

First India trip 2014

Friday 24

Arrived Delhi 12:30 with colleague Marcus Rowcliffe who will be working on camera trapping monitoring method (REM). Taxi for trip to Dehradun waiting but we arrived latter due to delay with flight. Good trip but slow and we are both tired.



Marcus and Chris (right) in taxi from Delhi to Dehradun

9 hrs. later, Late meal at Wildlife Institute of India (WII) - Dahl and yogurt and roti lovely.

To do:

- 1) Sort out collar attachments and access to devices prior to putting them on tigers
- 2) Assemble batteries and Flash old devices
- 3) Write talk for WII seminar

Saturday 25

Day 2:

Full day! Up at 8:30 thought I'd adjusted well to the time zone but now writing this at 2:00am (India time and still tired!) Marcus and students went through early week schedule which includes talks Monday. Training for REM and Mataki, Monday - Tuesday.



planning courses prior to heading off to Khana

We received the Mataki tags Dr Jhala received from us earlier, and they were tested and all worked except tag 6. Need to reformat.

Ujwall on of Dr Jhala's students has helped to solder batteries. First of the casings were mounted on the collar. Seems to work and are strong.

We tested the Gopro as for field use. Lots of testing to do tomorrow. We plan to head to Delhi Wednesday and take a train to Kanha next day.

Sunday 26

Attended celebration of India Republic.

Learning how to remotely use GOPRO and testing battery life. Runs

for about 12hrs on remote - possibly use for remote filming.

Tag set up and made preparations for talk. Went to bed at 1:00 am but slept well!

Worked with PhD student Ayan on Mataki tags. He's extremely helpful and we are both learning the set up needed. All tag are programmed and being charged. First attempt to attach tags to tiger collars.



Mataki collar attachment and casing - first attempt but due to concerns about the casing cracking and causing abrasion, we eventually just tapped the tags with medical tape to the collar.

Monday 27

Rem training. Marcus working like a fiend. Talks on scaling and ecology and Marcus' elephant study.

More Mataki tag testing. We are learning about the limitations with data download. 1/5 the real time download rate.

Tuesday 28

Day 5: Mataki tag demo with loads of questions and a lot of interest from WII Staff and students. REM field setup day. Mataki demo, had some problems but am learning more about them all the time. Managed to remote (forcedl download) procedure, which involve more advance control of the devices. Heading too Kanha tomorrow!

Wednesday 29

Day 6: early morning departure Dehradun to Delhi. Caught overnight train 20 hrs to Jabalpur



Early morning departure on Wednesday.



Jhala and team discussing research plans in Kanha. We also used the trip to discuss with students about their PhD plans - a very interesting time! The students here have exciting projects.

Thursday 30

Arrived Jabalpur 10;00ish drive to Kanha expected to be about 5 hrs. Visited Mandala, nearest town to Kanha NP forest park headquarters then WWF headquarters.

Friday 31

6:30 start but actual start delayed a bit. Jhala and team worked late to get collars ready and organizing last minute permissions.

During the late morning, Marcus and camera trap team set up the first REM cameras in India! Saw, gaur and swamp deer today for the first time!

Saturday 1

Tiger capture set up, but tigers aren't located. Seemingly impossible logistic with elephant needing to be in place, delays with locating wide ranging and cryptic animals like tigers over large areas. We saw a 2 yr-old male tiger in evening!!

Photographed! Saw jungle cat!

Sunday 2

Day 10: we collected photo from cameratraps based at tiger routes all trail based. Practiced with Mataki tags, had a go with the dart gun (on a target!) - it was impressively accurate!

Monday 3

7 or so tiger photos and two bear photos noticeable absence of herbivores! On route back we had a tremendous encounter with a young male tiger who walked towards the vehicle without stopping.

We reversed off the road, he headed off on a side trail.

Finally, we got the call that they'd darted a tigress (approximately 130kg) we went off to join the dart team and to set up the Mataki tags one deployed. Tag sent a remote signal then the signal was lost after release! We plan to find her again tonight.

Managed to get sick, possibly train food... feeling pretty rough but very excited!!



Our second tiger encounter on the trip. Young male and not at all shy!



Tiger with collar attached. The small white bump on the left contains the Mataki tag. The rest is the original collar.

Tuesday 4

Late start - Marcus left with REM team. I stayed and tested tags

for deployment. Waiting on the team to target another tiger.

Also found the collared tigress and managed to briefly find her and managed via elephant back, to download data, although transmission was aborted after sometime. Transmission rates are slow given the quantity of data we are extracting.



Chris heading off to follow the tigress with computer for downloading Mataki tag data.

Wednesday 5

late start to get next tiger capture set up.

Time at kanha headquarters. Showed Dr Jhala the downloaded data from the tigress. Reset the tag, (F_reset) near 5:00pm.

Thursday 6

Day 13: went to find and track the tigress. We found her usual resting area but was called back for another capture. Large resident male capture had been found and was in place. He was darted and weighed 197kg.

Collar was attached and the devices left in the with Dr Jhala's staff. Unfortunately we had to catch plan that evening!

Off drive to Nagpur airport, and then to Delhi!. Flying out the next morning.



Dr Jhala conducting health check on the tiger prior to release.

Thursday 6 London.