

TIGER MIGRATION REPORT

New Nagzira Tigress T6 (Kaani) migrates to Navegaon Wildlife Sanctuary

Distance travelled – 69.2 km

This report is to brief about the recent movement of tigers in Nagzira-Navegaon Tiger Reserve [NNTR]. A tigress named 'Alpha' delivered probably her third litter in 2012-13 in New Nagzira wildlife sanctuary of NNTR. The litter comprised of three siblings out of which 1 was male & 2 females. The first evidence (pugmarks) of cubs was found in the month of January 2013 so it expected that she must have delivered in October-November 2012. The cubs were sighted for the first time at 'Gaikhuri' of New Nagzira on 1st May 2013. Also, the movement of cubs along with their mother was mainly found at 'Gaikhuri' itself and 'Bandarzara'.

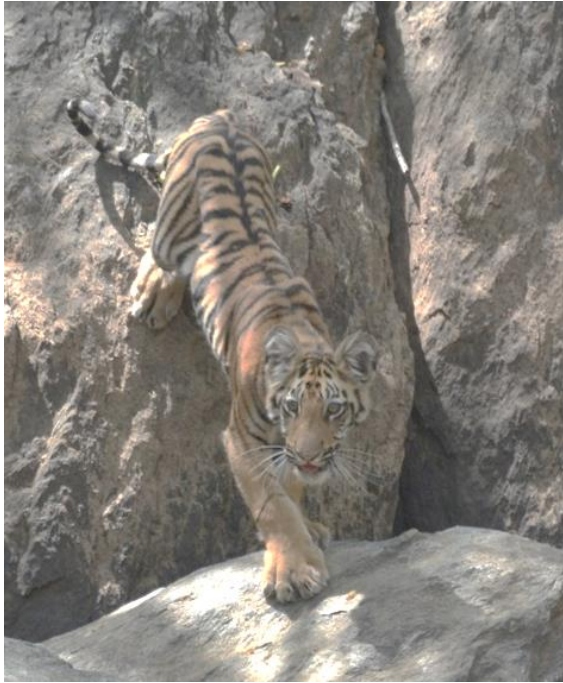


T6 photos where she was born

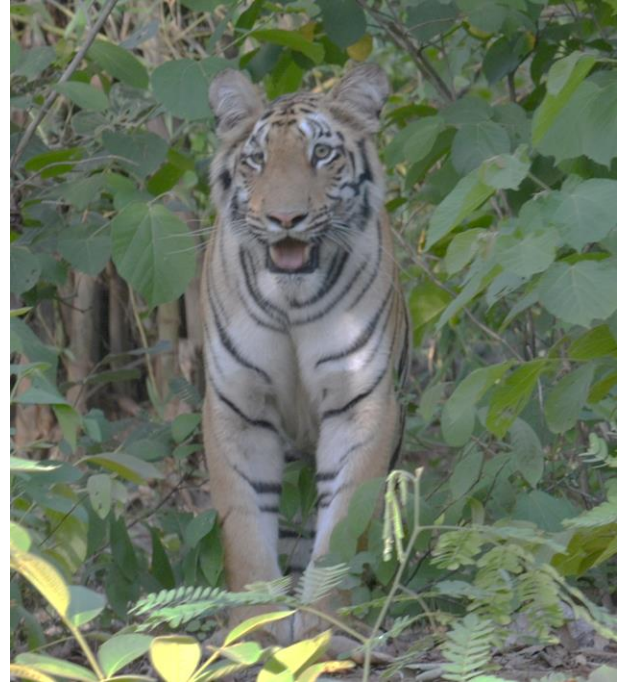
A female cub (later named as T6) was found to be the boldest and was quite prominently noted by her size being the smallest among the three of them. At about a year old, T6 was significantly seen with an abnormally smaller

right eye. This could have been an outcome of any fight or accident due to which she was famous with the name of 'Kaani'.

Compare the photos (look at the right eye)



T6 at the age of 6 months



T6 at the age of 1 ½ year

Primarily the movement of T6 with her family basically comprised at the entire area of New Nagzira wildlife sanctuary. As the cubs were 14-15 months old the family was reported in the adjoining Koka wildlife sanctuary as well in the month of March 2014. T6 was also seen roaming on the Koka-Chandrapur state highway in broad day light, this time quite far from her entire family on 2nd August 2014. She was frequently observed tracing the edges of Koka wildlife sanctuary. It can be understood she was trying for her separate territory.

T6 with her siblings T4 & T5



At the age of 5 months



At the age of 14 months

Our group monitored the movement whenever T6 was learned to be on the periphery of forest and was duly reported to the wildlife office. As the rainy season faded she was observed to be moving to the edges again. She then moved to the North of Nagzira and was reported in the adjoining forest of village Mangezari, Govindtola & Junewani which is an already recognized corridor for dispersal towards Kanha-Pench corridor.



T6 Pug marks were found during monitoring while she was in migration

There happened to be some cattle kills reported in this area from 21st October to 4th November. Subsequently, T6 was reported in camera traps in the compartment no- 92 of Nagzira wildlife sanctuary on 21st November 2014. This gravely led to draw our attention towards T6 as it was the first time she was noted to have travelled the longest till then.



Cattle kill by T6

Her movement was then observed to be leading to the east of Nagzira towards the village 'Murdoli' on the state highway as she was later seen by the locals crossing the state highway late night on 23rd November 2014. We updated about the prevailing tiger movement to RFO 'Goregaon (regular), RO 'Jambhdi' (regular) & RFO Jambhdi (FDCM) and also the further expected movement was informed. T6 then passed the 'Chulbandh' dam and went on towards the village 'Jambhdi'. After passing the forest area adjoining 'Jambhdi' her pugmarks were traced in the nallah of 'Umarzari' dam.

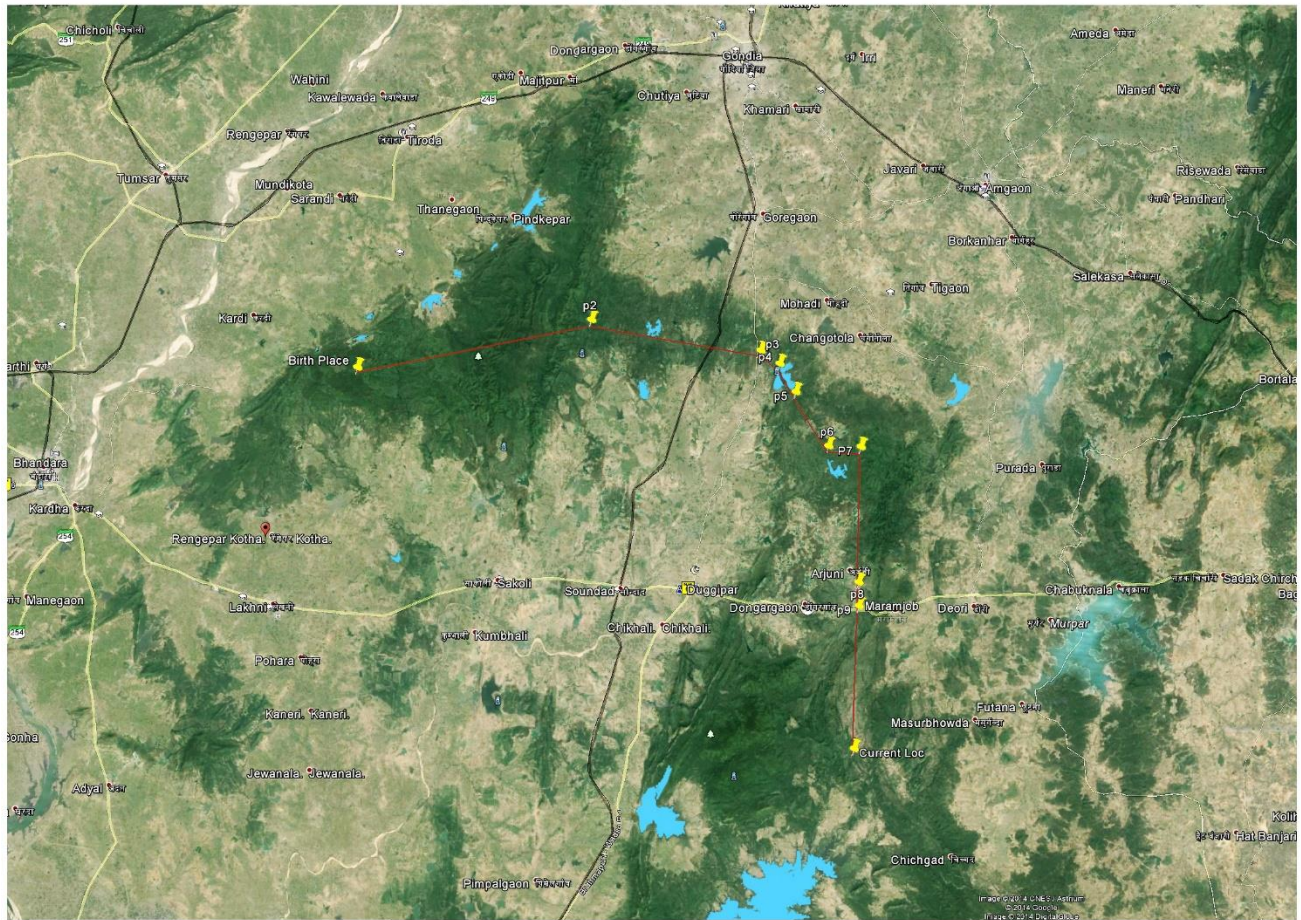


T6 crossed NH 6 and many state highway during migration

Later T6 was sighted directly by our group members on the ‘Salaitola’ road on 26th November 2014. She then moved eastward as the further portion on her trajectory was fragmented to ‘Ghisamari’ which is the center and the richest portion of the entire Nagzira-Navegaon (Jambhdi-Umarzari) corridor. Tiger scat was collected in this area after few days. Further she continued south towards the village ‘Putdi’. In the meanwhile, the recent movement of tiger and also the expected movement towards the Navegaon wildlife sanctuary were updated to the Deputy Director NNTR. Continuing towards the Ghat section T6 crossed the National Highway 6 / AH 46 which was seen by some locals of ‘Deori’.

Later, as the tiger movement was observed in the Navegaon wildlife sanctuary, the forest officials installed camera traps and the tiger was captured in photograph on 3rd December 2014. The photograph was then compared with the available records by the officers and it was affirmed that the tigress T6 (Kaani), a resident dweller of New Nagzira wildlife sanctuary had migrated to the Navegaon wildlife sanctuary.

Migration of Tigress T6 (Kaani) from New Nagzira to Navegaon Wildlife Sanctuary – Distance travelled 69.2 km



It is to be noted significantly that only if T6 stays in the current forest area for 1-2 months or comes in contact with the recently found male in the Navegaon national park that she can be called to be a resident of this forest. If it fails she can be expected to move further and carry on her trajectory. In this

case, she may lead further towards the available corridors which are i) Rajnandgaon (Chattisgarh) – East, ii) Gadhchiroli – South iii) Brahmapuri-Tadoba – West. For this reason, there comes a strong need of monitoring T6 with experts in the best possible ways.

Following the entire trajectory of T6 it is observed that the tigress could have settled in the 'Jambhdi-Umarzari-Alebedar' block as it offers a sufficient area.

The primary reasons why this was probably not possible for her may be-

i) Low prey base -

Distribution of wild animals:

A total area of ~ 280 km² was sampled with a total sampling effort of ~ 400 km in the dry months of 2011. The detection of signs was affected by the nature of ground cover and the estimates of were corrected for this. The occupancy estimates were highest for four-horned antelope followed by wild pig and nilgai. The estimates were lowest for gaur and sambar.

Species	Occupancy	Std. error
Nilgai	0.5095	0.0258
Four-horned antelope	0.6321	0.0001
Chital	0.4171	0.0328
Gaur	0.3780	0.0429
Sambar	0.3017	0.0442
Wild boar	0.570	0.0738

ii) Human settlements & grazing pressure

The overall results of the socio-economic survey show the causes of the anthropogenic disturbance. A vast majority (82%) own livestock which are majorly dependant (79%) on the forests as a source of fodder (grasses). An overwhelming majority (92%) are dependent on firewood extracted from the forests. About half (54%) of the households are dependent on the forests for their timber requirements. Among non-timber forest produce, the major dependence is on tendu (60%) and mahua (58%). Fires are set by people to clear the undergrowth and leaf litter. Reports of forest fires are highest in the tendu leaf collection season.

iii) Maximum portion of the forest is under FDCM which practices 100% & monoculture plantation.



After T6 there lies a strong concern for her remaining siblings i.e. T4 & T5. The major problem prevailing at this moment in the Nagzira & New Nagzira landscape is the male-female ratio among the tigers since the remaining tigers are of the same gene pool. **Hence there is a strong need of radio-coloring T4 & T5 for better monitoring and the required study.**

From 2002 we have observed that about 15-20 juvenile tiger cubs have vanished from the Nagzira wildlife sanctuary itself. We have been informing about this to the concerning authorities based on the records we have. Among this, we have efficiently monitored two successful migration of tigers briefed below of which detailed report had been submitted to the officers.

- **‘Ayaat’** – The previous litter of the tigress ‘Alpha’ born in 2010-11 which migrated from New Nagzira wildlife sanctuary to the forest area of Waraseoni, Balaghat District (M.P.) which further connects to the Kanha-Pench corridor in January-February 2013.

FROM VIDARBHA

Nagzira tiger located near Waraseoni in Madhya Pradesh

■ By Apoorva Methi
GONDIA, Feb 14

THE sub-adult male tiger born in the periphery of New Nagzira and had gone missing since around 45 days was located a couple of days back near Waraseoni forest range in the neighbouring Madhya Pradesh. The place is some 60 kms away at aerial distance. Looking at the threat to the big cat, the wildlife enthusiasts from Gondia who work for monitoring of the animals has demanded forest authorities to ensure safety to the endangered species.

It's one of the rarest cases in which the animal's identity is established without help of satellite or radio collar. According to information provided by Sawan Bahekar,

Honourary Wildlife Warden, Gondia district, the sub-adult tiger they named Ajat, had gone missing 45 days back from New Nagzira sanctuary and was located near Govindtola village and then at Khairbandha lake on January 30. During this period the tiger had moved over railway track near Tirora and crossed Wainganga river to reach Madhya Pradesh. The place where the tiger had been located is just at the aerial dis-



tance of 15 kms from Pench Tiger Reserve in East and Kanha National Park at 30 kms in West.

According to Bahekar, during past decade some 15 cubs have been dispersed from Nagzira and most of them had gone unnoticed, "Genetically similarities were found between the tigers of Nagzira, Pench and Kanha as compared to any other sanctuaries, which suggest that the young tigers moving in search of new territories had gone more towards Madhya Pradesh from Nagzira".

- **‘Jai’** – A cub of the legendary tigress ‘Maai’ (T2) born in 2010-11 which migrated from Nagzira wildlife sanctuary to the Umred-Karhandla wildlife sanctuary, Nagpur District (M.S.) in September-October 2013.

Vidarbha tiger walks 100 km, braves NH in search of a mate

VIVEK DESHPANDE
NAGPUR | OCTOBER 5

IN AUGUST, a three-year-old walked 100 km, crossed National Highway 6, one of India's busiest corridors, waded through Vidarbha's biggest river Wainganga, then in spate, and made his way to a forest on the other side. All Jay, originally of Gondia district's Nagzira wildlife sanctuary, was looking for was a mate.

He wasn't the only one driven 100 km out of Nagzira in search of a companion. The sanctuary's skewed male-female ratio saw a similar young male tiger, Aayaat, migrate to Balaghat district in February.

"Nagzira had six male and two female tigers. Aayaat migrated in February. One of the tigresses now is about 13 years old and is Jay's mother. The other is also older than 10 years. Both may stop giving lit-

ters soon. Currently, the other tigress is moving with cubs and isn't available for mating. So where does Jay go if not to a place like Pavni?" reasons Gondia honorary wildlife warden Savan Bahekar.

A senior activist says another Nagzira tiger, Rashtapati, is missing, leaving it with just five tigers. "On the contrary, the 180-sq-km Umred-Karandla (adjoining Pavni) now has nine."

This is bad news for Nagzira.



Jay (above) in Pavni. He is the second tiger to leave the Nagzira sanctuary this year due to the lopsided male-female ratio there

"It faces a Panna-like crisis of lopsided male-female ratio, which was one of the causes for decimation of tigers in the Madhya Pradesh reserve," the activist adds.

Used to tourists in Nagzira, Jay apparently had no trouble with the human beings he ran into on his trek to Pavni. Conservationists talk of stunned villagers spotting him audaciously squatting on the road or indifferently dodging human traffic.

From all accounts, he has settled in nicely too. "A very hefty tiger, he has chucked out a resident male tiger," says Nagpur honorary wildlife warden Rohit Karu. "He is now lordling over about 70 sq km." Officials are worried though that he has been killing cattle, over 20 so far, because of the thin prey base.

But as goes the matter of the mates, all is well. "He has perhaps mated with one of the two tigresses in the area," says Karu.

- **'Prince'** – A cub of the tigress T2 born in 2009 which migrated from Nagzira wildlife sanctuary to Pench National park (M.P.) which was confirmed by the forest department in 2014.

I would like to thank and appreciate the assistance provided in many forms by Mr. Sanjay Thawre, Field Director, NNTR; Mr. Ashok Khune, Dy. Field Director, NNTR; Mr. Jitendra Ramgaonkar, DCF, Gondia; SEWA Organization, Mr. Ankit Thakur, Mr. Chetan Jasani, Mr. Shashank Ladekar, Mr. Rahul Harode, Mr. Dushyant Akare, Mr. Shahid Khan, Mr. Anil Kumar, WTI and Mr. Pardhi, Forest Guard; Gondia Wildlife Dept., Gondia Forest Division, Gondia FDCM.

Report submitted by - Sawan Bahekar

Honorary Wildlife Warden

Gondia District

Member – District Biodiversity Committee