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Tracking the Tiger

by Bob Rupani
Rupani Media.
Pages 143.
₹2500

The world is divided between those who have seen a tiger in the wild and those who have not", says Bob Rupani.

In his latest book, *Tracking The Tiger*, Bob has covered the best tiger reserves in India. From one end of the country to the other, Corbett in the North, Kaziranga in the East, Bandipur in the South, Ranthambore in Rajasthan. He visited 13 wild-life reserves in 50 days. In each reserve, he spotted tigers. No special arrangements were made with the park authorities. Bob just drove in as an ordinary tourist, proceeded to shoot and scoot to the next destination.

Bob's style of writing is comprehensive and makes for easy reading. Details of the tiger and the jungle are vividly detailed. The book educates not only about the tiger, but just about every animal — birds, spiders, scorpions, snakes, alligators, rhinos, cheetals, barasinghas — every inhabitant that the tiger shares space with.

The text is titillating, the photographs scintillating. Bob's photographer, Dhritiman Mukherjee is a brilliant photographer with a keen eye for detail. He shoots with a wide open lens for a lesser depth of field to keep the subject in sharp focus.

Page 103 has a most unusual and rare photograph of a tiger sticking his tongue out with a frown on his face. This facial expression is called 'flehmen'. This is what a tiger does when he smells another tigers marking.

What is unique is that every picture has the day, date and time stamped. The information can help the reader plan a holiday. This also gives credence to the 50-day

Call of the wild



The book is informative and educative and can be used as a travel guide to the wildlife reserves of India

time frame.

Over the years, says Bob, the tigers have got used to humans and their intrusion into tiger territory. As such, the frequency of tiger sightings has increased, which is a very positive sign for the tiger to prosper in his natural habitat. Man is just one more occupant the tiger has to share space with.

In addition to being a treatise on wild life, the book is an arm-chair travellers' companion. 'The Fast Facts' are most informative, like, when in the Satpura Tiger Reserve

must see The Rock Paintings in Bori and Churna. 'Top Tips' are also very helpful — read Jim Corbett's books before going to The Corbett Tiger Reserve and visit his house in Kaladhungi — is one of these. The book is informative and educative. It is for everyone between the age of eight to 80. Most importantly, it is a window into the abundance of nature's bounty in India, the fauna, the flora and the landscape.

The one eye of the tiger on the cover makes a statement that the work is only half done. Save the

tiger and you save the environment, the planet. The forward to Bob's book is by Virginia McKenna, founder of The Born Free Foundation in Africa. She has visited India many times and is all praise for Bob's book. She says, "I have just been on a brilliant, fascinating Indian Safari and it lasted only 50 days. My safari was made possible by two very special people—author Bob Rupani and photographer Dhritiman Mukherjee".

The way Bob tells it, tracking the tiger seems easy. Tracking Bob may, however, need a radio collar!