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a lens

JUNGLE SAFARI

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INDIA - AMONG WORLD'S FAVOURITES FOR NATURE & WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY



By Rakesh Arora
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(Part II)

Leopard: Distributed across Asia and Africa, leopards have variations in appearance to a certain degree while one moves across the geographical range. What remains common is the beautiful coat, exceptional stealth and the elusive nature. The smallest of the big cat family, spotted nor dotted but wears rosettes and is a cornered cat despite the ability and agility to perform better than other big cats in the art of survival. Clever and cunning, widely distributed, leopards can flourish in areas where other large carnivores cannot. They feed on smaller herbivores species while hunting at night. This agile and adaptable creature is facing increasing threats and conflicts with humans.

Found in all forest types, leopards can survive in tropical rainforests, alpine coniferous forests to temperate deciduous forests. The loss of habitat and illegal trading of body parts has resulted in poaching. Also, decreasing habitat has made these creatures prone to death in road accidents by passing vehicles.

Vidya Attreya, affiliated with a non-profit Wildlife Conservation Society, a leading voice for leopards, stated, "I have seen the report. A similar report by Traffic International in 2012 too reported that a lot of leopards in India had died, mostly due to illegal trade in their body parts. This report is ambiguous about the causes of death and lists them in most cases as "unknown",

Owing to its adaptability to various habitats, a leopard can reside in human-use areas as well. They are widely found and flourishing in the coppice of Jhalana and the hillocks of Jawai in Rajasthan protecting them from the constant human conflicts in this remote countryside dwelling.

THE LEOPARD, known for its stealthy habits and camouflage techniques, is in its element in the jungles of Ranthambhore, Bandhavgarh, Kanha and other wild life sanctuaries where it is extremely



AT JAWAI, the leopard is seen which happens to be the hollow caverns in a hillock of Jawai. In this part of the world, the leopard is mostly nocturnal. Photo : Rakesh Arora Jawai Hills www.rapsafaris.com



These elephants are found in KABINI, NAGAR HOLE NATIONAL PARK, PERILAR NATIONAL PARK IN SOUTH AND RAJAJI NATIONAL PARK IN UTTARAKHAND



Photo : Credit to photographer unknown

Having experienced both these destinations, I was heartened to see that human-animal conflict does not exist in these remote countryside locations

Indian Elephant: The largest terrestrial mammal, it evolved around 60 million years ago and can have a height and weight of over 11 feet and six tonnes respectively. The wanderers of the wild, elephants boast soft and sturdy feet pads for movement. They can eat up to 400 kg of greenery in a day to keep their energized and dump dung acting as fertilizers for the forest floor. One can find the highest density of population of a giant, humble yet wild creature in tropical deciduous forests. These giants demand vast forestland with an abundance of food and water for survival.

Despite the huge population of the grey giants, they are running out of habitat as an aftermath of immense levels of industrialization and deforestation. The probe of humans in their habitat for searching land is leaving little room for the elephants. Protected areas are subjected to illegal encroachment and forest cleaning for road development has resulted in loss and fragmentation of habitat. This has caused them to

be confined to isolated populations not allowing them to migrate or mix with other herds.

Habitat loss has also raised concerns for human-elephant conflicts while pushing the elephant population to seek food sources in human settlements, farms and plantations. Therefore, we should figure out ways to secure the conflict and initiate harmony.

The One-horned Rhinoceros:

The grey giant, known as the Indian Rhinoceros, is one of the three Asian Rhinos. With a single back horn with a size between 20-60 cms, they can weigh about 1400 to 2700 kg. The species lead a solitary life, except when they gather to graze or at wallows. The primary grazing diet consists of grass, leaves, shrubs, branches, fruits, trees and aquatic plants.

One-horned Rhinoceros are considered a conservation success as the population decreased drastically to only 600 in the 20th century. The remaining rhinos were sent to a protected reserve to protect them from human harassment, poaching and habitat loss threats. Since then, the significant and successful efforts have resulted in an increase in the number of species rhinos to 3500 by 2015. Today, they proudly stand as the most populous of the three Asian Rhino species. However, despite all efforts of protection and conservation, they face a constant threat of habitat loss and poaching for its horn.

Today, the one-horned rhinoceros can be found in India and Nepal, widely in the foothills of the Himalayan range. They have been known to roam in the forests and floodplains along the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Indus River Valley in the past. The rhino is regularly hunted for the horn as it is thought to be an aphrodisiac. Its population dropped to 200 individuals. The century-old Kaziranga Park was given the status of a World Heritage Site in 1985 for providing succor to the survival of endangered wildlife.

Indian Bison (Gaur): A massively built animal with strong anatomy, the Indian Bison or Gaur is a social animal generally found in groups of 30 to 40. With strong and sturdy limbs, they can weigh up to 500 to 1500 kg. With a height of about 170-230 cms, Gaur has a convex forehead shape and a ridge running along their back. Prevalent in the Western Ghats, they are widely found in moist deciduous and evergreen forests with a capability of surviving in dry deciduous forests as well.



SHORT-SIZED horns, a massive neck and alert eyes make the gaur look formidable. She is protecting her calf. Photo by : Rakesh Arora . www.rapsafaris.com

An array of possible threats has resulted in a decline in the population of the Indian Bison. From food scarcity to poaching, they have also been facing the loss of habitat. Destruction of grasslands has caused them to face scarcity of primary fodder sources. Moreover, the increasing demand for Gaur meat has escalated the cases of poaching as a constant threat to their lives. All this calls for proper regulation for the indiscriminate grazing of grassland and human harassment.

It "wears" contrasting white stockings on all four legs, with a glistening ebony body to boot. Of all the wild cattle in the world, the gaur stands top on the list as the ultimate ungulate. Equipped with a heavy physique, it resembles a trained athlete on steroids

Wild Water Buffalo: Encountering the endangered species can be a thrilling experience in the floodplains of the Koshi River at the Wildlife Reserve. Mostly found in Assam and restricted to Kaziranga, Manas and Dibru-Saikhowa National Parks, they were once found in abundance across central and northeastern India. A body length of around 240 to 300 cm and weight of 800 to 1200 kg, they stand after the Indian elephant and rhinoceros in the list of the biggies. Larger in all proportions, they are quick moving and better coordinated.

Presently, wild water buffalo is tagged as a globally endangered species with around 92 per cent of the population surviving in Assam, India. Earlier, the forests of Bind-

rawagarh Zamindari allowed the hunting of these creatures. However, this practice was banned in the later years with constant amendments. Experts suggest that the pure breed of wild water buffalo is only left in Assam and Chhattisgarh now.

Where on one hand, the dedicated efforts for protection and preservation have conferred benefits to other species alongside; species such as the wild water buffalo demands direct intervention for preservation. The population of these species is around 4000 with over one-fifth of the total world population present in India, majorly in Assam. Systematic survey and conservation efforts are required to elevate the status from endangered to well-preserved species. Informed conservation strategies and constant efforts are being made but demand more efforts to ensure adequate survival and increase in the population of the water buffaloes.

PARKS :

RATHAMBHORE TIGER RESERVE, CORBETT NATIONAL PARK, KAZIRANGA, BANDAVGARH NATIONAL PARK, TADOBA TIGER RESERVE, KANHA NATIONAL PARK, BHARATPUR BIRD SANCTUARY, PANNA TIGER RESERVE, PENCH NATIONAL PARK, GIR NATIONAL PARK, KABINI AND NAGARHOLE NATIONAL PARK IN SOUTH INDIA

ICONS OF INDIA / PLACE WORTH SEEING WITH WILDLIFE SAFARIS

TAJ MAHAL is an ivory-white marble mausoleum on the south bank of the Yamuna river in the Indian city of Agra. It was commis-

sioned in 1632 by the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan to house the tomb of his favourite wife, Mumtaz Mahal; it also houses the tomb of Shah Jahan himself.

DELHI CAPITAL OF INDIA

RED FORT, RASHPATIBHAVAN, CHANDINI CHOWK, INDIA GATE ETC. JAIPUR AND UDAIPUR **Hawa Mahal** is a palace in Jaipur, India. Made with the red and pink sandstone, the palace sits on the edge of the City Palace, Jaipur, and extends to the Zenana, or women's chambers. The structure was built in 1799 by Maharaja Sawai Pratap Singh, the grandson of Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh, who was the founder of Jaipur.

The town of Amer and the Amber Fort were originally built by the Mairs, and later it was ruled by Raja Man Singh I.

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JANTAR MANTAR

CITY PALACE, ALBERT HALL, RATHAMBHORE TIGER RESERVE, BHARATPUR BIRD SANCTUARY

The Khajuraho Group of Monuments is a group of Hindu temples and Jain temples

DHUANDHAR FALLS, BEDAGHAT, JABALPUR PANNA TIGER RESERVE, BANDAVGARH, KANHA, PENCH NATIONAL PARKS SHOPPING, PUSHKAR MELA IN NOVEMBER, JHALNA LEOPARD RESERVE, JAWAI LEOPARD RESERVE

TO WATCH THE ROYAL BENGAL TIGER IN ACTION & EXPLORE RICH HERITAGE & WILDLIFE VISIT THE LAND OF TIGERS: RANTHAMBORE TIGER RESERVE



By Rakesh Arora
mail@indusage.com.au

This is one of those dreams come true, I have experienced in the wild safaris tours and travels. I have been to Ranthambore National Park four times and every time something different zone and tigers.

FIVE years of wildlife photography has been a journey in fulfillment. It has taught me many things, love for nature, the importance of conservation, patience. It has given me many moments of physical hardship, coupled with mental ecstasy.

Nature photography has many Subtle Distinction OR Variations. To Master this photography class/genre, you have to learn the science of photography and the art of photography. You need to move away from your comfort zone, cultivate patience and wait for that perfect moment. When everything is just right, you sometimes are rewarded by the perfect picture, and it becomes a photograph of the soul and you remember when and where it's taken, it becomes a memory for you and others too.

RAKESH ARORA (RAP safaris), My Business partner INDIAN WILD SAFARI (MR FEROZE HOSSIAN) who looks after operations in INDIA with can arrange your trip to



Photo : by Mr Feroze Hossain (INDIAN WILD SAFARI) (Tigress RIDDHI near Padam lake and Fort at background Zone 3)



Photo: FEROZE HOSSIAN (LAILA T41 and cub Zone 4)



PHOTO: by RAKESH ARORA (False eyes : The distinctive white spots on the back of their ears may function as 'false eyes', deterring potential predators stalking them. Another theory is that they act as beacons helping cubs follow their mothers through tall grass or at night)



PHOTO BY: RAKESH ARORA (ARROWHEAD ON ROAD between Zone 2 and Zone 4)



Photo: RAKESH ARORA (Noor T139 Zone 6)



PHOTO: RAKESH ARORA (sub-adult male cub of Krishna ZONE 5)



PHOTO BY: RAKESH ARORA (RIDHI Daughter of Tigress ARROWHEAD ZONE 3)



Photo By RAKESH ARORA (marking the territory)



Photo by RAKESH ARORA from canter (TIGRESS Krishna and its cubs)



Photo: RAKESH ARORA (blue-eyed sub-adult male of LIALA zone 4)
Between 20-24 months, female tiger cubs become independent of their mother and start leading solitary lives. They embark on a tough journey, in search of their territory. This is the most delicate period of their life

Ranthambore national park. Whether you are Indian National or Foreign National.

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Photo By RAKESH ARORA

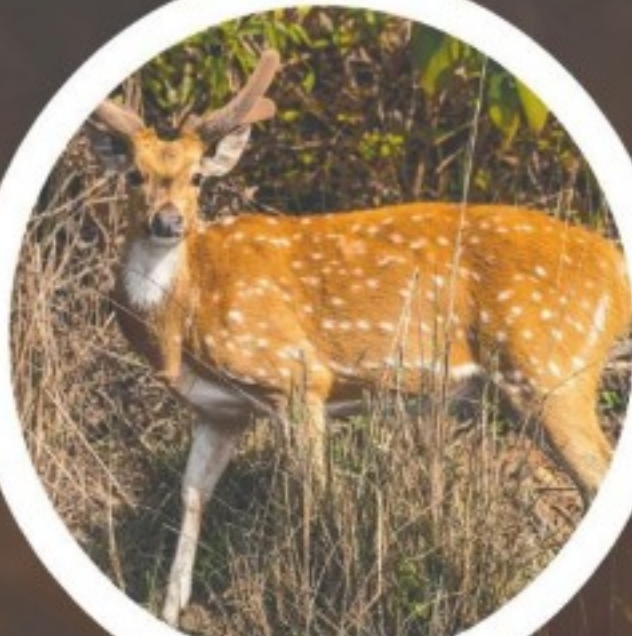


Photo By RAKESH ARORA

THROUGH A LENS

JUNGLE SAFARI

My name is Rakesh Arora. I'm an Australia-based photographer who's turned my love for the candid, beautiful moments of wildlife into years of professional photography experience.



mals. I want to take this experience and continue my work as a photographic mentor, teaching the core fundamentals of wildlife photography and passing on everything that I know.

If this kind of wildlife photography interests you, but you're not sure how to get started, I want to help! The only way to learn the ins and outs of wildlife photography is to do it. With workshops to help you learn the essential skills and expeditions and tours to give you the real-life experience.

Photo Credits:
RAPs
Vivek Banerjee

To know more visit:
info@rapsafaris.com

My Story, From India to Australia
I've been lucky to live in two magnificent countries in my life. I came to Australia from India in 1999 and brought with me my passion for the unusual and unrealised beauty that surrounds us. This passion eventually led me to begin working as a professional photographer in 2012.

My love for wildlife photography, however, came from an unforgettable wildlife photography tour in India in 2017, and the magnificence of Australia's natural landscape.

I currently do a lot of my work in wildlife and travel photography throughout India, recently in places such as Pushkar, Varanasi, and Bodhi Gaya, as well as national parks throughout both India and Australia. I particularly enjoy photographing the spectacular birds that live in New South Wales, where I'm currently based.

Capturing Real Moments

A posed photograph can serve as a wonderful keepsake, but I specialise in capturing the more natural moments of a creature's existence. Those moments that are untouched by human interference.

The storytelling aspect of photography is what inspires me the most. With these sorts of photographs, we can bring our own storytelling and human perspectives. To capture stills of animals, and see their elegance, humour, creativity, and heart, is an incredibly magical thing.

My time and experience spent on the craft have taught me how to capture these special moments with a photojournalistic style that ensures the animals aren't disturbed. To take a photograph of a hummingbird feeding, a tiger running, or anything in between can be incredibly challenging, but we're all capable of learning how.

My love for photography has led me to gain professional experience that spans events of all kinds, including birthdays, sports, community events, and wed-

dings, but travel and wildlife photography has taken centre-stage as I continue to travel and document more species.

For cameras, I have experience using all varieties of equipment, but my current preference is for Nikon DSLRs (D5 and D4s) and a multitude of Telephoto lenses with image stabilisers.

Professional Wildlife Photography

My passion of photography grew in 2016 when I was in India, I had an option to do something during my holidays in India so I decided to go to Wild life photography with Mr Sudhir Shivram who is a wild life photographer for last twenty years. He was my teacher and making us learn how to photograph the wild life in natural habitat. That was also in Bandhavgarh national park which is 180 kms from Jabalpur. It was my life time experience in wild and I grew my passion for this wild life photography.

My work in wildlife photography has been an incredibly passionate and fulfilling endeavour. My time spent on photography tours has allowed me to document some of the most spectacular species in the world, including big cats such as tigers, lions, and leopards.

I've done wildlife photography across the globe, including a great deal of time spent in these amazing locations:

- ▶ Bandhavgarh National Park
- ▶ Corbett National Park and Bengal Tiger Reserve
- ▶ The Jhalana Leopard Reserve
- ▶ The Asiatic Lion Reserve, Gir National Park
- ▶ Rathambore National Park
- ▶ Little Rann of Kutch
- ▶ Kanha national park
- ▶ Pench national park
- ▶ Tadoba National park
- ▶ Tippihwar tiger reserve
- ▶ Umred pauni karandhla tiger reserve
- ▶ Nagzira tiger reserve
- ▶ Sattal nr Nanital bird paradise.
- ▶ Bharatpur (keoldeo bird sanctuary)
- ▶ Jawai leopard national reserve.

- ▶ Kaziranga National Park
 - ▶ Masai Mara National in Africa.
- I want to help others go on the journeys I've been so fortunate to experience. Want to be a wildlife and nature photographer, but aren't sure where to start? With everything from workshops, to amateur tours, and even expeditions around the country and beyond, you can begin the career of your dreams, with me as your guide!

Over my eight years of professional experience, I've learned from various wildlife tours that covered a far range of incredible destinations and ani-

