IndiaWilds Newsletter

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Inside this issue:

Big Hairy Audacious Goal to Save the Tiger

The Project Tiger was started when across India hunters were indiscriminately shooting down tigers. This hunting pressure was tremendously increased by the hunting tourism lobby who were inviting trophy hunters from abroad. In this backdrop, Kailash Sankhala and "Billy" Arjan Singh had convinced Smt. Indira Gandhi to ban tiger hunting. Despite the vociferous arguments by the hunting lobby that they had already booked clients in advance and banning tiger hunting will deprive India of precious foreign exchange, Mrs. Indira Gandhi stood firm. Her decision was aided by the promise of 1 million dollars by WWF. Project Tiger was born with Kailash Sankhala becoming the founder director.

Tiger in Bandipur National Park

The stated objective of the Project Tiger was "**to ensure the maintenance of a viable population of the tiger in India and to preserve, for all times, such areas as part of our national heritage for the benefit, education and enjoyment of future generations**". The Project Tiger was started with nine reserves representing various ecosystems in India – Manas, Palmau, Similipal, Corbett, Kanha, Ranthambhore, Melghat, Bandipur and Sundarbans. These nine Tiger Reserves covered a total of 16,339 square kilometers.

Initially the project tiger was hailed as a success as due to protection accorded to the

reserves, there was a discernible difference in the sightings of wildlife in those 9 Tiger Reserves. In a number of reserves the sightings of Tiger became a reality, albeit over a bait. Then Project Tiger slowly changed gears and the initial success and euphoria tapered off. Why did it happen?

The Numbers Game:

Five years after the Project Tiger was launched in 1973, Periyar and Sariksa were added as Tiger Reserves in 1978. Four years later in 1982, Buxa, Indravati, NagarjunaSagar-Srisailam and Namdapha were added to the list of Tiger Reserves under the Project Tiger.

So by 1982, the number of tiger reserves were 15 and area was 24712 square kilometres as opposed to the original number of 9 Tiger Reserves with 16,339 square kilometres total area.

When the number of tiger reserves started increasing with more and more protected areas being brought under the ambit of the Project Tiger, some measured the increase in number of Tiger Reserves as progress or success of the Project Tiger. So by the stroke of a pen, reclassifying the existing protected areas as Tiger Reserves also increased the total area under tiger reserve classification. This was considered as a barometer of success.

The tiger population in initial 9 Tiger Reserves were estimated to be 268 and the total number of tigers in the Tiger Reserves under Project Tiger kept on increasing with more reserves added to the list as well as the individual officers number juggling ability.

In those days the estimates of tiger numbers were primarily based on pugmark method. Though there were exponents of this technique like Saroj Raj Chaudhury, the tiger census at various reserves were just estimations impacted by the degree of skill the individual officer possessed. So even the estimation of 268 tigers in the nine tiger reserves when Project Tiger was initiated cannot be considered as accurate. In this back drop, the increase in number of tigers projected by the tiger reserve authorities, though considered as another measure of success, was at best arbitrary.

Examining Project Tiger's Objectives:

Modern management theories based on the analysis of successful organisations suggest that the Vision/Goal of an organisation or project is very important to its success. According to a theory by Jim Collins arrived at by analysing hundreds of successful businesses, a good vision statement of an organisation should have a **core ideology and an envisioned future** (Jim Collins & Jerry Porras, Building your Company's Vision, HBR Sept 1996).

Core ideology:

The core ideology of the organisation is its enduring character, which doesn't change even after the passage of time. Core ideology provides the glue that binds the organisation when it grows in size, diversifies, moves into different geographies etc. Core ideology can be further subdivided into a Core values which is a system of guiding principles, basic tenets or commandments which guides the organisation through thick and thin; and Core purpose which is the organisations fundamental reason for existence.

Envisioned Future:

The organisation should have a Big Hairy Audacious Goal (BHAG) with a time frame of 10 to 30 years. This BHAG captures the imagination of the employees and excites them to give their best. It energises the organisation. It is also important that there is a vivid description so that the vision is well understood.

Sabyasachi Patra
Email—
sabyasachi.patra@indiawilds.com

In light of the above mentioned theory, the objectives of the Project Tiger "**to ensure the maintenance of a viable population of the tiger in India and to preserve, for all times, such areas as part of our national heritage for the benefit, education and enjoyment of future generations"** fails in several counts.

The core purpose of the Project Tiger is obvious from the objective. However, the term viable population is written from a management perspective and not from that of the stakeholders. So though there is a core purpose, it is not understood by the majority of Tiger Reserve staff, and hence fails to capture their imagination. When the staff are not excited, the result is a foregone conclusion.

One can argue that the objectives of the Project Tiger also contain "Core Values" in form of "preserve, for all times, such areas as part of our national heritage for the benefit, education and enjoyment of future generations". However "Core Values" require no external justification. They are enduring tenets of an organisation. Clearly preserving these Tiger Reserves should have been the priority "for all times". However, there have been several questions as to the reason for existence of the Tiger Reserves and some parts have been sacrificed for mining, dams, canals, industries, railways etc.

Also, the tiger reserves were supposed to be preserved as "National Heritage" a tag which means hardly anything to the internal as well as external stakeholders. They were also supposed to be preserved for "education and enjoyment of future generations". Unfortunately, that part remained only in letter and not in spirit. The communication with the future generations remained limited to badly maintained interpretation centres where a few posters could be seen.

Absence of a BHAG:

The Objectives of the Project Tiger also failed to create an enormous goal that could energise the Project Tiger officials, staff and stakeholders. For example, on May 25th 1961 when President John F. Kennedy announced before a joint session of Congress that before the end of the decade America will land a man on moon and safely bring him back home. That statement had energised not only NASA but the entire USA. That is the power of a BHAG (Big-Hairy-Audacious-Goal). Unfortunately, our Project Tiger authorities couldn't dream of such an audacious seemingly impossible challenge that could have captured the imagination of the nation and motivated the team to achieve it.

Years have passed. There have been task force to study the failure and like five blind men and an elephant, there have been prescriptions. Sadly even those prescriptions remain unimplemented. Our wilderness areas are increasingly under threat. They have become islands without any connectivity with each other. The health of those tiger reserves are also terrible with most of them runover by invasives, fragmented by roads and railways and canals, polluted by industries and sewerage from human habitations, encroached upon by people, poaching, logging, wood cutting and cattle grazing etc.

A tiger cannot live in isolation. It sits on top of a complex web of inter-relationships between various organisms. When there is failure to save the diversity of the forests, to protect the forests from being clear-felled for timber, or cut down by villagers for firewood, it impacts the prey species. That in turn affects the predators. If the forests officials had focused more on managing the health of the forests and protected the forests from grazing, wood cutting, logging and poaching, and relocating the villagers, used the local tribals for protection then the number of prey as well as tigers would have bounced back.

Species in Focus: Jungle Cat

Classification of Jungle Cat:

Jungle cat is found in Egypt, western Asia, Indian subcontinent, Burma, China Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia. It was first classified according to modern scientific nomenclature in the Caspian area and hence given the name *Felis chaus*. According to IUCN classification the status of Jungle Cat is "Least Concern" and the population trend is decreasing.

Distribution of Jungle Cat in India:

Classification of Jungle Cat

Jungle cat is widely distributed in India in open forests and scrub (*M. Krishnan in India's Wildlife in 1959-70, pub BNHS*). "It is found practically all over the Peninsula from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. It is commoner in the drier parts of the country keeping more to grassland and scrub-jungle and the reedy banks of the rivers."(*The Wild Animals of the Indian Empire, page 118* by S. H. Prater). It is very adaptable and occurs in habitats ranging from the vicinity of human dwellings to the densest forest (*Indian Wildlife: J. C. Daniel, page 80,81*).

Dunbar Brander, writing about a decade earlier than Prater,echoes similar views. "Out of a number of wild-cats found in the Province, by far the most common is *Felis chaus*, the Jungle Cat. This animal may be found anywhere – in the heart of a dense forest or in a grass patch in the open plains". (*Wild Animals in Central India, Dunbar Brander, page 273)*

With its long legs and comparatively short tail – the Jungle Cat has a very distinctive appearance. (*The Wild Animals of the Indian Empire, page 118* by S. H. Prater).

The jungle cat has morphological affinities (relatively short tail, long legs, big pointed ears) to African cats, such as serval (*Leptailurusserval*) and caracal (*Caracal caracal*), which may indicate a preference for open habitats (as opposed to closed canopy forests) (*Mukherjee, Shomita Et al. (Ecology Driving Genetic Variation: A Comparative Phylogeography of Jungle Cat*)

Size and Appearance:

Size:

There is a wide variation in size and appearance of Jungle Cats in India. "It varies greatly both in size and appearance. I have weighed mature animals which scaled 9 lb. and others have been as much as 20 lb."(*Wild Animals in Central India,*

Dunbar Brander, pg 273). According to J. C. Daniel "In size they range up to 2 ½ feet (75 cm) in body length with a tail half the length. The maximum weight recorded is 19.8 lb (9kg). (*Indian Wildlife: J. C. Daniel, page 80,81*).

Colour of Jungle Cat:

According to Dunbar Brander "the colour may be sandy grey or tawny red; some specimens are without markings except on the tail; in others the limbs may have transverse markings and the body may be marked vertically with rows of spots or wavy lines."(*Wild Animals in Central India, Dunbar Brander, pg 273)*

"The colour of the fur varies from sandy grey to yellowish grey. The tail is ringed with black towards the end and has a black tip. The paws are pale yellowish; black or sooty brown underneath. The ears are reddish, ending in a small pencil of black hairs. The underside of the body is paler with vestiges of stripes on the underside and flanks." (*The Wild Animals of the Indian Empire, page 118* by S. H. Prater)

"There is a distinct spinal crest of hairs and a small pencil or tuft of hairs on the ears. The general body-colour is gray to tawny to deep brown. Ear tips may be black. The two stripes on the foreleg are distinctive. Three races have been described from India." (*Indian Wildlife: J. C. Daniel, page 80,81*)

Shri M. Krishnan feels that there is a difference in colouration of jungle cats in Tadoba National Park and has written that "there seems to be a greater admixture of brick red in the grey... especially in Tadoba National Park" (*India's Wildlife in 1959-70, pub BNHS, page 66*).

Krishnan further observed that there is "a dark line running down from the inner lower corner of each eye down to the nose (on either side). In sub-adult, there were dark bars on the inner aspects of the upper half of the forelimbs and on the abdomen. (*India's Wildlife in 1959-70, pub BNHS, page 66*)

These variations in colour, size and appearance can be attributed to the genetic variation in the jungle cats in India. "Jungle cats revealed high genetic variation, relatively low population structure and demographic expansion around the mid-Pleistocene." (*Mukherjee, Shomita Et al., Ecology Driving Genetic Variation: A Comparative Phylogeography of Jungle Cat*)

Writing about the season when you have the most chance of sighting a Jungle Cat, George Schaller writes from his research

experience in Kanha "although fairly common in the park, they were infrequently seen except during the cool season, when they congregated on the meadow apparently while mating. (*Deer & the Tiger: A study of wildlife in India, George B. Schaller, pg 311*)

Litter:

It breeds during the early months of the year. Three to four kittens form a litter and the coats of these young ones are fairly

spotted. (*Indian Wildlife: J. C. Daniel, page 80,81*)

Food of Jungle Cat:

The Jungle Cat is a stalk and ambush predator. The Jungle cat is often on the look out for rodents, gerbils, insects and also feeds on eggs of birds, especially ground nesting birds, chicks and is ever ready to pounce upon birds feeding on the ground, drinking water or when perched on low branches. In Keoladeo Ghana I observed it being flushed out from bush from its hidden position near water and it made its annoyance known to the feral cattle with a sound resembling a small roar. According to Dunbar Brander "its chief food consists of birds and small mammals. It is especially destructive to game birds, most of which it kills and I have even known it to kill peafowl"(*Wild Animals in Central India, pg 273*).

Like Dunbar Brander, Prater too says that Jungle Cat preys on small mammals and birds. "It preys on small mammals, birds and, when near villages, on poultry, making bold to seize its prey even in the presence of its owners. Very swift and exceedingly strong for its size, it is quite capable of brining down larger game. Crump, writing of these cats in Kumaon says that it was not at all uncommon to find quills of porcupines which they had killed or attempted to kill embedded in their paws." *(The Wild Animals of the Indian Empire, page 118* by S. H. Prater). "While Jungle Cats appear to specialise on small prey, they are large and powerful enough to kill young swine, subadult gazelles and chital fawns. Adult chital obviously consider this cat to be a potential predator, as they react to its presence by giving alarm calls ". (Sunquist and Sunquist, Wild Cats of The World, page 63)

"Though catholic in diet, it lives largely on small mammals and birds". (*Indian Wildlife: J. C. Daniel, page 80,81*). They are also observed to feed on kills by other predators.

George Schaller had examined the droppings of jungle cats during his study of Tiger in Kanha in 1964 and had found evidence of Jungle Cat feeding on rats, mice and lizard. "All of the 27 droppings collected contained the hair and bones of rats and mice and in two instances also the remains of a lizard."(*Deer & the Tiger: A study of wildlife in India, George B. Schaller, pg 312*). A study in Sariska estimated Jungle Cats to feed on an average between three to five rodents daily

(Mukherjee *et al* 204).

All my observations have been that of lone individuals which is in conformance with the popular belief. "They are solitary;

outside of mating situations, the only enduring social contact is between mother and young" (Sunquist and Sunquist, Wild Cats of The World, page 63). However, M. Krishnan has observed four adult jungle cats crouching at one place "4 adults were seen crouched immobile in the open, near water, and in a bush near an artificial salt lick, evidently lying in wait for partridges, doves and other birds visiting the water and lick." (M. Krishnan, *India's Wildlife in 1959-70, pub BNHS, page 66*). This is a telling commentary on how poorly studied this species is.

Persecution in the Past:

The colonial mentality of branding any animal as a vermin or menace is also reflected in Dunbar Brander's writing about the Jungle Cat in the Book Wild Animals in Central India which was first published in 1923. Quote "This cat is a savage intractable animal, and as it kills an immense amount of game should be destroyed whenever possible."

Conservation of Jungle Cat in India:

The population trends of Jungle cat is categorised as decreasing by IUCN. The sightings in the field are decreasing in the usual habitats. Since it is not a charismatic species like the Tiger, it can swiftly get locally exterminated in a major part of its range due to habitat destruction and breeding with domestic cats. Conversion of forest lands into agriculture brings them more into contact with people in Srilanka (Wild Cats of the World: Sunquist & Sunquist 2002, page 64) and would hold true for India. Reclaiming wetlands, which are technically revenue lands, for housing also brings them in conflict with people (Bhubaneshwar, Pers observation). Specific steps should be taken to protect the riparian habitats and wetlands would be a big help in protecting this species. Specifically increasing the health of our wetlands near our cities and towns and curtailing the anthropogenic pressures would help them survive in these human dominated landscapes as well.

Impact of Food wastage on environment:

The food and agricultural organisation of the United Nations (FAO) has come out with a study titled "The Food Wastage Footprint – Impacts on Natural Resources" and has found that every year about one third of the world's food production is wasted. This amounts to a humungous 1.3 billion tons of food wasted every year.

The impact on the environment is huge.

This excess production of food grains contributes to about 3.3 Gtonnes of CO_2 equivalent annually, contributing to the global warming. This amount is third largest behind top emitters USA and China. This is equal to twice the amount of annual green house gas emitted by the road transport sector in USA in 2010.

The 1.3 billion tons of food wasted every year is estimated to grow in an area of 1.4billion hectares which is 28% of the entire world's area under agricultural production. So if we can manage to save the 1.3 billion tons of food wasted then the 1.4 billion hectares of land used for growing that food could be left uncultivated. This land can be left fallow and large patches can grow wild again. Nature with its huge capacity to bounce back will take over these fallow lands once again. This will be a big help to birds and animals that are fighting an increasingly losing battle for survival. These areas can also help in rebuilding the lost corridors between our various wilderness areas.

Leaving nearly one third the amount of arable land uncultivated will also result in less usage of toxic synthetic pesticides and fertilisers, which are increasingly poisoning our water sources and affecting the health of people as well as wildlife.

Agriculture also gobbles up huge amount of resources. Today there is an increasing tussle between farmers and industrialists in major areas for water. In places like Keoladeo Ghana National Park in Bharatpur, farmers stop water supply to the park. The 1.3 billion tons of wasted food requires 250 Km^3 of surface and ground water equal to the annual discharge of river Volga in Russia. Stopping these enormous food waste will help in preserving the ground water from overexploitation. We will not require massive dams and canals to divert water. Whenever dams are knocked off, the river runs at its normal course and the large swathes of land submerged under the backwaters of the dam will be now available once again and get converted to forests, further increasing the carbon sequestration capacity. India today is increasingly facing water wars, so this would come as a big boon to our country and economy.

The study has also found that in developing countries most of the losses are in the early stages of production due to the harvest techniques and post harvest transportation and storage facilities not being robust.

However in India, according to data released by FCI (Food Corporation of India) through an RTI petition, even the so-called developed states like Gujarat are among the top three food wasting states.

2401.61 MT of wheat has been damaged in the year 2011-2012 as opposed to damage of 1997 million tonnes (MT) in 2010-2011. This year the loss up to February 2013 is already 932.46 MT out of which the top three states responsible are Bihar at 306.5 MT, second is Uttarakhand at 221 MT followed by Gujarat at 195 MT. In 2009-1010 Gujarat had topped the list with maximum 785 MT of damaged wheat.

It is unfortunate that Gujarat prides itself as the most preferred investment destination; however, it hasn't given attention to food rotting in the go downs in its state.

In the developed countries where the harvest, transportation and storage infrastructure is efficient, the losses are mostly at the end of the supply chain ie at the consumer end. The study attributes that to the consumers often not buying items due to concerns about "best-before-buy" dates or quality standards being too restrictive according to size or aesthetics.

Wastage of food at the consumer end is also about consumer psyche and is impacted by the general shortage or abundance faced by the contemporary society of the country. A couple of years back during a conversation, the Ambassador of Finland to India had said that the generation of Finnish people who have seen the war with Russia understood the pain of food

shortage and were loathe to waste even a slice of bread. In sharp contrast to the habits of that generation of Finnish people, the present generation is more profligate and likely to waste food. Similar examples were seen in families who were uprooted from their homes in Bangladesh and Pakistan, however the younger generation in those families throw away food without any qualms if they "don't feel like" eating. In India, elders in many families even today admonish the youngsters if food is wasted. However, in a surprising experience in an SEZ (Special Economic Zone) where the Kitchen cooks one lakh meals a day, I have seen the employees waste lot of food. Surprisingly, 90% of these employees are from economically weaker sections of society who can only afford one meal a day. So saving food is not a universal value, ie. when the food is provided by a company or paid for by someone else, even people from deprived classes waste food. The average food waste in that SEZ varied between 100 gms at the least to 250 gms per person per meal per day. Awareness campaigns like placing boards mentioning the food wasted the previous day helped a bit in reducing the wastage.

A five member family wasting 100 gms per meal can save 1kg of food every day, if they become conscious and stop wasting. That equates to 30kgs of food every month. Is that not a cause for concern? Especially in an economy where the food inflation is running more than 18% can we not focus on this aspect?

If we don't stop wasting, then we need to raise food production by 60% to meet the food needs of people by 2050. I hope we can raise sufficient awareness so that we can stop food wastage, eradicate hunger as we will have enough for everybody to eat; save our forests from conversion to agricultural fields, reduce emission of green house gasses, avoid water problems, increase carbon sequestration, and live a green and healthy life.

The complete report can be found here:http://www.fao.org/docrep/018/i3347e/i3347e.pdf

Conservation News -

Poachers use Furadan to kill Tigers

A study by a three member team of ParamJit Singh, CCF Kumaon, Dr Utkarsh Shukla, Lucknow zoo deputy director and Dr Abhishek Singh has revealed that Furadan, a commonly available pesticide is used in poisoning of tigers and leopards in Uttarakhand.

Furadan insecticide was the cause of death of number of lions in Africa and hence FMC Corporate decided to withdraw this insecticide (Furadan 5G) from distributors and retailers in Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya. FMC had even mentioned that it had no plans to reintroduce this produce in the future in these countries. The details can be found here:

http://www.furadanfacts.com/InTheNews.aspx?itemId=1002

Unfortunately, Furadan is being sold in India by Rallis India, a Tata Group enterprise, under license from FMC Corporation. In the past we had documented use of Furadan to kill migratory birds in Chilika lake in Odisha, India. The pesticide

furadan can be clearly seen in the leaves near the dead birds.

With birds the death is instantaneous and the larger cats like tigers and leopards succumb within an hour or two. With these new facts coming to light will Rallis India stop marketing this in India the way FMC Corporation stopped selling it in East Africa?

When a chemical insecticide is withdrawn from African countries and still being sold in India, this is clearly a matter of discrimination. Will the Government of India sit up and take notice and ban Furadan from India?

Concerned members may write to:

Mr. V. Shankar,

Managing Director & CEO,
Rallis India Ltd., 156/157, 15th Floor,
Nariman Bhavan, 227, Nariman Point, Mumbai 400 021,
Fax: 022-66652847

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

Now hacking into tiger collar

20-09-2013, 09:59 AM

Hackers seem to look for new challenges for various reasons. Now, in an unprecedented situation, a hacker from Pune had tried to hack into a radio collar placed around the neck of a tiger code named Panna-211. This tiger had been relocated from Panna to Satpura.

Taking cognisance of this incident, the Bori-Satpura tiger reserve authorities have filed an FIR to probe into the incident.

The radio collars have been designed to track the movements of the animals it is put on. It was not visualised that someone will hack into it to find out the details of the location. These information can be used to poach the animal.

Tiger Genome sequencing completed

Sep 18, 2013, 01.42 AM IST

AHMEDABAD: In a first, a group of genome scientists from five countries has successfully completed the 'whole genome sequencing' of the tiger.

The 'whole genome sequencing' of an organism describes the arrangement of all the genes on a single set of chromosomes of the organism. It is considered a complete blueprint of its genetic make-up and provides invaluable insight into a species' interaction with its environment, its genetic diversity as well as its capability to adapt and evolve.

Fifteen scientists led by Jong Bhak of Genome Research Foundation, South Korea, decoded as many as 3 billion nucleotides (organic molecules that form the basic building blocks of nucleic acids, such as DNA). They identified 20,000 genes related to various functions of the tiger.

"This is a significant milestone as far as tiger conservation is concerned. Till now, genetic studies on the tiger were focused mostly on single functions or genetic aspects. This is the first time that the entire genome sequencing has been completed," said Priyavrat Gadhvi, a biotechnologist from Ahmedabad who was the only Indian participant in the project.

The genome sequencing was taken up in 2010 at a Tiger Conservation Colloquium hosted by Russian President Vladimir Putin in St Petersburg with the goal of doubling the number of world's tigers by 2022.

The completion of full genome sequencing of the tiger is a major breakthrough as the data now available will form the basis of all future genetic studies related to tiger conservation. The team has decided to make the data publically available for research.

"We want to make this information available to all researchers interested in and focused on conservation work," Bhak said.

India is the most important Tiger Range Country (TRC) - home to the highest number of wild tigers - among the few TRCs in the world.

Quote Sabyasachi Patra -

“The Tiger genome sequencing will go a long way in helping research and increasing our understanding about tigers and their susceptibility as well as adaptability to changes in external variables in its habitat. Since the researchers have decided to make all the data available for further research, it will work as a great start for many more projects to take off on the basis of this sequencing. We are still several years away from taking benefits of the human genome sequencing for medical applications, one shouldn't see an immediate benefit. Nevertheless, a good news for conservation. “

Equipment Discussions -

Sandisk launches Extreme Pro CFast 2.0 Memory Cards

Sandisk has launched cards which have write speeds of 350 MB/s and these cards use the new CFast technology. These cards can be used in the recently announced Arri Amira Documentary camera (for filming). Details below:

The World's First CFast 2.0 Memory Card

Designed to meet the demands of the cinema, broadcast, and photography industries, the SanDisk Extreme PRO CFast 2.0 memory card is the first memory card to use CFast 2.0 technology.

Write Speeds of up to 350MB/s

The SanDisk Extreme PRO CFast 2.0 memory card is more than twice as fast as today's fastest cards. With write speeds of up to 350MB/s (2333X) and data-transfer speeds of up to 450MB/s (3000X)**, the 120GB memory card can keep up with the burst-mode shooting of professional-grade cameras and camcorders. It also saves you time when moving large image or video files from your camera to your computer.

High Speeds for Full HD and 4K Video Recording

Resource-intensive Full HD and 4K video recording require high write speeds. The SanDisk Extreme PRO CFast 2.0 offers the speed required for flawless high-resolution video. This camera card is compatible with the new generation of high-performance cameras and camcorders based on CFast 2.0 technology

Designed for Professionals

The SanDisk Extreme PRO CFast 2.0 memory card was designed in parallel with leading-edge camera manufacturers. Built for the demands of professionals in the broadcast, cinema, and photography industries, this memory card offers the work-flow efficiencies you need to stay competitive.

Tested Under Extreme Conditions

This memory card can operate in temperatures ranging from 23 to 158 degrees Fahrenheit.

Card dimensions: 1.7" x 1.4" x 0.13" (43 mm x 36 mm x 3.3 mm)

Natural History -

COUNTRY NOTEBOOK: M.Krishnan: 'DID YOU DO IT' The Sunday Statesmen 08-September-2013 (shared by Shri.Saktipada Panigrahi)

RED-WATTLED LAPWING

"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 love.'

It is not at all like that here. There is no seasonal limit to the fancy of our young men, and our lapwing has no crest, not even in midsummer when it is the peak of spring in India.

It is different altogether from the English lapwing, though related in a cousinly sort of way. Birds of the same English mane, in diverse countries, are not necessarily of the same feather. The robin, for instance, is a wholly different bird in England, in America and in India - in fact, most countries have their own distinctive robin. The sparrow-hawk, the grackle and the chat may be only distantly related, or even unrelated, to their namesakes in other lands, and I mention these three merely in an illustrative manner. However, lapwings everywhere belong to the plover group.

All of them are long-legged and light-footed, and broad and lazy of wing, though capable of strong flight - it is from their flapping, lubberly wing action that they get their tribal name. But there are several kinds of them in India. The one I term "our lapwing" is the Red-wattled Lapwing, commonest of the tribe, the handsome, familiar "Did-you-do-it?", that is one of the few birds to figure in our legends.

Its call, admirably rendered by the words "Did you do it?" is quite distinctive, even when the black-and-white head and neck, red wattle and yellow legs are unseen. The only other bird for which it can be mistaken from a distance is the Yellow-wattled Lapwing, its younger brother - but the latter does not ask the querulous question, "Did-you-do-it?" as it rises into the air in alarm.

The Red-wattled Lapwing is not an especially sociable bird (incidentally, there is a sociable lapwing); it is usually by itself or with its mate, though as many as six may be seen together on occasion. It is essentially a shorebird, fond of the shingle margins of lakes and drying riverbeds, but equally at home on plough-land and in jungle clearings. It runs easily about on its neat, yellow legs, looking for its living in the sand and shingle and clods. And its knowledge of human intentions is uncanny.

It is noticeably less distrustful of humanity when on plough-land or the bare, pathless throughfares around villages where men are on their own ground, but nowhere does it permit a near approach. Sitting in the open, in a dry nullah, I have watched this bird for quite ling periods - it would invariably take wing in loud alarm at my approach, but soon alight some distance away and gradually walk nearer. But any movement, such as the creeping behind cover of a man with a gun towards duck in a lake or some other quarry, is instantly detected and blatantly advertised - the bird circles above the lurker, brandishing the white bar in its slow wings, as if to direction to its strident alarm. I may be imaginative, but when a lapwing proclaims the stalker in this manner its call seems to me slightly longer and more insistent in each syllable and definitely more urgent - a "Don't-you-see-him?" rather than anything else.

Naturally, shikaris have little love for the bird, and its Tamil name, "Aat-kaatti-kuruvi", is remarkably descriptive - "the bird that points out men", literally translated.

When you see a pair of lapwings on a pebbly shore or field, and one of them flutters right in front of you, be sure the eggs are somewhere near, a clutch of three or four pointed ones, pointed ends inward in a scrape in the earth, and so like the pebbles in their mottled indetermination that you are not likely to see them till you step on them.

Incidentally, you need not look for them where the fluttering bird was - they are likely to be near where its mate was.

Countryside legend credits the lapwing with the habit of sleeping on its back, so that it may catch and hold up the heavens in its feet should they collapse and fall while it is asleep. The legend has been interpreted by scholars as one illustrative of grotesquely exaggerated conceit; their comment is to the effect, "As if such a small bird could hold up in its feet something so huge and heavy as the firmament!" But I believe the legend could be more truly taken as one symbolic of the bird's wariness.

No naturalist can assert that the lapwing does not sleep on its back, for who has caught it napping? At night, the bird is even wider awake than by day, and I should think its sudden call is one of the most reliable of nocturnal alarms, telling the listener that something is moving nearby, unless, of course, he himself is the cause. I have rarely heard the bird when it was quite dark, but when there is moonlight it calls frequently, and I have heard it by such faint light that though I knew from the sound that it was flying directly overhead, may be 20 or 30 yards above, I was not able to see it."
-M. Krishnan

This was first published on 20 February 1955 in The Sunday Statesman.

The AGILE ARCHITECT

Text and Photographs by Shyamala Kumar

This small female sunbird single handedly (or should say single beaked) took on the task of nest building. I noticed that the male came on regular inspection visits but I never noticed him helping in any way.

She was all over the nest weaving and knitting.
She was a whirlwind of activity.

A lot of acrobatic moves were also incorporated.

Image of the Month -

The honour for the Image of the Month for August 2013 goes to the image titled
"Gaur chasing Tiger" by Praveen Siddannavar.

Gaurs can be really dangerous; their main strength lies in their sharp and strong horns that can even kill a predator like a tiger. However the tiger is seen sprinting with long leaps and finally manages to have a narrow escape. The tiger seems exhausted and also very embarrassed as he is watched by a group of Chital (spotted deers) as mute spectators. The tiger now looks back unable to digest the plight he had just been in and heads back to the bamboo bushes, the place where it all began...

Camera - Canon 1D Mark IV, Canon f4 500mm lens + 1.4x TC
EXIF - ISO 800 Av 5.6 Tv 1/800 sec EC +0.3 Focal length 700mm, small crop for composition, Shooting against sunlight

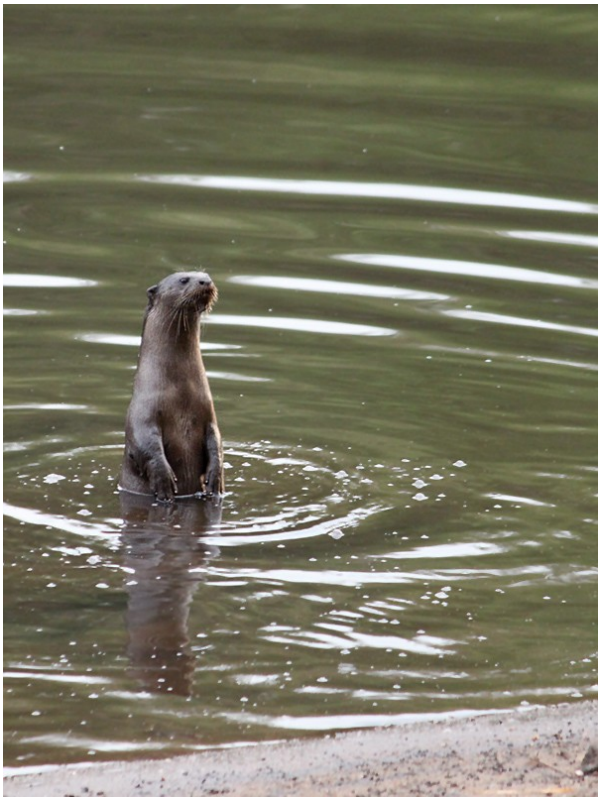
Wildlife Photography -

Fishing Vibes by Abhishek Jamalabad

Elephant Mud bath by Rajan Kanagasabai

Wildlife Photography -

Smooth Coated Otter by Roopak Gangadharan



Tuskers in Mock Fight by Mrudul Godbole

Wildlife Photography -

Leaping black bucks by Hymakar Valluru

Oriental White Eye from Ooty by Kaleeswara Srikanth

Wildlife Photography -

Skimmers – record image by Sabyasachi Patra

Corbett Landscape by Gajanan Bapat

Wildlife Photography -

Manchinbele by Bibhav Behera

I look forward to your inputs and support in preserving the last tracts of wilderness and wildlife left in our beautiful country. For other interesting articles and images check - ***http://www.indiawilds.com/forums/***

To post in the IndiaWilds forums, you can register free of cost using your Full Name as user id at ***http://www.indiawilds.com/forums/register.php***

If you are already a member of IndiaWilds and have forgotten you user id and/or password you can mail to administrator@indiawilds.com

Regards,
Sabyasachi Patra

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