

PENCH TIGER RESERVE, MAHARASHTRA

APRIL 2019

Team: Abhijit Dutta – *Assistant Director (Conservation)*
Kaustubh Marpalliwar, Bandu Uikey – *Conservation Officers*
Dilip Lanjewar, Balkrishna Bagmare – *Field assistants*

Highlights

- ⇒ *Three community foot patrols*
- ⇒ *One check dam constructed at Khapa*
- ⇒ *One shramdhaan for waterhole cleaning and de-silting*
- ⇒ *One shramdhaan for digging pits for sapling plantation*
- ⇒ *Three awareness programs on snakes; questionnaire survey on human-snake interaction*
- ⇒ *19 meetings to survey farmers' awareness level and knowledge of conservation issues*
- ⇒ *Five school education programs conducted - 92 students participated*
- ⇒ *Six education van programs conducted - 246 villagers participated*
- ⇒ *IT education program at Sawara*
- ⇒ *Two livelihood meetings with SHG members*

Conservation Action and Awareness

Sr.no.	Date	Village / Place	Activity	Participants
1.	Apr 6	Ambazari Beat	Community patrol	4
2.	Apr 7	Shiladevi Beat	--do--	4
3.	Apr 24	Khapa	--do--	5
4.	Apr 24	Khapa	Check dam construction	7
5.	Apr 13	Ambazari Beat	Waterhole cleaning & de-silting	4
6.	Apr 22	Ghoti	Dug 50 pits for sapling plantation	8
7.	Apr 16	Narhar	Installation of water pots for birds	4
8.	Apr 9	Ghatkukda	Awareness program on snakes & survey on human-snake interaction	11
9.	Apr 10	Narhar	--do--	9
10.	Apr 11	Ghatpendari	--do--	7
11.	Apr 10	Pipariya	Farmer awareness level survey and awareness on conservation issues	8
12.	Apr 10	Wagholi	--do--	15
13.	Apr 12	Kadbikheda	--do--	10
14.	Apr 12	Khudsapar	--do--	14
15.	Apr 13	Kirangi Sarra	--do--	13
16.	Apr 13	Tuyepar	--do--	11
17.	Apr 14	Ghoti	--do--	9
18.	Apr 17	Sillari	--do--	7

19.	Apr 18	Salai	--do--	10
20.	Apr 18	Hiwra	--do--	8
21.	Apr 19	Khapa	--do--	6
22.	Apr 19	Zinzeria	--do--	5
23.	Apr 19	Chargaon	--do--	16
24.	Apr 19	Awaleghat	--do--	8
25.	Apr 20	Suwardhara	--do--	12
26.	Apr 20	Shiladevi	--do--	12
27.	Apr 21	Ambazari	--do--	18
28.	Apr 26	Ghatpendari	--do--	9
29.	Apr 27	Narhar	--do--	10
<i>Total Participants</i>				<i>264</i>

On April 24, a check dam was constructed near Khapa by Dilip and volunteers from the village so that water is available for nearby agricultural fields and for livestock in the village throughout the year.

The check dam will also be a water source for wildlife in the region at night.



Khapa- Volunteers build check dam (left)

Khapa - Volunteers pose after check dam construction (right)

On April 13, a water hole was cleaned and de-silted in compartment no. 622 in Ambazari beat. The programme included our team and forest fire watchers.

The waterholes are critical to wildlife especially in the summer months. Regular cleaning is required to ensure that the water is safe for wildlife.

On April 24, Dilip led a team of four Village Eco-development Committee (VEDC) members from Khapa village on a foot patrol in the forest area near their village. The VEDC members looked out for signs of illegal tree felling or poaching during the patrol.

Balkrishna joined Forest Department staff on a foot patrol in Ambazari and Shiladevi beats on April 6 and April 7 respectively.

These community-based patrols are supplemental to the regular patrols being done by the Forest Department.



*Ambazari Beat- Volunteers cleaning and de-silting a waterhole (left)
Shiladevi Beat- Balkrishna during community foot patrol (right)*

During the month of April, villagers were motivated to collect seeds of native species which could be used in plantation drives during the monsoon.

We will arrange for supply of saplings of native plant species from the nearby nurseries. Our volunteers prepared fifty pits for plantation in Ghoti village.

With the onset of summer, water has become scarce and birds are struggling to get water to drink. We encourage villagers to provide water for birds by placing old bottles, pots and cans in suitable locations for birds.

During April, we conducted a program in Narhar to promote awareness about the importance of birds in the eco-system and the need to ensure their survival by helping them with water.



*Ghoti- Pits being dug for sapling plantation by volunteers (left)
Narhar- Putting up pots with drinking water for birds (right)*

On April 11, Balkrishna organized an awareness program on snakes in Ghatpendari village, where there was a fatality due to snakebite recently.

He explained about the importance of cleanliness and keeping rodents out of the house to keep snakes out. He also explained how to differentiate between venomous and non-venomous snakes and what must be done in case of a snakebite.

Later, he carried out a survey on human-snake interaction. Similar exercises were carried out by Balkrishna in three other buffer zone villages in April.

We are currently carrying out a study to understand the awareness level of farmers in the buffer region of Pench on basic issues including agriculture, knowledge about impact of fertilizers and pesticides on environment, as well as crop depredation by wildlife raiding and significance of insects and birds in agriculture.

The aim is to study the awareness level among farmers and to identify areas which could be improved through training. The study was completed in East Pench cluster during April and is underway in the West Pench cluster.



Ghatkukda- Balkrishna during an awareness program on snakes and questionnaire survey on human-snake interactions (left); Ghatpendari- Interaction with farmers and imparting awareness about conservation issues related to agriculture (right)

Environment Education

In April, a total of 5 school education programs were conducted by Balkrishna in which students were given lectures on man-animal conflict, biodiversity conservation, climate change and other issues related to nature conservation.

A total of 92 students attended these programs.

School Education Programs

Sr. No.	Date	School	Village	Number of students
1.	Apr 1	ZP School	Awaleghat	18
2.	Apr 2	ZP School	Dhawlapur	23
3.	Apr 3	ZP School	Shiladevi	17
4.	Apr 4	ZP School	Narhar	18
5.	Apr 5	ZP School	Suwardhara	16
Total Participants				92



Awaleghat- Balkrishna during school education program lecture

Education Van Program

The education van conducted six wildlife movie screenings in April. Four village night-show programs were conducted and two village shows were conducted during daytime, wherein movies like- Truth about Tigers and Girl Gang of Telia were screened. A total of 246 villagers attended these programs.

Sr. No.	Date	Village	Movie	Number of students
1.	Apr 28	Sawara	Truth about Tigers	45
2.		Usripar	Girl Gang of Telia	40
3.	Apr 29	Khapa	--do--	60
4.		Pipariya	Truth about Tigers	30
5.	Apr 30	Kirangi Sarra	Girl Gang of Telia	27
6.		Kadbikheda	Truth about Tigers	44
				246



Wildlife movie screening at Usripar (left) and Sawara (right)

IT Education Program

Satpuda Foundation has donated desktops as well as laptops to the Zilla Parishad School in Sawara village and has been conducting IT education program for the students free of cost since 2013. Basic computer skills are taught to the students to make them feel comfortable with the technology and improve their IT skills.

Sita Uikey, a resident of Sawara village works on an honorarium basis for Satpuda Foundation to teach the students. Four such classes were held in April.



Sawara- Sita during the IT education program classes

Employment Cell

On April 26, Dilip and Abhijit visited Ghoti village to inspect a paper making unit run by a women's SHG which is non-operational from a couple of months. The women requested Dilip for help in operating the unit as the unit expenses were running high.

On April 27, Dilip and Abhijit visited Kolutmara village to inspect a sewing/tailoring center which is non-operational from a couple of months and interacted with the SHG members.

They requested Dilip to conduct a programme to train them in making bags and also asked us for assistance in market linkage.



*Ghoti- Dilip with SHG members at the non-functional paper making unit (left)
Ghoti- Paper made by SHG members (right)*

Dilip took both the issues to officials from the Forest department who have promised a visit to the units soon.

They may help by linking these units to the VEDC or the Pench Tiger Conservation Foundation.

Livelihood activities & meetings:

Sr.no.	Date	Village / Place	Livelihood Activity	Participants
1.	Apr 26	Ghoti	SHG Livelihood meeting	10
2.	Apr 27	Kolutmara	SHG cloth bag training meeting	10
<i>Total Participants</i>				<i>20</i>

Research

A study to understand the awareness level of farmers in the buffer zone was undertaken by us. A questionnaire was prepared which included basic information regarding agriculture, knowledge about impact of fertilizers and pesticides on environment as well as crop depredation by wildlife and significance of insects and birds in agriculture.

The project is intended to study the awareness level among farmers and to identify areas which could be improved through training. The study was launched in East Pench cluster in April.



Chargaon- Kaustubh & Balkrishna interacting with farmers and imparting awareness about conservation issues related to agriculture (left)

Wagholi- Abhijit & Dilip interacting with farmers and imparting awareness about conservation issues related to agriculture (right)

A field survey on recording snakes, incidence of sighting them and incidence of snake bites in buffer zone villages has been completed.

It has helped in noting the snake species that are more prone to come into contact with humans. A draft report has been made that will be submitted to concerned officials.