



IndiaWilds Newsletter

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Cyclone and Mangroves

Severe cyclonic storms with epicenter near Gopalpur in Odisha was the cynosure of all eyes. Whereas experts abroad branded it as a Super Cyclone, the IMD (Indian Meteorological Department) predicted that its wind speed would be slight less and that wouldn't merit it to be categorised as a Super Cyclone category, the one which had devastated Odisha in 1999.

The 24x7 news channels were ready to provide spectacular visuals of the devastation caused by the cyclone beamed into the drawing rooms of people.



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Cyclone

The Odisha administration swung into action and evicted people from the coastal areas even shutting down hotels and resorts, guards from telecom towers etc. anyone not agreeing was forcibly evacuated. Not a single life to be lost was the order by Odisha Chief Minister. The popular Durga Puja holidays of Government servants was cancelled. People moved into official cyclone shelters and most of the people preferred to visit their relatives places in other towns. The evacuation is considered to be the biggest in the history of India.



Unfortunately, for the news channels this resulted in no deaths from cyclone unlike the 1999 super cyclone where officially 9803 people had died with the unofficial toll even at 15000. One popular lady tv anchor was known to have asked to arrange the dead bodies so that the tv camera could capture it well. This time there was no “opportunity” for a TV anchor to jump over or wade through bodies, fake a tear for the audience to be impressed in their drawing rooms.

No wonder the TV Channels most of whom are ever ready to skim these disasters quickly moved on from this story to the stampede in a temple in Madhya Pradesh. There were of course a few stories of the IMD asserting the accuracy of its predictions and trashing that of the foreign agencies and one story of fishermen of Tamil Nadu swimming and safely landing in Odisha coast. After focusing on a few micro localised issues, the cyclone is now quickly forgotten by the mass media.

And with that people have failed to notice that 2013 is yet to be over and we have already seen two massive natural calamities – one in Himalaya in June and the other in Odisha and Andhra. We are failing to notice that climate change has become a reality and these natural disasters have started to hit us at increased frequency.

The worst affected will be the poor who are staying in the coastal areas which immediately get inundated by the storm surge and the fields will be unsuitable for agriculture for a long time due to the salt water and debris deposited. Rebuilding lives takes a long time. Not everybody



Mangroves

has the mental strength to pick up the threads of their broken lives and start afresh. We shouldn't be surprised that these calamities have an impact on law and order.

After a long time, I visited the Gopalpur beach and was stunned to see the so called “development” or concretisation in the beach. The coastal regulation zone is not respected in many places. The beach for long stretches doesn't have any natural vegetation left, which can act as a natural barrier for the waves and wind. Even the casuarina trees have been cut off by people looking for firewood. A study conducted after the 1999 Super Cyclone in Odisha (*Das,*

Saudamini et al. 2009) found that villages with wider mangroves between them and the coast experienced significantly fewer deaths than ones with narrower or no mangroves. In the 1999 storm out of the official death toll of 9803 people, about 70% of them have been killed due to drowning in the storm surge.

Apart from helping reduce the storm surge, mangroves help in stopping the erosion of the shoreline. These mangroves also absorb excess nutrients like nitrates and phosphates and help in improving the water quality. They also absorb the sediments and help in creating a better ecosystem for fish, shrimps and other species. They also provide ecosystem services like carbon sequestration.

A lot of our mangroves have been lost due to conversion to shrimp farms, reclamation for setting up factories, tourism and also simply due to the increased population pressure. The Government has to urgently plan an ambitious scheme of re-wilding our coastal line by planting the natural vegetation like mangroves. This Government, which could successfully plan and execute the largest ever evacuation of people in independent India's short history, appears to have the will and execution skills to create a long-term solution.



Sabyasachi Patra

Email—

sabyasachi.patra@indiawilds.comwww.indiawilds.com

IndiaWilds Campaign: Justice for Leopard burnt to Death

During my research and travels for my film on Leopards, I have come across many situations that have brought a tear on my eyes. However, I am sharing an incident captured in a mobile phone camera in which shook me to the core. A wild leopard was captured in a cage in Rampur district in Uttarakhand. The cage had been set up to capture a leopard, which was supposed to be killing cattle and goats.

As soon as the leopard was captured, villagers' young and old gathered and horribly assaulted it with sticks. The forest department officials not only watch this but they have also been caught in the video poking and maiming the leopard, which had nowhere to go. The leopard was then burnt alive. The poor leopard died an agonising death.

We have cut off all the forests and trees in the hills and poached all the deers, wild boars, rabbits for their meat. To overcome the pangs of hunger, perhaps this poor leopard would have killed a few cattle or goats. Or worse, some other leopard would have killed the livestock and this innocent leopard would have got trapped in the cage. Is this public lynching and burning it to death right when all it was doing was trying to satiate its hunger?



Leopard burnt in cage

The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India while delivering the judgment on the relocation of lions has stated that "Article 21 of the Constitution of India protects not only the human rights but also casts an obligation on human beings to protect and preserve a specie becoming extinct, conservation and protection of environment is an inseparable part of right to life". Unfortunately, Indians today have forgotten their obligation and are actively involved in murdering a critically endangered species.

The Hon'ble Supreme court in the same judgment had further said, "our approach should not be human-centric or family-centric but eco-centric". It had again observed, "no specie can survive on the brink of extinction indefinitely and the probability associated with a critically endangered specie make their extinction a matter of time". So if we don't act today, then leopards will go extinct.

Anyone who watches this video will be horrified. Despite that should we choose to remain silent?

Writing about a situation in the Epic Mahabharata where Draupadi was being disrobed and the kings and courtiers remained silent, Gurcharan Das in his book “The Difficulty of Being Good” calls it the “immorality of silence” and even termed it as “conspiracy of silence”. “When honest persons fail in their duty to speak up, they ‘wound’ dharma, and they ought to be punished, says the sage Kashyapa”.



Leopard burnt in cage

I firmly believe that to remain silent is to acquiesce, to consent, and be complicit in this gory crime. To raise our voice is to become assertive. If we continue to remain silent, these kinds of things will continue to happen. Please raise your voice and write a letter or email to these and any other officials who can help in bringing justice.

Shri Manmohan Singh

Hon'ble Prime Minister of India,

South Block, Raisina Hill, New Delhi – 110011

Email: pmosb@pmo.nic.in

Tel: +91-11-23012312

Fax: +91-11-23016857

Smt. Jayanthi Natarajan

Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge)

Ministry of Environment and Forests

Paryavaran Bhawan, CGO Complex,

Lodhi Road, New Delhi – 110003

Email: mosefgoi@nic.in

Tel: +91-11-24361727

Fax: +91-11-24362222

Dr. V. Rajagopalan, IAS

Secretary Ministry of Environment and Forests

Room No. 1, ParyavaranBhawan,

CGO Complex,

Lodhi Road,

New Delhi – 110003

Tel: +91-11-24360721

FAX: +91 11 24362746 (Fax)

Shri Vijay Bahuguna

Chief Minister of Uttarakhand

Email: cm-uk@nic.in

Address: 4 Subhash Road, C. M. Office, Uttarakhand Secretariat, Dehradun, Pin-248001

Phone: +91 135 2650433

Fax: +91 135 2655177

Shri Alok Kumar Jain

Chief Secretary of Uttarakhand

Email: cs-uttaranchal@nic.in

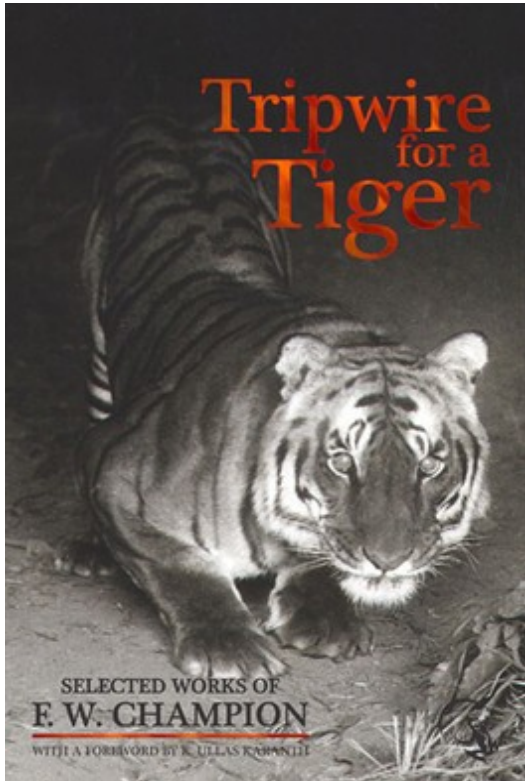
Phone: +91 135 2712094

Fax: +91 135 2712113

I hope this sadistic murder wakes all of us up and forces us to raise our voice to punish the perpetrators of this crime.

Tripwire for a Tiger: Selected Works of F. W. Champion

This book “Tripwire for a Tiger: Selected works of F. W. Champion” is a compilation of 24 articles written by a remarkable gentleman, F. W. Champion, who worked in the forests of pre-independent India and had authored two well-known books, “With a Camera in Tiger-land” and “The Jungle in Sunlight and Shadow”. In an era when hunting was the norm and photography was at its infancy, F. W. Champion not only photographed tigers but also pioneered photography through camera traps.



F. W. Champion’s two books are out of print and are difficult to procure. At times one is lucky to get it online sold second hand by someone. So a selection of his works made available in form of a book is a good sign as it helps today’s generation to get a glimpse of a bygone era and learn from his wisdom. F. W. Champion’s book with his articles arranged in chronological order gives us an idea about the pre-independent India’s wilderness areas and the prevailing thought process vis-a-vis preservation of various wilderness areas and wildlife.

Champion seems to have drawn inspiration from his contemporary, Dunbar Brander, and has quoted from Brander’s classic book on natural history “[Wild Animals in Central India](#)”. In an era, when hunting was more of a religion, Champion was among the few who stood out for the preservation of our wildlife. Incidentally, Jim Corbett – who killed his first maneater at the ripe old age of 54 and became renowned for his books “Maneaters of Kumaon”, “The Maneating Leopard of Rudraprayag”, “Jungle Lore” and others – and has been despicably described as a “tiger wallah” in the foreword of this book “Tripwire for a Tiger: Selected Works of F. W. Champion” took up filming tigers and other wildlife after being inspired by Champion’s photography.

Champion in his previous book “The Jungle in Sunlight and Shadow” had expressed strong views about ethics regarding photography and filming wildlife. So it was very happy to again read his views about photography in this book “Tripwire for a Tiger” too. Wildlife photographers of today accustomed to riding in jeeps and using long telephoto lenses firing away at 10 frames per second at the sight of a tiger may at first scoff at the grainy black and white images present in this book. Reading this book will help such wildlife photographers get a perspective of how difficult photography was at that time, especially using wide angle lenses with flash gun that can only explode once to create an exposure.

Those photographers who have tried placing DSLR cameras to get a good quality image of an animal by remote trigger or scientists who place compact remote cameras for their work will be amazed to read the lengths to which F. W. Champion went to compose a good image of a tiger.

Champion on Photographic Composition:

“If the camera is put too close, head-on pictures will often show bad perspective and part of the subject may be cut off; if it is put too far away, the intensity of light may be affected) which varies inversely as the square of the distance) and the photograph ruined by under-exposure. Then an effort must be made to guide the tiger into the right position and to induce him to give the pose desired. This may often put him off altogether or cause him to come in too fast.”

Lastly, there is the artistic side of auto-photography. It seems to me that many animal photographers and critics of auto-

photography do not in the least realise that it is not sufficient to obtain a mere photographic record of an animal, but that the pose must be a good one and the setting and background of the right type, if one wishes to produce a picture as well as a photograph.

While describing one of his celebrated photographs of the tiger F. W. Champion writes “I had made my own settings by

bending down bamboos over likely spots, and then I waited and waited. Either nothing came at all, or a jackal, or a hare, or a man, or anything but what I wanted fired off the flashlight. Then a tiger came on a bright moonlit night, and, spotting the tripwire, carefully stepped over it without touching it! At long last, when I had almost given up hope, a tiger came into my ‘studio’, producing the photograph reproduced.



Tiger Image clicked by F. W. Champion using a tripwire

Now this photograph, although it is one of my better efforts, still has several faults. Firstly, wild elephants came before the tiger, and although they didn't touch the tripwire, they very unkindly removed my carefully arranged bamboo arch from the right-hand side of the picture. Then the tiger blurred his off fore-leg by movement. I have remedied this to a certain extent by retouching, but the leg is still not posed in an artistic manner. Again, the track on which the tiger is walking is too straight and too broad. It has been blocked on both sides to centre the animal, but the straight line of the track passing out to the left of the picture does not help it from an artistic point of view. Lastly, owing to technical difficulties which I have not yet overcome, the photograph was unavoidably taken with a 6 in. lens, which has given false perspective, with the head and fore-legs too large in proportion to the hind-quarters, and the tail is little too much concealed.”

Champion's Advice Not to Fake Photographs

In today's digital age, photographers extensively manipulate their images. There are also incidents of some so called established photographers clicking a rarely sighted bird and duplicating it to create a photo of two of them in a frame. To all such photographers, he has strongly suggested not to take shortcuts, suggesting “It is far more interesting to search and search until you finally succeed in finding your subject with the right background and the right lighting. Then, when you have made a good photograph, you have produced a picture that will give you more satisfaction than all the faked photographs in the world”.

Photograph should tell a Story

There are a growing breed of wildlife photographers who select the background and blur it in their manic zeal to get a “clean background”. All such photographers may find his following words educative. He advises that “every effort should be made to try to make the photographs tell a story, that is to say, the subject should be doing something that indicates some part of its life’s activities. Then, again, the background should blend in with the subject; it should not be too obtrusive or too vague, but it should be clearly part of the picture. In my opinion, at least twenty-five per cent of the pictorial value of an animal photograph lies in the background or setting, which may, indeed, make or mar a picture, and this is a point that many animal photographers miss”.

Importance of Studying Art:

And lastly he says “I strongly recommend everyone who aspires to become a good wildlife photographer to study the principles of composition in art and pictorial photography and to try to embody these principles in his animal pictures.” Around 1920s there was an effort in USA to project cinematography as an art form. The early practitioners looked at art for inspiration as photography was a new invention. Soon photography could establish itself as an art form. Unfortunately, with the advent of digital era the focus is on digital manipulation, rather than creating an artistic image. The general masses due to their ignorance and inability to spend time to learn the art of photography, and editors of many magazines and newspapers in an effort to reduce cost have now mostly reduced photography into tripping of the shutter button. However if someone needs to excel in this area, then he/she should make an effort to study works of past masters.

Champion on Use of Public Opinion in conservation:

“...every effort should be made to make the general public realise how important it is to preserve the wildlife of a country while it is still there to preserve. At the same time, books and films that give the totally false impression that the jungles are full of terrible animals, eager to fall upon and destroy the unwary intruder, should be strongly discouraged. Most wild creatures – whether they be such supposedly dangerous animals as tigers, elephants and rhinoceros – desire only ‘to live and let live’ so far as the human race is concerned, and a great deal of harm is done by portraying them in false colours for the sake of sensation or money-making.”

F. W. Champion’s views on Sanctuaries and National Parks

Champion had strong views about preserving our wilderness areas for perpetuity. He says “Every country should close certain areas in perpetuity and form them into National Parks. Such parks are of great value in educating the public, and it is to be regretted that no such national park as yet exists in India. Sanctuaries are sometimes useful, but their status is often precarious, and owing to the difficult control, they have not always proved a success in India”.

Protection of Rare Stragglers:

Champion had foreseen the human-animal conflicts and had suggested measures to control the crowd in such instances. “When a rare animal, such as a rhinoceros, is known to have entered any particular district, a public proclamation should be made, warning the general public that a very high penalty will be imposed on anyone killing it.” Unfortunately, even today the authorities don’t impose Section 144 when a wild animal like leopard is seen near human habitation. Hence there have been many cases of mobs lynching the animals.

There are many more gems in the book “Tripwire for a Tiger: Selected Works of F. W. Champion” painstakingly compiled by his grandson James Champion. I wish the publisher could have put in some more efforts to create an index. That would have been easier for a researcher or a serious reader. Published by Rainfed Books, this book with a total of 202 pages and priced at Rs. 495 is surely a collectors item.

Conservation News -

18 foot long giant oarfish carcass found

In a rare and significant discovery, Jasmine Santana of the Catalina Island Marine Institute found a 18 feet long Oarfish carcass while snorkeling. She found it 30 feet deep while snorkeling in Toyon Bay. She needed 15 helpers to pull the carcass to the beach.

These oarfish dive to about 3000 feet deep and hence very little is known about them. Even though dead, examining it would enhance the knowledge of biologists.

The Oarfish are reputed to grow upto 50 feet long. It is believed that the serpent line structure and length of the oarfish gives rise to many sea serpent myths.



News and Image Source: Associated Press

Illegal sand mining rampant in Palar basin

CHENNAI, October 10, 2013

Sandmining has been going on unabated in the Palar river for several decades and the river is on the verge of dying. Infact, the villagers say that there is no water in this river for close to 15 years. Several years back in 2007, farmers had protested about illegal sandmining to the then collector Mr. Dharmendra Pratap Yadav, however, nothing came out of it. After that there have been many sporadic protests and no action has been taken. The increase in construction activity has resulted in the sand being sent to chennai but also as far as bangalore. Depending upon the size of the lorry, the sand is sold at between 7500 to 15000 per truckload. So sandmining has become a lucrative business and it has attracted organised mafia and political patronage.

Recently a case was filed by the lorry owners association. A single judge ordered a CBI enquiry. So the Tamil Nadu Government filed a counter appeal against it saying that the original petitioners had not asked for CBI appeal, so the judge ordering CBI enquiry is illegal. Based on this argument, a division bench stayed the CBI enquiry part of the order.

Illegal sand mining is happening in broad daylight in the river basins of Palar and Cheyyar, according to a fact-finding team

of the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL). The team presented to media on Wednesday the video and photographic evidence, showing heavy and persistent movement of several tractors transporting sand in broad daylight in Pazhayaseevaram (Palar basin), hundreds of people loading sand, mining to a depth of up to nine feet and mounds of sand in private quarries.

According to PUCL, the videos and photos shown to media were recorded on August 24 and 25, and the team corroborated their evidence, interviewed district officials, including the Kancheepuram District Collector, and got official responses before presenting interim report to the media. They said that at the mining sites at Pazhayaseevaram, Pazhaveri and Pinayur alone, thousands of men and women with shovels are working round the clock during the day to fill as many lorry loads as possible.

Though the permits issued by the Kancheepuram Collector for the Palar river basin – covering Pazhayaseevaram, Pinayur and Pazhaveri – was only up to 50 hectares, the illegal sand mining operation across huge tracts of Palar river basin could extend up to 200 hectares. The team estimated the monetary losses due to illegal mining for the period between April 2009 and July 2013 to be Rs. 5,875 crore. (This has been calculated for an estimated volume of 665 lakh cubic metres or 235 lakh units of 100 cubic feet at the prevailing market value of sand at rate of Rs. 2,500/ unit)

B. Gunaseelan, a resident of Pazhayaseevaram village, said the villagers had been complaining continuously to the district and revenue officials for the past four years. "We must have sent close to 100 representations to various government departments. But we have not even received a single reply so far."

The PUCL has called for an immediate ban on river sand quarrying not just in the Palar and Cheyyar basins but across the State till such a time a transparent system is in place for the activity. They have also called for a CBI probe into the issue.

Equipment Discussions -

Zeiss Launches Distagon T*55mm f1.4 Otus Lens

Zeiss has launched the Otus 55mm f 1.4 lens for professional photographers. For the first time Zeiss has brought their complex Distagon design which is found in their wide angle lenses to the 55mm range.

This lens is optimized for full frame DSLRs.

Construction: 12 elements in 10 groups.

Aperture: F1.4 to f16

Fully manual focus

Minimum focusing distance: 20"

Focus barrel rotation: 248 deg

Filter size: 77mm

Dimensions: Approx. 3.64 x 5.66" (9.25 x 14.38 cm)

Weight: 1030 g

Price: **Retails at 3990 USD.** (now available for preorder in B&H)

This lens will not only be used by high end professional photographers but also for filming.
Sabyasachi

Official Zeiss Press Release

OBERKOCHEN/Germany, 07.10.2013.

With an imaging performance that has hitherto only been seen with medium format systems, the new ZEISS Otus 1.4/55 offers ambitious photographers who do not accept any compromises in image quality the possibility for a more compact gear. DSLR cameras with high resolution 35mm sensors put enormous demands on lenses. The Otus 1.4/55 can deal with these demands thanks to its outstanding sharpness, high image contrast and no visible chromatic aberrations. It creates the highest-possible image quality, even with an open aperture. The new ZEISS lens is especially suited for advertising, fashion and studio photography, and professional photographers working in these fields will not need to make any compromises in terms of performance and quality. The Otus 1.4/55 is the first lens in a family of uncompromising professional lenses from ZEISS. Additional focal lengths will follow. Otus is the Latin name for a type of owl known for its excellent vision in darkness — just like this new high-speed lens from ZEISS.

“Our goal was to bring the best standard lens for SLR cameras onto the market. The Otus 1.4/55 delivers outstanding sharpness and contrast rendition all the way into the corners of the image. The only way we could achieve this was through the complex Distagon optical design, which until now has only been found on wide-angle lenses,” explains Christophe Casenave, product manager for ZEISS Camera Lenses. “Thanks to the low level of longitudinal chromatic aberration, there are no visible aberrations. So an illuminated harbor scene by night with many light sources in front of and behind the actual focal plane appears close to reality, without displaying complementary, color contrast edges. The excellent performance delivered by Otus is constant for all shooting distances. Its high performance with an open aperture also makes this lens a good choice for close-ups or portraits. For architectural and landscape photography, the Otus 1.4/55 takes full advantage of modern high-resolution camera sensors, resulting in impressive resolution in the images, even for the smallest detail.”

Other unique features of the Otus 1.4/55 are its high image contrast all the way to the edges (even for low f-numbers) and the consistent high-resolution performance across the entire image field. The lens has a completely new optical and mechanical design, which was developed taking into account the special and increasing requirements of high-resolution DSLR cameras. The Otus 1.4/55 is equipped with a floating elements design with 12 lens elements in 10 groups, including a double-sided aspheric lens and six lenses made of special glass with anomalous partial dispersion. These sophisticated features create image results without color fringing or distortion. Cameras with a lower number of pixels will also benefit from the



Distagon T*55mm f1.4 Otus Lens

lens's unique features.

The performance delivered by the Otus 1.4/55 is especially obvious with night shots. When taking pictures with many image-dominant, open light sources, it is common for correction defects to show up. Because the Otus 1.4/55 is an apochromatic lens, longitudinal chromatic aberrations are corrected by its lens elements of special glass with anomalous partial dispersion. The color defects are therefore significantly lower than the defined limits. Bright/dark transitions in the image, and especially highlights, are rendered with no colorful artifacts. Although it is not a traditional focal length for architectural and landscape photography, here, too, the lens can deliver very good results. The edges of the image can be used for all apertures, giving full rein to the photographer's creativity. For portraiture, the Otus 1.4/55 render the finest details precisely, and thanks to the maximum aperture of f/1.4, the photographer can consciously play with the depth of field and create a smooth bokeh. The Otus 1.4/55 stands out not only for its highly detailed pictures with no bothersome artifacts, but also for its mechanical quality. The smooth focus operation with the large angle of rotation allows for the finest variations when focusing — qualities that are only possible in a metal barrel. Its design as a manual focus lens allowed the engineers to work with much smaller tolerances during the construction. The

lens's robust metal barrel with the easy to grip focus ring makes it perfect for the demanding everyday situations of professional photographers, and guarantees a long product life. The yellow labels on the scales, which are borrowed from the professional ZEISS cinema lenses, contribute to better visibility. For its innovative product design, the Otus 1.4/55 already won the iF product design award 2013.

The Otus 1.4/55 will be available with F bayonet (ZF.2) and EF bayonet (ZE) starting at the end of October in all global markets. The recommended retail price will be €2,940 or US\$3,999 (excl. VAT)*.

Sennheiser Esfera 5.1 surround sound microphone system



Esfera provides 5.1 surround sound from just two channels, which will come as a big help, as one will have two channels free in a four channel system. The system consists of a high-quality stereo microphone, designed with Sennheiser's renowned RF condenser technology, and a 19" rack-mount processing unit that converts the stereo signal into a complete 5.1 signal – anywhere in the production workflow, whether in real time or during post production. The compact size of the microphone unit and the versatile connectivity of the processing unit ensure that Esfera can easily be integrated into existing workflows. The system will be available from March 2014.

The SPM 8000 stereo microphone: With its two radio-frequency condenser microphones Esfera's SPM 8000 stereo microphone offers all the advantages that Sennheiser RF condenser microphones are renowned for: natural, detailed sound, transparency, high resistance to adverse climatic conditions and ruggedness. The microphones feature an extremely low inherent self-noise, have very low distortion figures and are inherently fully floating and balanced.

The SBP 8000 processing unit: The Esfera processing unit uses a special algorithm to generate a full 5.1 surround signal with sampling rates of up to 96 kHz from the microphones' stereo signal. An inte-

grated compressor ensures a broadcast-friendly signal. The processing unit has four directly selectable presets, which can be modified via an Ethernet interface. The processor software enables the user to adjust the gain of the individual channels, modify the front and surround focus, determine the surround delay, adjust several filters with their cut-off frequencies and set the compression, the limiter and the treble boost.

Connectivity of the processing unit: Inputs: two analogue XLR-3 sockets with P48 phantom powering and two digital inputs for an AES3 signal; outputs: six digital outputs (left, right, centre, LFE, surround left, surround right) for three AES3 signals.

This system is being targeted at broadcasters however there will be many uses in various other fields. The price is not announced yet.

GoPro Hero 3+ Announced

SAN MATEO, CA (October 1, 2013) **– GoPro today announced the availability of its new HERO3+ line of cameras, featuring a 20% smaller and lighter design and 30% better battery life than previous models. These upgrades, combined with an improved lens and convenient new video capture modes, produce the most advanced and easy-to-use GoPro, yet. In addition, GoPro announced several new mounting accessories that further enable immersive content capture during any activity. The HERO3+ line of cameras and accessories are now available at GoPro.com and at select retailers worldwide.

GoPro is enabling people to capture and share life experiences in a way that was never before possible. Prior to GoPro, it was very difficult for anyone to capture content of themselves doing anything without having the help of someone else to film them. GoPro has enabled a new era of self-documentation whereby people can now easily wear or mount miniature ultra wide-angle GoPro cameras to record themselves doing just about anything, anywhere. The result is a surge of immersive user-generated and professional content made possible by the versatility and affordability of GoPro's cameras and accessories. An average of three GoPro "tagged" videos are uploaded to YouTube every minute, and GoPro is used by the world's leading production companies to help produce some of today's most engaging film and television content.



Go Pro Hero 3+

In addition to being the best-selling camera globally in consumer markets*, GoPro's HERO3 camera has also been the best-selling camera to professional production companies, on a volume basis. The National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences recently awarded the HERO3 camera an Emmy for its contributions to filmmaking and television production.

"We have used GoPro cameras in some of our biggest productions, like Survivor and The Bible. GoPro has allowed us to capture and share fascinating new perspectives that previously weren't possible or were too costly, which in the end makes for better story telling. We are always excited to see what GoPro is working on next," remarks award winning producer, Mark Burnett.

"The HERO3+ illustrates GoPro's commitment to innovation. We took the world's best-selling ultra compact camera and made it better because we're relentless in our pursuit of delivering the best possible user experience to our customers. We saw that we could make the HERO3+ significantly smaller and lighter while at the same time increasing battery life 30%. We saw the opportunity to design a sharper lens, so we did it—improving GoPro's already highly regarded image quality. And we thought up exciting new features like SuperView, which enables the world's most immersive wide-angle video. These are all features that we as passionate GoPro users want for ourselves, and we're excited to share them with our customers around the world," said Nicholas Woodman, Founder and CEO of GoPro.

The HERO3+ Black Edition - The Most Advanced GoPro Camera Yet.

Innovative new housing yields a 20% smaller and lighter overall package when camera is installed in housing (waterproof to 40m)

30% longer battery life

4x faster Wi-Fi for quicker transfer and playback of photos and videos from your HERO3+ camera to your mobile device when using the GoPro App

SuperView is a new video mode that captures the world's most immersive wide-angle perspective

Auto Low Light mode intelligently adjusts frame rate for varying lighting conditions

A new lens for sharper video and improved image quality

The HERO3+ Black Edition camera has a suggested retail price of \$399.99.

The HERO3+ Silver Edition - 2x More Powerful.

2x faster image processor than the HERO3: Silver Edition

Enables 1080p60 and 720p120 fps video

Innovative new housing yields a 15% smaller and lighter overall package when camera is installed in housing (waterproof to 40m)

4x faster Wi-Fi for quicker transfer and playback of photos and videos from your HERO3+ camera to your mobile device when using the GoPro App

The HERO3+ Silver Edition camera has a suggested retail price of \$299.99.

New Mounts, More Versatility, Better Content

GoPro is the world's 2ND largest camera accessory brand* thanks to its industry-leading line of wearable and gear-mountable accessories. Mounts and accessories are key to enabling the life-capture creativity of millions of GoPro customers around the world. GoPro announced today several new mounts, including:

Jaws: Flex Clamp – A quick way to clamp your GoPro camera to a variety of objects. Use the optional opposable neck to achieve a wide range of camera positioning and adjustability. Jaws securely grips irregular shapes and super slim objects thanks to its innovative design.

Junior Chesty (Chest Harness) – A smaller version of our adult-sized Chest Harness. Perfect for kids ages 3+, the Junior Chest Harness is great for capturing immersive footage of a child's world from their perspective—from skiing and skateboarding to slides and swings.

Headstrap + QuickClip – The QuickClip is a new accessory that now comes bundled with GoPro's Headstrap. The QuickClip enables ultra-compact, low-profile mounting to baseball hats, belts and other objects ranging in thickness from 3mm to 10mm. Check out other new mounts and accessories at: GoPro.com/products .

Awesome Edits Made Easy: GoPro Studio 2.0

While HERO3+ cameras and accessories make it easy to capture incredible footage, GoPro Studio 2.0 makes it easy to edit and share incredible videos. New to Studio 2.0 are GoPro Edit Templates—customizable templates of some of GoPro's best videos made available for free to users. It's as easy as picking out a GoPro video you like and dropping your own GoPro clips into the pre-made edit template. Killer soundtracks are included and all the edits are stylishly timed to the music by GoPro's famous production team. Now anyone can easily create professional-looking videos, making it more fun than ever to GoPro. Studio 2.0

Simple to use storyboard-based video editing software for Windows or Mac

Manually create a video with transitions, titles, and soundtrack, or

Use GoPro Edit Templates to quickly create professional-looking videos based upon edits originally produced by GoPro's acclaimed production team.

Firmware update for Canon EOS 1D X and 1D C cameras

Canon has announced firmware upgrades for the Canon EOS 1D C and Canon EOS 1D X cameras. The press release is shared below.

- Sabyasachi

Canon Firmware Upgrades For The EOS-1D X And EOS-1D C Digital SLR Cameras Deliver Improved Creative Control And Convenience

Firmware Version 2 for the EOS-1D X is Based on Extensive User Input and Provides More Efficient Autofocus Performance in Low Light, Custom Controls, and Improved User-Programmed Functionality.

MELVILLE, N.Y., October 22, 2013 – Canon U.S.A., Inc., a leader in digital imaging solutions, announces improvements in the functionality and convenient operation of the EOS-1D X Digital SLR camera and the EOS-1D C Digital SLR Cinema camera through new firmware scheduled to be available starting in January 2014 and November 2013, respectively. Firm-



Canon EOS 1D X

ware enhancements for the EOS-1D X Digital SLR camera are designed to provide photographers with greater creative freedom and speed, especially in sectors such as sports, wedding, nature/wildlife, and journalism, which often contain rapidly changing action, sometimes in low-light environments. Service enhancements for the EOS-1D C Digital SLR Cinema camera improve lens performance, lens status display, metadata storage, and audio recording.

"Canon constantly strives to provide our customers with advanced and innovative technology in our products," noted Yui-chi Ishizuka, executive vice president and general manager, Imaging Technologies & Communications Group, Canon U.S.A. "We understand the daily life of photographers, we listen closely to what they have to say, and we use their feedback in our constant efforts to improve existing products and develop new ones. The latest Canon firmware for the flagship EOS-1D X Digital SLR camera provides better automation to help photographers fine-tune how the camera operates moment-by-moment so users can concentrate on creativity and success. Filmmakers have also requested improved functionality for the EOS-1D C Digital SLR Cinema camera, and its new update delivers."

Improved Operability for the EOS-1D X

Developed as the ultimate Canon EOS camera, the EOS-1D X Digital SLR is designed with foresight that enables its performance to be periodically improved with new firmware upgrades, helping to ensure maximum long-term value for owners and users of the camera. These improvements are engineered to support and advance the evolving creative needs and business imperatives of professional photographers and committed high-end amateurs. The features provided by firmware version 2 are designed for more efficient automation that takes the task of changing settings away from the "heat of the moment" and enables photographers to concentrate on creativity and obtaining valuable shots. Firmware version 2 upgrades and operability additions include a total of 10 features that are now new or improved:

- **AF Performance with Moving Subjects** - For greater creative control, additional parameters have been added to AI Servo 2nd Image Priority, enabling users to adjust these settings for more accurate AF performance according to the situation at hand. Photographers can fine-tune the balance between prioritizing focus versus the framing rate for the second and subsequent shots in a burst.
- **Enhanced AI Servo AF Performance in Low Light Conditions** - The AI Servo focusing algorithm has been improved to allow more time for light sampling during AF activation prior to shutter release, enhancing AF performance in low-light situations. Additionally, initial AF control is now based on the new "+2 focus priority" setting of AI Servo 2nd Image Priority, which has higher distance measurement capabilities under low-light conditions. Upon full depression of the shutter button, settings from AI Servo 1st Image Priority take over and then settings from AI Servo 2nd Image Priority are applied on any subsequent images in the burst. This increases the probability that the first image in a burst sequence will be as sharp as possible.
- **Improved Acceleration/Deceleration Tracking Parameters** - To improve tracking performance of fast-moving subjects that fill the frame, additional parameters for acceleration/deceleration tracking in AI Servo AF have been added to provide photographers with more precise control when photographing rapidly moving subjects that accelerate or decelerate quickly or unexpectedly. In response to feedback from professional photographers, these new settings have been added to handle larger differences in speed (i.e., the rate of change in image magnification) compared to the previous firmware.
- **Selection of Initial AF Point While Shooting in 61-Point Auto Selection AF** - This new option in the AF Menu provides more continuity when switching to 61-Point Auto Selection AF from any other AF Point Selection mode. The option maintains the AF point selected from the previous Selection mode as a starting point for 61-Point Auto Selection AF. It also maintains the ability to change to a pre-programmed AF point when changing the Selection mode. This time-saving option is designed to help eliminate the need to stop and think, and helps photographers to customize their individual shooting style.
- **AF Point Switching According to Camera Orientation** - In addition to programming the EOS-1D X camera to automatically switch to a different AF point and area selection mode based on camera orientation, firmware version 2 adds the option of programming only the AF point according to camera orientation (horizontal, grip up and grip down). This new ability to select up to three different AF points according to camera orientation allows for greater customization of the camera to specific shooting styles.
- **Expanded Minimum Shutter Speed in Auto ISO** - In response to user feedback, this improved functionality in Auto ISO enables photographers to select a minimum shutter speed as high as 1/8000th of a second to freeze moving subjects.
- **Exposure Compensation in Auto ISO with Manual Mode Set** - This new function enables photographers to manually set a desired shutter speed and aperture, use Auto ISO to control the exposure, and use Exposure Compensation to adjust the exposure for challenging lighting conditions (e.g., a very dark or very bright background). This new function can be activated through the Quick Control Dial or by using the Main Dial while pressing the SET button.
- **Toggling Between Alternate Camera Settings** - EOS-1D X camera users can now toggle between three groups of camera settings instantly by pressing the shutter button, AE Lock button

or the AF-ON button. Selectable settings that can now be assigned to the AE Lock and AF-ON buttons via Custom Controls include:

- Currently selected AF point vs. pre-registered AF point
- AI Servo AF configuration sets (Case 1 through Case 6)

- One-Shot AF vs. AI Servo AF
- Currently selected drive mode vs. 14 fps Super High Speed drive mode
- With these new options, photographers can reconfigure their EOS-1D X camera on the fly, while keeping their eye on the viewfinder to maintain concentration on the shot they are trying to get. For example, the camera could be set up for One-Shot AF and single shot drive mode on the shutter button, AI Servo AF in Case 1 with high-speed continuous drive mode on the AE Lock button, and AI Servo AF in Case 4 with super-high-speed 14 fps continuous drive mode on the AF-ON button.
- **Same Exposure for New Aperture in Manual Mode** - This new firmware feature provides users with the ability to maintain consistent exposure levels in Manual mode when the aperture changes, for example when a photographer shoots at maximum aperture with a variable-aperture lens (such as the Canon EF 70-300mm f/4-5.6L IS USM telephoto zoom) or when using a lens equipped with built-in extender (such as the EF 200-400mm f/4L IS USM Extender 1.4X). The feature gives users the option to have the camera adjust the shutter speed or the ISO to compensate for the aperture change.
- **Display Protected Images Only** - Users can now page through protected images only via an option on the main dial. This feature already exists with rated images, and is an expansion of that capability.

Enhancements for the EOS-1D C

A versatile, self-contained 4K cinema camera as well as a robust still photography camera, the Canon EOS-1D C will also benefit from a new service update that further enhances the performance of this unique imaging device.

- **EF Lens Communication** - The new service update for the EOS-1D C Digital SLR Cinema camera will enable Canon EF-mount Cinema lenses to store lens metadata in the video recorded by the camera. Furthermore, Canon EF-mount Cinema lenses will be supported by Peripheral Illumination and Chromatic Aberration Correction functions, helping to improve overall image quality [1].
- **Audio Recording** - In response to user requests, audio on the EOS-1D C camera has also been enhanced. Currently audio recording is limited to a MIC input, but the forthcoming service update will permit selection of LINE or MIC input, allowing use of a wider variety of external audio sources.

New Firmware Release Schedules and Installation Procedures

Firmware version 2 for the EOS-1D X Digital SLR camera is scheduled to be posted on the Canon U.S.A. website in January 2014. Users will be able to download and install the new firmware on their own, or have it installed by an authorized Canon Factory Service Center.

The update for the Canon EOS-1D C Digital SLR Cinema camera is scheduled to be available November 2013, and will be installed at no charge as a service upgrade that requires the camera to be sent to an authorized Canon Factory Service Center.

Natural History -

COUNTRY NOTEBOOK: M.Krishnan: 'Of specially pleasing flight'

The Sunday Statesmen 6-Oct-13 (shared.by Shri.Saktipada Panigrahi)

THE PIED WAGTAIL

"THE winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on earth", but the official opening of the vernal season is still months away. And when it does open, it will be very unlike what English poets say it is in England.

'In the spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another crest; In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of



Pied Wagtail

Image courtesy - Prashant Jois

love."THE Pied Wagtail is a very likeable bird, wherever you may meet it, unconcernedly reconnoitering the village pool, almost within reach of the dhobi wrecking your clothes upon a rock, tripping along the banks of suburban ponds, or sitting atop a city gable piping its high, sweet songs. What can you want in a little bird to like it? Trim, pied looks, a friendly tolerance of humanity and a gay bearing - it has them all. But though it is the largest of our wagtails, the only resident one and the least frailty built of the lot, it has the rather weak, loose-jointed appearance of its clan when you see it in town or village, and the way it keeps on wagging its tail like a puppy makes you suspect it of mental incoherence as well. To know the bird really, you must see it in its native haunts, beside a rock-strewn, turbulent river.

Recently I watched a pair of these wagtails for an hour beside just such a river. We had spent the morning in strenuous work and had adjourned for our basketed lunch to an ancient, cool, dark stone pavilion, right at the water's edge. The river roared past in a broad, foaming torrent, hurling itself headlong against the rocks that jutted out of its course here and there. The larger rocks were miniature islands, topped with dry sand and rushes, and on either side the river was likewise flanked with black rock, white sand and rank green rushes.

After doing justice to the meal, we stretched ourselves on the rock floor of the pavilion. A hundred and fifty yards away a

statuesque osprey was sunning its bedraggled plumage on a stone pillar on the farther side of the river, and I lay watching it idly. Suddenly, out of the tail of my eye, I saw something come skipping and dancing across the water, and turned around. Two black-and-white birds were coming across from the opposite bank, making directly for our pavilion. They flew low in their dipping, rising passage, skimming the surface, one behind the other and at each perfectly synchronised dip it seemed as if the angry current would engulf them and suck them right in. I knew they were only Pied Wagtails, just a pair of common birds, but no Bird of Paradise could have looked more fairy-like in that setting. Many times that afternoon I watched them cross and recross the river, or go flitting from one rocky island to another.

The sheer buoyancy, airiness and abandon of their flight so much at variance with the heavy turbulence of the water underneath - such a contrast in moods!

In such haunts, these wagtails no longer seem weak in build or manner. For one thing, they spend much less time trotting about the sand and rock and are much oftener on the wing - the undulating flight of all wagtails is pleasing to the eye, the flight of this one being specially pleasing, as with each wing beat the bird seems to grow suddenly brighter and larger, as the wing is opened and more white is displayed, and then to fold neatly into itself.

As the wagtails came skimming and swinging over the water, they piped joyously to each other. The quick calls clear above the river's incessant, sullen roar. This flight-call was quite different from the usual long-drawn whistles or the cock's song - it was a sharp, eager call, jerked out of the bird every two yards of its flight, commencing, I think, just while it was rising from its dip. It could be that it was only the cock that piped, but I thought, I heard both birds.

They visited the pavilion several times, but it was only after a while that they discovered the rice grains scattered on the unhewn boulder just beyond the pavilion steps, where one of us had been amusing himself feeding the fish in the rapid water below. It was the cock, the blacker and more dapper of the two, that found the rice first. It pecked eagerly at the grains, unmindful of my presence two yards away; then it flew across to where its mate was, its quick piping calls fading as it went further, and presently returned with the hen. Both fell to on the rice with zestful pecks.

I spoke to them, in surprise. "Do you know," I said, "you shouldn't do that, according to the books - you are strictly insectivorous!"

They just wagged their tails easily and in unison without bothering to explain, and flew right away, having eaten up every grain of rice on the boulder. "

-M.Krishnan

This was first published on 10 April 1955 in The Sunday Statesman.

Image of the Month -

The honour for the Image of the Month for August 2013 goes to the image titled -

"Mother's Love: Sparrow with Chicks" by Satishchandra Ranadive

The original text by Satishchandra Ranadive accompanying this image reproduced below:

"I am happy to see, very happy/healthy nice group of sparrows,(females with almost 7-8 juveniles). Males were there, but far away from this spot.

Canon 550D, 400mm. f:5.6,1/500,ISO:400."



Wildlife Photography -

Indian Flying Fox by Roopak Gangadharan

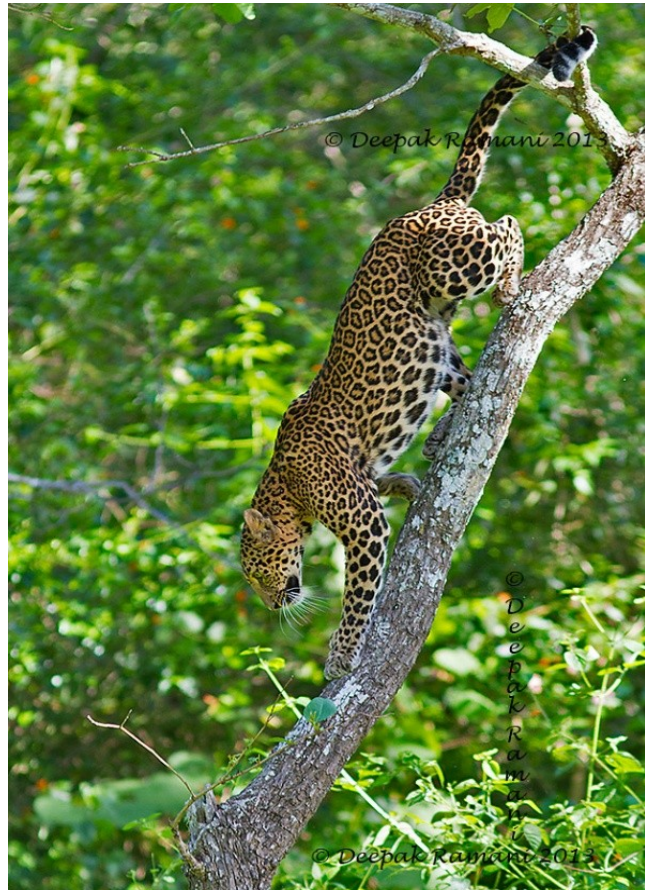


Tuskers sparring by Bhargava Srivari



Wildlife Photography -

Leopard descending by Deepak Ramani



Himalayan Marmots by Dr Ajay Kumar Singh

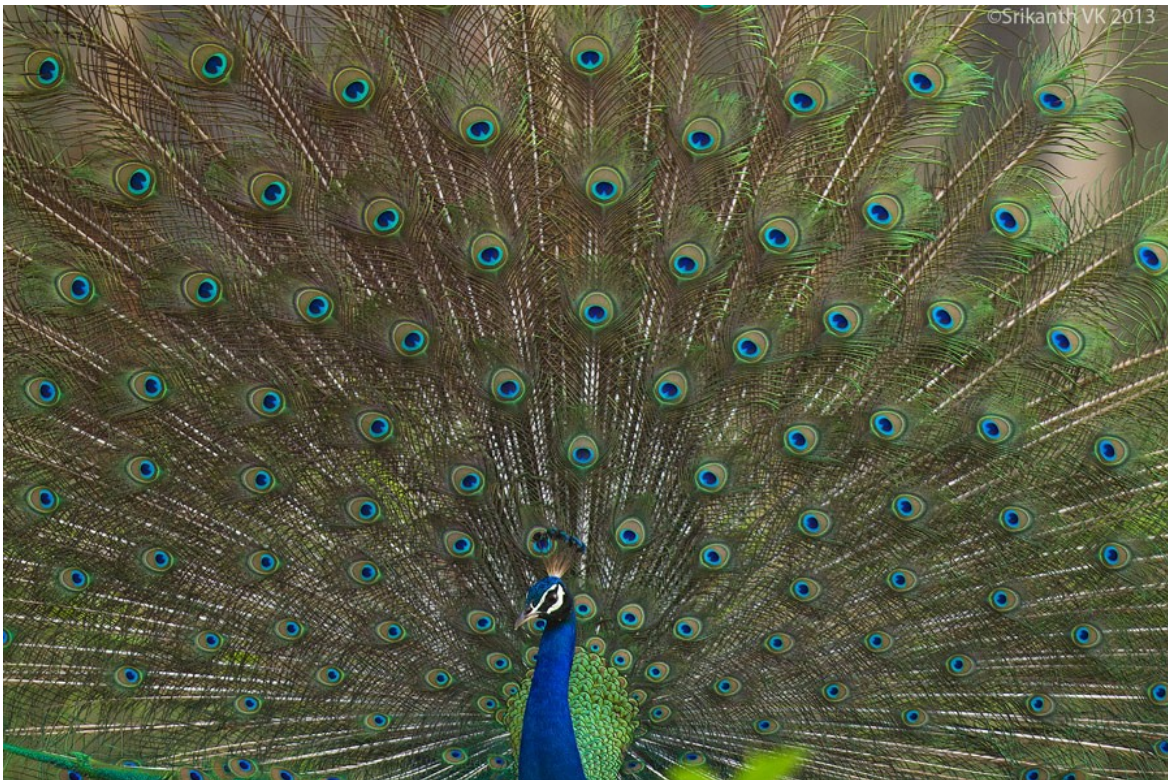


Wildlife Photography -

Dhole by Rajan Kanagasabai



Peacock by Kaleeswara Srikanth



Wildlife Photography -

Scaly breasted Juvenile by Dr.Jitendra Katre



Journey by Arindam Datta





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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