



Issue – 01 Volume – 01

January 2015 Newsletter

CATT Speaks....

" CATT - Conservation Awareness Team Trust has completed one year now.

We express our gratitude to all CATT Members & Non Members who has stood by us & delivered for conservation of Wild Life especially in Bandipur TR.

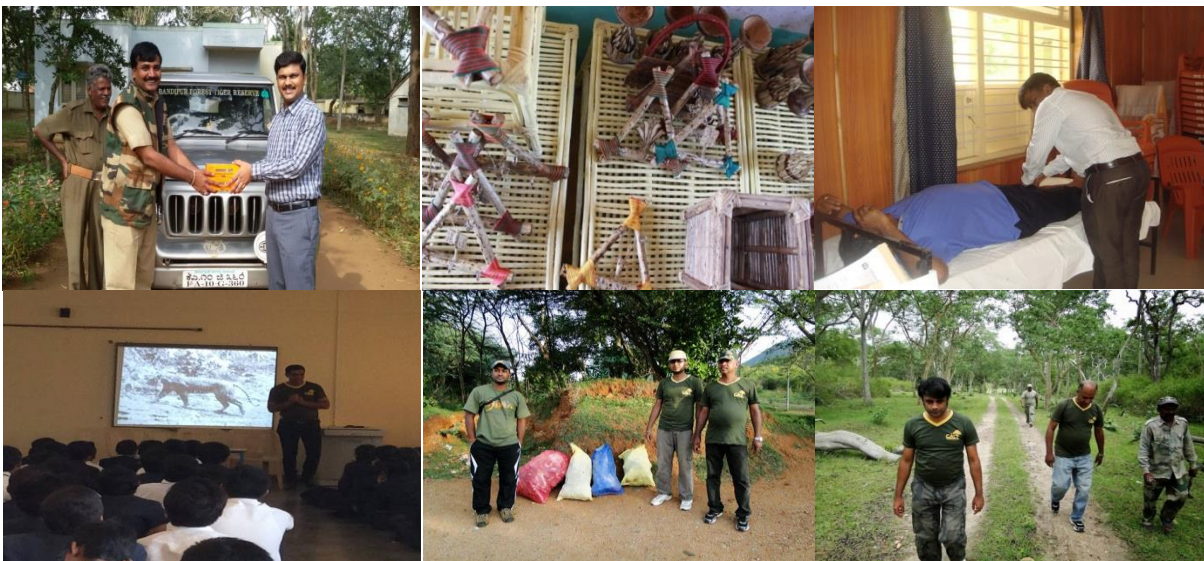
We thank Karnataka Forest Department & special mention to Kantharaju Sir who has been our mentor & guide for all our activities.

We, as a Wildlife NGO have gathered lot of experience during this year & have performed variety of exercises as per the requirement which will help us to perform our future activities in the year 2015.

We have larger plans for the year 2015 - 2016 which will be put across to All Members very soon like

1. Capability building for all CATT Members to deliver more excellence in field.
2. Involve local tribal people in conservation activities of CATT.
3. Providing Tax benefit to CATT Members & corporates who are backbone of conservation activities.

CATT - Conservation Awareness Team Trust is committed to Conserve Wildlife in India."

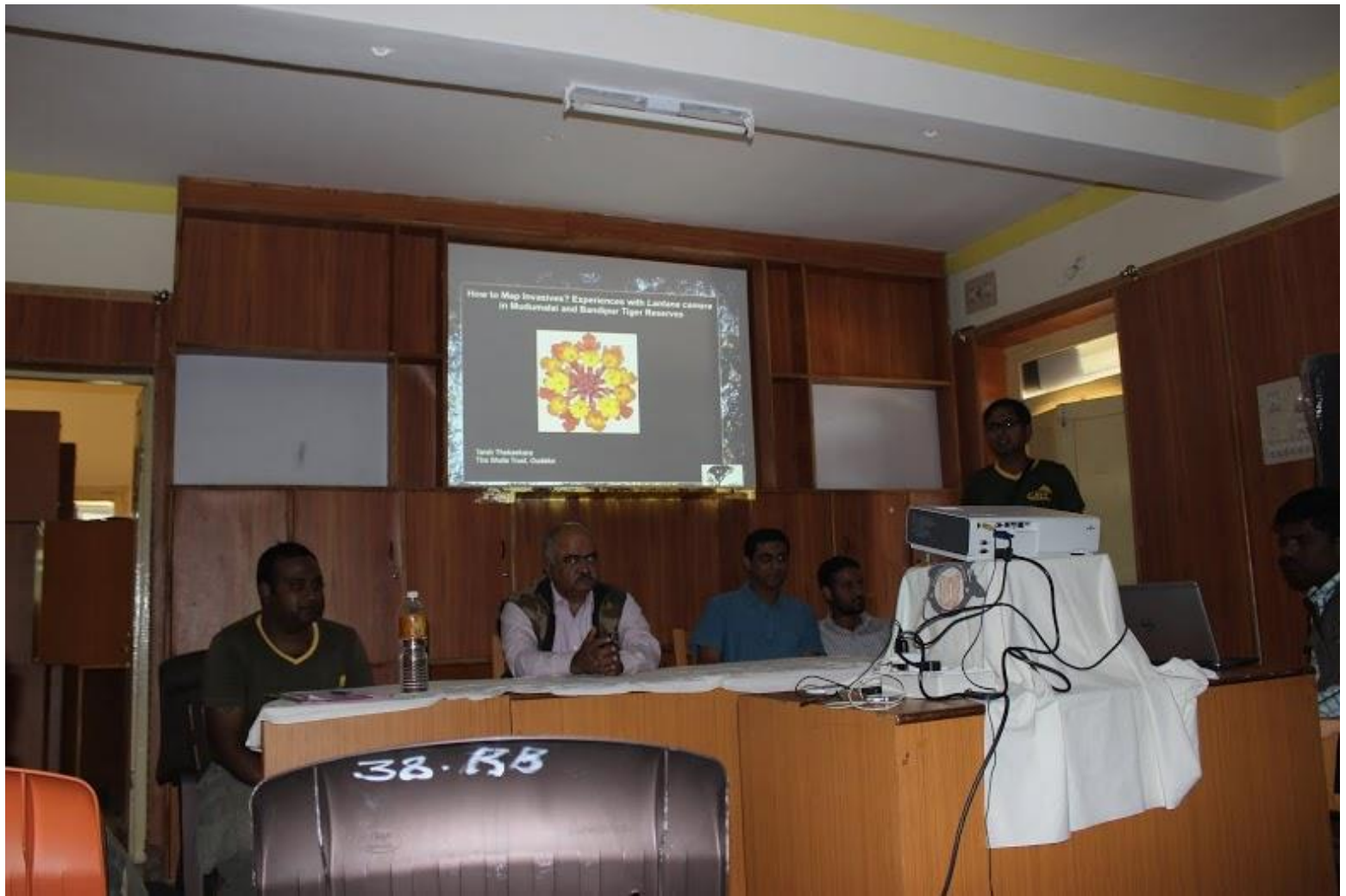


CATT Torch Donation



Vaibhav Mupadi	Shyam Ganesh	<p>The forest guards are the backbone of wildlife protection and they require all the support and encouragement there is to it. CATT took a step to honor its commitment to wildlife protection and conservation by deciding to donate High Beam torches to the patrol squad which will go a long way in supporting the squad during night patrol to identify our lurking friendly beasts at a distance and avoid any unseen incident. The torches were donated through ACF Ravi Shankar who has been a major part of conservation for CATT initiatives"</p> <p>Please include list of Members & Volunteers who contributed for this activity. 26 Members & Non Members of CATT Team did come forward and donated for the cause.</p>
Vidya Sagar	Rutvid Dholakia	
Mayank Prakash	Deepak Shankar	
Pratap Sikdar	Naveen JS	
Vijay Kulkarni	Girish Gumbalapuram	
Suvojit Sinha	Devleena Bhattacharya	
Vinayak Krishnamurthy	Shaila Prabhu	
Saradhi Roy	Praveen Byrappa	
CS Reddy	Mervyn Pinto	
Kunal Srivastava	Nirmalya Chakraborty	
Suresh Babu	Ganesh Shankar	
Pradeep Iyer	Hemanth Kamma	
Manjunath H E	Nagendra J	
Praveen Goel		

CATT Lantana Control Workshop



A day as usual as any in the life of a conservationist.... Try to conserve anything and everything possible found in nature.... an everyday mantra for CATT!

The lantana control management workshop, a place for an ideal conservationist saw many CATT members leaving behind their hectic schedules and heading out to Bandipur for a two day event organized to debate on what can be done about a serious issue engulfing our reserves.

For those of you who are wondering what Lantana is, here it is-

Lantana Camara is the DON among weeds, a kind of virus in the forest which inhibits any other species from flourishing and up until now there has been no vaccine that can prevent it from doing what it does. Introduced in India from South America as an ornamental plant as in any other country it has taken host, it has proven to be a major threat to native species and here's why-

- Produces chemicals that inhibit other plants from growing.
- Produces toxins which are poisonous to herbivores.

- Uprooting them simply exposes dormant seeds, increasing them in numbers.
- Produces around 12000 seeds which remain dormant up to 11 years.

However, all is not lost due to the effort put in by the forest department along with CATT and other NGOs who have used a novel idea to put the malice to some good use. It is found that L.Camara can be used to make furniture with the help of tribal population spread across the forests. This seems to have caught up as a vocational occupation among the tribals and may finally bring in some good news to the Paleotropical Kingdom.

The two day event was a success with CATT's mentor and IFS officer, Mr. Kantharaju H C and Mr. Girish Sampath from the Shola Trust giving some useful and first hand inputs on conservation of forests when it comes to invasive weeds. This was followed by some field activities where all CATT members (new and old) got a chance to bond and experience life in Bandipur along with the Tribals. In short, it was a perfect bonhomie... with respect to conservation of course.

CATT Bamboo Seeding Activity

Bamboo Seedling at Bandipur TR was done on 12/07/2014 to 13/07/2014. Most of the forest land in the Bandipur National Park has been engulfed by an invasive weed species named Lantana. Due to forest fire in summer of 2014 lot of vegetative native plants species have been destroyed. Both of these has contributed to the shortage of food for herbivorous. In search of food they are getting near to the human settlements. As a result of shortage of prey animals carnivorous are also being driven out near to the human settlements. The main solution to this is the forest regeneration and which is not possible without human intervention. In order to bring the forest back into her natural look forest department of Bandipur TR has initiated Bamboo seedling program. Under this program five tons of bamboo seeds are being planted across different ranges and beats of Bandipur TR. CATT with five volunteers supported the forest department in the field activity of bamboo seedling for two days. Lead was: Pratap Sikdar
Participants: Suresh Babu, Achintya Kundu and Girish Krishna and Rakshit.

CATT with VIKAS Team helped to plant number of trees around Vibhutipura Lake in LBS Nagar. This was the first plantation activity which was done by CATT Team with Members & Volunteers.



Camera Trap Pole Erection and Footage Collection

We also visited the various beats in Bandipur range and downloaded the camera trap images for Tiger Census Phase 2. These camera traps have captured the images of Tiger, Leopard, Mouse Deer, Barking Deer, Mongoose, Elephant, Wild Dog, Black Bear, Gaur and Spotted Deer. We also set up poles for camera traps. We helped the forest staff of Bandipur Tiger Reserve in digging up pits in different beats of Gopalaswamy Betta (GS) & Male Kamanahalli ranges. These were the initial phases of pole installation for setting up camera traps for Tiger Census Phase 2. CATT helped to dig up around 28 pits.



CATT Medical Camp

Medical Camp Report - Weekend 1 & 2
Dated :19/04 - 20/04 & 26/04 - 27/04.
NGO Partner: Hosmat Hospital
Location: Bandipur TR

CATT as a NGO believes to support the Front Line staff & their families who are the backbone of Wildlife Conservation in Karnataka.

CATT in collaboration with Hosmat Hospital arranged Free Orthopedic Medical Camp in Bandipur Range & Maddur Range on 19/04/2014 & 20/04/2014 also in Kalkere & N Begur range - 26/04/2014 & 27/06/2014

We treated almost 150+ staff & villagers from tribal colony including contract & regular employees of Forest Department. Free Medical Camp organized to address Orthopadeic issues faced by department staff & their families because all the hard work Forest Department staff does are manual.

CATT plans to organize more Free Orthopedic medical camp in coming weeks across Bandipur Tiger Reserve. Free medicines will be provided by Hosmat Hospital to these staffs in future camps.

CATT would like to thank CF Mr.Kantharaju, entire forest department & Hosmat Hospital who has extended their support to make it successful.

It is an unique event organized which addresses orthopadic issues of Forest Department staff.

These Free medical camps will benefit 300 + staff of Bandipur Tiger Reserve.



CATT Conservation Awareness Campaign

CATT took a great initiative to conduct an awareness programme in a school in Bangalore to spread awareness among the young minds. JSS public school had given the opportunity to The Vice Principal of the school was also present. The students showed a lot of interest and they were really excited after seeing the PPT of CATT. A lot of things had been discussed in the Q&A sessions. It was CATT's 1st awareness programme in a city school. More than 80 students attended the programme . Awareness programme in a city school.

Forest-fire and Environmental Protection Awareness and also street play on peacefully mitigating man-animal conflicts was conducted in a village, on the fringes of Bandipur Tiger Reserve.



CATT Crowd & Litter Management at Gopalaswamy Betta



CATT-Conservation Awareness Team Trust





CATT-Conservation Awareness Team Trust



BEFORE



AFTER



Every year during Annual Rath Yatra we see 25– 30 thousand people throng to this temple which is located in core area. As this festival happens during peak summers there are high possibilities of forest fire. To prevent such untoward incidents & reduce disturbance in the core area CATT Team participated in this activity. On 25th March we identified the strategic location for volunteers to be stationed. The major problem during this time is after entering through the forest checkpoint situated at the base of the hill most people like to spend a lot of time on the peak. This creates a lot of crowding and commotion within the forest. There's a certain amount of time allotted to every vehicle that goes through the checkpoint within which they are expected to come back. We saw lots of public & private vehicles moving into the Tiger reserve with devotees. There was a heated argument between KFD and the local crowd as the forest checkpoint closed at its usual time at 04.30 PM and the crowd weren't ready to follow. Later devotees were allowed to travel by KSRTC buses to reduce further disturbance. On the day of the event, teams were deployed by 06.00 AM at various strategic locations. Quick response from volunteers & KFD curbed movements of devotees outside the temple area and into the protected reserve. No private vehicles were allowed to enter park. KFD, KSP & several NGOs did good Crowd Management. No fire incidents in GSB occurred for 4 years in a row. Wild animals were not disturbed by crowds. Animals like Elephants, deer, wild boar & many lovely birds were spotted like pipit, pied bush chat, yellow footed green pigeon, bulbuls, swallows. CATT is committed to preserve this

After the festival, CATT sanitized the entire stretch by collecting and disposing of all unwanted and non-biodegradable wastes. There were 2 major forest fires during this period where CATT volunteers helped the forest department by doing fire-line monitoring and acting as fire-watchers to look out for fires.

We collected 5 bags of litter by walking along the entire stretch from Gopalaswamy betta check post to the temple on top of the peak. Litter Clearing Drive 1 at Bandipur Tiger Reserve was also done on 27th Feb, 2014 - 2nd Mar, 2014. CATT collected over 70 -80 kgs of plastic and other non-biodegradable litter from inside the park over a period of 4 days. We are extremely thankful to the cars who stopped by to offer water and provide words of encouragement! Special thanks with loads of respect for the kind of effort and dedication shown by our volunteers - Sriram and Ruchita, and the forest department officials who accompanied and helped us in the activity.

Its people like them who inspire us.

CATT Foot Patrolling & Fire Prevention

A wildfire started on 13/03/2014, turned over 1000 acres of these beautiful forests into ashes. The type of fire which had engulfed these forests was "crown" fire which spread from tree-top to tree-tops.

In spite of our best efforts, CATT Team could only reach the scene of this tragedy on the next day, but we continued to provide support to Forest Department to put out the fire.

We have not heard of or seen any large-animal deaths due to the Inferno.

Special Mention: Srinivasa Krishna participated along with Saradhi Roy in this activity & he has been a great support. Together, they successfully doused fires at several spots.

On 21/06/2014: The forest department has been tracking an elephant which had come out of Bhadra and was roaming around. They were using radio collar to trace it. But unfortunately, the radio collar is not working and the forest department had to search for him manually. We four members from CATT along with two forest watchers (from Hulikerre APC) walked for almost 15 kms to search for the elephant. Unfortunately we could not trace the radio collared elephant but could spot around six elephants with calf, a large herd of Gaurs, common langurs and many birds. Our trek ended at Hulikerre APC.





CATT New on Alert!

Sundarbans Oil Spilling.

The Indian Coast Guard and Border Security Force are both monitoring the situation, and boats are patrolling the rivers that connect the Sundarban region, which straddles the border between India and Bangladesh. Both Sundarbans include large swaths of protected areas that host a diverse wildlife, including threatened species such as the Bengal tiger, rare dolphins and the estuarine crocodile.

The chief wildlife warden in the state of West Bengal told Reuters the spill had not yet had any impact on the tiger reserve territory or marine life on the Indian side of the border.

"It may happen, and if it happens we have to deal with it," said Ujjwal Kumar Bhattacharya, the chief warden.

Tigers of Goa

PANJIM Goa Forest Department has finally admitted to the presence of tigers in the state. The Forest Department is undertaking tiger census in the state to ascertain the existence of wild cat and the same would continue till 2017. In a news bulletin, the forest department has said that during the wildlife census conducted from April 21 to 26 this year, presence of tigers was noted through pug marks in few areas. "In one area, a leopard with cubs was also sighted," the news reads adding that the census carried out by the Forest Department and the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Dehradun, has assessed the wild animal and their habitat.

Under pressure from environmentalists, the department had in 2013 conducted special tiger survey to ascertain their presence. Though, the survey revealed the presence of tiger, the department was not satisfied with the result to go ahead and declare Mhadei wildlife sanctuary as tiger reserve. However, Environment Minister Alina Saldanha is on record saying that state would be in position to declare any of its sanctuaries as tiger reserve only after the census ends.

CATT Special Mentions...

CATT Member Nirmalya Chakraborty completed a successful expedition to the Alaskan Arctic where he studied and observed the vulnerable Beaufort Sea sub-population of the Alaskan Polar Bears. He travelled the long risky roads of the James Dalton Highway to reach the Arctic Ocean where he travelled on a small plane in blizzard conditions to reach the small islands where the Polar Bears reside. He has reported acute ice (habitat) loss and lack of prey for the polar bears resulting in tough competition and less birth success. Polar bears are predating sea gulls and much more frequently confronting with humans in anticipation of easy food. Due to weather change and global warming, grizzly bears have migrated north and have interacted with Polar Bears and giving birth to “Prizzlies” – a crossbreed.

“The Alaskan Arctic habitat was too fragile and exposes the effects of habitat change directly”, says Nirmalya to CATT.

Nirmalya Chakraborty has also pioneered in lighting the lives of few souls in a very remote forest covered mountain village in Karnataka-Goa border by deploying solar lamps that would help the villagers to avoid the forest to light up their dark lives. These villagers were in the dark for many decades and administrations have found it still very difficult to extend power lines.

