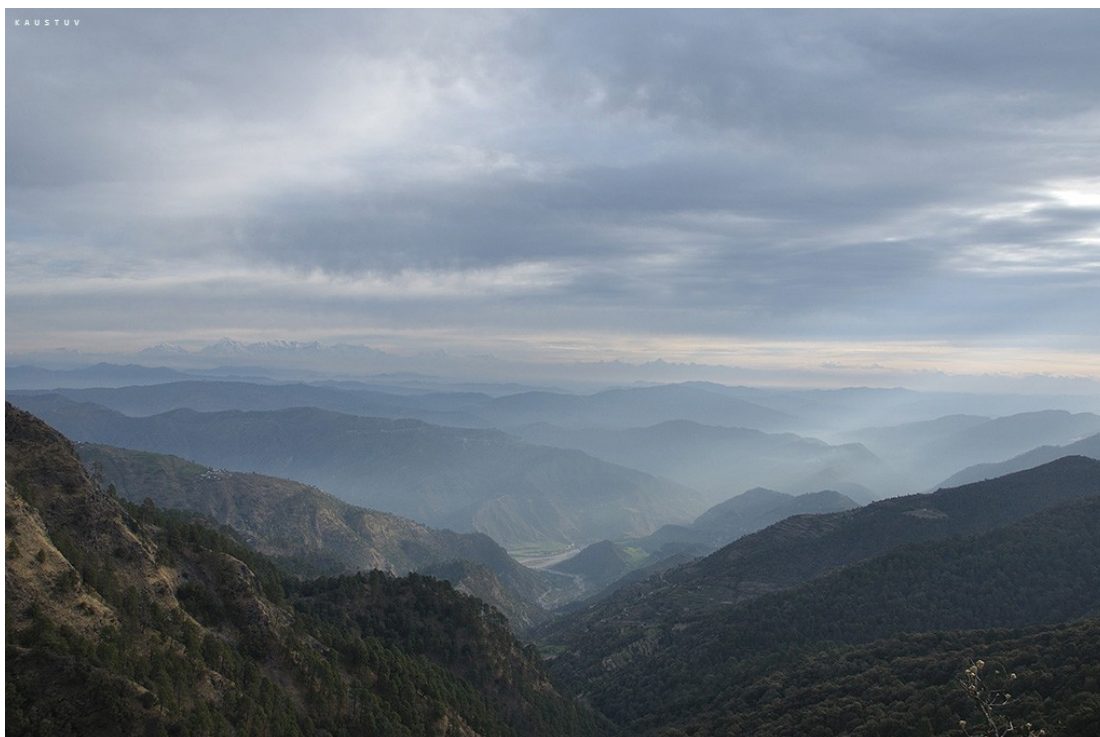


Goose Barnacle by Abhishek Jamalabad



Wildlife Photography -

Himalayan Morning by Kaustuv Chatterjee



Srilankan Frogmouth by Bibhav Behera



Wildlife Photography -

Yellow wattled lapwing by Jitendra Katre



Painted Sandgrouse Female by Hymakar Valuru



Wildlife Photography -

Scaly breasted Munia with a compact camera by Partha Pratim Patra



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>

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Regards,

Sabyasachi Patra

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