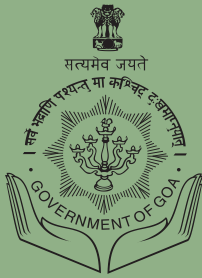


GOA FOREST NEWS

QUARTERLY NEWS BULLETIN OF THE GOA FOREST DEPARTMENT

VOL. XII NO. 1 JULY 2013



COVER STORY

PHOTOGRAPHING TIGERS IN THE WILD

SPECIAL FEATURE

WILDLIFE ANIMAL CONFLICT

BREAKING NEWS

GOA

GOA FOREST NEWS

EDITORIAL

VOL. XII NO. 1
APRIL - JUNE 2013

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
SHRI RICHARD D'SOUZA, IFS

MANAGING EDITOR
SHRI S. K. AGGARWAL, IFS

EDITOR
SMT YASODHA K., IFS

EDITORIAL TEAM
SHRI N. D. NAIK, ACF
SHRI VIKAS DESAI, ACF
SHRI AMAR HEBLEKAR, ACF
SHRI PARESH POROB, RFO

DESIGN & LAYOUT
SHRI AMAR HEBLEKAR

Cover photo : Amar Heblekar

Quarterly news bulletin of the Forest Department, Government of Goa. For private circulation only. Not for sale.

Matter from this newsletter may be used without prior permission, but source has to be acknowledged by the user.

To receive copies of this newsletter, please write to:

Dy. Conservator of Forests, Research & Utilisation Division, Forest Colony, Aquem, Margao, 403601 Goa.

The Goa Forest Department is not responsible for any liability arising out of the content/ text of the articles published in this magazine.

Published by Smt. Yasodha K., IFS, Dy. Conservator of Forests, Research & Utilisation Division, Forest Colony, Aquem, Margao, 403601 Goa on behalf of the Forest Department, Government of Goa.

Tel: +91-832-2750099 Web: www.forest.goa.gov.in

Address all correspondence and contributions to the publisher at the above address. Contributions not accepted for publication shall not be returned to the sender unless accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope. No royalty or payments shall be made for published articles. Rights to accept or reject any contribution lies with the editor.



Dear Readers,

It gives me great pleasure to inform that the staff of the Goa Forest Department under the dynamic leadership of Shri Richard D'Souza, PCCF could trap the tiger on camera in Madei Wildlife Sanctuary.

It forms our cover story and the person who could achieve this wonderful thing gives a first hand record of his take in this issue.

We also had the IFS Officers of the 2011-2013 batch visiting Goa. Though different batches have visited Goa in the past, there was a large gap between the last visit and this visit and thus this visit was given a lot of importance.

With best wishes

Editor

IN THIS ISSUE ...

Tiger caught on camera at Madei1
IFS Officer trainees in Goa2
Feature - Our Tour of South Goa3
Striped beauty in forests4
Living with wildlife6
Wildlife Rescue Squad report8

TIGER CAUGHT ON CAMERA AT MADEI

Camera sensors traps set at strategic locations yield results



Right:
The tiger caught on
camera

Camera traps set at strategic locations in Madei Wildlife Sanctuary in Sattari taluka of Goa by Shri Paresh Porob, Range Forest Officer, Madei Wildlife Sanctuary yielded excellent results capturing stunning images of the tiger.

The Goa Forest Department procured camera traps for its Wildlife Sanctuaries in the last financial year. One such camera set in Madei near a wild boar kill (full first hand report on centre page of this issue) captured a few clear images of the tiger.

This is the first time on record that tigers in the wild have been captured on film.

The Madei Wildlife Sanctuary notified in the year 1999, is located in the Western Ghats of the State of Goa which are one of the 25 Mega bio diversity hot spots in the world.

The Sanctuary harbours more than a thousand species of flowering plants and a

vast variety of endemic orchids.

A number of sacred groves are known to exist. The better known being "Nirankarachi Rai" near Bambar on the way to Kodal which is dominated by a unique plant species- *Myristica malabarica*.

The vegetation is mostly moist deciduous type interspaced with evergreen patches on its northern extremity.

Barapada caves of Khanapur Taluka (Karnataka State) which is just 5 km away from the sanctuary border, at which *pishyachi kond* (mad man's hideout) shelters the Wroughtons Free Tailed Bat (*Otomops wroughtonii*).

It is the only place in the world where this bat resides. These bats have free range in Madei Wildlife Sanctuary and are classified as critically endangered.

The three highest peaks in Goa are situated in the hill ranges of the Sanctuary. They are Sonsogod (1027 mts), Talavche sada (812 mts) & Vageri (725 mts). The main River

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

Continued from page 1...



that flows through the Sanctuary is the Madei. There are a number of tributaries and sub tributaries for this river.

Though this is the first time that the presence of tiger has been captured on film, the first record of the tiger was on 4th February 2009 when a buffalo kill was reported in the area. The then Range Forest Officer Shri Amar Heblekar of Wildlife-Campal range had recorded the presence and traced the pug marks of the tiger. However, it was presumed that the tiger was a seasonal visitor to the area from neighbouring states.

The State Assembly congratulated Shri Richard D'Souza, IFS, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Shri Paresh Porob, Range Forest Officer on the capture during the Assembly Session.

Shri Manohar Parrikar, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Goa passed the motion to congratulate the Officers in the House.

VISIT OF IFS OFFICERS TO GOA

Indian Forest Service Officers of the 2011-2013 batch from the Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy, Dehradun visited Goa on their study tour in May 2013.

During their visit they toured Dr. Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary, Chorao and the mangrove nursery. They also visited Sanquelim to study the rehabilitation of mines.

Their program included a visit to the National Institute of Oceanography at Dona Paula where they were briefed about the various research activities conducted by them.

On the last day, they visited the State Secretariat to interact with by Smt Alina Saldanha, Hon'ble Forest Minister as well as Shri B Vijayan, IAS, Chief Secretary and Shri Richard D'Souza, IFS, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Goa.

Shri R. K. Verma, IAS, Principal Secretary (Forests) hosted them a dinner along with several IAS, IPS and IFS Officers of the State.

The tour program for the Officers was coordinated by Shri Amar Heblekar, ACF under the guidance of the Nodal Officer Smt. K. Yasodha, IFS, DCF (Research & Utilisation), Margao.



Top, left:
Photograph of the tiger pug mark recorded in 2009;

Bottom:
Hon'ble Forest Minister Smt Alina Saldanha interacting with the IFS Officers at the Secretariat

LIVING WITH WILDLIFE

by Amar Heblekar



*Left:
Forest Officers
assessing damage
caused to crops by a
herd of wild elephants
in Pernem taluka.*

Conventional wisdom in the field of wildlife conservation science and research is that people and wildlife cannot coexist. All efforts so far have been put in to create human-free pockets of protected areas for wildlife. Research and wildlife management practices have been striving to focus on this aspect with some successful cases of rehabilitation of human habitations from such protected areas.

Little effort is put in understanding what happens beyond these protected areas where people and wildlife regularly interact. Even in such modern socially aware societies like Goa where the number of wildlife conservationists are, tongue-in-cheek, said to exceed the wildlife population of the State, wildlife-human conflicts are limited to compensation for damage to agricultural crops.

In western developed countries, large animals that compete with humans for

space and resources have been exterminated. Wild animals like wolves, bears, lions, moose and wild horses have been wiped out from most of the areas of Japan, Europe and America. In this global scenario, India poses something of a paradox.

Even though India has the technology to wipe out our large animal populations, and in spite of having an extremely high density of human population, we have still managed to hold on to most of our large wild animals populations. This, in spite of the fact that wild animals like elephants and tigers, are a lot more challenging to live with than bears and horses.

What aspect of Indian culture makes people more tolerant to wildlife and able to share space? Is it the sacredness of various life forms in Hinduism, which reveres elephant as God, or the fact that

Indians on an average eat less meat than most people in the world? It is difficult to fully understand our cultural tolerance.

An interesting element of human-wildlife coexistence has been the indigenous communities who have lived peacefully alongside wildlife for centuries. Traditional tribes see the forests and animals in it as part of their environment and believe that as long as they treat the forests well, they will be looked after by it.

It is believed by them that there is no need to hoard resources or save things for later or strive for better luxuries since the forest is always there to take care of their needs. This is in stark contradiction with our modern societies where we strive for a better life, strive to hoard our resources and save for the future.

We have done a reasonably good job of protecting our forest areas and have come a long way in understanding natural systems and the ecology of our forests and wildlife better. But we need to make some effort to understand what happens beyond these protected areas. Since the nation's protected areas cover a fraction of the total land area and are too small an area to host a viable population of any of the larger animals, conservation outside this area is also important to safeguard the future of the wild animals.

We should grow beyond the "compensation for damage" concept. While



we focus on continuous escalating reports of human wildlife conflict, we fail to take note that there are thousands of instances in the country where there are no reports of any conflict and where people and wildlife are getting along fine. There are numerous challenges and it is not easy to live peacefully alongside large mammals like elephants or tigers, yet there are instances of places and people who are doing it.

It is high time that NGOs and State Forest Departments to stop imitating western conservation ideas and look at what our own culture has to offer. A good starting point is to perhaps start incentivizing tolerance, whereby communities are possibly subsidized for not planting conflict-prone crops. We need to evolve ways of coexistence and tolerance for wildlife.

The author Shri Amar Heblekar, ACF is Principal, Forest Training School, Valpoi.

*Top right:
Wild Elephant foot
prints in a paddy field at
Pernem taluka.*

*Below:
A black leopard trapped
in a village near
Cotigao Wildlife
Sanctuary.*



STRIPED BEAUTY IN FORESTS

by Paresh Porob, RFO, Madei Wildlife Sanctuary



*I*t was early morning I along with my staff Shri Premkumar Gaonkar Forest guard of Keri Range whom I had handpicked for this work ,were on the way to check another area in Madei Wildlife Sanctuary for some indirect evidence of Big cats, we were armed with lot of local information gathered from people around sanctuary started working on establishing links which would have even amazed the famous detective Sherlock Holmes. Every time the climax of whole investigation lead to Prince of cats Leopards, it was not leading us to King of Jungle, but we kept on boosting morale of each other convincing each other that we will get to the King of jungle. It was 09th April 2013 morning we were moving along an old kutchra road and we stumbled upon trail of pugmark on dust at edge of road, we actually ran to have a better look at it and were rewarded with fresh trail left by Big cat the previous night. We were very excited on our find and hurriedly started tracking it down, with the decrease in dirt along roadside pugmarks which were faint. We picked up

direction in which cats has moved, with whatever experience I have in tracking this animal down into valley. Further there were no any sorts of evidence as entire forest floor was covered with leaf litter. We zeroed down entire valley for intensive exploration and almost everyday evening and early morning devoted time for serious exploration in this area, but to our bad luck there were not much of evidence. This continued for almost 5 days and finally on the sixth day of our explorations we were rewarded. As we were walking with gaze down on forest floor negotiating steep slope, gentle breeze of air carried odour of decaying meat, we were startled and excited but kept our fingers crossed and descended in valley slowly without making much disturbance and also expecting big cat on kill we moved stealthily. We were accompanied by Nanda Dabekar local who was well versed with terrain of this area. He informed that there is small spring there in valley and area is very dense. Once we reached in valley we were very excited to

see pugmarks all over the place in wet mud. We had directly reached big cats dining area and carcass was of huge Wild Pig which was a day old, the hind portion of carcass was devoured and about 15 mts from where the carcass was lying there were struggle marks which was evident that wild pig was pulled down near waterhole only. As we were on exploration we didn't carry camera traps with us so we decided to return in the evening with Camera traps. The same evening we hurriedly reached at site full of enthusiasm only to find that carcass of wild pig was missing from the area, we searched and within short while managed to locate it carefully hidden in dense vegetation upstream of same nallah. We set 2 camera traps in the area one on facing the carcass and other facing the trail coming down the hill. As we were testing our second camera trap, we were stunned with her call hardly 30-40 mts from us. It was 18.40 hrs. All 3 of us immediately huddled together and our eyes were straining to get glimpse, but dense network of climbers and undergrowth prevented us from seeing, as our main moto was to capture her on Camera we didn't waste time we moved slowly and climbed back on steep slope on all our fours we came up on ridge and took good breadth. It was getting dark and we had to retrieve back without flashing our torches to avoid disturbing her, as were moving on ridge it was 19.35 hrs we saw bright illumination on valley. we congratulated each other as that was camera trap flash which had fired and it was followed by another one. We didn't stop there and moved out from the area. Next day early morning Premkumar and Nanda collected Camera traps and we checked it on computer and we were over the moon on seeing the tigresses in frame. Again we congratulated each other for our success, I cant really express my happiness and excitement of this moment, but I can relate it to excitement I had back in my college days, when I got positive reply from my girlfriend (though it was not first one). Immediately messaged about it to my senior Officers and congratulations Messages poured in from my senior officers that added to excitement and happiness. I will be failing on my part if I don't thank Shri Richard D'Souza IFS PCCF who has shown confidence in me and posted me in Madei Wildlife Sanctuary, Seeing his enthusiasm during treacherous trek to Vageri Hill just to see pugmark of tiger was truly motivating. During this trek that I promised him to get tiger from Madei on camera soon, he was source of inspiration for this whole

*Left : The tiger trapped on camera;
Right : Pug marks of the tiger*



exploration. After taking over as RFO Keri which was my first territorial posting I was engrossed in this altogether new venture, and my DCF Dr G. T. Kumar insisted that evening I should try setting up camera traps which he had procured to gather some wildlife in action, Immediately I started and captured lot of animals in catchment of Anjunem but no tiger. The encouragement From Dr G. T. Kumar to try camera traps and carry out proper documentation of wildlife was something which boosted my morale and put in extra efforts, I should really thank him for identifying talent in subordinate officer and giving timely encouragement to put in more hours in field.

And last but not least I should thank my field staff especially Premkumar Gaonkar Forest Guard loaded with dedication and zeal to contribute towards his duty which is very rare. He is one forest guard who with his smiling face has always showed readiness at even odd hours to go on field exploration. His skill of gathering information from people is amazing. If our rich natural heritage needs to be conserved I personally feel that government should understand practical difficulties of field staff and work for improving living conditions of field staff on par with other law enforcing departments, this will not only motivate them but also afford better protection to our western ghat forest which in turn help in maintaining water

The author Paresh Porob is Range Forest Officer, Madei Wildlife Sanctuary .

OUR TOUR TO SOUTH GOA by Forester Trainees



*Left, top:
An old temple of termite nest in a remote forest of Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary;*

*Right, top:
The Range Forest Officer, Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary explaining about the plants in a butterfly park*



The Forest Training School, Valpoi organised the first study tour of South Goa for seven days in May 2013 of the V Batch of Foresters to be trained in this Institution.

During this tour, we visited different places and studied various aspects of Forestry which will help us in our career ahead for protection and management of the forests of Goa.

We camped at the ecotourism complex at Hathipal near Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary in Canacona taluka. This complex is well developed with excellent facilities for ecotourism and a butterfly park!

We visited several places in South Goa which included formal gardens like Anna Fonte Garden and Agha Khan Garden at Margao, all maintained by the Forest Department.

These gardens comprise of more than 25 species of exquisite ornamental plants laid out beautifully around fountains and even a musical fountain which attracts a large number of people.

The botanical gardens developed by the Goa Forest Development Corporation in Salauli is considered the largest garden in Goa and was one of the best gardens we had seen.

During the tour, we also visited several plantations raised by various ranges in South Goa which include Dicarpal, Bali, Kindalkatta, Tirwal, Shisheval and Canal-bank plantation at Quepem.

We also visited the Condimol Nursery which is the central nursery for South Goa. We learnt the different varieties of forest species raised in this nursery.

Visit to the mangrove areas of Mashe was very helpful as it gave us a first hand

knowledge of this wonderful ecosystem.

As per schedule, we also got to see the two timber depots of South Goa at Hathipal and Curdi. This was a very useful in respect of maintenance of records of timber, methods of stacking and gave us a clear idea of criteria in establishing an ideal timber depot. We also were shown several soil and water conservation measures taken in different forest areas to help prevent soil erosion and raise the water table in the soil.

We saw several gabion check dams, loose boulder check dams, retaining walls, staggered trenches, etc which helped in reducing the velocity of flow of rain water.

The turtle nesting sites at Agonda and Galgibag beaches were also visited and we could interact with the protection staff posted on these beaches to protect the nests of olive ridley turtles that frequent these areas.

The visit to Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary was the most important part of the tour that we treasure. Trekking in the forests for the full day and studying the locality factors and observing the change in vegetation from moist deciduous to evergreen forests was very enjoyable, yet rewarding.

This tour of South Goa gave us a lot of practical learning opportunities and compensated for all the learning hours spent in classrooms.

The concepts of forestry that we learnt in our classrooms could actually be related to the work done in the field and this tour helped us to understand and value our training more than can be expressed in words.

(The authors are Forester trainees undergoing one-year training at the Forest Training School, Valpoi.)

For the period from April 2013 to June 2013 of the Goa Forest Department.

APPOINTMENTS

Goa Forest Department extends a hearty welcome to the following new recruits:

Forest Guards:

Shri Mansingh A. Dessai
Shri Damodar Kudnekar
Shri Sakharam Malik
Shri Gurunath Pagi

The Forest Department wishes the new appointees all the best and expect sincere dedicated service to the Government of Goa.

PROMOTIONS

The Goa Forest Department congratulates the following staff on their promotion to the following posts:

Range Forest Officer:

Shri Duklo Dhargalkar
Shri Rudyard D'Silva

Dy. Range Forest Officer:

Shri Shankar Salkar
Shri Arjun Gawas
Krishna Bethodkar

Upper Division Clerk:

Shri Vinod D. Naik
Shri Melwyn D'Souza
Shri Deepak Volvoikar
Shri Bhimrao Shahapurkar

The Forest Department congratulates them and wishes them all the best in their new endeavors.

RETIREMENT

The following staff retired on superannuation:

Shri Ratnakar Fadte, RFO
Shri Pundalik Virnodkar, DyRFO
Shri Shivaji Naik, Aval Karkun
Shri Antonio Fernandes, Forest Guard
Shri Maruti Gurav, Forest Guard
Shri Sakharam Dessai, Forest Guard
Shri Chandrakant Parsekar, Forest Guard
Shri Datta L. Naik, Driver
Shri Sadanand Tople, Driver

The Forest Department wishes them a happy retired life.

WILDLIFE RESCUE SQUAD REPORT

The following wild animals and birds have been rescued and rehabilitated by the Wildlife Rescue Squad of Campal for the period between April 2013 to June 2013:

Mammals

Civet cats	5 nos
Squirrel	1 no
Bonnet macaque	5 nos
Mouse Deer	1 no

Birds

Owl	3 nos
Peafowl	2 nos
Eagle	1 no
Pigeon	3 nos
Kingfisher	1 no
Stork	1 no
Crow	3 nos

Reptiles

Striped Keelback	12 nos
Wolf snake	10 nos
Bronzeback	43 nos
Russel's Viper	40 nos
Cobra	125 nos
Rat snake	110 nos
Python	79 nos
Sand Boa	54 nos
King Cobra	1 no
Checked keelback	49 nos
Common Kukri	1 no
Common krait	1 no
Green vine snake	3 nos
Cat snake	2 nos
Coral snake	1 no
Bamboo pit viper	5 nos
Banded racer	1 no
Mugger	17 nos
Soft shell tortoise	8 nos
Olive Ridley Turtle	1 no

PROMOTIONS

The following Range Forest Officers have been promoted to the post of Assistant Conservator of Forests:

Shri G. R. Mashelkar
Shri Amar Heblekar
Shri Srikrishna Prabhu

The Forest Department congratulates them and wishes them all the best in their new endeavors.



**... V Batch of Foresters
study tour of Cotigao**



All photographs © Amar Heblekar



**DR. SALIM ALI BIRD SANCTUARY
CHORAO
JUST 4 KM FROM PANAJI
TEL: +91-832-2228772**