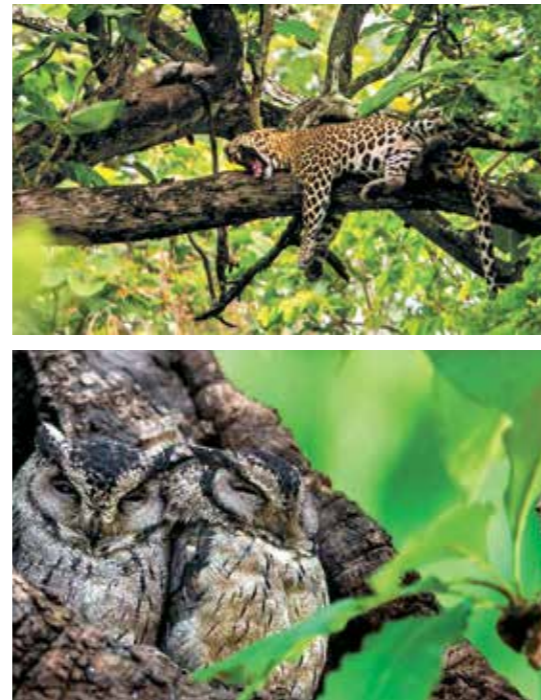


Pooja Mujumdar brings to you a compendium of India's 'wild' wealth and creative expressions by reviewing two books that are sure to be the ultimate centrepieces and conversation starters.

Chronicling India's Wealth

We review two coffee-table books illustrated with stunning photographs. One celebrates the splendour and diversity of India's natural history and the other documents the early decades of Bombay cinema.



India is home to more than 89,000 species of wild animals, 1,200 species of birds and 2,500 species of fish.



TRACKING THE TIGER
Author: Bob Rupani
Photography: Dhritiman Mukherjee
© Jaguar Land Rover Limited 2014
Publisher: Rupani Media
Price: ₹ 2,500
Pages: 144

INTERWOVEN WITH THE IMAGES IS INFORMATIVE TEXT ON THE HISTORY OF EACH TIGER RESERVE AS WELL AS THE ECOLOGY AND CONSERVATION OF THE ANIMALS HOUSED WITHIN ITS BOUNDARIES.



With a book jacket beautifully adorned with the image of a tiger, rolling muscles beneath his furry, striped coat, and a title that names the magnificent animal, it is easy to assume that Bob Rupani's *Tracking the Tiger* chronicles the tiger population of the country. Written in association with Jaguar Land Rover, the book, however, is a visually striking evidence of something that is more encompassing of India's biodiversity. Seen through the lens of wildlife photographer Dhritiman Mukherjee, *Tracking the Tiger* not only showcases the glorious tiger but also the diversity and beauty of the animals sharing the tiger's domain across 13 of India's most well-known tiger reserves.

The narrative is by auto journalist and wildlife enthusiast Bob Rupani, who accompanied Mukherjee on several excursions to tiger reserves including those at Bandhavgarh, Corbett, Kanha, Kaziranga, Nagarhole, Pench, Ranthambore and the Sunderbans. The natural history of this extraordinarily diverse region is marked by dramatic extremes of climate and terrain, and you are sure to see the transition in weather in the images too. Not surprising, considering the duo's journey began at the Corbett Tiger Reserve in 2013 in the hot month of April, before progressing through regular wildlife safaris to the monsoon month of June and later the cool, wintry months of October and November.



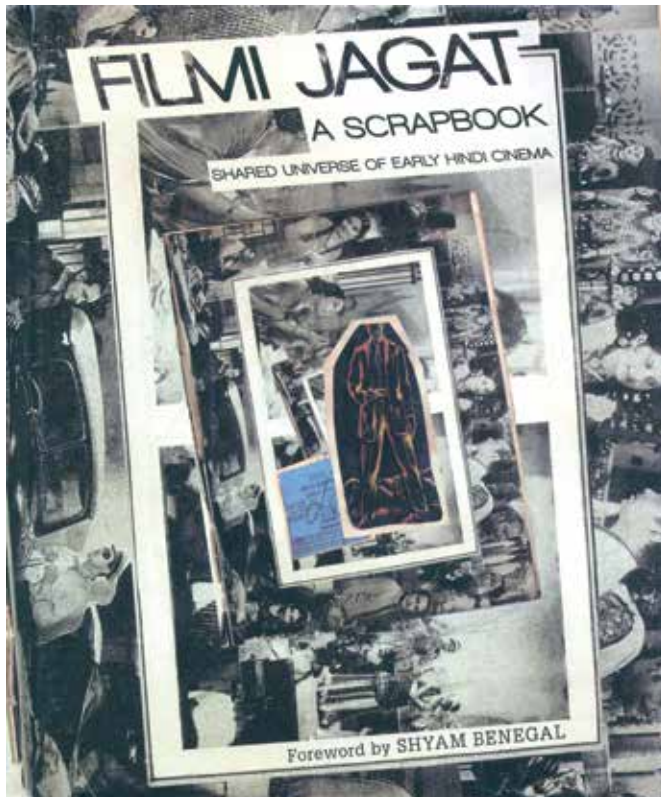


Recipient of the Carl Zeiss Award for Conservation, Mukherjee seems to effortlessly transform his unabating sense of awe at the wildlife and landscape he encounters into stunning images. The photos were clicked real-time over a span of 50 days, and no special permission was sought to visit parts of the reserve not accessible to other tourists. The slew of photographs evokes a mosaic of emotions within the reader, be it from a chital

doe lovingly licking its fawn at Bandhavgarh, rose-ringed parakeets playing with each other at Kaziranga or a sambar wearing a garland of ferns at the Nagarhole tiger reserve.

Interwoven with the images is informative text on the history of each tiger reserve as well as the ecology and conservation of the animals housed within its boundaries. For one, did you know that the last white tiger in Bandhavgarh was captured by Maharaja Martand Singh of Rewa in 1951 and was named Mohan? The white tigers residing in all other zoos are actually descendants of this lone, glorious animal. Or that the hoolock gibbon, the only ape in India, resides at the Kaziranga National Park?

Additionally, a mention of the best places to see the tiger, advice on the best time to visit, the nearest airport to the area, the locations, sights to see and activities to do while visiting the area enrich Mukherjee's renditions, and make *Tracking the Tiger* an enthralling read as well as a moving argument for more vigilant conservation of nature.



FILMI JAGAT

Book: *Filmi Jagat: A Scrapbook* (Shared Universe of Early Hindi Cinema)

Author: Kaushik Bhaumik, Debashree Mukherjee, Rahaab Allana with

Foreword by Shyam Benegal

Publisher: Niyogi Books

Price: ₹995

Pages: 218

Packed with photos of collages and cut-outs of film posters, and ads of products as diverse as cement and insurance, *Filmi Jagat* documents the early decades of 'Bombay' cinema in a period known as the 'Early Talkies'. The photos, derived from a frail scrapbook—supposedly created by Mangaldas V. Lohana, whose name was stamped on several of the pages—focuses on the relatively less chronicled periods of the Indian cinematic past, the onset of a full-blown commodified print culture from the 1940s and the major directors, stars, writers and composers who