

PENCH TIGER RESERVE, MADHYA PRADESH

March 2019

Team:

Conservation Officer – Sumit Kumar Kar

Field Assistant – Niranjan Hinge (Turia cluster)

Field Assistant– Kamlesh Pawar (Khamarpani cluster)

Major highlights of the month

- Awareness meeting on forest fires organised at Khamba
- Three shramdhaan activities organised
- Meeting on stall feeding for livestock at Kundai, Aamajhiri and Khamba
- Education programme at 7 schools attended by 168 students
- Ecofriendly Holi Celebration on 19th and 20th March and World Sparrow Day celebrated
- Three nature trails
- Birdbath preparation and installation
- Meetings of SHGs on training in cooking organised at Turiya and Kundai
- Three unemployed youths placed in jobs
- Mobile Health Service camps at 6 villages treating 244 patients

Conservation Action and Awareness

| Sr. no. | Date | Village / Place | Activity | Participants |
|---------|--------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Mar 14 | Aamajhiri | Bio gas repair | 03 |
| 2. | Mar 22 | Khamba | Stall feeding and forest fire meeting | 06 |
| 3. | Mar 19 | Potiya | Eco-friendly Holi celebration | 14 |
| 4. | Mar 20 | Durgapur | Eco-friendly Holi celebration | 14 |
| 5. | Mar 04 | Durgapur | Nature trail | 18 |
| 6. | Mar 05 | Ambadi | Nature trail | 05 |
| 7. | Mar 9 | Turiya | Bird bath installation | 05 |
| 8. | Mar 21 | Aamajhiri | Bird bath installation | 03 |
| 9. | Mar 31 | Aamajhiri | Cleaning of area next to hand pump | 07 |
| 10. | Mar 23 | Pulpuldoh | Soak pit construction | 02 |
| 11. | Mar 14 | Chirrewani | Compost tank | 12 |
| 12. | Mar 15 | Mohgaon | Bird bath installation | 02 |
| 13. | Mar 16 | Chirrewani | Bird bath installation | 07 |
| 14. | Mar 20 | Thuyepani | Eco-friendly Holi celebration | 20 |

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------|-----------|--------------------------|------------|
| 12 | Mar 31 | Kundai | Meeting on stall feeding | 14 |
| 13. | Mar 30 | Thuyepani | Nature trail | 12 |
| Total Participants | | | | 194 |

Grazing in forests by domestic livestock is an issue which affects wild herbivores and impacts predators such as tigers. In order to address the issue, Satpuda Foundation is motivating farmers to adopt stall feeding.

High-yield cattle with stall feeding practices and proper fodder management techniques can help reduce grazing pressure on forests. Last month, we had identified a resource person to motivate and train cattle owners to adopt stall feeding practices. On March 31, we organised a meeting with Mr. Jagdish Gohte of Kundai village, a resource person for members of Dairy Federation of Kundai region. The advantage of Napier grass cultivation and impact of it on milk production was discussed. The members showed interest in adopting the stall feeding technique associated with Napier grass cultivation. Mr. Jagdish has agreed to supply Napier grass.

A similar meeting was organised on 22nd March at Khamba.



Meeting on stall feeding for dairy farmers of Kundai

Mahua (*Madhuca longifolia*) flower collection is an important event for the buffer villages around Pench Tiger Reserve. Mahua flowers are an important NTFP (Non Timber Forest Produce) which contributes to village economy. It is a common practice to set fire to grass and leaves beneath Mahua trees to aid flower collection. Although such fires are mostly supervised, some lead to forest fire incidents.

Forest fire in a deciduous forest of teak such as that of Pench Tiger Reserve can result in devastating consequences for the forest and wildlife. The recent forest fire in Bandipur Tiger Reserve in Karnataka state can be considered as an example of how damaging forest fires could be and highlights the need to be prepared for such an event.

With a view to avoid such tragedies, awareness meetings on forest fires were organised by Niranjana at Khamba and Aamajhiri on 22th and 25th March respectively. The agenda of the meetings was to increase awareness on the various causes of forest fires and their impact. Various measures to prevent such fires were also discussed.



Meeting on forest fires at Khamba

On March 30, Kamlesh organized a nature trail for students of Thuyepani Middle School. During the nature trail program, Kamlesh and Sumit spoke about the various birds found in the buffer region of Pench Tiger Reserve and their role in the ecosystem. We also organised a visit to a nearby water hole to create awareness on water conservation and importance of water hole for wildlife conservation. Niranjan organised similar nature trails on March 16th and 17th in Durgapur and Ambadi villages respectively.



Thuyepani – Sumit explaining role of water conservation during a nature trail (left)

Participants on completion of nature trail (right)



Students spotting birds during a nature trail at Durgapur

On March 31, Niranjana assembled a group of volunteers at Aamajhiri to clean the area next to a hand pump. Niranjana had explained to the villagers the concept of groundwater recharge and how clean areas around the hand pump can help in faster percolation of waste water and reduce the spread of water borne insect vectors. The cleaning activity was done around a hand pump used heavily for drinking water purposes.



Thuyepani–Volunteers cleaning area next to a handpump (left) and after completion (right)

Holi is the festival of colours which is celebrated across India. Often this festival is associated with use of synthetic colours and heavy usage of water. In order to address these issues, we organised awareness sessions on how to celebrate Holi in an eco-friendly manner. Niranjana organised awareness sessions on 19th and 20th March at Potiya and Durgapur respectively while Kamlesh organised a similar activity in Thuyepani on 20th March. The objective was to promote usage of natural colours such as that derived from palash (*Butea monosperma*) and reduction in water usage in the festival.



Potiya – Awareness session before Holi

With the arrival of summer, water availability for birds reduces. In order to involve students in conservation of avifauna, our team organised bird bath making in villages of

buffer region. In order to celebrate Sparrow Day on 20th March, we organised a programme at Turiya Middle School to make bird baths. The bird baths were installed by the students who volunteered to regularly fill these water baths throughout the summer.



*Khamarpani–Kamlesh with students while making a bird bath (left)
Turia - water filled by students after installation*

Abundance of cow dung in rural India is tapped via biogas plants to convert the organic material into biogas which mainly consists of methane. Biogas is a sustainable form of energy which is used mainly for cooking, reducing the need for fuel wood and thereby reducing pressure on forests. Biogas is produced from slurry of cow dung through anaerobic decomposition. Satpuda Foundation has been undertaking repair activities of defective biogas production units and stoves. Niranjan undertook a biogas repair activity at Aamajhiri village.



Aamajhiri – Niranjan undertaking repair of a faulty biogas unit

Satpuda Foundation has been working on promoting organic farming to reduce the impact of chemical-based fertilizers on farms adjoining forests. Composting recycles various organic materials otherwise regarded as waste products and produces a soil conditioner (the *compost*). Compost is rich in nutrients. It is used, for example, in kitchen gardens, horticulture, and organic farming, thus completing the nutrient recycling process.

Kamlesh organised the construction of a compost pit at Chirrewani with the aid of volunteers from the village during March.

Environment Education

In the month of March, a total of seven school education programs were held by Niranjn, Kamlesh, and Sumit in which students were given lectures on a wide range of topics such as pollution, man-animal conflict, biodiversity conservation and other issues related to nature conservation. A total of 168 students attended these programs.

School Education Programs

| Sr. No. | Date | School | Village | Number of students |
|---------------------------|--------|----------------------|------------|--------------------|
| 1. | Mar 5 | Govt. Primary School | Ambadi | 16 |
| 2. | Mar 1 | Govt. Primary School | Thuyepani | 20 |
| 3. | Mar 2 | Govt. Primary School | Chirrewani | 18 |
| 4. | Mar 4 | Govt. Primary School | Deori | 32 |
| 5. | Mar 13 | Govt. Middle School | Kundai | 24 |
| 6. | Mar 24 | Govt. Middle School | Pulpuldoh | 28 |
| 7. | Mar 25 | Govt. Middle School | Doodhgaon | 30 |
| Total Participants | | | | 168 |



Ambadi-Niranjn conducts environment education program (left)

Chirrewani– Kamlesh addressing students at an environment education program (right)

Nature games

Nature games are useful as they impart important conservation-related messages through interesting and simple games. They are more interactive than traditional lectures and are more effective in capturing the attention of young minds. During the month of March four such nature games were organised.

| SL no | Date | Village/Location | No of Participants |
|-------|----------|------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | March 16 | Durgapur | 20 |

| | | | |
|---|----------|---------------------------|-----------|
| 2 | March 17 | Ambadi | 07 |
| 3 | March 03 | Doodhgaon | 12 |
| 4 | March 12 | Bisenpur | 08 |
| | | Total Participants | 47 |



Nature game in progress at Durgapur (left) and Bisenpur (right)

Employment Cell

Satpuda Foundation has been helping local youths obtain employment by connecting them to potential recruiters. During the month of March, 3 youths got jobs with our assistance.

| Sr. No. | Name | Village | Age | Qual. | Job | Organisation | Salary (Rs. Per month) |
|----------------|-------------------|----------------|------------|----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. | Vinod Marawe | Karmajhiri | 19 | 8 th pass | Housekeeping | Mahua Van Resort | 5000 |
| 2 | Mangleshwar Parte | Karmajhiri | 18 | 8 th pass | Housekeeping | Mahua Van Resort | 5000 |
| 3 | Mukesh Uikey | Khamba | 19 | 8 th pass | Housekeeping | Village Machan Resort | 5000 |



Turiya – Mr Mukesh Uikey at his new job in a resort

One of the employment-related activities undertaken by the Foundation is supporting of women's self help groups (SHGs) in starting and sustaining new ventures which can give them adequate financial returns. During March, a meeting was organised in which Sumit and Niranjana discussed the status of money deposited with the SHG and how such funds could be utilized for productive income generating activities. Business opportunities which could be adopted by members, such as making of mats, were discussed.

Kamlesh organised a preliminary meeting with SHG members of Kundai village on 29th March to discuss training of members and new business ideas for implementation.



SHG meeting at Kundai (left) and Turiya (right)

During March, we organised 6 meetings related to livelihood and skill-enhancement training programmes.

| Sl. no | Date | Village/location | Event | Topic | No of participants |
|--------|------------------------|------------------|--------------------|--|--------------------|
| 1 | 18 th March | Turia | SHG Meeting | New business ideas such as mat making | 08 |
| 2 | 22 nd March | Khamba | Farmers Meeting | Stall feeding and RSETI training | 06 |
| 3 | 25 th March | Aamajhiri | Farmers Meeting | RSETI training, Forest fires and stall feeding | 05 |
| 4 | 29 th March | Kundai | SHG Meeting | New business ideas and documentation | 12 |
| 5 | 23 rd March | Durgapur | VEDC meeting | Poultry and vermi-compost tank related | 3 |
| 6 | 26 th March | Pulpuldoh | Employment meeting | RSETI programs | 10 |
| | | | | Total | 44 |

Mobile Health Service (MHS)

During March, 244 patients were treated for free through our Mobile Health Service (MHS) camps.

| Sr. no. | Date | Village | No. of Patients |
|-----------------------|---------|-----------|-----------------|
| 1 | March 5 | Pulpuldoh | 48 |
| 2. | | Thuyepani | 34 |
| 3. | March 6 | Kundai | 38 |
| 4. | | Bisenpur | 24 |
| 5. | March 7 | Sauri | 93 |
| 6. | | Mohgaon | 07 |
| Total Patients | | | 244 |



Dr. Khode treats patients at Mohgaon

Research

We are currently doing a research project 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 project is intended to study the awareness level among farmers and to identify areas which could be improved through training. The study was carried out in Khamarpani cluster during March.



Interview of farmers of Kundai village