

mangrove swamp have to be preserved to fight the mighty tidal waves of the Bay of Bengal and to protect the lives and properties of millions of poor villagers residing adjacent to the forests. Project tiger is therefore essentially an environment conservation project.

The local people of the Sundarbans have a firm conviction that death is an inevitable phenomenon and occurs as decreed by the Tiger-God and there is nothing one can do about it; they have reconciled themselves to a

co-existence with man-eaters; as a supernatural creature that cannot be exterminated. The tiger is accepted as a hard reality in the life style of the Sundarbans and people are only made to observe elaborate rituals of ground rules to ensure co-existence with the man-eaters. People of all religions, irrespective of their social position, caste and creed, sit together and prey for survival against this "magical" animal. This is the philosophy of man's relationship with the Sundarbans tigers.

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2. INTERACTION BETWEEN GAUR AND TIGER IN BHADRA WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

On 24.xi.1983, along with several forest officers I was on the wildlife viewing machan located at 'Chandrana Hadlu', a grassy swamp in Muthodi range of Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary (Karnataka State). We were observing (through 8 x 50 binoculars) an artificial salt lick in the open, surrounded by young Teak plantations.

At 6.15 p.m. a young Bull Gaur (*Bos gaurus*) came rushing out of the teak plantation and stood looking back anxiously emitting snorts of alarm. Within a couple of minutes a Junglefowl (*Gallus sonneratii*) gave alarm, followed by a herd of spotted deer (*Axis axis*) in the woods. Along the path used by the gaur, a tigress (*Leo tigris*) came out of the plantation into the open. The gaur which was

about 30 metres away started off to run, then stopped. The tigress came out slowly, emitting low moans but showing no sign of aggression or hostility. The Gaur stood its ground, with ears pricked forward alertly. At one point the two animals were only about 20 metres apart, the tigress totally ignoring the gaur, which took a couple of hesitant steps towards the tigress and then stopped. The tigress strolled onwards leisurely, sniffing at the grass and moaning now and then. While the tigress drank from a pool of water 80 metres away, the gaur relaxed and started feeding. Throughout the entire period the tigress totally ignored the gaur as well as the continuous alarm calls of spotted deer and sambar (*Cervus unicolor*) from the surrounding woods. A wild tusker in *musth*

which was about 100 metres away from the pool also ignored the tigress. Alarm calls indicated the onward passage of the tigress as she went out of our sight.

Though tigers appear to prey on gaur fairly frequently in the Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary as well as in Nagarahole National Park, it is difficult to say whether this particular medium-sized tigress could have taken on the young bull gaur. Further, two tigers had killed two domestic cattle and consumed a large amount

of meat from one of the kills two days earlier at a spot barely two kilometres away from the *machan*. It is quite possible that the tigress which we saw could have been one of them, and so was not hunting. In any case the gaur seemed to be aware that it posed no immediate threat.

Similar interaction between the Indian Wild Dog (*Cuon alpinus*) and their prey like sambar has been reported by A.J.T. Johnsingh in the Bandipur Tiger Reserve.

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3. A NOTE ON THE LONGEVITY OF TWO SPECIES OF WILD CARNIVORES IN CAPTIVITY

Not much information is available on the longevity of Indian wild animals in captivity. The present note deals with the longevity of two species of wild carnivores recorded at the Nandankanan Biological Park, Orissa.

Leopard Cat (*Felis bengalensis*). A male received as a kitten on 26.iv.1970 died on 21.iii.1983 after remaining for 12 years, 10 months and 24 days in captivity. The estimated age at the time of death was approximately 13 years. After death it weighed 3.015 kg and measured 93 cm tip to tip including 29 cm long tail. This was housed in an enclosure having a floor space of approximately seven square metres; height 2.80 metres and with suitable cavelike retiring dens. It was fed with 300 gm of goat meat and 50 gm of beef daily. One live chicken was given once a month in place of goat meat and beef.

A female Leopard Cat of New York Zoological Park lived for 13 years, 6 months and 4 days (Crandall, 1965). Flower (1931) gives

the longevity of a specimen of this species as 12 or 13 years.

Himalayan Palm Civet (*Paguma larvata*). A female received as a young in the park on 1.x.1968 died on 7.iv.1983 after remaining for 14 years, 6 months and 7 days in captivity. The estimated age at the time of death was about 15 years. After death it weighed 5.4 kg and measured 110 cm, including 46 cm long tail. This was living in an enclosure similar to that of the Leopard Cat's. It was fed with 300 gm ripe banana, 50 gm minced goat meat, 200 ml milk and 50 gm boiled rice per day.

Flower (loc. cit.) has given the longevity of this species as 15 years, 5 months and 17 days. The best longevity of this species recorded at the New York Zoological Park was 11 years, 3 months and 27 days (Crandall, loc. cit.). The average span of life of captive civets in general is given as 12 to 15 years (Prater 1971).



Karant, K Ullas. 1984. "INTERACTION BETWEEN GAUR AND TIGER IN BHADRA WILDLIFE SANCTUARY INDIA." *The journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 81, 460–461.

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